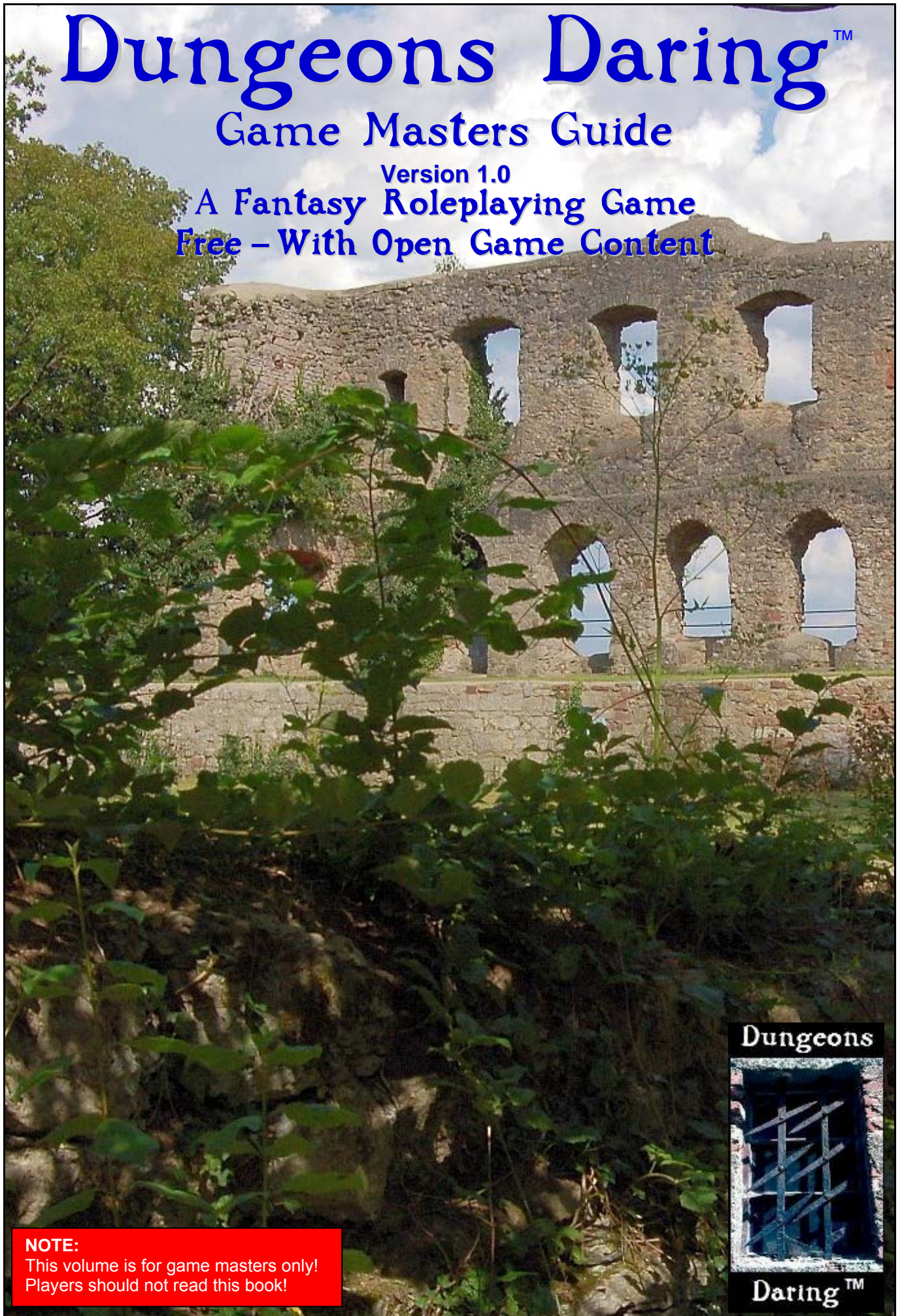


# Dungeons Daring™

## Game Masters Guide

Version 1.0

A Fantasy Roleplaying Game  
Free – With Open Game Content



**NOTE:**

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## A Fantasy Role Playing Game

*Book 2 – Game Masters Guide*

Version 1.00

**Authored by the Vintyri™ Project**

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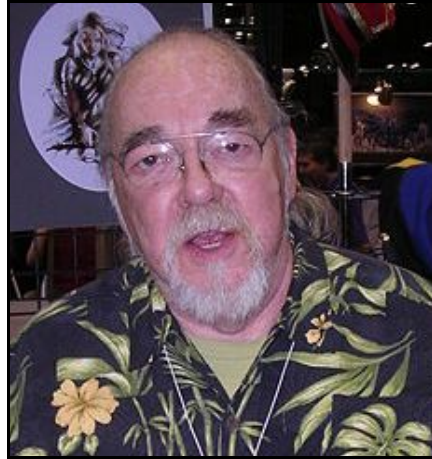
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**Dungeons Daring™**  
is dedicated to the memory  
of the Father of Gaming

**E. Gary Gygax**  
1938-2008

**Photo: Gary Gygax at GenCon 2007**

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# Foreword

## 1. Game Master? What am I Getting Myself into?

*Dungeons Daring* is a so-called *fantasy role-playing game*, often simply abbreviated as *Fantasy RPG*. A Fantasy RPG is not a board game, a card game or anything of similar nature. It is instead a game where players create characters in a mythical world and a mythical time frame. In the case of *Dungeons Daring*, that time frame probably will have elements similar to the Dark and Middle Ages of our own real world, and the things to be found in that world will have roots in mythologies similar to those found in various parts of our own world.

There's a big difference between you and the rest of the members of your adventuring group. All the other members will be creating heroes who will be off on an adventure. They'll be doing the spellcasting, fighting, drinking in the local taverns and perhaps a bit of wenching too.

While they're doing that, you'll be busy running the whole show. It's you who will pick the adventure they're in. You may even be the one who writes that adventure. You'll be making the decisions that determine what the results of the actions are that the Player Characters (PCs) and their foes take. At least that's how it looks to your players.

The truth is, if you like role-playing, play-acting or just plain hamming it up, there's no better chair for you to sit in than that of the game master. You see, you get to play the role of *everyone* in the whole adventure *except* for your players' characters. That means that you're the king and the orc at the next table who wants to split some player character's skull as well as the beautiful princess they want to rescue and the dragon that's prepared to roast them and eat them alive before they succeed.

The truth also is, being a game master can be a lot of fun, but if you want to do it well, it also is a lot of work. That starts here. Your players need to have a good starting idea of what's in Book 1, the *Players Guide*, and that knowledge should grow the longer they adventure.

You need to know what's in the *Players Guide* too, and even better than the players do, because the *Players Guide* defines the basic parameters of the game, which it's your job to manage. You also need to know the contents of this book, the *Game Masters Guide*, fairly well too. This book gives you the information you need on how to manage what you've gotten out of the *Player's Guide*, and it also clues you in on more things that the players shouldn't know, at least not at the start, and with some of them, never.

It's your job to tell your PC adventurers where they are, what they see and what's happening around them. If they have an encounter with other creatures of some sort (i.e. NPCs), you're also responsible for taking the in-game actions necessary to determine what these other creatures do in response to the PCs.

For instance, you may roll some dice and then tell your PCs that the NPCs they encountered are friendly and are willing to give them some help. In other cases, you may determine that the encountered creatures are withholding judgment regarding the PCs and their fellow adventurers. Depending upon what the PCs do, the other party could react in either a friendly or hostile manner to them or continue to be neutral in their attitude toward the PC party.

In most adventures, however, the chances are greatest that the creatures that the PCs encounter are hostile and they're ready to begin battling with the PCs and their companions. The PCs will make their own decisions on how to deal with these hostile beings, and they will make dice rolls to determine whether they succeed. At the same time, you will be making similar dice rolls to determine the outcome of their hostile foes' actions.

There isn't much *hardware* necessary to run this game. All you really need is the three *Dungeons Daring* books and a set of six dice, with four, six, eight, ten, twelve and 20 faces, respectively. However, you may choose to add some additional material to your campaign. Here are some things that often are encountered:

- Maps and/or dungeon plans.
- A board of some sort that shows a dungeon plan or encounter layout. Tokens or small miniature figures representing you and your fellow adventures and also the creatures you encounter might stand on the board, ready to be moved to show your PCs a bit better how the fantasy scene before their eyes looks.

- A digital projector with screen that shows the same thing as the board mentioned above, but that allows for more flexible displays and quicker movement of figures than a board with miniatures.
- A laptop computer network that shows the same thing as the digital projector, but even more efficiently. The game master feeds information from his or her laptop to the players' laptops.

These are merely tools, however. The really critical element in an RPG campaign is you, the game master. You have many different jobs to do:

- First of all, you need a group of people willing to play the roles of characters in your campaign.
- Next, you need an adventure. Many game masters write their own adventures, but usually, it's best to do that after you've had a little bit of experience with a commercial adventure or one written by someone else. If you're a beginner, you might want to try running the starting adventure at the end of this book.
- When you have a PC group and an adventure, you next need to consider what kind of party it needs. There aren't many adventures available that are well-suited for a party of four Wizards, five Warriors or six Thieves. An adventuring group – particularly one with beginning players – usually should have some of the most basic character classes covered. If they aren't, it may be that your first-time PCs end up facing problems that they can't resolve, because they don't have all of the talents and skills that they need. Usually, a PC group should have the following as a minimum:
  - ◆ A Warrior from the Fighter Classes or a Ranger from the Naturalist Classes to give the others some protection in combat. The Warrior or Ranger is their front battle line.
  - ◆ A Wizard or Sorcerer from the Magi Classes. There are some problems that can't be resolved by brain and brawn alone. There are things that only magic can resolve.
  - ◆ A Thief or Scout from the Specialist Classes. At a minimum, someone needs to find and disable traps. The Thief also will be able to give the Warrior some backup in combat.
  - ◆ A fourth character, usually a Warrior, Ranger or Skáld from the Bardic Classes who is willing with time to take up Healer as a second class. A Healer who takes that as his or her first class usually makes for a weak PC, but with time, his or her secondary class talents are needed.
- It's up to you to tell your players which combination of Character Classes is acceptable for the planned adventure. That may produce a bit of grumbling, but try to make it clear to your players that the combinations suggested are necessary, that the group is likely to fail in its adventure if necessary talents are missing in the group.
- After you've done all of these things, you need to guide your players through character development, and that's one of the places where this book comes in. In the pages that follow, you'll find some things that *you* need to know about the development of a new PC that aren't in the *Players Guide*.
- From that point on, you'll be using this book together with the *Players Guide* to determine how to do your job best. As a *Game Masters Guide*, this book continually amplifies upon the content of the *Players Guide*, giving you information that the players and their characters don't need to know and sometimes shouldn't know.



## 2. The Rules and the Vision behind *Dungeons Daring*

*The secret we should never let the game masters know is that they don't need any rules.*

- Quote popularly attributed to E. Gary Gygax

To a certain extent, you need to decide what the rules of the game are. This book and the *Dungeons Daring Players Guide* make up the *Dungeons Daring* game system. Some game masters go 100% by these books. Most, however, use a set of so-called house rules that modify those found here. *Dungeons Daring* has only one firm rule. It is a rule common to many other RPG systems as well. It's always called *Rule Number One*.

### Rule Number One:

***The game master always is right!***

There are no other rules. The rest of this book consists of guidelines.

That said, as game master YOU should turn one guideline into a rule for you: Don't violate your PCs' free wills. In this game, the players should be telling you what their PCs are doing, and you should tell them what happens. Any time you disagree and say, *No, that's not what the PC is doing*, and then go on to take the decisions away from the player, you're doing your campaign a disservice. There are few things that sour a player quicker than a game master who takes control of his character away from him or her.

There are some RPGs that have magic spells and items which force a PC to act in a certain manner, regardless of whether his or her player wants the PC to act this way. No such magic exists officially in *Dungeons Daring*. The *Players Guide* makes quite clear that the free will of humans, halflings and half-elves is inviolate in this game. These races (and also light elves and dwarves) all officially have free will, and it is beyond the power of magic to change that.

This does not mean that your NPCs cannot threaten coerce or even use torture to make a member of these races do a certain deed. In most cases, when the pain or the pressure and the stakes are high enough, a character probably will end up doing something that is against his or her own wishes. The key, however, is that the PC must decide to yield and perform the act against his or her own will but as the result of his or her own decision.

Game masters and the players of PCs have varying reasons for getting involved in fantasy role-playing. There are a lot of groups that devote themselves to getting into battles with evil characters or monsters, slicing them up and then taking off with the foes' treasure. Such groups have relatively little interest in local history, current political interests or the setting itself. They live for encounters. This often is called *hack-and-slash* gaming.

Others play because they like working out strategies. Why they're fighting an enemy or what else there is to do in the area where they are is of little interest. Once an opponent has been identified, the important thing to such groups is to work out and implement strategies to bring that foe to a fall. This often is called *strategic* gaming.

Still another group views an RPG adventure something like the story of a fantasy novel or the screenplay of a movie. The important thing is to live out the story of the adventure being played, even it means burying several dead PCs before the last chapter ends. This sometimes is called *story line* gaming.

Finally, there are those who climb into their alter egos and live out the roles of their characters. They want the adventure world in which they're playing to be filled with virtual reality, and in the role they're playing, they expect to learn whatever they wish about the virtual reality that's directly before their character's eyes. They expect roads to have forks in them, and they expect to be able to choose for themselves which fork of the road their characters will follow. This generally is called *role playing* gaming.

Most RPG campaigns end up being a mix of these four elements and more, but they usually concentrate upon one of these elements. There is no one of these approaches that is better than another. People play RPGs for their own enjoyment, and different folks enjoy different things. A hack-and-slasher usually has just as much fun as a role player, and vice versa.

On the other hand, many RPGs try to be all things to all people. Many rules systems hope to serve hack-and-slashers just as well as strategists and storyliners just as well as roleplayers. They seldom succeed. Things that work well for one group often work poorly for another. Compromises have to be made, and house rules (There's that word again.) usually have to be drawn up and implemented to make such rules work well.

*Dungeons Daring* is not a system designed for all gaming types. *Dungeons Daring* is targeted specifically for the roleplaying variant. Of the four groups mentioned above, hack-and-slash campaigns probably will be least satisfied with *Dungeons Daring*. For the sake of roleplaying credibility, the system intentionally eliminates the so-called *min-max* elements of an RPG that allow hack-and-slashers to build the power-packed mini-Supermen that are important to their gaming style.

Let's take a look now at the matter of house rules, or to be more specific, what they are and why they are. They're nothing more or less than modified or extended rules that you develop yourself for your own campaign. House rules are almost inevitable when you use a one-for-all game system, but they usually shouldn't be avoided completely when you use a targeted game like *Dungeons Daring* either.

*Dungeons Daring* is based on a vision of a world in which magic and the people who adventure there evolved. Parts of this vision doubtless will not match the goals of some campaigns, and that's a good place for house rules to be created and put into practice.

Before we continue, let's take a step backward and remember that *Dungeons Daring* basically is a system of guidelines for a game and not a campaign world or setting. That notwithstanding, in creating an RPG, one must have a certain idea of the kind of environment for which these guidelines must apply. As a result, the authors gradually put together a not completely defined vision of the kind of world their guidelines should produce. The full realization of this vision is in the *Jörðgarð World* campaign setting that is being produced together with the *Dungeons Daring* game guidelines.

The concepts behind the design of *Dungeons Daring* have their roots in the old Norse mythology of the Icelandic Eddas, developed further through the elements of traditional fantasy literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such literature depicts elves as a mysterious and isolated folk living in its own dimension, often unable to withstand iron and sometimes unable to tolerate the sun as well. Dwarves are the black elves who went into the depths, to the roots of the world. In most of the old literature, dwarves are a dour and evil folk.

We envision a fantasy RPG world born under an ancient sun that represents the power of Light and life, a starless night sky that represents the power of Darkness and entropy and a moon in the dark sky that reflects the Light of the sun into the Darkness of the night, representing the neutrality of balance.

Into the primeval ooze of this young world came a primal creator race that formed a crude world out of the ooze. Little is known of this race, but at least two of its members are believed to remain in the world today, the Earth Mother and Hela, who reigns over Deep Hell, where the souls of mortals go to meet their fate after death.

After the creator race came the elves, Children of the Light, born of the sun rather than the Darkness. Millions of years ago already, these Light Elves (*ljósálfar* in old Icelandic) fashioned the life forms and beauties of the world. However, some of these eventually were mutated and malformed by powers of the Darkness.

Even the elven folk became divided. Some elves were drawn away from the sun into the bowels of the world, where they became fascinated by the metal ores and jewels of the depths. Eventually, they evolved into Black Elves (*Svartálfar* in old Icelandic) and became known as dwarves (*Dvergar* in old Icelandic). Other elves turned from the Light to the Darkness and evil. They became known as the Dark Elves (*Dökkálfar* in old Icelandic).

As Children of the Light, the Light Elves were destined to ascend to the heavens as stars when their work upon our world was done. In the time frame envisioned for *Dungeons Daring*, many elves already have ascended, and the once black night sky is filled with the twinkling stars of elven spirits.

Other elves also turned from this destiny but not to the Darkness or evil. Some of the early elves learned to love the trees of their own creation more than the heavens, and they chose to remain in the world, at first evolving into the bark-skinned tree herder elves. When some of these tree herder elves grew old and tired, they evolved further into sentient elven trees, mighty creatures that can spend ages sleeping but that can be terrible when awakened.

These elven variants had not been a part of the Earth Mother's great plan. That led to the world's first great conflicts. After the elves, came the second born, the giants. The depths of the world, the fields of ore and the work of the smith were to have been the giants' legacy, but it already had been usurped in part by the black elves, who never were meant to be. As a result, it came to strife during these times between the dwarves and the giants. For the first time, the world knew war.

With the coming of the giants, the Earth Mother withdrew the reproductive seed from the elves, and this affected all variants of the firstborn race. Thus, more than a million of years now have passed since the last elven birth took place. The elven race is, to a certain degree, immortal. Elves can be slain, but they die no natural deaths. Their destiny is to remain until they ascend into the heavens to take their place among the stars.

However, that way has been closed to those who have veered from the path of the Light. Dark elves live on until they are slain. At that point, their lightless spirits descend into Deep Hell, where Hela obliterates them and sends their life energy back into the great pool of life, whence the souls of newborn humans come. In assuming their sylvan forms, tree herders and elven trees became mortal albeit long lived. When their lives end, their spirits simply merge into that of the world's forests, enlarging it.

The black elves or dwarves usurped the legacy of the giants. Thus, the Earth Mother deemed it fit that the spirits of slain dwarves should share the fate she had reserved for the mortal second born, the giants. Like the elves from whom they evolved, dwarves die no natural deaths, but they can be slain. The spirit of a dead dwarf, like that of a dead giant, merges into the greater sprits of the world's own bedrock.

When one considers that in this vision all elves and dwarves who still are alive were born more than a million years ago, it may become understandable why elves and dwarves are not listed among the PC races in the *Players Guide*. However, it's also clear that this game world vision is not necessarily the vision of every game master who may choose to use the *Dungeons Daring* guidelines.

In most gaming groups that we've seen since *Dungeons & Dragons®* appeared on the market in 1974, we've observed that PCs who play the part of elves or dwarves usually recreate little more than humans with pointed ears or short humans with beards and axes.

Nonetheless, the dream of many players is to recreate Legolas or Gimle from *Lord of the Rings*. It's not our intention, of course, to forbid that. In fact, this is an excellent point to bring in some house rules. If your campaign wants or needs either of these races as PC races, you simply can make your own racial definitions and add them to the rules for your campaign.

In the case of elves and dwarves, that isn't necessary. We know that many campaigns want elves and dwarves to be available as PC races, and we do offer alternative rule suggestions that you can use in your campaign, if you wish. The difference between *Dungeons Daring* and many other RPGs is, that the elven and dwarven definitions are in your book, the *Game Masters Guide*, and not in the *Players Guide*. That gives you the chance to decide yourself whether you wish to offer your players these races.

Another example that we could use is the *gnome*. There are no *official* gnomes in *Dungeons Daring*. But that doesn't mean that you can't add them with house rules. Let's take a look at how that can be done:

- Humans make up the base race in *Dungeons Daring*, the race against which others are measured.
- You then need to ponder what characteristics gnomes will have in your campaign. In what respects are they different from humans? Until you've answered this question, you're not ready to define your version of the gnome.

For our example, let's assume that we see gnomes in the following light:

- Gnomes are small.
- They live a bit longer than humans, with a life expectancy of 100 to 120 years.



- Because they're small, they're a bit harder to hit in battle (base Reflex defense 11 instead of 10). They're less tough than a human (base Armor defense 9 instead of 10). They're also a bit less consequent than humans (Will defense 9 instead of 10). For the same reason, gnomes have ability bonuses and penalties: -1 Strength, -1 Stamina, +2 Dexterity, Maximum Strength 19, Maximum Stamina 19, Maximum Dexterity 22.
- Because of their underground habitat, we also give gnomes the racial ability *See in the Dark*.
- Gnomes can mate only with other gnomes.

We begin with the data for humans in the *Players Guide*:

### Gaming Data:

**Size:** Medium

**Life expectancy:** Usually 80-100 years

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Alignment inclination:** none

**Resistances:** None

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10, Endurance 10, Reflex 10, Will 10

**Attacks:** Fists, Weapons, Spells

**Skills:** no racial bonuses or penalties

**Special racial abilities:** All humans are born with the Talent *Religion*. Most humans believe in and worship one or more deities.

**Mating:** Humans can mate with other humans, elves, half-elves and halflings

And then we make the changes that we've decided upon::

### Gaming Data:

**Size:** Small

**Life expectancy:** Usually 100-120 years

**Speed:** 30/9m per round

**Alignment inclination:** none

**Resistances:** None

**Base Defenses:** Armor 9, Endurance 11, Reflex 11, Will 9

**Attacks:** Fists, Weapons, Spells

**Racial bonuses and penalties:** -1 Strength, -1 Stamina, +2 Dexterity, Maximum Strength 19, Maximum Stamina 19, Maximum Dexterity 22.

**Special racial abilities:** See in the dark

**Other racial bonuses and penalties:** none

**Mating:** Gnomes mate only with other gnomes.

With that, we have a good start toward making a new PC race for gnomes. There still are some things you need to do:

- Write up a racial description for gnomes, similar to those in the *Players Guide* for humans, halflings and half-elves. What you write in that description is up to you. After all, the gnome is *your* invention in *your* house rules.
- Write a definition of the special racial ability *see in the dark*. It should tell how well a gnome sees in the dark, how far he or she can see and whether or not there are hindrances to the gnome's ability to see in the dark.

Once you've completed that, your campaign has a new PC race for gnomes, and you can offer it as an option to your players.

That's one example of a house rule. As your campaign continues, you doubtless will start implementing a number of house rules to deal with things that the *Dungeons Daring* books handle in a manner that doesn't work out well in your campaign.

One thing of which you should beware, however, is the tendency of new game masters to create house rules with inflationary effects. A new game master who is running a campaign with first or second level players may tend to think that his or her PCs are too weak. To cure that problem, he or she may make a new house rule to beef the PCs up a bit.

Here are some common approaches:

1. The game master decides to raise the die used for determining injury points from, for example 1d6 to 1d8.
2. The game master gives the 1<sup>st</sup> level PC a magic weapon with a bonus of +2.
3. The game master gives everybody a bonus talent.
4. The game master gives everybody a two-injury-point-bonus at levels 1 and 2.

The only one of these solutions that has a negligible inflationary effect is the last, No. 4. Throughout his or her career, the PC always will have those two extra injury points, but by level 5 or 6 already, the effect is minimal.

The worst option is the first, No. 1. The bonus grows with every new level the PCs get, making overpowered characters of them. When these PCs reach level 10, they already have 10 injury points more than other average characters of their level. This is unhealthy for a campaign.

The second and third options aren't as bad as the first, but they're still too inflationary. A PC with a +2 weapon at Level 1 continues to have a two-point better chance than the average creature of his or her level, and when he or she does hit, the weapon always causes two extra points of damage.

Items with a permanent magical bonus should be earned through experience and achievement, not merely given away by a game master who wants to beef up his or her PCs a bit. If you want to achieve the same goal as with the +2 weapon but limit it to the early part of a PC's career, give him or her a magical talisman with 50 or 100 charges. As long as there are charges remaining, he or she gets a +2 bonus in combat, but once the 50 or 100 charges are used, the talisman's magic is gone and so is the bonus.

Non-permanent magic always is the best kind for a game master to make available until he or she has a good sense for the intervals and circumstances that work well for passing out permanent magical items.

In example No. 3 above, the bonus talent gives everyone a bonus talent. Each talent includes a number of skills, and the ability to use each skill usually grows throughout the PC's career. The bonus you intended to give at 1<sup>st</sup> level ends up being given again and again with each new level, as the PC begins adding bonus talent points to a talent that he or she really shouldn't have in the first place.

The temptation for a game master to give out such points can be quite strong. Nonetheless, you should try to resist it. When your PCs are overpowered, one of two things tends to occur:

- The PCs have too easy a time handling the opponents they encounter.
- You end up inflating the abilities of the PCs' foes to return balance between the two sides.

Both of these situations tend to make your campaign less fun for you and your players.

Finally, you need to remember that the three basic *Dungeons Daring* books contain guidelines, not rules. These guidelines play roles on two different stages:

- The guidelines should be implemented as rules or augmented through house rules when it comes to adjudicating what your PCs initiate and do and whether they succeed at it. Your adventure usually will succeed only if your PCs have a clear, understandable and reliable path to follow.

- In determining the doings of the NPCs in your world, you also should implement these guidelines or your own house rules as rules, when elements of your adventure demand no alternative of a higher priority. If, however, certain events are of critical importance in your adventure, you simply need to make them happen rather than leaving these issues up to a rule or a guideline and then a dice roll.

Once you understand that what generally are considered to be rules really only are a set of guidelines, it becomes easy to give yourself a free hand in doing those things that your adventure requires. It also is important to understand that you usually *shouldn't* explain things to your players.

At the end of a gaming session, when you're yourself and your players are themselves again, they often will ask questions like:

*What spell was that, that Murgatroyd hit me with?*

or

*What rule did you use to conjure that magical cheese sandwich?*

or

*How could I possibly have missed old Elmo with such a good roll?*

The real answers might be:

*Pie in the Face, a spell I just invented on the spot for Murgatroyd.*

and

*I didn't use a rule. I gave Addabas a spell I invented on the spot called Conjure Cheese Sandwich.*

and

*Because that was an illusion of Elmo, idiot! He wasn't really there!*

By no means should you give your players such answers or any others to these questions. Such answers give them knowledge that's none of their business. Even worse, these answers give their PCs knowledge they couldn't possibly have.

If your players really want to go after these answers, then tell them to have their PCs do it in game time with role-playing. If a PC wants to know how an NPC did something, he or she, as a role-playing character, should investigate the matter and try to discover the answer. In the process, he or she might or might not learn that:

- Murgatroyd knows a spell named *Pie in the Face*. If the PC can develop spells and wants to do so, give him or her an opportunity to do that.
- Addabas knows a spell named *Conjure Cheese Sandwich*. If the PC can develop spells and wants to do so, give him or her an opportunity to do that.
- Elmo is known for hiding and then using a spell to create an illusionary double and a *Throw Your Voice* spell to deal with strangers without having to risk being attacked by them

However, behind these answers lies another key to performing well as a game master. In dealing with your NPCs, you aren't always bound to operate by the guidelines. Instead, you sometimes need to put different things on the two sides of your game master's scales and then make sure that they're in balance.

On the one side, you place whatever event or result is necessary to make your adventure stay on its track and succeed, hoping the PCs will follow your lead. On the other side of the scales is the question, *Is this fair to the PCs*. If your scale is out of balance, you need to change what you're planning until that balance has been achieved.



With that in mind, however, you should design some NPC events first and foremost as parts of the story of your adventure rather than things that have to depend upon a rules system and dice rolls. An example:

- One of the key evil foes of your PCs is a Wizard with a powerful staff. Your PCs will meet this Wizard head on at a later point. As a part of your campaign plot, it would behoove your PCs to get a hold of this staff temporarily, just long enough to learn what its powers are, so that they can counter them.
- A PC who is a Skáld discovers the whereabouts of the evil Wizard's former apprentice. From him, the Skáld learns that the apprentice has overheard the Wizard speaking the command word for this powerful staff, and he tells the Skáld what it is. He also reminds the Skáld that with the command word, another mage, might succeed in dominating the opposing wizard's staff.
- In the middle of the night, when the enemy Wizard is asleep, the PC Thief breaks into the Wizard's tower and steals the staff. You determine that he succeeds, regardless whether his checks succeed. You ignore the checks and simply rule that he has succeeded. The Thief brings the staff to the PC Wizard, who attempts to work the *Dominant Staff* spell upon it. The PC Wizard makes his check and you roll a check for the enemy Wizard, but you completely ignore the results. You simply tell the PC Wizard that he has succeeded.
- The PC Wizard then succeeds again in determining what magic has been ensorcelled into the staff. The party now can prepare its encounter with the Wizard better. It's time for the staff to return to its owner.
- The PC Wizard detects that the enemy Wizard is working a *Call Staff* spell. The PC Wizard makes his check and you roll the enemy Wizard's check but you again ignore the results and tell the PC that he's lost control. In the next round, the staff vanishes. The PC Wizard knows happened. The enemy Wizard worked a *Call Staff* spell and now has his staff back.

Is this fudging the guidelines or possibly even cheating? Not in the *Dungeons Daring* system. In this game such operations on the game master's part not only are legal but are exactly right. The reason for that is that the things that took part in this sequence always are fair to the PCs:

- First of all, *you* made the apprentice available to the PCs. *You* saw to it that he had information that the PCs could use, and *you* saw to it that he gave the PC Skáld the command word for the staff. Without the command word, nothing more would have occurred. These events were elements of your plot line, not events that the PCs put in action.
- Your plot line calls for the PCs to succeed in gaining the staff and learning its properties, therefore, there's nothing wrong with you making ignored checks to give the staff to them and to make it possible for them to learn its properties.
- At no point, are the PCs forced to do anything. All their actions are of their own free will. They could have decided at anytime not to take advantage of the knowledge they had and to make no attempt to gain the staff.
- The PCs in no way *earned* the staff. It was given to them by the plot. What the plot giveth, the plot make take away. The PCs did nothing to earn a dice decision on the *Call Staff* spell.

This system is perfectly legitimate, as long as you use it correctly, but it is legitimate only as long as you use it as a fair tool. It is neither legitimate nor fair to prevent things that your PCs initiate on their own, simply to keep them on your plot line. If they veer from your plot and you want them back on your track, fudged dice rolls to force them there are wrong and unfair. You need to place things in the adventure that lure them back into the plot line rather than hammering them there.

The players will see quickly that you're forcing them into actions that you want them to take. Most players will resent that, diminishing the value of your game and your campaign. It will be difficult and take some time to rebuild the confidence you wasted by being unfair. Let's continue now with the example above:

- After the enemy Wizard has succeeded in regaining his staff, your PC Wizard decides he's not going to put up with that. He intends to take it back. He waits two fortnights, long enough for the enemy Wizard to have lowered his guard.

- The PC Thief returns to the tower in the middle of another night. This time, you make honest checks on both sides for any traps or alarms that are along the way. If the Thief succeeds, he succeeds, fair and square. You have no business manipulating the game to foil the PCs in their own pursuits. This is not a part of your plot action. It's a PC initiative. If the PC Thief fails, he'll have to face the music, whatever that means in this case.
- Assuming that the Thief succeeds, the PC Wizard then is entitled to try to dominate the staff again. This time, all the checks are honest. If the PC Wizard succeeds, he succeeds fair and square. If he fails, the enemy Wizard can recall his staff. There's no place here for game master manipulations. These are PC initiatives, and they must be tested fairly. That's what the game's about, the PC's vs. the opposing NPCs. When the PCs decide on a course of action, you have no business manipulating the action to prevent their success ... or to assure it, for that matter.



***It takes a daring thief to break into the castle of an evil mage.***

# I. *Dungeons Daring*™ Character Creation

## 1. Character Creation and the Game Master

To create a successful role-playing character, a player needs more than the simple statistics on a character sheet. Before your player begins recording statistics in his or her PC's character sheet, you and he or she should have a precise understanding of exactly who the PC is. Both of you should know *at least* all of the following information:

- \* Where is the PC's home?
- \* In what other areas of the gaming world has he or she been?
- What is his or her family history?
- From whom did the PC gain his or her training?
- What conflicts have there been in the PC's past life?
- What is the PC's motivation for going on adventures?

\* For these two questions, you should provide the player with detailed information, maps, etc. of these locations. If a PC has been somewhere to where the PCs are going, he or she is a prime information source for the rest of the group. The PC can play that role only if his or her player has the necessary information.

In a *Dungeons Daring* campaign, the standards are somewhat like those of an actor in a play. A player can play his or her role well *only* if he or she is thoroughly familiar with the person of the character whom he or she is recreating.

## 2. The Character Sheet

After a PC's person has been defined, the rest of character creation involves the character sheet. That's a piece of paper with all the statistical data that a player needs to run his or her character correctly. In this section in the *Players Guide*, we created a sample character, a 1<sup>st</sup> level Wizard named Lurga.

In case you wonder why a character sheet is important, let's look at an example involving Lurga. Lurga has the talent *Arcane Magic*, and it, in turn, gives him the skill *Arcane Knowledge*. Let us assume that in the course of an adventure, Lurga's group comes across some writings about a magical mystery that offers a clue to whatever the group is seeking.

No one else in the group has any understanding for such things. Lurga is the only Wizard in the group. In his study of magic, Lurga gained knowledge of some of the magical mysteries, and he thinks that this is one of them. He applies his skill to see what he can fathom out of the writings that his companions have found.

To make a skill check, you have to set the Difficulty Level (DL) for the task at hand, and Lurga's player needs to roll the die for the check. In our example, let's say that you have assigned DL 20 to this task. To check, Lurga must to roll 1d20 and add whatever bonus he has to his roll.

Most PCs will learn quickly what bonuses they have for their weapons, and most spellcasters will learn the details for the magic that they use frequently, but few PCs know what all of their check scores are. The character sheet gives them the ability to quickly look up what they need to know. With that, let's return to Lurga. He picks up a d20 die and rolls 12. Now he looks at his character sheet to see what his check for Arcane Knowledge is. (*Continued on Page 21.*)

Name:		Player:	
Lurga		John Doe	
<b>Skills</b>			
Skill	Prerequisites?	Check	
Appraise (Applied Knowledge)	No	-	
Appraise (Perception)	No	-	
Arcane Knowledge (App. Knowledge)	Yes	1d20+11	
Arcane Knowledge (Arcane Magic)	Yes	1d20+11	
Armor Proficiency (Melee Combat)	No	-	

CharacterSheet.xlsx - Microsoft Excel

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**Dungeons Daring™**

**Character Sheet**

Name: Player: Character Level:

Race: Life Points: Inj. Points: Spell Points:

Armor: Endurance: Reflex: Will:

Defenses:

Ability	Score	Modifier
Strength		0
Dexterity		0
Stamina		0
Magical Aptitude		0
Mechanical Aptitude		0
Knowledge		0

Injury Threshold:	Spell Point Loss:	Penalty:
Injured: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-1
Serious: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-2
Critical: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-3
Mortal Danger: 0 IP	Reduced by 0	-4

Base Weapon Attack Bonus: Initiative: Initiative Bonus: Basic Spell Attack Bonus:

Melee Weapon	Bonus	Base Damage	Attack Score	Damage
			0	0
			0	0
			0	0
			0	0

Modified Spell Attack:

Normal/Other	
Close Range	
Medium Range	
Long Range	

Character Talents & Skills Magic & Equipment Background Tables Open Game Licen

Character Sheet File CharacterSheet.xlsx in Excel 2007 with Windows Vista

Product Identity

Microsoft Excel - CharacterSheet.xls

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**Dungeons Daring™**

**Character Sheet**

Name: Player: Character Level:

Race: Life Points: Inj. Points: Spell Points:

Armor: Endurance: Reflex: Will:

Defenses:

Ability	Score	Modifier
Strength		0
Dexterity		0
Stamina		0
Magical Aptitude		0
Mechanical Aptitude		0
Knowledge		0

Injury Threshold:	Spell Point Loss:	Penalty:
Injured: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-1
Serious: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-2
Critical: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-3
Mortal Danger: 0 IP	Reduced by 0	-4

Base Weapon Attack Bonus: Initiative: Initiative Bonus: Basic Spell Attack Bonus:

Melee Weapon	Bonus	Base Damage	Attack Score	Damage
			0	0
			0	0
			0	0
			0	0

Modified Spell Attack:

Normal/Other	
Close Range	
Medium Range	
Long Range	

Classes:

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Character Sheet File CharacterSheet.xls in Excel 2003 with Windows XP

Product Identity



CharacterSheet.ods - OpenOffice.org Calc

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**Dungeons & Daring™**

**Character Sheet**

**Name:** **Player:** **Character Level:**

**Race:** **Life Points:** **Inj. Points:** **Spell Points:**

**Armor:** **Endurance:** **Reflex:** **Will:**

**Defenses:**

Ability	Score	Modifier
Strength		0
Dexterity		0
Stamina		0
Magical Aptitude		0
Mechanical Aptitude		0
Knowledge		0

Melee Weapon	Bonus	Base Damage	Attack Score	Damage
			0	0
			0	0
			0	0
			0	0

Range Weapon	Bonus	Range	Attack Score	Damage
			0	

Injury Threshold:	Spell Point Loss:	Penalty:
Injured: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-1
Serious: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-2
Critical: 1 IP	Reduced by 0	-3
Mortal Danger: 0 IP	Reduced by 0	-4

Basic Spell Attack Bonus:

**Modified Spell Attack:**

Normal/Other	
Close Range	
Medium Range	
Long Range	

**Classes:**

Character Talents & Skills Magic & Equipment Background Tables Open Game License

Sheet 1 / 5 PageStyle\_Character 80% STD Sum=0

Product Identity

**Character Sheet File** CharacterSheet.ods in OpenOffice.org Calc 3.0 with Windows XP, classic view

The character sheet (s. Page 19) lists his check as  $1d20+11$ . Lurga rolled a 12. That plus 11 equals 23, higher than the DL of 20. That means he made the check and can solve the riddle of the papers found by his companions.

The *Players Guide* contains a paper character sheet that you can print and that your players can fill out with pencil or pen, but we'd strongly urge you to use one of the electronic character sheets in your *Dungeons Daring* package instead. The electronic versions calculate all of the bonuses, checks, etc. They make it quick and breeze to accurately maintain the data for each of your PCs.

No expenses need be involved in using these electronic character sheets. Originals are included in the *Dungeons Daring* Player Characters tools package in formats for the programs *OpenOffice.org Calc 3.0*, *Microsoft® Excel 2000 to 2003* and *Excel 2007*. *Excel* is a commercial program. One must buy a license for it. However, *OpenOffice.org* is a freeware program that you and your players can download at no cost from:

<http://www.openoffice.org> .

The complete instructions for using the electronic data sheet are in the *Players Guide*.

The downloads include standard spreadsheet (.ods, .xls, .xlsx) and template (.odt, .xlt, .xltx) versions of the electronic character sheet. You're best off if you copy the appropriate template version into your template folder. This gives you the ability to open a new, empty character sheet anytime you need one.

### 3. Equipping Your PCs

Usually, when a PC goes off on an adventure, he or she needs money, weapons and perhaps some armor and equipment. When a new PC enters a campaign, it's up to you to determine what money and possessions the new PC has. There are no guidelines that can govern the many situations that can arise in equipping new PCs.

Let's assume for a minute that you start your campaign off with an adventure you've purchased from a commercial RPG publisher. The adventure begins with a group of PCs who all are sons and daughters of wealthy royalty and nobility. Their parents are testing their mettle by sending them off on a noble quest. Such a PC group might be equipped by their rich parents in an admirable fashion. These PCs could be carrying items that normally might be found only in a party of adventurers of Level 5 and higher.

Of course, you also might buy an adventure that starts out with a band of destitute PCs who have no money or equipment at all. All they have is a treasure map that they've found. If there is a treasure at the location the map shows, the PCs at last will be able to buy weapons, armor and the other equipment they need. Until then, they'll have to deal with foes without the help of weapons.

These examples are extremes. The startup status of most groups will be somewhere between them. The important point is, that only *you* as game master know what the status of the PCs is in *your* adventure. Only *you* can decide what level and wealth and equipment the startup PCs in *your* adventure are likely to have.

Even then, many variations on this theme are open to you. Let's look again at the second example we cited above. Let's assume you've purchased the adventure for destitute PCs that we described, but you doubt that your PCs will be able to gain the treasure with their bare hands. At this point, that's *your* business and no longer the business of the adventure's authors. They're not with you to help you make the adventure run well in *your* campaign.

In that case, you can ignore some of their advice on the equipping of the party. You can have your PCs remain just as destitute as the purchased adventure suggests, but give each of them a family heirloom. The Warrior in the party has a beautiful sword inherited from a grandfather who also was an adventurer. It might even have a +1 or +2 magic bonus, although you're the only one who knows that at present.

It's easy for you to deal with a magic weapon when its bearer doesn't know that it's magical. Encounters run as usual. The Warrior rolls 1d8 and reports a result of 10. You know that he or she needs 11 to hit. You secretly add the +1 bonus to the 10 rolled, get 11 and tell the PC that he or she has hit. The PC then rolls 1d8 for damage and gets a 5. You secretly add the +1 bonus and reduce the opponent's injury points by 6. The PC assumes that he or she caused only 5 points damage, but you know otherwise.

The Thief in your party has inherited a set of thieves' tools that once belonged to his or her thief father, a poor soul who died locked in a dungeon after being caught in the act. The PC doesn't know it, but the key in the toolbox is a magical skeleton key. It opens any lock if its user rolls more than a natural 1 on his or her check.

The Wizard in the group has learned a few spells and also has a spellbook and wand inherited from a deceased uncle who also was a wizard. The wand was ensorcelled with a special property: It automatically attunes itself to any member of the uncle's family who tries to use it.

With these changes, your PCs still are as destitute as the original adventure suggested, but they are a truly powerful lot for a 1<sup>st</sup> Level adventuring band. All these issues are in *your* hands. It's *your* adventure and *your* campaign.

There are quite a number of methods used by game masters to allot money and/or equipment to startup PCs. Here are the most frequent:

- You might determine that each PC has a certain amount of money to spend. It's up to the player in the person of the PC to decide what he or she wants to buy.
- Some game masters decide for their PCs what they do and don't have. This isn't the friendliest method from a PC's point of view, but it's within the game master's rights. Sometimes, as in the example above involving the destitute PC party, it's a good option.

- Other game masters tell the player to put together a list of desired possessions for the PC, and the player and game master together then decide which of those things the PC actually will have.

Once that issue's settled, you need to tell your players what is or isn't available at the time and location where his or her campaign is taking place. You should assume that there's almost nowhere in your campaign world where a PC can go into a store and buy full plate armor ensorcelled to a +5 bonus off the shelf.

A PC shouldn't be able to choose everything and anything in the property and possessions lists of the *Players Guide*. There are some things in those lists that should be almost impossible to obtain anywhere. Objects made of dwarven middle silver make excellent examples. There is a 99.99% chance that your PCs never will find anything made of middle silver for sale anywhere. It's rare. Dwarves don't sell their items of middle silver to others. If your PCs come into something made of middle silver, it was booty at one time, no doubt taken from a dead dwarf.

## **Bulk and Weight**

Players have an incredible tendency to load their PCs and pack animals up with far more gear than either possibly could carry. In Section *1.8.1 Taking it with You* of the *Players Guide*, you'll find clear cut guidelines and tables that determine exactly what and how much players and pack animals can bear. There also are tables with penalties for overloaded PCs and pack animals.

These restrictions are vital to the credibility of your roleplaying adventure. Anytime you let your PCs do the impossible, the believability of your adventure will suffer. You should enforce bulk and weight restrictions strictly.



***Sunrise over a world with adventures waiting***



## 4. The Races

In most *Dungeons Daring* adventures, the characters whose roles are being played usually are humans or halflings, a subset of the human race. In some cases, a player also might have a character who is a half-elf, although these are encountered less frequently. These three races are official PC races defined in the *Players Guide*.

If you haven't offered your players any other options, they need to choose between the three base races in *Dungeons Daring*:

- **Humans** by and large are just like people in our own real world. They define the average for PCs in all respects.
- **Halflings** are a mutated subset of the human race. They usually range in height between 3 and 4 feet, in other words, 91 to 122 cm. In comparison to humans, halflings tend on the average to make somewhat poorer targets for attackers, but they also tend to have a bit less strength than humans. Most halflings tend to be noticeably weaker than humans but that's often offset by their greater agility. Halflings are good at hiding, escaping from activity and being stealthy. Because of their size, they make smaller targets than humans.

The small folk came into being in lands bordering upon elven domains. Light elves believe that the humans there who rather suddenly became halflings were reduced in size through a fluke contact between magic and mechanical power. That may be. Neither the elves nor any other magi have found a way to reverse the effect, and few halflings would want it reversed now. They tend to be quite content with their lot.

There are some so-called renegade halflings who live in human settlements, but most who live outside of the halfling homelands dwell in halfling communities not far but a bit removed from human settlements. Although they tend to live among their own, halflings are ready and willing to form trade relations and in some case even personal relationships with humans. However, most halflings are slightly reserved in their dealings with the larger folk, believing that the human race is not quite able to focus itself upon the truly important things in life, at least as halflings see them.

- **Half-elves** share many of the characteristics of humans, but the force of the Light is stronger in half-elves than in humans. Half-elves live longer than humans. They have a mix of elven and human characteristics. The first class level of a half-elf *always* is as a Sorcerer. This is a natural characteristic of a half-elf. On the average, half-elves tend to be a bit weaker than humans and they also have a much poorer aptitude for mechanics than humans. On the other hand, they're a bit more agile than humans and have a better capacity for learning magic.

Half-elves came into being when light elves discovered that humans and elves could mate. That was at a time after the dwarves had introduced elfbane iron into the world. They also discovered that natural mating between elves and humans produced normal humans as offspring. This also will be the case in the unlikely event that an elf and a human simply meet and mate. The offspring always will be purely human.

The hybrid half-elf race resulted from strong magical influences that the light elves exerted during the original mating between humans and elves in ancient days. Only the true blood descendants of the originally born half-elves can give birth to true half-elves. Half-elves also are immune to the effects of iron.

The human genes of half-elves are stronger than their elven genes. Half-elves are longer-lived than humans, but they are mortal. Like humans, they have souls rather than elven spirits. When a half-elf dies, it does not ascend to become a star in the heavens, as elves do, but rather goes to Hela in Deep Hell for judgment, just as humans and halflings do.

Half-elves seldom are found outside of their own societies. Those who are elsewhere usually have explanations for their journey into *foreign* lands. However, most half-elves would balk at the idea of leaving their homeland. Those who have done so usually have had some tragic or perhaps evil motivation for leaving departing.

## 4.1 Light Elves

### The Official *Dungeons Daring* Version

The elven race, as explained earlier, is an ancient folk. No new elf has been born for more than a million years. For this reason and because ever more claim their true place as stars in the heavens, the race continually diminishes in number.

For long ages, elves had their domains among those of giants and humans. That ended shortly after dwarves discovered iron and began making it available to humans. Iron is deadly to elves; they cannot withstand it. In that age, the great light elven Magi used their powers to create their own dimension – the *Middle Dimension* – between the dimensions of life and death. Those that are found in the gaming world continue to live in their own domains in this dimension to this date.

Light elves do know how to cross the borders of the dimensions and enter the Dimension of Life where humans dwell, and it is believed that they do so at times. Few if any humans know how they cross the dimensional border. The secret is, that many ages ago, the elves detected the ley lines of power where the magical energy of the world is most concentrated. Along these ley lines, the built ley stones that further magnify that power.

Light elven Magi know how to use this concentrated power to open the bridge across the dimensions. To what purpose they do so in your campaign is your decision as game master. However, in human lands, there are rumors at times that light elves have crossed the borders to steal human children and bring them into elven kingdom. Other human rumors have it that light elves at time cross the borders to seduce members of the opposite sex and bring them into the misty realm of the Middle Dimension.

Herbal Witches in some remote areas claim that these tales are false, that light elves never cross the borders. Rather, they say, these are dark elves disguised as light elves, who steal children and seduce would-be lovers to use their victims for their own evil purposes?

What's the truth? You're the only one who knows. It's your campaign. As game master, that's for you to determine.

Light elves are quite a bit different than most beings. After all, they're all more than a million years old. There are no elves with a Character Level other than 30. Light elves are ready to defend themselves, if necessary, although that's seldom the case since they slipped into the Middle Dimension. The main weapons of the light elves are blocking magic and their Warriors.

As is the case with humans, Level 30 represents the physical limits for a light elf. At Level 30, his or her physical system has reached a point of maximum achievement. That notwithstanding, the average Level 30 light elven Warrior is a bit weaker than the average Level 30 human Warrior. On the whole, light elves never quite reach the strength of the most fit humans. On the other hand, no human ever has reached the levels of magical achievement attained by the high elven magi.

Magic is a power of the Light, and elves are children of the Light. Magic is an inherent part of each light elf. Magic is so strong within the light elves that all were born with the 1<sup>st</sup> level as a Sorcerer, although not all light elves chose to develop their magical talents.

Because magic is an integral part of them, light elves have a respect for it and a relationship to it that is far different from that of other races, even half-elves. Light elves abhor the misuse of magic as they see it. Misuse from the light elven perspective includes any implementation of magic that causes death, harm or injury and also any magic that is destructive.

Much of light elven magic is constructive. It was used to transmute the primitive life forms of the primal era into the more advanced forms that followed including the life forms of the modern world. When elves use magic against their foes or creatures of nature (and often of their own making) that might threaten them, their spells tend to create protective barriers, convert things that are harmful into things that are harmless or transport dangers far away from them. Their making of their refuge in the Middle Dimension is a prime example.

The main character classes of the light elves are Healers and Scholars of the Aristocratic and Burgher Class, Skáld of the Bardic Class, Warrior of the Fighter Class, Wizard and Sorcerer of the Magi class, Ranger of the Naturalist Class and the White, Blue and Green Druids.

Elven spellcasters, even Healers, have entirely different magical abilities than human spellcasters due to their long ages of experience. Elven magi have learned to completely control the magical arts in which they specialize. They use absolute magic, commanding its energy to do whatever they wish it to do. If the task requires more magical power than they command personally, they call upon the magical powers in communion, with two or more magi working together. As a result, their ability to produce any desired magical result is almost unlimited.

The true limits of light elven magic are in the elves' refusal to use black necromancy or other magic aligned with the Darkness as well as spells that produce harm or damage.

## Gaming Data:

The values here are base Level 1 values. You still need to increment them for the current Character Level.

**Size:** Medium

**Life expectancy:** Immortal

**Speed:** 40/12m per round

**Alignment inclination:** No evil

**Resistances:** 3% Immunity to Magic/per Character Level

**Base Defenses:** Armor 8, Endurance 8, Reflex 12, Will 12

**Attacks:** Fists, Weapons

**Special racial abilities:** Absolute Magic, Starvision, Elvensight, Alternate Form

**Other racial bonuses and penalties:** Character Level 30, -2 Strength, -1 Stamina, +2 Dexterity, +7 Magical Aptitude, -6 Mechanical Aptitude. Maximum strength 18, Maximum Stamina 19, Maximum Dexterity 22, Maximum Magical Aptitude 25, Maximum Mechanical Aptitude 14.

**Mating:** Elves can mate with humans, half-elves and halflings

**Absolute Magic:** Light elves use no spells. They call upon magic to perform what they wish it to do within the limits of their power.

**Starvision:** Under moonshine and starlight elves can see just as they do in the daylight. At the time of the New Moon or when the stars but not the moon are visible, they can perceive nearer objects as by daylight but they lose the abilities of *Elvensight*. When the night sky is overcast and neither moon nor stars are visible their night sight is limited to 300ft/180m.

**Elvensight:** When not obscured by fog or similar obstacles, an elf can adjust his or her eyes somewhat like a zoom camera lens to clearly make out larger objects and creatures at a distance of up to 3 miles/5 km.

**Alternate Form:** Every elf has an alternate animal form that it can assume at will. The elf does not choose this form. It should be decided at random by the game master.

## The Alternative Player Character Version

You need to work the historical details of a PC light elven race out yourself in terms of the needs of your campaign. For this alternative race, we suggest the following statistical base.

## Gaming Data:

**Size:** Medium

**Life expectancy:** Immortal

**Speed:** 40/12m per round

**Alignment inclination:** No evil

**Resistances:** None

**Base Defenses:** Armor 8, Endurance 8, Reflex 12, Will 12

**Attacks:** Fists, Weapons, Spells

**Special racial abilities:** Starvision, Elvensight, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> Level as Sorcerer

**Other racial bonuses and penalties:** -2 Strength, -2 Stamina, +2 Dexterity, +6 Magical Aptitude, -4 Mechanical Aptitude. Maximum strength 18, Maximum Stamina 18, Maximum Dexterity 22, Maximum Magical Aptitude 24, Maximum Mechanical Aptitude 16.

**Mating:** Elves can mate with humans, half-elves and halflings

**Starvision:** Under moonshine and starlight elves can see just as they do in the daylight. At the time of the New Moon or when the stars but not the moon is visible, they can perceive nearer objects as by daylight but they lose the abilities of *Elvensight*. When the night sky is overcast and neither moon nor stars are visible their night sight is limited to 300ft/180m.

**Elvensight:** When not obscured by fog or similar obstacles, an elf can adjust his or her eyes somewhat like a zoom camera lens to clearly make out larger objects and creatures at a distance of up to 3 miles/5 km.

## 4.2 Dark Elves

### The Official *Dungeons Daring* Version

In most respects, light and dark elves are identical. After all, dark elves are nothing other than light elves who left the path of the Light to turn to evil. In doing so, the Light passed from their spirits and doomed them to oblivion, should they one day be slain. Bitterness over the fate often is a motivating force of the dark elves.

Physically, there is nothing to distinguish a dark elf from a light elf, nonetheless, few humans who have had experience with elves would be likely to mistake a dark elf for a light elf. Clothing, gear and even the expressions upon a dark elf's face betray him or her for what she or she is.

The greatest difference between light and dark elves is in their access to magic. When these evil elves turned their backs upon the Light in an age long past, the Light withdrew itself from their spirits. It will not return again. Dark elves are beyond redemption. Dark elves die no natural deaths, but if one of them is slain, the heavens are closed to him or her. The slain dark elf's spirit travels to Deep Hell where Hela mercilessly sunders it into small sparks of life with no identity, and these sparks then are used to create the souls of newborn humans.

The question of the innocence of newborn dark elves does not pose itself. More than a million years ago, the Earth Mother withdrew the reproductive seed of life from all elves. They are no dark elven newborn. Each dark elf turned from the Light of his or her own volition, and the Light has opened no door through which they can turn back.

For humans, halflings and half-elves, dark elves have the potential for being the most dangerous foes that can be faced. However, the many complexities of the dark elven spirit do much to lighten the threat within that danger. Light elves yearn for their true home in the stars. Dwarves view the merger of their spirits into the greater spirit of the physical world itself as a spiritual elevation.

Many humans believe in an existence after death through the help of their deities if they worship faithfully. Halflings and half-elves believe that if they faithfully serve the quest for harmony in their lives, that they will be rewarded with a reincarnation at a higher level of existence in their past lives. Dark elves, on the other hand, have only a deep fear of death and oblivion. Since the dwarves discovered iron and made it available to humans, the fear of death has been overwhelming for most dark elves.

Because direct access to the power of the Light is closed to them, dark elves are troubled by ley lines. They are unable to cross the invisible borders of the ley lines to seek refuge from iron in the Middle Dimension, as the light elves did. When iron approaches, dark elves must defend themselves against it as well as they can.

The complex dark elven spirit also has closed some doors to magic to the race. Although dark elves turned to evil, they never have been willing to be subservient to other powers and are, indeed, subservient only to the Earth Mother and Hela. This was not so much a matter of choice as one of having no choice.





*Dangerous paths into the domain of the dark elves*

It is important to understand that in turning from the Light, the dark elves in no way allied themselves with the Darkness. However, they have no aversion to using harmful or damaging magic, as the light elves do. White necromancy is unavailable to the dark elves, but they have learned to employ black necromancy. Dark elves can employ magic in the same manner as their estranged light elven kin. All dark elves reached the 30<sup>th</sup> Character Level ages ago, and dark elven spellcasters command absolute magic, just as the light elves do.

Because oblivion is their destiny and because of the fear of death and deadly iron, most dark elves – who are relatively few in number to begin with – tend to live together in their own isolated enclaves. When these are near human settlements or when humans settle near the dark elven enclaves, the dark elves usually subjugate and to a certain extent enslave the human settlements.

However, when they do so, they do it carefully. Cruelty, brutality and oppression for their own sake are not a factor in the dark elven subjugation of humans. The dark elves are wise enough to know that cruel repression leads to hatred and rebellion, and these, in turn can lead to the loss of some dark elven lives, or even worse, the smuggling of iron weapons into the hands of rebels.

With each death of a dark elf, the dark elven population is reduced by one, forever. The fewer dark elves there are, the weaker their power is. Therefore, dark elves usually rule humans they dominate in a manner that is unlikely to provoke retaliation. However, the dark elves also will deal swiftly and decisively with so-called troublemakers.

## Gaming Data:

The values here are base Level 1 values. You still need to increment them for the current Character Level.

**Size:** Medium

**Life expectancy:** Immortal

**Speed:** 40/12m per round

**Alignment inclination:** No good

**Resistances:** 3% Immunity to Magic/per Character Level

**Base Defenses:** Armor 8, Endurance 8, Reflex 12, Will 12

**Attacks:** Fists, Weapons, Spells

**Special racial abilities:** Absolute Magic, Starvision, Elvensight, Alternate Form

**Other racial bonuses and penalties:** -2 Strength, -2 Stamina, +2 Dexterity, +6 Magical Aptitude, -4 Mechanical Aptitude. Maximum strength 18, Maximum Stamina 18, Maximum Dexterity 22, Maximum Magical Aptitude 24, Maximum Mechanical Aptitude 16.

**Mating:** Dark elves can mate with humans, half-elves and halflings

**Absolute Magic:** Dark elves use no spells. They call upon magic to perform what they wish it to do within the limits of their power.

**Starvision:** Under moonshine and starlight elves can see just as they do in the daylight. At the time of the New Moon or when the stars but not the moon is visible, they can perceive nearer objects as by daylight but they lose the abilities of *Elvensight*. When the night sky is overcast and neither moon nor stars are visible their night sight is limited to 300ft/180m.

**Elvensight:** When not obscured by fog or similar obstacles, an elf can adjust his or her eyes somewhat like a zoom camera lens to clearly make out larger objects and creatures at a distance of up to 3 miles/5 km.

**Alternate Form:** Every dark elf has an alternate animal form that it can assume at will. The elf does not choose this form. It should be decided at random by the game master.

## The Alternative Player Character Version

You need to work the historical details of a PC dark elven race out yourself in terms of the needs of your campaign. For this alternative race, we suggest the following statistical base.

## Gaming Data:

**Size:** Medium

**Life expectancy:** Immortal

**Speed:** 40/12m per round

**Alignment inclination:** No evil

**Resistances:** None

**Base Defenses:** Armor 8, Endurance 8, Reflex 12, Will 12

**Attacks:** Fists, Weapons, Spells

**Special racial abilities:** Starvision, Elvensight, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> Level as Sorcerer

**Other racial bonuses and penalties:** -2 Strength, -2 Stamina, +2 Dexterity, +6 Magical Aptitude, -4 Mechanical Aptitude. Maximum strength 18, Maximum Stamina 18, Maximum Dexterity 22, Maximum Magical Aptitude 24, Maximum Mechanical Aptitude 16.

**Mating:** Dark elves can mate with humans, half-elves and halflings

**Starvision:** Under moonshine and starlight dark elves can see just as they do in the daylight. At the time of the New Moon or when the stars but not the moon is visible, they can perceive nearer objects as by daylight but they lose the abilities of *Elvensight*. When the night sky is overcast and neither moon nor stars are visible their night sight is limited to 300ft/180m.

**Elvensight:** When not obscured by fog or similar obstacles, a dark elf can adjust his or her eyes somewhat like a zoom camera lens to clearly make out larger objects and creatures at a distance of up to 3 miles/5 km.

## 4.3 Dwarves (Black Elves)

The stout folk does not consider itself to be elven. They call themselves dwarves, and they resent being called *black elves*, a name that is more than a million years old, stemming from the time of their evolution. That notwithstanding, giants who hate both elves and dwarves, refuse to use any name other than *black elf*. Some human societies also still use the old name.

There no longer is anything elven about the dwarven race. Even the pointed ears that once were a mark of the folk have receded. Where the difference between light and dark elves boils down to their relationships to the Light, the dwarves are a folk that truly has evolved into a race in its own right.

Millions of years ago, the ancestors of modern dwarves were light elves who were allured more by the secrets beneath the surface world than by its meadows and forests. They explored caves and natural tunnels and then began boring their own shafts into the earth, into the depths where they found gemstones and then metal ores, which they learned to smelt and forge. They became the world's master smiths and remain that today.

Although the black elves had abandoned the sunlit meadows and forests for the dark depths, the Light still burned long within their spirits, and their relationships with their light elven kindred on the surface were excellent. Still, the Earth Mother never had allotted the elves the subterranean reaches of the world, its ores or the smith's craft. She had made clear to the elves that these were the legacy of the yet-to-come second born, the giants.

In their great subterranean halls and shafts, the black elves came to covet that which they had found and developed where they had no right to be. The evil of greed came into their hearts and the Light withdrew from the folk. The black elves began to mutate, evolving slowly into a tough, squat race. With time, hair began to sprout from their chins, and they thought of themselves ever more as dwarves and ever less as black elves, although they too were afflicted with the Earth Mother's withdrawal of the reproductive seed.

Like the dark elves, the dwarves lost their ties to the Light but did not turn to the Darkness either. Instead, they developed an affinity with the very substance of which our world is made. Where the light elves viewed themselves as Children of the Light, the dwarves considered themselves to be the Children of the Earth. However, the Earth Mother did not see things that way.



In these days, the Light left the spirit of the black elves completely. They lost all access to magic in those times, but because they had not turned to utter evil and had not personally forsworn the Light, the Earth Mother opened the way for them to become one with the rock of the earth they had come to covet and love. Dwarves, who retain their elven mortality, are not dispatched to Hela and oblivion if they fulfill their destinies. Instead, their spirits merge into the greater spirit of the earth, as is the case with giants.

However, as the subterranean dwarven empires reached their greatest glory, the second born, the giants, came, and the dwarves, deeply entrenched in their deep halls and mining shafts, denied the large folk much of the inheritance that the Earth Mother had designated for them. It came to wars that neither side ever won, but the dwarves could not reproduce. With each of their fallen, the race was reduced by one, while new giants continued to be born.

At last, the dwarves retreated into their deepest halls. Their shafts were not made for large creatures like the giants. They were unable to reach the deep halls and made no attempts to perpetuate the warfare by trying to tunnel their way into the dwarven halls. The dwarves became an isolated folk in these times, seldom seen except by one another in their deep halls. The giants claimed the surfaces of the mountain ranges and the upper mines.

The wars between the giants and the dwarves also ended the relationship between the former black elves and their light elven kindred. The dwarves had expected the light elves to join them in their battles against the giants, but the elves did not do so. The light elves began to understand the wrong their kindred had done in usurping the legacy of the giants. They were unwilling to fight the second born in what they knew was their righteous claim to their legacy, but they also will unwilling to stand on the side of the giants against their former kin. The light elves remained neutral and uninvolved.

The elven neutrality ended the kindred love between elf and dwarf, although they still had not become enemies as they are today. The giants with right knew the dwarves to be their mortal foes. The large folk knew that the dwarves were elven born, therefore, they also considered the light elves to be their foe, although the latter had done nothing evil to the giants.

Despite war and stolen legacies, the dwarves or black elves cannot be compared to the dark elves. They are not a purely evil folk, nor do they covet what belongs to others except for the giants' inheritance, which they stole in a much earlier age.

The greatest geological discovery of the dwarves was the precious metal middle silver. No other known metal makes weapons and armor of an equal quality. To this day, only dwarves produce middle silver or have learned the secrets of smelting and forging it. Middle silver ore is found only in the great depths where none but dwarves ever have mined.

The greatest spiritual discovery of the dwarves was the latent magic of the earth itself. It is a magic that makes no spells, but one that slowly can be drawn from the earth through cut and stained runes. Only the dwarves and giants have the specialty affinity to the earth that one needs to master runic magic. It is beyond the ken of elves, humans or other creatures.

However, there are other deeds written in the legacy of the dwarves that are less glorious. It was the dwarves who burrowed too deeply and unleashed the first of the hidden demons of the Darkness upon the world, a horror that was stopped only by the magic of the light elves, and then only after the demon had destroyed part of the elven kingdom.

Worst of all, at least from an elven viewpoint, was the dwarves' discovery of iron and their reckless decision to bring it into the surface world. Ironically, the dwarves have no love for iron and do not use it themselves. It is a cold metal with only a reluctant trace of the living earth spirit within it. The dwarves have only scorn for such a metal. They smelt it and sell it as raw iron to human smiths of the surface world, who consider it to be the finest metal available to them, due to the fact that it is harder and more durable than bronze.

However, iron was a curse for the light elves. To them, it is a deadly poison. They never have forgiven the dwarves for unleashing the demon upon them or for bringing iron into the Dimension of the Living and forcing the elves to flee into the Middle Dimension.

In truth, there are no other races that like dwarves, and there are no races the dwarves like other than their own. Where the light elves, dark elves and giants all see dwarves as enemies, humans look upon dwarves as dour and gruff iron dealers who practice price gouging. Dwarves recognize humans as the only folk willing to do business with them, but they also believe all humans are out to cheat them.

Halflings have bit of pity for dwarves. The stout folk has succeeded in only one thing, as far as halflings are concerned. They have approximately the right size. Beyond that, they consider dwarves to be fools for their dedication to unpleasantness. The dwarves, on the other hand, consider halflings to be fools in every respect. Half-elves are immune to iron poisoning, but they tend to hold the dwarves responsible for the threat iron has made to their ancestor race. Dwarves view half-elves as treacherous spies for the elves.

These dark relationships with other races have given the dwarves a schizophrenic alignment complex. Most dwarves tend to be overly ardent advocates of law and order, giving almost all of them a lawful alignment element. Otherwise, the majority of dwarves must be considered to have a good alignment element among other dwarves and a greedy and self-serving evil alignment element among other races. In other words, they tend to have a lawful good alignment among themselves and a lawful evil alignment in relationships with other races.

Because all dwarves living today are more than a million years old, they all are of the 30<sup>th</sup> character level.

## **Gaming Data:**

The values here are base Level 1 values. You still need to increment them for the current Character Level.

**Size:** Small

**Life expectancy:** Immortal

**Speed:** 30/9m per round

**Alignment inclination:** Lawful, inclination good among dwarves, evil among other races

**Resistances:** None

**Base Defenses:** Armor 12, Endurance 8, Reflex 10, Will 10

**Attacks:** Fists, Weapons, Runic stones and tables

**Skills:** Escape Artist +2, Sneak +2, Jump -2, Sneak +2, Swim -2.

**Other racial bonuses and penalties:** +1 Strength, -3 Dexterity, +2 Stamina, Maximum Strength 21, Maximum Dexterity 17, Maximum Stamina 22.

**Special racial abilities:** Deepsight, Deepsense, Sense Subterranean Directions, Learn Runic Magic, inability to use spells or clerical rites.

**Mating:** Dwarves can mate only with other dwarves

**Religion:** None

**Deepsight:** Dwarves can see in subterranean darkness just as clearly as humans can see about half an hour before sunset.

**Deepsense:** In subterranean areas dwarves automatically have the skill *Sense Traps* as far as constructed traps involving buildings, bridges, geological formations, etc., are concerned. If the dwarf already has this skill through the Talent *Perception* or *Skullduggery*, the bonuses for *Deepsense* and *Sense Traps* stack. Through *Deepsense* alone, one gains a bonus of +1 per Character Level for all checks. In other words, the check at Level 1 is 1d20+1, at Level 2 1d20+2, etc.

**Sense Subterranean Direction:** Underground dwarves automatically know which way is up, down, north, west, east, south, etc.

## **The alternative Player Character version**

You need to work the historical details of a PC dwarven race out yourself in terms of the needs of your campaign. For this alternative race, we suggest the same statistical base as for official dwarves. Character Levels should be limited to 30.

## 5. The Abilities

Once a player has picked his or her PC's race, he or she needs to determine the basic physical and mental abilities. Each new PC starts out with a total of ability points available between 61 and 80. Whether that total is 61, 80 or something in between is a matter of chance. A throw of the 20-sided die decides that. During a PC's adventuring career, he or she can gain more ability score points that can be assigned according to the player's wish.

### The Definitions

Ability definitions are listed and explained in the *Dungeons Daring Players Guide*, Book 1.

### Abilities in a System with Role-Playing Emphasis

The *Dungeons Daring™* RPG guidelines system was designed to give much more emphasis intentionally to role playing than to pure role-created and dice-roll-determined decision-making. Many popular RPG rules systems just as intentionally do the opposite.

Despite many heated arguments to the contrary in Internet forums and blogs and on mailing lists, we doubt that either approach can be right or wrong. The right approach is the one that makes the most enjoyment for you and the members of your gaming group.

Some groups love role-playing and do their best to avoid the rules whenever possible. Other groups make no effort to play roles. Their members do their best to know the rules and bend them to their best advantage. Most gaming groups can be found somewhere between these two extremes.

That notwithstanding, the *Dungeons Daring™* RPG guidelines system is balanced much more in favor of the role-players than the dice rollers. One must assume that you also are inclined toward the role-playing side of the scales if you have chosen to run your campaign with these guidelines.

If this is the first time run an RPG campaign, this may not mean much to you. If you have played other RPGs, a number of familiar things may be missing in these guidelines:

- There are no ability scores for such attributes as Comeliness, Charisma, Wisdom, Intelligence, etc. Whether a PC succeeds in attempting to use such abilities depends upon his or her player's ability in role-playing. No dice throws or statistics are available to help a PC whose player can't role-play such things well.

This system already is one that draws strong, divided reactions. Many who prefer an emphasis on role-playing support this system. Others argue that it makes it impossible for a dumb player to play the role of a smart PC well. Those who disagree argue that this is better than letting a smart NPC be swayed by a player's dumb argument. The only way to resolve such disputes is for the game master to choose the system that best suits his or her group's needs.

- For similar reasons, skills or other abilities that determine through dice rolls whether a PC or NPC succeeds in fooling, intimidating, deceiving, etc., other PCs and NPCs are missing in *Dungeons Daring™*. In this game system such dealings are left to role-playing.
- There has been an increasing tendency in recent years for commercial fantasy RPG settings and worlds to be driven by deities and high level NPCs. Priests and clerics who serve deities often are among the most powerful characters in such realms. *Dungeons Daring™* doesn't eliminate such elements, but both have been designed above all with the goal of adventures being PC-driven.

In this respect, *Dungeons Daring™* substantially reduces the role played by deities and their clergy. PCs are likely to encounter high level NPCs *only* when the game master has a reason for them to do so.

## Other Abilities

A PC often also will have a number of other abilities. Most of these need to be determined in consultation with you, the game master.

Languages are an important issue. Different people in the various parts of your campaign world have various native tongues. Your PCs probably speak the local tongue of their native lands and a common tongue as well, but that is something you need to determine.

Literacy is another important issue. In most campaign worlds, Commoners speak one or more languages, but they have little talent for reading and writing. The majority of Commoners is illiterate. Player characters, on the other hand, usually are literate in one or more languages. That, too, is a matter for you to work out with your players.

Situations sometimes develop within the framework of an adventure or due to the actions of your players that require abilities that are not foreseen within the guidelines. When house rules, additional ability definitions, etc., are necessary in your campaign, you should not hesitate to create them. If you're inexperienced, use the definitions in this book as a model and starting point.



***With giants and trolls above and dwarves below, mountains are treacherous.***

Product Identity

## 6. The Character Classes

In the *Dungeons Daring* world, the occupations of an adventurer or other character are defined in classes, and these often are divided into subsets. In that case, each class and subset can have its own basic requirements and benefits. The advancement of a character is measured in levels. Player characters often advance from levels 1 through 30.

Some game masters and even more players wonder why a cap has been set at Level 30. There is a certain real world logic behind this. Take former muscle man actor and later California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger as an example. Even in his prime years, regardless of how many hours a day he lifted weights, Schwarzenegger wouldn't have been able to lift the Empire State Building. We know that the only one who can do that in the real world is Superman, and then only if the area has been cleared of Kryptonite.

The *Dungeons Daring* authors see things similarly within the virtual reality of an RPG. Despite age and experience, each PC body has its physical limits. There is a point when one reaches the highest level of achievement possible. In official *Dungeons Daring*, that's Level 30.

- Of course, some game masters may wish to run campaigns that require class levels higher than 30. If you have such a campaign, you should start with the table *Character Progression Benefits* on the next page and then expand it according to your campaign's needs with the help of the section *Extended Character Levels*.

### Class Level vs. Character Level vs. Caster Level

These terms often are confusing to new game masters, because they sound similar:

- **Character Level:** This is the sum of all levels that a character has in all classes. In the example of a PC who is a 5<sup>th</sup> level Warrior and a 3<sup>rd</sup> level Sorcerer, he or she has a Character Level of 8 (5+3), a Class Level as a Warrior of 5, and a Class Level as a Sorcerer of 3.
- **Class Level:** This is the level a character has reached in a certain class. If he or she has only one class, the Class Level and the Character Level are equal.
- **Caster Level:** This is the level a character has in a single spellcasting or other magic-using class.

### Monitoring Additional Classes

Each time a PC gains a new Character Level, he or she has a basic right to gain a new level in an existing class or to gain a 1<sup>st</sup> level in a new class. When you help a player to create a new character, one assumes that the PC already has all of the training and experience necessary to use the abilities of the starting class that the player has chosen.

However, things are different when a PC gains additional Character Levels. With each new level, a player can claim either a new level for his or her PC or take a new, additional class that begins at the 1<sup>st</sup> level. To keep your game sensible and logical, you should allow the PC to make use of this new class *only* after he or she has the necessary training and/or experience.

The best method is to tell a player with a new character at Level 1 that he or she should begin pondering how the PC wants to develop over his or her career. It's your job to advise the player what must be done to claim a new secondary class when a new character level is attained. In the case of the 1<sup>st</sup> Level Wizard Lurga, used as an example in the *Players Guide*, weapon training would be needed during the Level 1 phase of his career if he wishes to claim the 1<sup>st</sup> Level as a Warrior upon reaching the 2<sup>nd</sup> Character Level.

## Character Progression Benefits

Character Level	Experience Points	Campaign Time	Primary Talent Max Points*	Secondary talent Max Points*	New Talents	Ability Score Increases
1	0	0	8	4	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>	-
2	100	2 months	10	5	-	-
3	200	6 months	12	6	-	-
4	300	1 year	14	7	-	-
5	500	2 years	16	8	-	1 <sup>st</sup>
6	800	3 years	18	9	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-
7	1100	4 years	20	10	-	-
8	1400	5 years	22	11	-	-
9	1800	6 years	24	12	-	-
10	2200	7 years	26	13	-	2 <sup>nd</sup>
11	2600	8 years	26	13	4 <sup>th</sup>	-
12	3000	9 years	28	14	-	-
13	3400	10 years	28	14	-	-
14	3800	11 years	30	15	-	-
15	4200	12 years	30	15	-	3 <sup>rd</sup>
16	4600	13 years	32	16	5 <sup>th</sup>	-
17	5000	14 years	32	16	-	-
18	5400	15 years	34	17	-	-
19	5800	16 years	34	17	-	-
20	6200	17 years	36	18	-	4 <sup>th</sup>
21	6600	18 years	36	18	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
22	7000	19 years	38	19	-	-
23	7400	20 years	38	19	-	-
24	7800	21 years	40	20	-	-
25	8200	22 years	40	20	-	5 <sup>th</sup>
26	8600	24 years	42	21	-	-
27	9000	27 years	42	21	-	-
28	9400	30 years	44	22	-	-
29	9800	33 years	44	22	-	-
30	10200	35 years	46	23	-	6 <sup>th</sup>

- **Character Level:** This value represents the total value of all levels combined. As an example, a player character who has the 5<sup>th</sup> level as a Warrior and the 3<sup>rd</sup> level as a Sorcerer has character level 8 (5+3).
  - **Experience Points:** Awarded by the game master according to the *Game Master's Guide*. (See next page.)
  - **Campaign Time :** Maximum game time experience recommended. (See next page.)
  - **Primary Talent Max Points\*:** Each class definition on the following page also lists the official primary talents for each class. This shows the maximum number of talent points a character may have in a primary talent for a particular class.
  - **Secondary Talent Max Points\*:** Any skill that not is a primary talent is a secondary talent. This shows the maximum number of talent points a character may have in a secondary talent for a particular class.
- \* If a PC or NPC combines his or her Craft points with the Profession points or the Profession points with the Craft points, the maximum doubles for the combined skill only.
- **New Talents:** At the levels indicated, all PCs and NPCs are entitled to choose a new talent.
  - **Ability Score Increase:** At each level indicated, a PC or NPC may improve *one* of his or her ability scores by 1 point.

**Multi-Classing and Talent points:** It may occur at times that a multi-classed character is entitled to primary talent points in a single skill for one class and in another secondary talent class points for the same skill. In that case, the two skill point entitlements are combined and he or she is entitled to full primary talent scores regardless of the Talent's root class.

## The Artisan: the Master Examinations

Any PC or NPC who wishes to be a Master in an Artisan's craft must pass guild examinations to be elevated from the journeyman's to the master's rank. To take the master's examination, an Artisan must have at least 100 Talent Points. To pass the examination, a successful Craft check for the appropriate Craft skill must be made. If a journeyman fails the test, he or she must wait six months before it can be repeated.

## Extended Character Levels

As indicated in the *Players Guide*, the 30<sup>th</sup> Level is the highest standard level a character normally can reach. Reality shows us two facets that affect the idea of a maximum level:

- At some point, a being reaches his or her ultimate physical limits. The body takes one no farther.
- Until possible mental degeneration sets in at advanced age, a person continues to learn more with the years, not less.

*Dungeons Daring* deals with these realities as follows:

- No fixed system is defined to deal with possible mental degeneration setting in at an advanced age. This is an individual problem, and it may or may not occur. To the extent that this becomes an issue in your campaign, it should be worked out between you as game master and the player or players involved.
- Extended character progressions beyond the 30<sup>th</sup> level are possible. The table *Extended Class Levels* below shows the minor advancements for level 31 to 40. If you need to go above level 40, simply apply the same progression. Aging and racial ability score limitations often will make it impossible for the additional ability score increases in the last column to the right to be applied.
- Creatures that experience physical deterioration through aging begin to lose ability points for Strength, Dexterity and Stamina, and the move these *lost* points over to the abilities Magical Aptitude, Mechanical Aptitude or Knowledge. See the Section 1.5.2 *Ability modifiers, Bonuses and Penalties* in the *Players Guide* for the details.

## Extended Character Progression

Character Level	Experience Points	Campaign Time	Primary Talent Max Points*	Secondary talent Max Points*	New Talents	Ability Score Increases
31	10600	38 years	46	23	-	-
32	11000	42 years	46	23	-	-
33	11400	45 years	46	23	-	-
34	11800	48 years	46	23	-	-
35	12200	52 years	46	23	-	6 <sup>th</sup>
36	12600	56 years	46	23	-	-
37	12600	60 years	46	23	-	-
38	13000	64 years	46	23	-	-
39	13400	68 years	46	23	-	-
40	13800	72 years	46	23	-	7 <sup>th</sup>

## Experience Points & Campaign Time – the Game Master's Job

NPCs who have reached the high levels of 21-30 should be rare in your campaign world, and the same goes for PCs. If you're running a campaign where your heroes advance from Level 1 to Level 30 in less than two years of gaming world time (as opposed to real time), your campaign has gotten out of control. Your PCs should advance gradually and as the result of experience, just as real people do in the real world.



A human who reaches Level 30 is, at a minimum, getting old. A human with this level should at least be nearing age 60 and in most cases be older than that. A 30<sup>th</sup> level character is someone who has done just about everything that one can do in his or her field and with such success that he or she is a mighty legend in his or her own time.

If you've used other RPGs, you'll notice that the amount of Experience Points required for the 30<sup>th</sup> Level in *Dungeons Daring* is about the same as is required for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> level in many other systems. That should give you a strong clue that the experience point system in *Dungeons Daring* probably is somewhat different from that to which you're accustomed.

Most RPGs have their game masters award experience points on the basis of the number and power of monsters killed, the amount of treasure gained or a combination of both. Encountering opponents certainly can be helpful in gaining experience points in *Dungeons Daring*, but treasure found is irrelevant. In *Dungeons Daring* encounters, whether the PCs win or lose is not particularly important for experience points.

The critical factor is whether the PCs learned things that will improve their ability to deal with issues in their further adventures. Experience points should be awarded when the PCs gained from an experience in a manner that increases their abilities in the future, one that sharpens the use of the talents and skills that they have. The experience must have an ingredient of character growth in it to justify an experience point award. In this respect, *Dungeons Daring* is more demanding of you, the game master, than most systems.

Relatively new adventurers with Character Levels of 1 or 2 and to a certain extent even 3 gain points for most of the significant experiences they have. They're new to adventuring. A great many of the situations in which they become involved are very instructive. This is a period when an adventurer either hones his or her abilities, talents and skills quickly or he or she usually meets an unfortunate end.

Anytime your players have an encounter at these levels, an award of a few experience points probably is in order. But even at these levels, you have to calculate the reduced value of repetition. Look at it this way:

- The first time your PCs encounter a band of four 1<sup>st</sup> Level Orc Warriors, the survivors probably will have earned three or four experience points each.
- The second, third and fourth times they have a similar encounter, they still have a lot to learn. These encounters may earn them two or three experience points each.
- After that, the PCs probably are getting a pretty good idea what an encounter with four orc warriors is like. They're still new to the trade, and these encounters are good on-the-job training that are improving the PCs' abilities, talents and skills, but the experiential value of such encounters isn't what it used to be. These encounters probably are worth one experience point each. By the time the PCs reach the second level, these encounters no longer will earn experience points.

Similar standards need to be applied at all levels. In deciding whether to award experience points, ask yourself first these questions:

- Did the PC or PCs learn something of value for their adventuring careers?
- Are the PCs applying this knowledge in a manner that suggests growth in their abilities?

These answers should be combined with the pace of the PCs' learning. A character can have many experiences, but if they come too often and in aces, he or she may not have the time to ponder what lessons one can draw out of such encounters. In such a case, the PC may be defending him- or herself much more than learning. The capacity of a person to observe, absorb and then learn from an encounter is limited, particularly if a series of new encounters comes along before the person has had time to thoroughly process the experience of an encounter.

The third column in the table *Campaign Time* on the following page gives you a recommended time frame for level progression. For PCs, we recommend this as the *maximum* time that should have passed before a PC gains the named level, *if* he or she is gaining the experience needed to justify that level.

## Campaign Time

Character Level	Experience Points	Campaign Time*
1	0	0
2	100	2 months
3	200	6 months
4	300	1 year
5	500	2 years
6	800	3 years
7	1100	4 years,
8	1400	5 years
9	1800	6 years
10	2200	7 years
11	2600	8 years
12	3000	9 years
13	3400	10 years
14	3800	11 years
15	4200	12 years
16	4600	13 years
17	5000	14 years
18	5400	15 years
19	5800	16 years
20	6200	17 years
21	6600	18 years
22	7000	19 years
23	7400	20 years
24	7800	21 years
25	8200	22 years
26	8600	24 years
27	9000	27 years
28	9400	30 years
29	9800	33 years
30	10200	35 years

\* *Campaign Time* refers to the virtual time in which the PCs live, not the amount of time that the PC's player spends playing. In a campaign, a month's virtual campaign time can pass in minutes of real time at the gaming table.

That *if* is a huge factor, however. Let's keep in mind that most highly competent and accomplished NPCs in your campaign setting probably end their careers with Character Levels between 5 and 10. To go beyond that requires extraordinarily steady and concentrated devotion to one's Character Classes. The following table provides some rough guidelines for the awarding of experience points, either for a single encounter or a closely-linked series of encounters where the time frame between levels is appropriate.

Experience Value	Experience Points
Worthwhile	1
Valuable	2-3
Very Valuable	4-5
Critical	6-8
Monumental	9-10

## 7. The Talents and the Skills

Class Group	Class	Primary Talents ( <i>Religion</i> can be a Primary Talent for humans of all classes)
Aristocrat/ Burgher	Artisan	Applied Knowledge, Perception
	Healer	Applied Knowledge, Naturalism, Perception
	Herbal Witch	Applied Knowledge, Naturalism, Perception
	Merchant	Applied Knowledge, Perception, Skullduggery
	Petty Noble	Applied Knowledge, Melee Combat, Skullduggery
	Scholar	Applied Knowledge, Perception, One of Choice
Bardic	Blue Druid	Applied Knowledge, Arcane Magic, Melee Combat, Perception
	Skáld	Applied Knowledge, Arcane Magic, Melee Combat, Perception
Cleric	Cleric	Applied Knowledge, Religion, One of Choice
Commoner	Commoner	Applied Knowledge, Athletics
Fighters	Warrior	Athletics, Melee Combat, Mounted Combat, Ranged Combat
	Born Knight	Athletics, Melee Combat, Mounted Combat, Ranged Combat
	Dubbed Knight	Athletics, Melee Combat, Mounted Combat, Ranged Combat
Magi	Runecutter	Applied Knowledge, Perception, Runic Magic
	Sorcerer	Applied Knowledge, Arcane Magic, Perception
	Wizard	Applied Knowledge, Arcane Magic, Perception
	White Druid	Applied Knowledge, Arcane Magic, Perception
Naturalist	Green Druid	Applied Knowledge, Arcane Magic, Naturalism, Perception
	Nature Druid	Applied Knowledge, Arcane Magic, Naturalism, Perception
	Ranger	Melee Combat, Naturalism, Perception, Ranged Combat
Specialist	Assassin	Athletics, Melee Combat, Perception, Skullduggery
	Scout	Melee Combat, Perception, Ranged Combat, Skullduggery
	Spy	Athletics, Melee Combat, Perception, Skullduggery
	Thief	Athletics, Melee Combat, Perception, Skullduggery

### Gaining Talents and Skills

In *Dungeons Daring*, PCs and NPCs do not automatically gain new character classes, skills or talents as a result of gaining new levels. It is clear that a character's ability in a character class, skill or talent that he or she already commands will grow through experience, and it also is clear that the experience of adventuring helps a character develop untested talents and give him or her new skills.

Skills in *Dungeons Daring* develop from talents that a character has. Talents are there from birth but they must be developed before they result in skills. Sometimes that occurs through experience; sometimes training is required. There is no need for a PC who's had trail experience to go to a school to learn to use a rope. That's true of most untrained skills. However, most skills that are available with training only as well as some that are untrained do require that a *Dungeons Daring* PC take the time to develop a talent or learn a new skill before he or she can claim it at a time after the character already has been created.

Some skills fit closely to the needs of certain Character Classes, indeed, some are really necessary for certain classes. A Warrior or Knight who lacks combat talents probably will have a short-lived career. A Sorcerer or Wizard without a talent for Arcane Magic already has one foot in the grave.

As a PC progresses through his or her adventuring career in a *Dungeons Daring* campaign, he or she develops talents and gains their skills with experience. At certain levels a PC is entitled to claim new talents, however, as game master it's your job to require your PCs to take actions to train themselves before they can make full use of the new talent and its attendant skills.

Shortly after a PC gains a new Character Level, you should remind his or her player to begin pondering how the PC intends to develop him or herself on the way to the next class level and inform him or her what's needed to achieve those goals. If the PC fails to meet these requirements before gaining a new Character Level, then he or she is entitled to the Talent Points earned, but they can be implemented as usable skills only when the PC has gained the needed training or experience.

## Checking Your PCs' Skill Usage

When your character uses a talent's skill, a skill check determines how well he or she does. The higher the result of the skill check, the better. Based on the circumstances, the PC's result must match or beat a particular number for the check to be successful. This is either a Difficulty Level or the result of an opposed skill check. The harder the task, the higher the number the player must roll to succeed.

Most skill checks work in that manner and certainly almost all of them do where the PC and his or her player are aware that the check is being made. Sometimes, however, a situation occurs in an adventure where a player fails to notice, or, due to circumstances, it's not possible for the player to know that a skill is being addressed.

As the game master, you must consider that a player's skills almost always are there and usable. There are, of course, situations where that doesn't apply or may apply only to a limited extent. Examples are when a PC is sleeping, unconscious or incapacitated by a magical effect.

Whatever the cause, if a PC's skills play a role in an encounter and the player makes no skill check, then you should make a secret check for him or her and apply the result to whatever the PC is doing during the encounter.

A skill check takes into account a character's training (Talent Points), natural talent (ability modifier), and luck (the die roll). To make a skill check, roll 1d20 and add your character's Talent Points for that skill and then add the ability modifier for that skill's key ability, plus any other miscellaneous modifiers that may apply.

Some checks are made against a Difficulty Level (DL) and others are opposed checks. The DL is a number that is set using the skill definition as a guideline. A PC must score that number or higher in his or her skill check in order to succeed. If you're running an adventure written by someone else, DL scores for various actions usually are provided.

If the encounter is a work of your own invention, you need to determine the DL yourself. This may prove to be one of your most difficult tasks as a game master! The starting DL is 10. If a DL would be lower than 10, the task is so simple that a PC should be able to do it without a check. After that, the PC or NPC checks with 1d20 + the Talent Points that he or she has assigned to a particular Talent Skill.

The range of possible checks is much, much greater than other DL-check situations. You must understand the range of check possibilities before you can define a sensible Difficulty Level to a skill check for a certain task. Here's one way of looking at those possibilities:

- A Commoner with 5 Talent Points in the Talent Applied Knowledge and no bonuses for abilities makes his or her checks with 1d20+5. A check will produce a result between 6 and 25.
- A Sorcerer of Level 1 with 8 points in the Talent Arcane Magic and a Magical Aptitude score of 18 checks for Arcane Magic skills with 1d20+14. A check will produce a result between 15 and 34.
- A Specialist of Level 10 with 26 points in the Talent Skullduggery and a Mechanical Aptitude score of 20 checks for Skullduggery skills with 1d20+36. A check will produce a result between 47 and 56.
- A Fighter of Level 15 with 30 Points in the Talent Melee Combat and a Strength score of 21 checks for Melee Combat skills with 1d20+36. A check will produce a result between 37 and 56.
- A Master Artisan of Level 6 who concentrates his or her 27 Applied Knowledge points upon his or her Craft and who has an Ability Score of 19 in Mechanical Aptitude checks for his or her Craft skill with 1d20+54. A check will produce a result between 55 and 74. (This assumes that the Artisan has added his 27 points for the Skill *Profession* into the Skill *Craft*.)
- A Wizard of Level 25 with 40 points in the Talent Arcane Knowledge and a Magical Aptitude score of 25 checks for Arcane Knowledge skills with 1d20+55. A check will produce a result between 56 and 75.
- A Scholar of Level 30 with 46 points in the Talent Applied Knowledge and a Knowledge score of 25 checks for Applied Knowledge skills with 1d20+61. A check will produce a result between 62 and 81.

The following table will give you some rough guidelines.

Difficulty	Difficulty Level (DL)
Normal or average	10
Slight	12
Medium	15
Straining	20
Difficult	25
Challenging	30
Very difficult	35
Extremely difficult	45+
Nearly impossible	70+

The success or failure of an opposed check is determined by comparing the PC's check result with the opposing NPC's check result. In an opposed check, the higher result succeeds, while the lower result fails. In case of a tie, the higher skill modifier wins. If these scores are the same, roll again to break the tie.

In general, a PC or NPC can try a skill check again if he or she fails, and he or she can keep trying indefinitely. Some skills, however, have consequences of failure that must be taken into account. A few skills are virtually useless once a check has failed on an attempt to accomplish a particular task. For most skills, when a character has succeeded once at a given task, additional successes are meaningless.

A skill check represents an attempt to accomplish some goal, usually while under some sort of time pressure or distraction. Sometimes, though, a character can use a skill under more favorable conditions and eliminate the luck factor.

- Taking 10:** When a character is not being threatened or distracted, her or she may choose to take 10. Instead of rolling 1d20 for the skill check, one calculates the result as if one had rolled a 10. For many routine tasks, taking 10 makes them automatically successful. Distractions or threats (such as combat) make it impossible for a character to take 10. In most cases, taking 10 is purely a safety measure—one knows (or expects) that an average roll will succeed but fears that a poor roll might fail, so one elects to settle for the average roll (a 10). Taking 10 is especially useful in situations where a particularly high roll wouldn't help.
- Taking 20:** When a PC or NPC has plenty of time (generally 100 seconds for a skill that can normally be checked in 1 round or 5 seconds), he or she is faced with no threats or distractions, and the skill being attempted carries no penalties for failure, he or she can take 20. In other words, eventually one will get a 20 on 1d20 if one rolls enough times. Instead of rolling 1d20 for the skill check, one calculates the result as if one had rolled a 20. Taking 20 means you are trying until you get it right, and it assumes that you fail many times before succeeding. It consumes 20 five-second rounds, or 100 seconds of time.

## Duplicate Skills

Some skills develop from various talents. These duplicate skills do not stack. However, the PC or NPC can choose from which talent he or she uses a duplicated skill. It's usually the one that will give him or her the highest score when he or she has to make a skill check.

If we look at the Character Sheet of the example character Lurga in the *Players Guide*, we can see that he gains the skill *Use Magical Device* through the Talents *Applied Knowledge*, *Arcane Magic* and *Religion*. The bonuses are 11, 11, and 7, respectively. As mentioned, these skills *do not* stack. Lurga does not gain a combined bonus of 29 (11+11+7).

Use Magical Device (App. Knowl.)	Yes	1d20+11
Use Magical Device (Arcane Magic)	Yes	1d20+11
Use Magical Device (Religion)	Yes	1d20+7

Instead, when Lurga applies the *Use Magical Device* skill, he needs to decide from which Talent he draws the skill. *Applied Knowledge* and *Arcane Magic* are the best choices. Each gives him a bonus of 11, where *Religion* gives him a bonus of only 7.

In initial testing, some players believed it unfair that such skills do not stack. That isn't correct, however. In designing this Talents and Skills system, the authors took into account that Skills from various Talents often would overlap and also calculated the average overlap frequency. This was balanced in deciding the number of Talent points PCs and NPCs become at new levels.

## Elevating Talents

It may be that a player has chosen a Secondary Talent for his or her PC because it was not available to the PC's Character Class as a Primary Talent. However, with time, the PC might acquire a second Character Class for which this Talent is a Primary Talent. In that case, the PC may reclaim any extra Talent points that he or she spent on the basis of their belonging to a Secondary Talent. These points then are free to distribute among the PC's talents as the player wishes, as long as the maximum points are not exceeded.

## Certain Skills: What You Should Know

### Key Ability

Please note that the Key Ability for determining checks is the Key Ability for the Talent from which the Skill developed. Skills do not have their own Key Ability categories.

### Craft Skills

Craft skills all come from the Talent Applied Knowledge. They include a number of separate artisan's skills. A PC or NPC can have several Craft skills, and with these skills alone, he or she can reach a high journeyman level. However, only members of the Artisan class can become masters of a trade. If that's the case, he or she must divide his or her total Talent Points for *Applied Knowledge* among the various Crafts. Thus, a PC with 8 Talent Points in Applied Knowledge could claim 4 points as a carpenter and 4 points as a sawyer. If a PC with the Talent Applied Knowledge decides to do completely without *Profession* skills, he or she can assign the available *Profession* points to *Craft* skills. In other words, a PC with 8 Talent Points in Applied Knowledge could do without *Profession* skills and assign 16 points to *Crafts*.

### Knowledge Skills

The skills in this class should be viewed by you and your players as a group. Some talents include a large number of *Knowledge* skills, but not every *Knowledge* skill arising from a talent is immediately available to a PC with the talent. A PC can claim one *Knowledge* skill out of all those that are available for a particular talent for every three Character Levels. Thus, a character with Applied Knowledge as a primary talent has at 1<sup>st</sup> level the choice among the following *Knowledge* skills:

- Arcane Knowledge
- Herbalistic Knowledge
- Knowledge of Architecture and Engineering
- Knowledge of Dungeons
- Knowledge of Geography
- Knowledge of History
- Knowledge of Local Customs, Events and Occurrences
- Knowledge of Nobility and Royalty
- Religious Knowledge
- Runic Knowledge



With the Talent Applied Knowledge, a PC could claim *Arcane Knowledge* at Level 1, *Herbalistic Knowledge* at Level 4, etc. However, if a PC gains *Knowledge* skills from more than one talent, he or she can pick one *Knowledge* skill per Talent with *Knowledge* skills for every three Character Levels. As an example, a new 1<sup>st</sup> Level PC with the Talents Applied Knowledge and Arcane Magic could choose *Herbalistic Knowledge* from Applied Knowledge and *Arcane Knowledge* from Arcane Magic.

## Perform Skills

The skills in this class also should be viewed by you and your players as a group. A PC can claim one *Perform* skill out of all those that are available for every three Character Levels. Thus, a character with Applied Knowledge as a primary talent has the choice of any *one* of the available *Perform* skills.

## Profession Skills

Profession skills all come from the Talent Applied Knowledge. They include a number of professional skills. A PC or NPC can have several Profession skills. If that's the case, he or she must divide his or her total Talent Points for *Applied Knowledge* among the various Professions. Thus, a PC with 8 Talent Points in Applied Knowledge could claim 4 points as an Advocate and 4 points as a Diplomat. If a PC with the Talent Applied Knowledge decides to do completely without *Craft* skills, he or she can assign the available *Craft* points to *Profession* skills. In other words, a PC with 8 Talent Points in Applied Knowledge could do without *Craft* skills and assign 16 points to *Professions*.

## Proficiency Skills

For every Talent Point in a Talent that grants a Weapon or Armor Proficiency, the PC can claim a proficiency in one type of weapon or one type of armor. Thus, a Fighter with 8 Talent Points each in Melee Combat and Ranged Combat could claim 16 proficiencies out of the following:

- Proficiency in up to 8 melee weapons.
- Proficiency in up to 8 ranged weapons.
- Proficiency in up to 16 kinds of armor.



Field camp



## 8. The PCs' Equipment

Some adventures may take place in the city or village where the PCs live or are staying, but for most part, your adventurers will be heading down that road that goes ever on. Before they depart, they need to determine what they wish to take with them and how to carry or transport it. The full list of official *Dungeons Daring* equipment can be found in Section 1.8 *Possessions and Packing Up* of the *Players Guide*.

As we mentioned when we looked at character creation, the game master has only a few responsibilities as far as equipment is concerned, but these are important:

- You need to determine what's available in the area where the PCs are. Not everything in the *Players Guide* lists are available anywhere.
- You need to determine the prices in the area where the PCs are shopping. These are dependent largely on the distance to the area where the items the PCs are seeking are produced. In a remote regional market town a few hundred miles/kilometers from the nearest mine, a bronze sword could cost twice as much as in a larger regional town near mines and foundries, where weaponsmiths compete with each other.
- Always keep a close watch on weight and bulk limitations and penalties. It's important to make sure that it's really possible for the PCs to carry what they buy. If they overload themselves, they might need to buy a pack animal or leave some things behind.

### 8.1 Of Iron and Middle Silver

The *Dungeon Daring* era still is a bronze age for the most part. Therefore, these two metals are very special cases. Adventurers are dependent upon dwarves for both.

- **Iron** is a cold, nearly lifeless metal that resists magic. Its ore is found in deeper regions beneath the mountains that only dwarves have mined to date. The spirit of the earth that is within the bedrock and ore of the world is very weak within iron. For that reason, the dwarves eschew it. They use no iron for themselves but some clans smelt it and sell raw iron to humans, whose smiths forge it into weapons and tools. Iron resists magic and is deadly dangerous to elves. It is impossible to ensorcel an iron weapon or iron armor and make them magical. Iron is harder and more durable than bronze, but it has the disadvantage that it rusts. Steel and other more stable iron alloys have not yet been developed.
- **Middle Silver** is an extremely rare and expensive metal but also the hardest available and the easiest to ensorcel with magic. Middle Silver ore is found only at the deepest roots of some mountain ranges. To date, only dwarves know enough about the great depths of the world to mine there. The dwarves covet middle silver and keep it for themselves. On only a few rare occasions have dwarves given items of middle silver to members of other races. When an item of middle silver becomes available to a PC, it usually is booty from a dwarf who fell in an ancient battle, however, it is a rare day indeed when a PC has the chance to obtain an item of middle silver.

Almost all metal items available in your campaign world are made of copper or bronze, basically an alloy of copper and lead. Furnaces that burn bituminous coal (lignite) are adequate to forge it. Iron comes only from dwarven mines. Only the dwarves know where iron ore deposits are or where in the depths to seek the hard anthracite coal necessary to forge it. Dwarves sell the cold, lifeless metal and forge weapons and armor of it that they sell to other races, but they do not love iron and do not use it themselves. Iron still is infrequent. One cannot buy wares made of iron everywhere.

Middle silver is the finest of all metals for weapons, but it is extremely rare. Only the dwarves know the secrets of smelting, forging and smithing this difficult metal. It is said that at one time the dwarves made gifts of middle silver items to the elven royalty, but it is not known whether this is true. With this exception, the dwarves are not known ever to have parted willingly with middle silver.

Because dwarves forge items of middle silver only for themselves, only a limited number of members of other races are able to use middle silver armor that might be found or offered. Generally, such armor will fit only halflings (usually loosely) and stout but very short humans and half-elves. There are no such limitations with weapons. All races can use dwarven middle silver weapons, although some are shorter than the user might consider ideal.

## 8.2 Iron and Magic

Two restrictions regarding iron and magic are known to your players, because they are described in the *Players Guide*:

- **Iron Armor and Shields** have a weak ability to repel magic. If the wearer of iron armor or bearer of an iron shield is attacked by a spell or magical weapon, the iron armor automatically gains a +4 Reflex defense bonus. If the magical attack succeeds despite that bonus, there is a 5% chance (1 on 1d20) that the armor or shield will shatter and become useless.
- **Iron Weapons** have a weak ability to penetrate magic bonuses upon armor. The bonus of magical armor is countered by a +2 attack bonus against magical armor. It also has a 5% chance of penetrating other magical protections that were created with magic of 5 spell points or less, such as protective rings. When attacking the wearer of such magical protection, the bearer of the iron weapon rolls 1d20. A result of 20 indicates that the magical protection has failed. However, a result of 1 on 1d20 indicates that the magic has overwhelmed the iron, causing the iron weapon or object to shatter.

Another restriction is not in the *Players Guide*. Your PCs should learn it through experience:

- **Magic Corruption** can take place when iron is within 20ft/6m of a magic user casting spells, a member of a Bardic class performing magical song or diction or a Cleric performing a rite. See the table below.

In the following table, the two measuring sticks are the weight of the iron present and the distance between the iron and the magic user

### Magic Corruption Results

1d20 Result	To 30 lbs/15kg, to 10ft/3m	To 30 lbs/15kg to 10ft/3m	+30 lbs/15kg to 20ft/6m	+30 lbs/15kg, to 20ft/6m
1-40	1	2	None	1
41-80	2	3	1	2
81-100	3	4	2	3

### Results:

- None: The magic functions normally.
- 1. The game master secretly rolls 1d20. A result of 1-10 means that the spell or magic points are lost but the spell does not work. A result of 11-20 means that the magic functions normally.
- 2. The game master secretly rolls 1d20. A result of 1-10 means that the magic's effect is reduced by 10%. A result of 11-20 means that the effect is increased by 10%. With magic where such a result is impossible, use the results for No. 1 instead.
- 3. The game master secretly rolls 1d20. A result of 1-10 means that the magic affects the caster instead of the target or area designated. A result of 11-20 means that the magic functions normally.
- 4. The magic misfires. Another spell, song, diction or rite that the magic user can use or perform is unleashed instead. Which magic that is, is the game master's choice.

## II. Adventuring

### 1. Life, Death and Healing

Life in the *Dungeons Daring* world is represented by two types of beings:

- **Humans, Halflings, Half-Elves and Draugs** are souls who inhabit physical bodies.
- **Elves, Dwarves, Giants and all other creatures** are spirits who inhabit physical bodies.

Furthermore, the Earth Mother has withdrawn the reproductive seed from the elves, dwarves and giants. They are long-lived but slowly dwindling races that no longer have children.

#### 1.1 The Death of a Being with a Soul and the Road to Deep Hell

When a human, halfling or half-elf dies, death applies at first only to the physical body of the person. His or her soul hovers in an incorporeal form near the body until it has decomposed to the point that all spiritual ties to the body have ended. That takes 6 to 16 days, decided by a dice roll with the formula  $1d10 + 6$ .

During this time, it is possible to work magical rites that first will heal the dead body and make it fit again for life and then call the hovering soul back into the body. No creature is powerful enough to involuntarily force a soul back into its body. If a soul wishes to remain dead, it remains dead. Period.

Once the 6 to 16 days have passed and the last of a soul's spiritual ties to its former body have ended, it regains a likeness of its living body, a likeness that exists upon what the sages call the Dimension of Death. A spirit subservient to the Mother of Death in Deep Hell who lives on the Dimension of Death comes to bring the soul to its destination. That is an underground route that goes deep into the bowels of the world, through Hell to Deep Hell.

A powerful and insane member of the mysterious creator race called *Hela* rules the souls of the dead in Deep Hell. Hela, Mothguth, Garm, the Earth Mother and the three Norns are the only members of the creator race who still are known to exist although others well may be among us. They are described in Book 3, the *Dungeons Daring Creature Guide*. Just where Deep Hell is located may depend upon the campaign setting that you're using. If the setting describes such a location, you should use it.

If your setting provides no help, you might want to take a clue from Nordic and Icelandic mythology. There, the gate to Hell is described as being in mist-shrouded lands on the border of Álfheim (the elven kingdom). If your campaign has an equivalent of such an elven land, it's an ideal location for placing the gates of Hel. In most settings, this land has names like Álfheim, Elfhome, Færie or the Elven Kingdom.

It's possible that your PC group may attempt a journey to Deep Hell to regain a fallen comrade after it reaches advanced levels. It's not easy, but it isn't impossible either. There are myths and legends of adventurers who have traveled through Hell to Deep Hell, where they successfully have bargained with Hela for the soul of a fallen comrade. If Hela agrees to such a bargain, she also has the power to restore the soul's mortal body and bring its life back into it.

Before reaching Hela in Deep Hell, however, a PC party must make its way through Hell, which is the domain of two other members of the creator race, Mothguth and Garm. The first of these that they will encounter is male, Garm. He seldom wears the form of a human but rather takes the shape of a large and vicious fire-breathing dog or wolf. Garm serves Mothguth. He has been charged with keeping living intruders from reaching her on the banks of the underground Gjöll River, where she blocks the road to Deep Hell.

To succeed on such a mission one somehow must get past Garm. This is no easy task. The slaying or serious injury of members of the creator race is far beyond the ability of any worldly creature. Magic also will not work upon them. Even human deities are unable to harm or influence them.

That means the Garm must be tricked, bribed or otherwise be convinced to allow the PCs to go on to Mothguth. On the other hand, the Earth Mother has forbidden members of the creator race from slaying living humans, halflings, half-elves, elves, giants and dwarves, so Garm's options are limited too.

If they reach the river, the PCs probably will see Mothguth at first in the form of a swan. They will not necessarily recognize her as being anything but a swan. She will take her human form and communicate with them only if they pique her curiosity somehow.

The most the PCs will be able to see before them are the swan and a bit of the river. Thick, nearly freezing mists swirl at all times through the air of this domain. No mortal magic can dispel them. Mothguth has a magical bridge with which the PCs can cross the river safely, and she needs to summon it before it can be used. It is the only way that the PCs can cross the river.

The creator race magic bars any other means of transportation. Attempts to cross the Gjöll magically simply will fail. A PC who goes into the Gjöll in an attempt to swim it will reach Deep Hell much sooner and in a much different manner than he or she would wish. Powerful undercurrents in the Gjöll, again creator race magic beyond the defiance of anyone, will draw a PC underwater immediately drowning him or her and depositing the body on the shore of the Gjöll when it bubbles back to the world's surface far downstream.

The soul or spirit of a PC slain by the Gjöll will not hover in the Dimension of Life for 6 to 16 days. Instead, it will go immediately to Hela in Deep Hell for judgment.

If the PCs do pique Mothguth's curiosity, she might be convinced by them to allow them to travel into Deep Hell to barter with Hela. However, the PCs will have to rely solely upon their own wits to convince her. None of their magic can affect a member of the creator race.

If the PCs do reach Hela, they again need to use their wits to convince her to yield whatever souls or spirits they seek. Hela too is beyond the abilities of their magicks or weapons. There are two factors that either can help or hinder the PCs in their dealings with Hela:

She is totally insane. What she will do is absolutely unpredictable. Her words and deeds can work either for or against the PCs, with absolutely no good reason for either option being the case.

Hela is subject to the Earth Mother and her edicts, which ban Hela from having living beings in Deep Hell or harming any who get there against her will. But she does have the magical power to expel the PCs from Deep Hell at will, and they have no ability to resist expulsion. She also can ban any living creature who has entered Deep Hell from returning there again.

This means that the PCs will have to awaken Hela's curiosity quickly and talk even faster if they hope to strike any bargains with her. If they're too slow, they may find themselves on the bank of the Gjöll again, unable to go back into Deep Hell.

Whether they succeed or not, the PCs will find that the way out of Deep Hell and Hell is much easier than the way in. Both Mothguth and Garm have orders from Hela to dispatch living creatures that come out of Deep Hell back to the surface as expeditiously as possible. This means that when the PCs reach the bank of the Gjöll, regardless of the circumstances, Mothguth and her bridge will be there to allow them to cross back into Hell. On the opposite bank, Garm will be waiting, snapping at the PCs' heels and doing his best to drive the living back to the surface in double time.

In Deep Hell, Hela has something of a free hand with the dead souls that come to her. She can keep a soul there, fully conscious, for as long as she wishes. She sometimes subjects the souls of those who led evil lives or worked against harmony to horrible mental tortures in Hel. She also forces the souls of those who were not evil but who also did no good in their lives to long ages of mental contemplation of their worthless existences as living beings.

For all souls, however, there comes a time when Hela lets them pass from her realm. In most cases, the souls in Deep Hell lose awareness of their previous existence and are divided into many parts which are merged together with parts of other dead souls to become the souls of new humans, halflings and half-elves in the dimension of the living.

Hela divides the souls of those who led good lives and who worked for the gaining of harmony to a lesser degree and in some cases not at all. Such souls also are returned to the Dimension of Life as the souls of the newborn, but because large parts of the previous soul remain, such newborn often have fragments of memories from their previous identities, and they may even retain some of their previous abilities.

Souls who live in the interim in their likeness bodies in Deep Hell, remain conscious of their identities as living persons and can communicate with one another, should they wish to do so. Those souls who reach Deep Hell will find that they have spirits as well as other souls as their neighbors. The spirits of elves, giants and dwarves who led their lives poorly, failing to fulfill their personal destinies as members of those races, also are brought to Hela. Their fates are less kind, however.

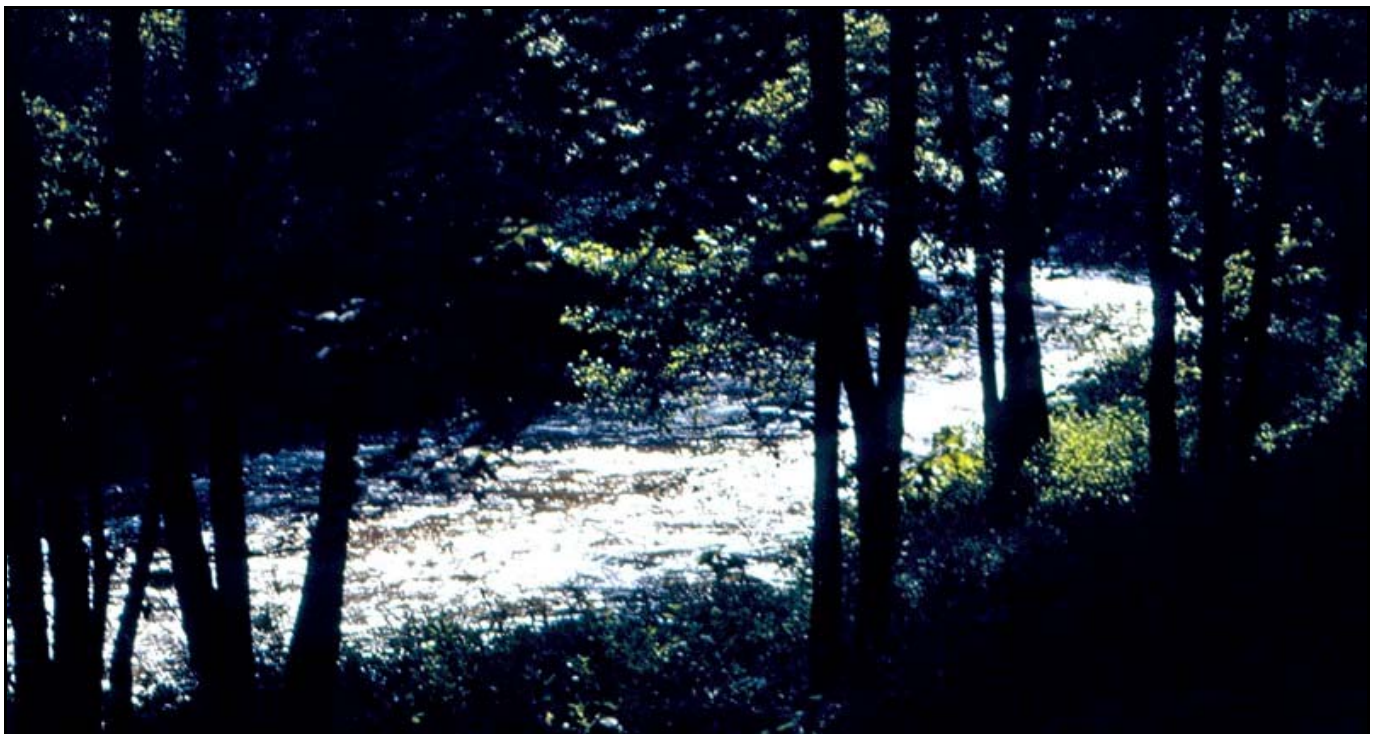
Hela will judge them. If she finds redeeming things in the tales of their lives, she may allow their spirits to evolve into souls that will, in part, become the souls of newborn humans, halfling and half-elves. Those elves, dwarves and giants who fail Hela's tests, however, will find that their spirits are shattered into oblivion. Only their spiritual energy will survive, in tiny fragments that Hela makes available to new souls and spirits.

However, none of these things always work out in this manner. Sometimes, Hela makes very unusual judgments, because she is, after all, insane. She also is corrupt, although her corruption may result from her insanity. There are cases where living beings have succeeded in traveling through Hell and Deep Hell to Hela, in an attempt to strike strange deals with her to win the release of a dead soul. Some brave souls actually have succeeded in such bargaining.

In the *Players Guide*, sages are quoted as saying that this is only the first step in returning the dead to life. If the deceased's body still exists, the sage's claim, powerful magic needs to be used to restore it to a level where it can play host to a soul and life again. After that, powerful white necromantic spells must be used to bring the soul into the body.

Another method, the sages say, is to find another body that can be restored so that it can live and play host to the soul. This, too, however, requires powerful white necromancy.

This is true, as far as it goes. But if a living intruder bargains well enough with Hela, she also might be convinced to restore the dead completely, in body and soul. Of course, all of these options are of value only if the soul still exists as such. If the soul has been dissolved for recycling into the pool of life, not even Hela can reverse that.



***The Gjöll leads to the Gates of Hell.***

## 1.2 The Death of a Being with a Spirit

The matter of a spirit's fate after the death of its body is not so clear cut as that of a soul. Different races share different fates:

- **Elven spirits** ascend to their true home in the heavens, where they become stars. In this form, they can communicate telepathically with their living kin below. However, elves who fail to fulfill their destinies or who turn from the Light lose the ability to ascend. This applies above all to the dark elves. Their spirits go to Hela, where she shatters most of them into oblivion and divides their life energy among the souls of newborn humans, halflings and half-elves and the spirits of new animals and plants. However, if Hela finds redeeming elements in their lives, she may allow their spirits to evolve into souls that will, in part, become the souls of newborn humans, halflings and half-elves.
- **Dwarven spirits** belong to the stone and soil of our world, and they merge into the spirit of the earth, becoming not only a part of it but also enlarging it. Dwarven spirits actually return to the Earth Mother herself and become a part of her growing spirit. As with elves, those dwarves who fail to fulfill their destinies or who turn from service to the earth also go to Hela, where she shatters most of them into oblivion and divides their life energy among the souls of newborn humans, halflings and half-elves. However, if she finds redeeming elements in their lives, she may allow their spirits to evolve into souls that will, in part, become the souls of newborn humans, halflings and half-elves.
- **Giant spirits** belong to the stone and the soil, just like the spirits of the dwarves, who stole the giants' legacy. Giant spirits share the same fate as dwarven spirits.
- **Mutation, animal and plant spirits** go to their own regions of Deep Hell. If the mutations are of a race that can reproduce, such as orcs, their spirits are shattered into oblivion and the individual elements of their spirits make spirits of the newborn. If the mutations are of a race that cannot reproduce, Hela shatters their spirits into oblivion and send the elements of those spirits back as parts of the spirits of newborn animals. Animal and plant spirits always are shattered and their elements return in the spirits of newborn animals and newly germinated plants.
- **Spirits of the slain undead** are sent to the Darkness, which may do with them what it will. Such spirits are beyond Hela's jurisdiction.

It is almost impossible to restore a dead elf, dwarf, giant, mutation, animal or plant to life. These beings do not hover near their bodies or forms upon the Dimension of Life after dying. Elven spirits ascend directly to the heavens, while dwarven and giant spirits merge immediately into the earth spirit. Mutation, animal and plant spirits appear directly in their region of Deep Hell on the Plane of Death, and undead spirits go to the Darkness.

Only the spirits of mutations, animals and plants as well as those of elves, dwarves and giants who did not fulfill their destinies stand any chance of being restored to life. All of these appear in Deep Hell to await the judgment of the Mother of Death. During this interim time when they are in the Dimension of Death, it would be possible for one of the living to attempt to travel to Deep Hell to bargain with Hela for such a creature's spirit.

A being dies when he, she or it drops to a level of 0 (zero) life points and remains at that level for more than a gaming minute (12 five-second rounds). After the 13<sup>th</sup> round begins, only magic can help bring back a human, halfling or half-elf who is dead. The matter is much more difficult if the deceased is a creature with a spirit rather than a soul.

Because undead are not alive to begin with, they also cannot die in the mortal sense. They are slain by being destroyed, which moves their souls from undeath to death. The souls of the undead are bound to their unliving bodies. When the body is destroyed, the undead is destroyed too for most practical purposes.

Avatars, skeletons and zombies are soulless, spiritless animations. They stop being active when their bodies reach a level of destruction that makes it impossible for them to keep acting. At that point, the Black Necromancer usually abandons his or her control, and the avatar, zombie or skeleton once again is nothing more than normal body remnants of the dead.



Other undead can have their physical bodies restored through magic, or they can be given another body. If that is done, the Darkness can send the undead's soul back into the body and reanimate it. All undead can be destroyed immediately by severing the head from the shoulders. The souls of such undead (soulless zombies and skeletons excluded) are dispatched immediately to the Darkness, which can restore them, but only in another body.



***Into the fog and on to the gates of Hell***

## 1.3 The Three Dimensions

Two dimensions are natural to our world; the third was created long ago by master magi of the light elves. All three dimensions are varying phases of the world. The dimensions exist like layers in the same place at the same time, and yet, each of them also is a place and time of its own. The two dimensions that have existed since life first appeared in our world are:

- **The Dimension of Life.**
- **The Dimension of Death.**

The third dimension, created by the elves after dwarves brought iron to the surface and men began spreading it, is:

- **The Middle Dimension.**

The latter dimension got its name from the elves who created it. It lies somewhere between the Dimensions of Life and Death.

Some things are consistent on all three dimensions. The mountains, seas and landscapes are identical, but changes made in one dimension do not occur in another.

### The Dimension of Life

This dimension probably needs little in the way of explanation. It's the dimension where we all live, mostly oblivious to the two other dimensions.

### The Dimension of Death

This is the dimension that is the doom of all humans, halflings, half-elves, mutations, plants and animals as well as errant elves, dwarves and giants. The dimension is devoid of all life. Only the non-living physical elements of the world – mountains, barren land and lifeless water – exist along with the likenesses of dead souls and spirits in this dimension. This is the dimension where the Darkness reigns. Its lifeless landscapes are as they were when the first elves were born. They do not change and never will.

There is one exception to the lifelessness of this dimension, however. Hell and Deep Hell also are in this dimension. There are adventurers who have succeeded in going from the Dimension of Life to the Dimension of Death to bargain with Hela for the soul or spirit of someone who died, thus, it appears that life can exist, at least for a time, in the Dimension of Death.

### The Middle Dimension

Most but not all elven enclaves exist in this dimension now where they find refuge from iron. When the dwarves discovered elfbane iron ore, they began smelting it to sell it to giants, but it soon came into the hands of humans too, who spread it through much of the world.

Iron not only is resistant to magic, which is the reason that rune-loving dwarves sell it rather than using it themselves, but it also is deadly to elves (although not half-elves). Elves have mighty Wizards and Sorcerers with abilities far beyond those of human Magi who created the Middle Dimension to escape the threat of iron, which has not entered the surface world of this dimension.

There are humans who have entered the Middle Dimension without iron. There are times when elves have lured humans without iron into their dimension, to do services for them. There also are humans, halflings and half-elves who claim that they somehow unintentionally stumbled into the Middle Dimension.

No human, halfling or half-elf who has entered the Middle Dimension ever has returned in his or her own time. All return at a much later time in their own dimension, unaged, remaining as old or as young as they were on the day when they entered the elven dimension.

Some who have crossed the dimension boundary into the elven kingdom claim that they spent but a single day there, and yet, they discover that the calendar of the Dimension of Life has advanced 20 years during that day.

The borders of that land are protected with powerful magic that confuses humans, halflings and half-elves who try to enter. They simply go in circles, often finding the edge of the border forests, where they can leave freely, but the way to the interior always eludes them.

However, those who have entered the elven enclaves upon the Middle Dimension talk of lands of peace and bounty, freed from orcs, trolls, ogres and other mutations that plague our times upon the Dimension of Life. Most who have crossed into the Middle Dimension either were taken there by elves or they crossed unknowingly. They usually did not even know when or where they crossed the dimensional border. They realized where they were only when they noticed that familiar settlements had vanished and elven dwellings began to appear.

The secret lies in the ley lines of power that cage the world and in the ley stones that ancient elves built along those lines. When all of the circumstances are right, one can cross the borders in the vicinity of the ley stones. However, the necessary secrets to completing that cross are known only to the light elves of the Middle Dimension. Humans who cross unwittingly apparently trigger the circumstances through coincidence.

The landscapes of the Middle Dimension are exactly as they were on the Dimension of Life on the day when the Middle Dimension was opened, except that only animal and plant life were duplicated. The elves moved to the Middle Dimension, but it is free of human, half-elven, dwarven, giant and mutated life that was not taken into the dimension by the light elves. There also are no demons, devils, undead or other spawn of the Darkness in the Middle Dimension.

Such elven mutations as good dragons and unicorns are so rare upon the Dimension of Life in our time because most such creatures moved with the elves to the Middle Dimension. The rest of this dimension remains as it was on the day it was opened. It will not change unless invaders from the Dimensions of Life or Death learn to gain entrance to it and begin to take control of parts of it.



***One merely crosses the river to enter the Elven Kingdom ... maybe.***

## 1.4 Injury, Sickness and Healing

### The Game Master, Exhaustion, Injury, Sickness and Death

In many RPGs, a PC or NPC remains at full health and capacity until the fatal blow is dealt. Then he or she suddenly is dead. *Dungeons Daring* tries to emulate reality a bit more. The more severely injured or ill a character is, the weaker its abilities become. A Warrior who is critically injured can't fight as well as a fresh fighter who just has entered the battle. A wounded Wizard also is weakened and has less mental strength to muster for spell-casting than he or she does when in full health.

After a creature is so injured or so ill that he or she has lost more than 25% of his or her injury points, he or she also begins to take penalties. The thresholds are calculated as followed, with all calculations rounded down:

- **Fully capable:** 76-100% of original injury points remain.
- **Injured:** 51-75% of original injury points remain. The character has a penalty of -1 on attack, damage and skill check rolls and on the Endurance and Reflex defense scores. Spellcasters lose a number of spell points equal to 5% of their full spell points.
- **Seriously injured:** 26-50% of original injury points remain. The character has a penalty of -2 on attack, damage and skill check rolls and on the Endurance and Reflex defense scores. Spellcasters lose a number of spell points equal to 10% of their full spell points.
- **Critically injured:** 1-25% of original injury points remain. The character has a penalty of -3 on attack, damage and skill check rolls and on the Endurance and Reflex defense scores. Spellcasters lose a number of spell points equal to 15% of their full spell points.
- **In mortal danger:** No injury points remain. Life point loss begins. The character has a penalty of -4 on attack, damage and skill check rolls and on the Endurance and Reflex defense scores. Spellcasters lose a number of spell points equal to 20% of their full spell points.

**Injury Point Table**

Injury Point Threshold	Spell Point Loss (non-cumulative)	Attack, Damage, Skill and Defense Penalty
Fully capable	None	None
Injured	5%, rounded down	-1
Seriously injured	10%, rounded down	-2
Critically injured	15%, rounded down	-3
In mortal danger	20%, rounded down	-4

- **Spell Point Loss:** This figure represents the number of spell or magic points lost due to illness or injury. The loss is the percentage of the *original* total spell or magic points that the character had when in full health, not of the *remaining* spell or magic points. If the character drops below zero spell or magic points, he or she no longer can cast spells, sing songs, perform diction or rites, etc.
- **Attack, Damage, Skill and Defense Penalty:** This penalty is deducted from attack, damage and skill check rolls and on the Endurance and Reflex defense scores etc.

The game master is responsible for monitoring the hit- and injury points, spell point loss and penalties for each PC and NPC in the game. It is important that neither side claim more abilities than it is entitled to have after some creatures are injured or ill. It's also the game master's job to maintain the tally on exhaustion points and to keep the PCs informed of the state of their exhaustion.

In an intense adventure, your PCs may have many battle encounters or physically draining tasks during the course of the day. As in real life, such activities tend to drain one of strength. Tiredness and eventually exhaustion set in. These effects are simulated through exhaustion points in *Dungeons Daring*.



It's up to you, the game master, to determine when the PCs' activities begin to cause degrees of exhaustion, but we can give you some general guidelines. You should determine the exhaustion threshold for the party as a whole, but then levy exhaustion points individually, based upon how much each PC actually did.

Consider your party's abilities and skills in each situation and compare them to the difficulty of the situation. You should make this decision *after* the exhausting task has been completed, based upon how difficult it *really* was for the PCs. Then classify the encounter in one of the five following difficulty levels. As a measuring stick, consider *Balanced* to be a situation where the chances for success are about 50-50 for success and failure.

### Exhaustion

Difficulty	Exhaustion Level	Exhaustion Points
Very easy	1	1
Easy	2	1
Balanced	3	2
Difficult	4	2
Very difficult	5	3

We generally recommend that you start levying exhaustion points after the PCs' activities have given them a total of 12 exhaustion levels. Assess that on a group level, even if some of the PCs have been inactive in some things. The point where you start levying exhaustion points always will be reached based upon what's difficult for the specific group at hand, not on a general basis for all groups, therefore, the value 12 should serve equally well for groups of all average character levels.

Once you've passed the point where you start levying exhaustion points, levy them *only* on those party members who actually took part in the exhausting action. If, for example, a party of four 1<sup>st</sup> level PCs encounter four 1<sup>st</sup> level orcs in combat, that's a balanced encounter. You can levy 2 exhaustion points per PC, and, if they've had previous exhausting activities on that day, also 2 points per orc.

On the other hand, if only the two Warriors in the PC party fight the orcs while wizard and thief take cover to protect themselves, that could be viewed as a very difficult encounter for the two PC Warriors. In that case, you might levy 3 exhaustion points per Warrior. You also need to consider whether the orcs have earned exhaustion points.

Classifying encounters can be rather easy. Other situations that can cause exhaustion need to be calculated in another matter. In addition to other damage they may cause, the effects of poisons, even if neutralized, can be exhausting. The same is true for a thief's work in disabling traps. Both poisons and traps have Encounter Levels (defined in their own sections of this book) that should be used in determining how exhausting they are. If the entire party is poisoned or falls victim to a trap, proceed as follows:

1. **Calculate the average level of your party:** Add the Character Levels of all of the PCs and divide by the number of the PCs in the party.
2. **Determine the Difficulty Factor** by subtracting the average level of the party from the Encounter Level of the poison or trap. The Difficulty Factor might end up being a negative number.

If only individual party members are affected, calculate separately for each member:

1. **Note the Character Level of the PC.**
2. **Determine the Difficulty Factor** by the Character Level of the PC from the Encounter Level of the poison or trap. The Difficulty Factor might end up being a negative number.

After you've determined the Difficulty Factor, you can assess the Difficulty (see table above) as follows:

### Difficulty for Poisons & Traps

Difficulty Factor	Difficulty
-3 or less	Very easy
-1 or -2	Easy
0	Balanced
1 or 2	Difficult
3 or more	Very difficult

There are, of course, other factors that need to be assessed in determining exhaustion. The following table is a beginning guideline. As your campaign continues, you'll doubtless come up with some more entries of your own.

### Difficulty for Exhausting Situations

Cause	Difficulty
Per first 24 hours without rest or sleep	Difficult <sup>1</sup>
Additional consecutive 24 hours without rest or sleep	Very difficult <sup>1</sup>
First noontime or evening without meal	Very easy <sup>2</sup>
Second noontime or evening without meal	Easy <sup>2</sup>
Additional consecutive noontime or evening without meal	Additional level <sup>2</sup>
Travel through difficult terrain, first four hours	Easy <sup>3</sup>
Travel through difficult terrain, each additional four hours on same day	Balanced <sup>2</sup>
Travel through very difficult terrain, first four hours	Balanced <sup>3</sup>
Travel through very difficult terrain, each additional four hours on same day	Difficult <sup>3</sup>
Travel in inclement weather, first four hours	Easy <sup>3</sup>
Travel through inclement weather, each additional four hours on same day	Balanced <sup>3</sup>
Travel through severe weather, first four hours	Balanced <sup>3</sup>
Travel through severe weather, each additional four hours on same day	Difficult <sup>3</sup>
Travel in extremely hot or cold weather, first four hours	Difficult <sup>3</sup>
Travel in extremely hot or cold weather, each additional hours	Very Difficult <sup>3</sup>
Travel between eight and 12 hours in one day	Very easy <sup>4</sup>
Travel between 12 and 16 hours in one day	Easy <sup>4</sup>
Travel between 16 and 20 hours in one day	Balanced <sup>4</sup>
Travel between 20 and 24 hours in one day	Difficult <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Periods without sleep stack or are cumulative.

<sup>2</sup> Periods without food stack or are cumulative.

<sup>3</sup> All terrain and weather factors stack or are cumulative.

<sup>4</sup> Periods of travel stack or are cumulative.

When one of more PCs becomes exhausted, there are several methods to lift or recover from that exhaustion:

- **Rest:** A full night's sleep (at least 7 hours) lifts all exhaustion points. Every 2 hours of rest (sleep not necessary) lift 25% of the total exhaustion points.
- **Herbal Medicine:** There are herbal teas and the like (defined in the *Players Guide*) that will lift varying degrees of exhaustion. Such cures *are not* cumulative. One herbal restorative will be effective every 20 hours. An herbal restorative becomes effective 2d4 + 10 minutes after being consumed. It is effective only if consumed slowly, at a rate no faster than 4 oz./125ml per minute (12 five-second rounds).
- **Magic:** Spells that heal wounds can be used to lift exhaustion. Such spells will lift twice as many exhaustion points as they will injury points.

First and foremost, it's your job to keep accurate track of the condition of both the PCs in your campaign and of those NPCs they are likely to encounter more than once. To this end, you can print the empty table on the following page use it to keep your tracking record. If you use a computer at the gaming table, electronic versions in formats for *OpenOffice.org* 3.0 and *Microsoft Excel* in the version 2000-2003 and 2007 also are available, each in standard spreadsheet and template versions.



## Injury/Exhaustion Tracking Table

[illegible]

## 2. Magic

### 2.1 Human Magic – a Game Master's Playground

In *Dungeons Daring*, humans (including halflings and half-elves), or perhaps more accurately, creatures with souls rather than spirits, have crossed the threshold of what hopefully will be a long history. That they are different from the First- and Secondborn, the races of elves, dwarves and giants, is becoming clear to all folk. Some of these differences already are becoming quite clear:

- Humans have become the shortest-lived of all folk.
- Humans have the ability to bring their own deities into existence, and they are doing so.

The latter is a significant point. In the age in which *Dungeons Daring* is set, no one has done significant research yet into the question of why humans have created gods for themselves or, more important, why they have the ability to give their gods great magical powers.

It may be that human sages have yet to advance to the point where they are prepared to examine such monumental issues. It also may be that none has posed the necessary questions to him- or herself yet. One must look in vain toward elves, dwarves or giants for the answers.

Elves consider the Thirdborn to be a puzzlement. They understand the inheriting race little. They see humans as a comical and inconsequential folk that, like a bee, rushes from flower to flower, takes nectar and then dies before it barely has begun to live. That humans have found a means to create immortal regional deities neither surprises nor interests the elves. Such deities are powerless in the elven domain and are of little consequence to the Firstborn.

Philosophers are rare among the dwarves and non-existent among giants. Neither folk is like to ponder the whys and wherefores of humans and their ways. One could pose some additional questions regarding halflings and half-elves. Both races, like humans, have souls, but neither has called deities into existence. However, there is little reason to think they could not do so if they wished to. Perhaps they will some day, in your campaign. That decision lies in your hands.

As of today, however, halflings tend to look amused upon their larger kin. They see humans as a temperamental, driven folk that drives on relentlessly toward its individual endings at death without ever stopping to enjoy the finer things of life. Halflings, on the other hand, are a rather hedonistic folk. They live for the pleasure of things. It's difficult to imagine how deities might enrich the lives of halflings.

Half-elves also tend to maintain distance from both of their half-kin. They consider their elven ancestors, even those who still live in the world, to be venerable beings but also creatures of a fading past. They consider their human half-kin to be rushed and unfocused creatures who, by and large, mean well, but who do little to make what they must of their inheritance.

Half-elves see themselves as the protectors of that inheritance, those who guard it until humans awaken and understand the legacy that has been left to them. The creation of deities by humans alarms the half-elves. They believe that deities lead to division and strife among the folk when it should be striving for unity and harmony. In that light, it is perhaps not so difficult to understand why half-elves have created no deities of their own.

That all may be well and good, but the fact remains that none among the living or undead understand exactly how humans have given their deities the power that they wield or what the source of that power is. Yet, it can be useful to you as a game master to know that which your PCs cannot learn immediately.

In the beginning, the light elves were born of the Sun and the Earth Mother. For that reason, they are called the Firstborn and the Children of the Light. Their nature is more of the Light than of the neutral Earth. It is their destiny to ascend to the heavens as stars, becoming in the end Creatures of the Light. The light elves draw the magical power of the sun directly and reflected from the moon into the Earth, where it wraps around the world's surface in invisible ley lines of energy. This power enhances but also conflicts with the natural energies of the Earth. Both the enhancement and the conflict are the work of the greatest member of the creator race, the Earth Mother.

One must remember that our world is her domain and not that of the sun. Her goal is neither Light nor Darkness but rather harmony. The Earth Mother is the spirit of our world. The power of the sun drawn into our world by the elves can exist here only through the will of the Earth Mother, and it must bend to her rules. The sun itself cannot decide how the power it gives will behave in our world. It only can accept the Earth Mother's decision or withdraw its power from the world.

The elves brought magic into the world as a power of the Light, but the Earth Mother channeled it in her own manner, making it available to the forces of the balance and the Darkness as well. She respected the magic of life as being inherent to the sun and denied its power to the Darkness. Thus, spellcasters and Clerics who serve the Darkness cannot use the magic of White Necromancy. But she also opened the power of magic to the Darkness, to make death magic of it. She denied this Black Necromancy to the servants of the Light.

Spellcasters and sages have learned much of the magic of the Light and that of the Darkness, but only the dwarves and giants have come to know the great body of magic between the two, the magic of the Earth, the Balance and harmony, which the Earth Mother has made available to all, and even they recognizes only facets of it. It is in this magic that the secret of godhood can be found.

Elves, as Children of the Light, can access the surface of the Earth Magic that they channel into their spells, songs and diction by drawing upon its relationship to Light Magic and their own intellectual understanding of such things. Dwarves and giants have a natural affinity for Earth Magic, but both folk are more physically than intellectually talented. They have learned to access Earth Magic only through runes.

Humans, on the other hand, are Children of the Earth. Each of them is free to turn to the Light or the Darkness, or they can choose the neutral path between the two toward balance and harmony, which is what the Earth Mother hopes of them.

Within humans – and that includes halflings and half-elves – is a latent affinity for Earth Magic akin to the light elves' affinity for Light Magic. This affinity still is asleep within the human race. It has manifested itself until now only in the empowerment of human deities, although neither humans nor their deities understand the power that humans have tapped to create their gods. It was an act of belief, not an act of knowledge. Yet in most and perhaps all cases, the worshippers' gift of Earth Magic is the true source of the deities' powers.

The deities who are servants of the Darkness are the only exception, if such deities exist in your campaign. They may gain their power directly from the Darkness, in which case, White Necromantic magic is barred to them, but they can employ Black Necromancy.

Because this power still sleeps in humans, halflings and half-elves, it gives you an opportunity to do interesting things in your campaign. The hidden power of Earth Magic that makes gods of worship and belief might start to be tapped in other manners by humans, halflings and half-elves in your world. Perhaps some of them may uncover the first few secrets of this latent magic.

But remember that whatever happens, it is a power that slowly is passing from the world. It may not be gone until your PCs have been 1000 years in their graves, but it diminishes constantly. All magic is dependent upon the Light Magic drawn into the world from the sun by the light elves. The fair folk are fading from the world, gradually ascending to their place in the heavens as stars. No new elves are being born. With each elf that passes, the power of magical energy grows less.

Wizards, wands and deities are not the long range destiny of humans. Mankind is slowly headed toward a future without magic, one that is dominated by the power of waterwheels, smokestacks and steam kettles. Perhaps your PCs can delay the coming of that time to a certain degree.

## 2.2 Conflicting Magical and Physical Energy Sources

Two different types of energy are at the core of the *Dungeons Daring* environment. On one level, we find the purely physical or mechanical energy that we know from the real world. Such energy is inherent to the world itself. It is neither good nor bad; it simply is there for any and all to use.

On another level, there also is the foreign type of energy that men call magic. It is not native to the world. Its roots are in the sun, the Spirit of Light. This energy is drawn into the *Dungeons Daring* world by the first Children of the Sun, the light elves. It is not a part of the world. Rather, it has been brought into it, and to a limited extent, the world has embraced it. In doing so, the world has opened channels to magic for all, good, bad, and even the worst foes of the Light, whence magic comes.

As long as the elves continue to draw the force of the Light into the world, magic will remain for those with the skill to grasp and use it. But our world is not the destiny of the fair folk. Their true home is in the stellar constellations of the heavens. Once the last of the elves has ascended, magic will vanish from the world forever. Fortunately, for those who live in our age, it appears that the last days of the elves are in a distant future.

The two types of energy sometimes conflict with one another. They seem to tolerate one another as long as no physical energy is converted from one mechanical form to another. There are spellcasters who have attempted to work magic near a mill, where the power of running water is converted by a waterwheel into that force the turns a grindstone. Sometimes the wizard's spell goes awry. Sometimes the mill breaks down in one way or another. Sometimes both go wrong. This is the classic magic vs. science conflict found in many great works of fantasy literature.

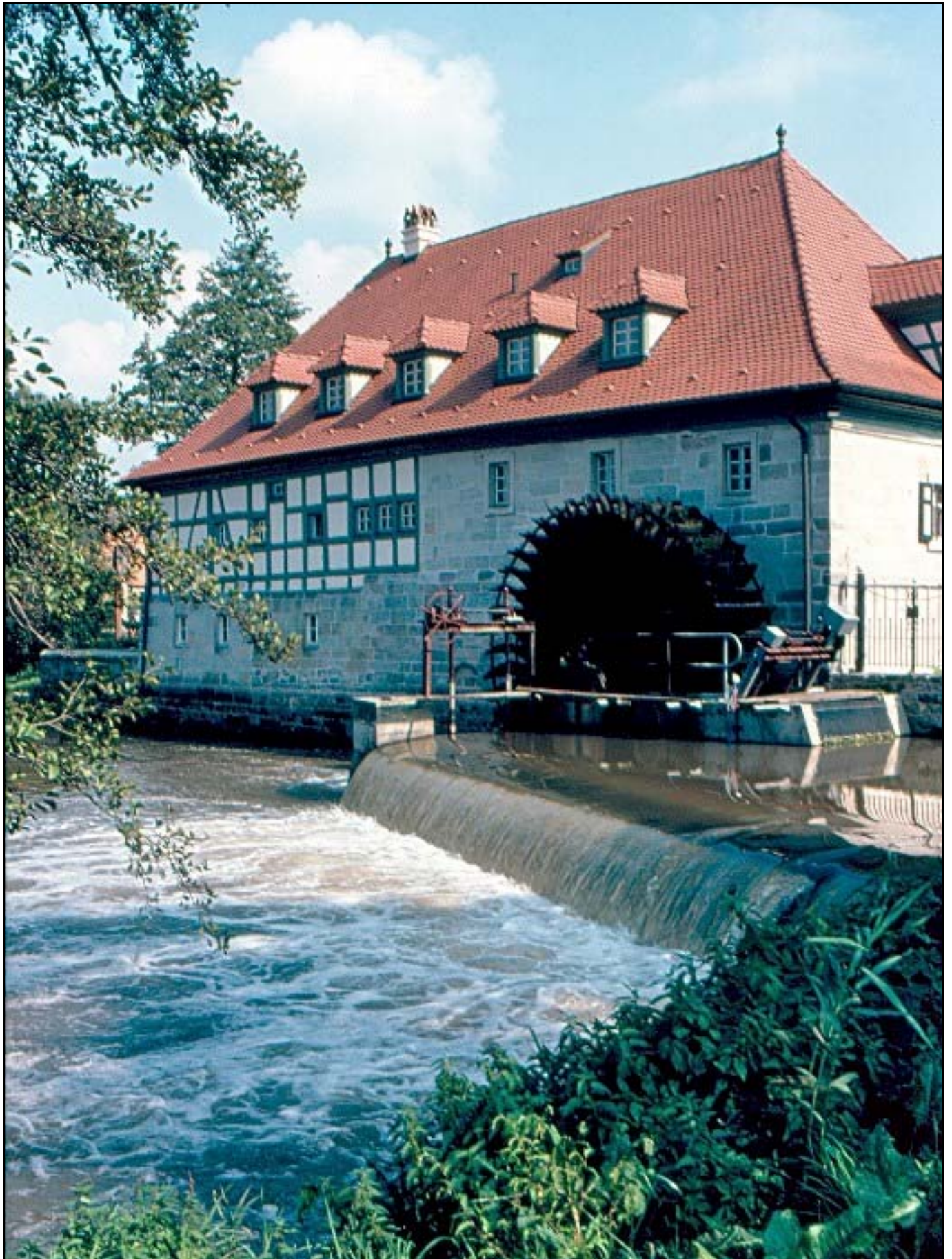
The conflict between types of energy and magic in *Dungeons Daring* is a point that requires considerable attention from you, the game master. If you design your own adventures and you have mills that run on water power or other businesses that convert heat into other forms of energy, you should make conflict checks when magic comes into the area of effect of these operations.

Before you can perform such a check, you need to establish an effective spell point level for the physical energy-converting operation. The best way to do that is to consider what work the operation that converts physical energy is doing and then compare that with spells that would consume approximately the same level of energy.

A simple village mill's waterwheel, for instance, probably would consume energy equivalent to a spell that uses 2 spell points. For the purposes of our check, then, we would give the mill an equivalent spell point level of 2. Then proceed as follows:

- The magic user rolls 1d20 and adds the spell point cost of his or her spell plus his or her bonus for Magical Aptitude.
- You roll for the mill with 1d20, add the equivalent spell point cost that you've set and the miller's Mechanical Aptitude bonus.
- You compare the two results.
- If both are the same, nothing happens.
- If the magic user has the higher check, the magic works but some problem occurs at the mill.
- If your check for the miller is higher, the spell goes awry but the mill grinds on as ever.





*Mills and magic – a source of conflict*

## 2.3 Conflicting Conventional Magical and Runic Sources

When adventurers have attempted to trade magical items to dwarves in return for dwarven wares, they've been quickly rebuffed. The stout folk claims that its runic magic is the only reliable kind. After years away from the sun in the depths of our world, dwarves lost their ability to use the Magic of the Light. They now look almost superstitiously upon such magic, calling it *fey elven work*.

This may seem strange, because the dwarves that survive today either once were light elves or they descended from first generation dwarves who had evolved from their original light elven nature into the race that came to be known as black elves and later as dwarves.

Nonetheless, the stout folk did have numerous dubious experiences with the magic of the Light before developing its current negative views of it. In the last section, we read about the conflicts between conventional magic and machines that convert one kind of physical energy into another. Here, we come upon another conflict.

Dwarves use fire as one of their main tools, smelting ore and forging metal with it. This triggers no conflict with items of conventional elven magic, because the fires of the furnaces produce natural heat that does its work directly in the foundries and forges. With time, however, the dwarves also came up with another idea for channeling fire's energy. They began making large, enclosed kettles that they filled with water.

The dwarves heated the water and then channeled the pressure of steam released from the kettle into metal pistons that could be used to turn their machinery. In doing so, the stout folk had managed to convert the heat of fire into the potential energy of steam pressure and that energy into mechanical energy.

However, they also discovered a secondary effect that was most unpleasant. Whenever they were near their steam machines and attempted to use items of conventional magic that had been made by the elves, either the magic would go awry or the steam systems would malfunction. In less serious cases, pipes that were under steam pressure would explode. In the worst cases, the steam boilers themselves would explode, leading to death and destruction.

This phenomenon and research by dwarven scholars in the age that had run parallel to the harnessing of steam led the dwarves gradually to abandon their objects of elven magic. During this time, dwarven sages in the depths of their halls already had been studying the characteristics of the basic elements of which the world is made: Earth, Fire, Water and Air.

They came to understand the form of primal life that was within these elements and the power that such life can exert. They also learned that these powers can be addressed through the creation of symbols that represent the patterns of the elemental powers. Thousands of years passed, and the dwarves eventually developed an entire system of symbols that could draw upon the four elements and then other substances that were subsets of the elements.

It was in this time that the Darkness began corrupting some elves and mutating them into the ancestors of today's orc tribes. The evil orcs sought refuge in the mountains and came into inevitable contact and conflict with the dwarves. The blood of both folk flowed. The dwarves then discovered that if they cut the elemental symbols that they had created into stone or tables of beechwood and stained these symbols with the blood of their orc enemy, that they could make keys to the concentrated natural power of the elements, a power that was similar in many ways to conventional magic, but one that came from the earth rather than the sun.

Thus came runic magic into our world. The dwarves also quickly discovered that there is no conflict between runic magic and natural energy forms that are converted or transmitted. Runic magic can be employed without difficulty in the vicinity of steam machines, waterwheel-powered mills and the like. However, runic magic has the same conflicts with conventional magic that converted energy does. The two do not mix.

The dwarves first discovered the secrets of runic magic, but they are not the only folk to use it. The dwarves were born as elves. Although they evolved into Children of the Earth, they needed to learn the secrets of the earth rather than gaining them instinctively. The opposite was true with one of the dwarves' enemies, the giants. They were born as Children of the Earth, and they have a natural understanding of its resources.



Quite instinctively, some giants began to understand the secrets of the elemental powers and of the methods that could be used to call those powers into runic symbols. However, the giants also were fashioned as creatures of physical rather than mental prowess. The smith's and miner's crafts were their intended destinies, not conventional or runic magic.

As a result, giants are somewhat limited in their ability to cut and stain runic staves. The large folk works only with runic tables in beechwood. Unlike the dwarves, they do not cut and stain runes in stone tablets. In addition, no runestainer of the giants ever has succeeded in cutting and staining a staff that expends more than 10 magic points.

However, the issue of magic is less straightforward among giants than it is with dwarves. Most giants use no magic at all, but among those who do, some cut and stain runes while the few intellectual elite among giants are sorcerers. They are subject to the same problems as dwarves when conventional magic and runic magic meet. Suffice it to say that most giant tribes tolerate either runestainers or sorcerers but not both. In those rare cases when a tribe has both, they usually are kept distant from one another.

Although it happens only rarely, PCs sometimes come into possession of items of dwarven or giant runic magic. Most humans will know little about runes and nothing about the conflict between runic and conventional magic. Sometimes a PC group will find itself in deep trouble with magic going awry, when one member of the party uses conventional magic item and another has a magical runic object. Problems also can occur when hostile groups meet in melee combat, and each group has magical items of an opposing type.

These conflicts require attention from you, the game master. You need to make conflict checks whenever conventional and runic magic near each other or are used against one another. You make a check whenever two opposing objects come within 20ft/6m of one another or when two opposing objects are used against one another, regardless of distance.

Magical items all have an effective spell or magic point level. You must compare the two and then proceed as follows:

- The user of conventional magic rolls 1d20 and adds to the result the spell point cost of his or her spell or magical item.
- The user of runic magic rolls 1d20 and adds to the result the magic point cost at creation of his or her runic item.
- You compare the two results.
- If both are the same, nothing happens. All items function normally.
- If the conventional magical item has the higher check, the magic works but some problem occurs with the runic item.
- If the runic item has the higher check, the runic staff works but some problem occurs with the item of conventional magic.

When items of conflicting magic are within 10ft/3m of each other, you can use the following additional optional results:

- The winning item has a doubled effect, if that is possible.
- The magic is banned from the losing item.

## 2.4 Iron, Lead, Magic, Elves and Undead,

In making the world, the creator race sought to achieve balance. As a part of its attempt, two different subsets of the earth element were created that repelled or resisted conventional magic, iron and lead. Each has a different effect and a different cause for it.

Iron and lead, like all other natural substances, have the life spirit of the earth in them. This is a primordial and largely latent spirit, but it results from a form of life. Life also is the force that transmits the energy of magic, regardless of type.

### Iron

There are few substances in which the life of the earth spirit is as weak as in iron. On the other hand, iron has electromagnetic properties that are alien to other minerals. The dwarves call iron a cold and lifeless metal and they dislike it. They do not use it for themselves, but they do mine and smelt it and sell raw iron to humans. Some halflings also use it. Most half-elves will have nothing to do with iron, although it has no known adverse effects upon them.

Iron has many strange effects beyond its magnetic properties. It strongly hinders the healing effects of many herbs. The same properties that give iron its magnetic facet also cause chaos when iron and conventional magic meet one another. Those conflicting properties tend to cancel one another. Sometimes they do that. Sometimes they balance and do nothing to each other. But in most cases, iron overwhelms magic or magic overwhelms iron.

This also will be the case with alloys of iron, such as steel, if they have been invented in your campaign. Iron alloys should be treated for magical purposes just as if they were pure iron. However, chemical compounds of iron are not affected. Blood contains iron in compound form, and it is an excellent vessel for and conductor of magic.

Iron is deadly to light elves, dark elves and most draugs. With elves, iron is poisonous. Draugs are slain by iron because of its anti-magical properties. Undead are magical creatures. Necromantic magic rather than life powers the lifeless bodies of draugs. When a draug's body is wounded by iron, this magical binding is broken. The body falls in its true lifelessness to the ground, and the draug's soul hovers helpless and without physical form in the Dimension of Death, perhaps forever, but at least until new necromantic magic is used to bind the soul anew with a lifeless body.

However, it is difficult under many circumstances to bring iron into use in battle against draugs or elves. Armies can do it, because they can keep distance between iron-bearing Warriors and spellcasters. However, a band of adventurers traveling together may have difficulty doing the same. Anytime an iron-bearer comes within 20ft/6m of a magic user, the latter's magic can be corrupted.

**Magic Corruption** can take place *anytime* iron is within 20ft/6m of a magic user casting spells, a member of a Bardic class performing magical song or diction, a Cleric performing a rite or an item of conventional magic. However, iron does not interfere with runic magic. In the following table, the two measuring sticks are the weight of the iron present and the distance between the iron and the magic user

### Magic Corruption Results

1d20 Result	To 30 lbs/15kg, to 10ft/3m	To 30 lbs/15kg to 10ft/3m	+30 lbs/15kg to 20ft/6m	+30 lbs/15kg, to 20ft/6m
1-40	1	2	None	1
41-80	2	3	1	2
81-100	3	4	2	3

## Results:

- None: The magic functions normally.
- 1. The game master secretly rolls 1d20. A result of 1-10 means that the spell or magic points are lost if a spell is being cast but the spell or magic does not work. In the case of a magical item with one use, that use is expended. In the case of a magical item with charges, the intended number of charges is used. A result of 11-20 means that the magic functions normally.
- 2. The game master secretly rolls 1d20. A result of 1-10 means that the magic's effect is reduced by 10%. A result of 11-20 means that the effect is increased by 10%. With magic where such a result is impossible, use the results for No. 1 instead.
- 3. The game master secretly rolls 1d20. A result of 1-10 means that the magic affects the caster or user of the magical item instead of the target or area designated. A result of 11-20 means that the magic functions normally.
- 4. The magic misfires. Another spell, song, diction or rite that the magic user can use or perform is unleashed instead, in the case of a spell. In the case of a magical item, a random magical effect is unleashed. Which magic that is, is the game master's choice.

## Special Situations for the Game Master

Sometimes there are special circumstances that may further affect conflicts between conventional magic and iron. It may be that a prisoner in an iron cage attempts to use magic or that someone else attempts to use magic upon him or her. First of all, use these guidelines:

- Once the magical effect comes within 10ft/3m of the cage bars, make the indicated check. If it indicates magical failure, the issue is resolved.
- If the check indicates that the magic functions normally, then calculate what the open area to iron ratio is at the point where the magic would enter or leave the cage. If you have 10% iron and 90% air or some other substance that transmits magic, the spell has an additional 10% chance of malfunctioning. Roll 1d%. 1 to 10% fails. If you have 90% iron and 10% open area, the failure chance is 90%. Magic cannot penetrate an enclosure that is 100% iron without openings.

There well may be other situations that are not completely covered here that will involve the conflict between magic and iron. If you see such situations in your campaign, use the guidelines on this page and the previous page to establish base points for calculating your own chances for failure and success.

## Lead

Lead is a soft metal. It does not resist magic; it simply absorbs it, much as a sponge absorbs water. It never reflects magic back upon its user. It never causes magic to go awry. It never causes random effects. Anytime any part of a magical effect comes within 1ft/30cm of lead, the lead will absorb it entirely. This effect occurs only with lead in its elemental form. Neither chemical compounds with lead nor lead alloys have this effect. Bronze is a lead alloy, and it is an excellent conductor of and vessel for magic.

## Special Situations for the Game Master

Magic cannot penetrate a container of solid lead or with openings where the outer edge of the magical effect, when passing through the opening, would be within 1ft/30cm of the lead. If the magic could go through the opening without coming within 1ft/30cm of the lead but it still would come within 2ft/60cm of the lead, there is a 50% chance (1-10 on 1d20) that the magic will be absorbed.

## 2.5 Ley Lines and Ley Stones



**Ancient elven ley stone**

Product Identity

Picture how a globe of the real world is caged in equally spaced horizontal latitudinal lines and in longitudinal lines that converge at the North and South Poles and spread farther apart as they approach the equator. The ley lines of the power of Light Magic that also are the source of earth and Dark magic envisioned for *Dungeons Daring* are similar, except the vertical lines also are equally spaced, ending at East and West Magical Poles.

The world envisioned for *Dungeons Daring* is divided into eastern and western hemispheres with large continental land masses in each hemisphere. The East and West Magical Poles are upon the equator in the oceans between the two hemispheres. Light magic has its strongest concentration at each of these four poles. In fact, it is so strong at the poles that draugs, demons and devils that come within 50 miles/80km of a pole are destroyed immediately and permanently. Their spirits, or souls in the case of draugs, are dissolved and revert directly into the pool of life, beyond the grasp of the Darkness.

These lines of magic are known as *ley lines*, taken from *leynstigur* in the old tongue, which means *secret paths*. Ley lines are not a natural consequence of the drawing of Light magic from the sun to the earth. They are the work of the first light elves, who channeled the magic they drew into the world along these lines.

These ancient elves discovered that life exists not only in elves, animals and plants, but also that there is more latent form or life or something akin to it in the soil, sand and stone that are the foundation of the world. They also found that there can be bindings made between earth, sand, stone and the force of Light magic. Such bindings make a great conduit of the magical force and are indeed the ingredient that draws a part of the magic into the earth to become independent earth magic.

The light elves laid the ley lines in a time when they first became aware of the power of the Darkness and the threat it posed to them and to the Light. With the great knowledge they had gained, the early elves began laying standing stones to fortify the ley lines and to fix their paths. If the worst come to the worst, the elven magi determined, an elf fleeing servants of the Darkness would find that the ley lines would provide him or her with a safe path, one that could blast a pursuer from the Darkness into oblivion.

The ley lines were laid in the earliest days after the elves drew the sun's magic into the world. However, the later ley stones were a project that the fair folk never completed. It was in the time of the stones' laying that the discord began among the elven folk that eventually led to the departure of the Dark Elves from the kin and the Light. These events overshadowed efforts to complete the setting of ley stones, a work that never was completed. As a result, there are many parts of the world where there are no ley stones and never have been any.

Ley lines and ley stones have a number of effects:

- Draugs, devils, demons and even dragons that have allied with the Darkness will come only reluctantly within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone. Within that range, they lose all of their magical powers and all use of magic. Even their magical items become temporarily non-magical. A dragon within that range also is unable to use its breath weapon.

- A vampire cannot of its own power come within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone. It can come within this range or cross a ley line only if it is in its own coffin resting upon its native soil and it is being transported by some other creature or force. If a vampire is forced outside of its coffin to enter this zone against his or her will, it will be destroyed as if it had entered sunlight.
- Trolls that come within 100ft/30m of a ley line are blinded until they pass out of range again. If they come within 500ft/150m of a ley stone, they are turned to stone immediately, just as if they had come into daylight. Their spirits are immediately dissolved to enter the pool of life, beyond the grasp of the Darkness. Ley lines and stones are among the main reasons that trolls began early on to burrow and to maintain networks of tunnels which run beneath ley lines.
- Orcs, ogres, worgs and other servants of the Darkness (but not all evil creatures) that come within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone suffer immediate penalties of -4 to Strength and Stamina, and this loss continues until they leave that area.
- Dark elves who come within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone suffer discomfort and unease, destroying their initiative bonuses and giving them a Dexterity penalty of -1.
- Other draugs, devils, demons and even dragons that have allied with the Darkness, and orcs, ogres, worgs and other servants of the Darkness that touch a ley stone are destroyed immediately and permanently. Their spirits, or souls in the case of draugs, are dissolved and revert directly into the pool of life, beyond the grasp of the Darkness.
- The field of force of a ley line is cylindrical. It also extends 100ft/30m to both sides of the line and above and below the earth's surface. The field of force of a ley stone is spherical. It extends 500ft/150m outward from the stone in all directions including above and below the earth's surface.
- The strength of the field of force at a ley line junction, where east-west and north-south ley lines cross, doubles cylindrically. From the junction point, the effects extend out 200ft/60m in all directions.
- The strength of the field of force at a ley line junction where a ley stone has been set quadruples. From the junction point, the effects extend out 2,000ft/600m in all directions. You should note that in areas where ley stones are to be found, the elves did set most ley stones at junctions.
- All surviving ley stones retain their effects, although not all of them are visible. Many ley stones now are buried beneath the earth's surface. In some cases, this was caused by landslides, mud washed over them by floods or other natural shifts in the earth as well as unnatural events that changed the landscape. In some cases, where ley stones were set in light soils, the stones simply sank beneath the surface with time. The stone itself continues to be the center of its own area of effect. Thus, a ley stone that now is beneath 10ft/3m of soil has an area of effect extending 490ft/147m above the surface and 510ft/153m below the surface.

Magic-using servants of the Darkness have attempted to develop objects which will deface ley stones and negate their power. They are unable to employ such devices themselves, but they do at times seek evildoers who are not directly servants of the Darkness to do this work for them. In a few cases, they have succeeded, but in most cases, their agents have been destroyed by the magical power in the stones.

Beyond their channeling of magical power and their negative impact upon the servants of the Darkness, ley lines and ley stones form the dimensional bridge that light elves use to cross from the Dimension of Life into the Middle Dimension and back.

Up until this time, only light elves have succeeded in making such crossings unaided. However, some light elves fear that the dark elves might one day learn the secret of using the ley lines as a bridge. Other elves disagree, saying that the dark elves are unable to use the magic of the Light and therefore are barred from using the ley lines to cross dimensional barriers.

From the North Pole to the South Pole there are 1,250 horizontal ley lines, with another 1,250 vertical ley lines from the East to the West Magical pole. All ley lines are 10 miles/16km apart from one another.

## Ley Lines and Ley Stones in Gaming

Ley lines and ley stones offer you as a game master the opportunity to bring some interesting and mysterious elements into your adventure. The root of these possibilities is in the fact that your PCs will know nothing about ley lines or their existence, and they will know nothing about ley stones that they may see, other than that they probably are ancient works of the elves.

There are no human, halfling or half-elven sages who know any lore of the ley lines and stones. This knowledge also is beyond the scope of members of Bardic classes in today's world. The only opportunity that a PC might have to learn anything at all about ley lines and ley stones is in the elven domain in the Middle Dimension.

To get there, light elves would need some reason to take the PC across the border into the Middle Dimension. However, once a PC arrives in the elven dimension, it remains extremely unlikely that he or she will learn anything about ley lines or ley stones.

As a game master, you need to remember that the *leynstígur* are more secret paths than ever these days. They are the key to the elven kingdom's security from iron. Even if your PCs are taken into the Middle Dimension, and even if they succeed in forming close relations and bonds with the light elves there (which is unlikely), it is very doubtful that the elves will reveal anything about ley lines or ley stones to them.

The secret of the ley lines is the key to the elves' survival in a world where iron is spreading, and they will see no need for the PCs to have knowledge of them. The only clue that the PCs might gain to the existence of ley lines could be a magical *Dimensional Talisman* that the light elves might give to the PCs to enable them to return of their own will to the Middle Dimension. However, the elves only rarely part with such talismans.

**NOTE:** *Statistics for Ley Stones and Dimensional Talismans as magical items can be found below in Section II.2.6.3 Catalog of Special Ensorcelled Items.*

Here are several adventure ideas and hooks involving ley lines and ley stones that can play an interesting role in your campaign:

- **Mysterious Locations:** This facet of ley lines probably will come to the attention of any PC group sooner or later. An intelligent group of PCs adventuring in troll country should notice with a bit of experience that there simply are places where trolls will not go. The PCs may be the desperate objects of a night hunt by hundreds of trolls, only to see that the trolls suddenly stop dead in their tracks. The trolls will continue to fire range weapons at the PCs, but they will not proceed. Slowly, some of the trolls will vanish into the earth and then a bit later appear on the other side of the PCs. From there, they may continue firing range weapons at the PCs, but the trolls will not come within 100ft/30m of them. If ancient elven stones are near the PCs, the trolls will remain 500ft/150m distant from the PCs. If the PCs can protect themselves from the trolls' range weapons, they simply can wait out the trolls through the night. Shortly before the first hint of dawn in the eastern sky, the trolls will slink into the ground, and the PCs can proceed on their way until the trolls return after sunset. If your PCs go into troll country regularly, they probably will begin to note safe points and seek these out before the sun sets. Smart PCs, with time, will deduce that the ancient elven stones all are safe points. Other adventurers experienced in troll country also can advise the PCs to seek out the elven stones as points of sanctuary. However, no one ever will be able to explain to the PCs why things function in this manner, although some NPCs doubtless will manufacture explanations that are false.
- **Unsated Blood Thirst:** If the PCs are being pursued by a vampire, it will react in much the same manner as a troll when it comes near a ley stone or a ley line. Vampires will not cross a ley line except, perhaps, by flying over it. Even then, the PCs are safe from the vampire, as long as they remain where they are. Like the trolls, the vampire will have to flee back to its coffin before sunrise. However, if there are wolves that already are under its influence or worgs that it commands can reach, the vampire can call them to attack the PCs. The ley lines and stones will not hold back wolves or worgs, but worgs will have the same penalties in a ley zone as orcs or ogres, and they will enter a ley field only reluctantly, except to cross it quickly. Wolves are unaffected.
- **Restless Foes:** This situation may come to your PCs' notice a bit more slowly than the effects of ley lines upon trolls. With time, the PCs should notice that many (but not all) types of creatures that they consider to be evil seem to suddenly become uncomfortable fighting the PCs at certain places. When this occurs, they often attempt to force the PCs into other positions, sometimes at added risk to themselves.



The PCs will not be able to see any strategic sense in these actions. However, if they're observant, the PCs may note that certain foes that are in this situation also are weakened in their combat abilities and suddenly stop using magic. Draugs, devils, demons, orcs, ogres, worgs and other servants of the Darkness all fall into this category. Dragons are in this category too. The PCs might gradually come to the conclusion that there are places where dragons, for no apparent reason, cease using their breath weapons.

- **Across the Border:** Light elves rarely ever enter into the Dimension of Life these days. Few humans, halflings or half-elves see an elf at anytime during their own lives. In the unusual event that they do encounter an elf, it is more likely it will be a dark elf rather than a light elf. On those rare occasions when a light elf crosses the invisible dimensional border, it arrives well warded against the effects of iron, seeking out one or more humans to do things that the elven kingdom wants to be done. Afterward, such an elf will return as quickly as possible to its own dimension. If an elf appears in a human's life and bids it to do deeds that the fair folk wishes to be done, a human always should be aware that the elves do things solely to the benefit of their own desires and goals. Human values are a fleeting thing of little value to the light elves. Nonetheless, a human who serves the elves usually can expect to be well rewarded, but he or she also must be aware that his or her deeds are in the service of the elven kingdom. Furthermore, a human who fulfills the wishes of the light elves probably never will know the true purpose of his or her deeds.



*Even in the darkest depths of night, the light elves draw sun magic from the moon.*

## 2.6 Works of Conventional Magic

### 2.6.1 You and Works of Magic in Your Campaign

The full information on creating magical spells, songs, diction, rites and items can be found in the *Players Guide*. Your job as game master is to see to it that all the conditions are fulfilled. Players often have an understandable tendency to underestimate costs and caster levels and, when developing new spells, to underestimate spell or magic point costs. Some also have a tendency to develop spells beyond the limits of a PC's casting abilities.

A hypothetical example would be a *Destroy the World* spell. Such a spell is far greater in power than any spell, song, diction or rite that expends 15 spell or magic points. It simply exceeds the abilities of any PC. Not even the great elven archwizards who have lived for more than a million years could work such a spell, although they can do things with their absolute magic that are beyond the abilities of mortal magic users. If anyone at all could destroy the world in a single blow, it would be the Earth Mother alone.

One of your prime responsibilities as game master is to maintain perspective and proportion in your campaign. You need to do this within your group and within the relationship your group has to the part of the world in which you're gaming. Nothing brings a PC group so quickly out of synchronization internally or externally as an overloading of your PCs with magic. Too much magic can quickly turn a 1<sup>st</sup> level character into a *de facto* 5<sup>th</sup> level character.

If only one member of your PC group is overloaded in such a manner, it will diminish the ability of your other players to enjoy the game. If all or most of the group is overloaded, foes will be defeated too easily, which gradually will make your campaign boring. It's entirely up to you to prevent this. If you're inexperienced as a game master, here are some ideas:

- In a sense, you have given and will continue to give your PCs everything that they have.
- Your PCs can acquire only those magical items that you make available to them. If a 1<sup>st</sup> level party finds a treasure that includes a +5 sword, a powerful magical ring and a magical skeleton key that opens all locks without trouble, you no longer have a genuine 1<sup>st</sup> level party. Instead, you have a group of PCs that are completely out of synchronization with the rest of your adventure.
- PCs who acquire too much magic or other valuables have too much money. It's expensive to buy things and *very* expensive to make works of magic. If your PCs have too much of either, you've put too much money into their pockets.
- Anytime you place a treasure somewhere, think carefully about what you put into it. If the PCs have earned the treasure fair and square, they're entitled to have it without any manipulations on your part to take it away again. You can avoid learning that you've given your PCs too much by mentally weighing every item you include in the treasure and ask what immediate, long-term and secondary effects their possession of the item in question might have. If the answer is that an item makes the PCs too powerful for too long a time, don't put the item into the treasure. Put only those things into treasures that are unlikely to become lasting burdens upon your campaign.

Sometimes the demands of your campaign make it necessary for you to place magical items into a treasure so that the PCs can successfully make their way through an episode of your campaign. However, you usually need to do this in a manner that gives your PCs the magic at the point that is crucial without their continuing to have it later, when it would make them overly powerful.

A wise game master usually places items of temporary magic into a treasure rather than those with permanent ensorcellments. This not only is a limiting factor, but it also has logic to it. Permanently ensorcelled items are difficult and expensive to create. They generally are in short supply. The owner of a permanent magical item usually is bearing it.

Temporary items are created for use at need. When the owner has no immediate use for the item, he or she stores it until he or she does need it. These storage places are the stashes where adventurers often find treasure, including not only items of temporary magic but also reserve items of monetary value. Items of permanent magic also might be in a treasure, but these usually are special items that no one, including the owner, would use on a regular basis.

Here are some tips for putting items into a treasure:

- If it's possible, put the needed magic into the treasure in the form of a potion. Once the potion is consumed, the magic is free to do the needed job, and both the magic and potion are gone.
- If the needed magic is a spell that can't be ensorcelled into a potion, put one or two charges (but not all 10) into a rod. If possible, pick a spell that does the job but that is above the ability of your magic users to cast. That way, they're unable to recharge the staff. When they reach the level where they can recharge it, the day-to-day demands of adventuring will keep them from doing so often, and their need for the rod is diminished, if they can cast the spell themselves.
- If you need to beef up the ability of a PC in a Fighter class for a certain encounter or series of encounters, don't put a permanent magical weapon into the treasure. Place a weapon ensorcelled with temporary magic into the treasure, one with just enough charges to do the necessary job.

## **Materials Suitable for Ensorcellment**

As already discussed, lead and iron cannot be ensorcelled, although their reactions to magic are different:

- Lead simply doesn't accept magic. It doesn't resist it or damage it. But lead objects cannot be ensorcelled, and magic cannot pass through lead. This effect does not occur with chemical compounds that contain lead, nor does it apply to lead alloys, such as bronze, which is an excellent vessel for magic.
- Iron resists magic and can neutralize it. Iron objects cannot be ensorcelled, nor can other metals that are alloys of iron. However, this effect does not apply to chemical compounds of iron. Blood contains iron in a compound form, and it is an excellent vessel for magic.

The following materials all are good recipients and conductors of magic. In most cases, they can be ensorcelled immediately:

- Wood and other parts of the rowan, beech and yew trees, of the elderberry, hazel and holly bushes and of the mistletoe parasite, if they are an essential part of the object being ensorcelled. Unnecessarily staining an item with elderberry juice will not make it more receptive to magic, however.
- Bronze, copper, gold, silver and the blood of elves, dwarves, giants, humans, halflings, half-elves, beasts and mutations.
- Body parts of unicorns, demons, dragons and some other magical mutations.

Ensorcelling items made of other materials takes 11-30 (1d20+10) days time for the magic to be absorbed. If the period extends that long, an absorption check for Magical Aptitude (1d20 + Magical Aptitude Bonus) must be made on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> days against a DL equal to:

**10 + combined Caster Level of the spell(s) being ensorcelled to a maximum of 15.**

If either of these checks fails, the ensorcellment fails and must begin anew.

## **Creating Miscellaneous Magical Items**

Given the right set of spells, abilities, skills and talents, one conceivably could create almost any magical item one could imagine. To ensorcel a miscellaneous magic item, the caster must have the talent Create Magical Item and know the spell or spells that he or she wishes to cast into the item to achieve the desired end.

That often is the problem many spellcasters face. They know what they want to do, but finding the right combination of things to do it can be difficult. This is a task that the player of spellcasting characters needs to work out with you, the game master.

The biggest problem of all is finding the right spells to reach the PC's goal. It's a good idea to start a search for unknown but needed spells in a city and with a good bankroll at hand. Some of the better NPC spellcasters in your campaign may work for the ruling nobility and be uninterested in a PC's business. But usually one will find independent wizards in a city who never can get their hands on enough money to pay for all of the research they want to do.

Such wizards often bolster their income by having their apprentices copy scrolls containing spells, which they, in turn, are willing to sell at a handsome price. If they can't sell a PC the spells that he or she is seeking, they may be willing to settle for a little less money in return for information on where one can go to get what one is seeking.

If that fails, the PC may be looking for a spell that no one ever has developed yet. In that case, he or she may have to research the new spell and create it. The only other alternative is to commission another spellcaster to develop it, if one has the money needed to pay for such services.

## **Magically Enhanced Weapons**

Many RPGs see weapons and to a certain extent armor as a means to extend magic beyond sorcerers, wizards and other spellcasters to make every character a magic user to a certain extent. The *Dungeons Daring* approach prefers the idea that fighters fight, thieves steal, spell users work magic, etc. If you disagree with this viewpoint, you'll be glad to know that there's nothing whatsoever in the *Dungeons Daring* guidelines to bind you to this system.

Your players learn only how to use the spell *Ensorcel Arms and Armor* to give weapons and armor plus points. The spell can do more, but your spellcasters will learn that only when and if you wish them to do so. In truth, a spell user who has access to this spell also can use it to ensorcel spell powers into weapons and armor. To do so, use the following formula to determine the number of spell points needed to ensorcel spells into a weapon or into armor:

$$1 + \text{spell or magic points of the spell being ensorcelled into the weapon} + \text{number of plus points}$$

If you want to charge the weapon or armor, you can create up to 50 charges by casting the spell into the weapon or armor up to 50 times.

If you want the magic to be permanent in the weapon or armor, you must cast *Ensorcel Arms and Armor* a second time after the spell or spells have been cast into it, with an expenditure of 10 spell points.

The process follows this sequence:

- *Ensorcel Arms and Armor* is used upon the target weapon or armor.
- The spell or spells intended for the weapon or armor are casted into it. *Ensorcel Arms and Armor* prepares the weapon or armor to receive this spell or these spells, preventing their being triggered.
- Cast *Ensorcel Arms and Armor* a second time at a cost of 10 spell points, if the ensorcellment is to be permanent.

That said, we encourage you to limit almost all of the special powers you give to weapons and armors to a bare minimum. Think of the great fantasy literature and how rare such weapons are. Great swords like *Mímung* or *Dáinsleif* (Dáin's Heirloom) are powerful weapons that were forged for monumental figures of the old myths, sagas and legends.

If you place such weapons in your adventure where your PCs can find them, remember that these weapons and all of their powers will be omnipresent in your campaign, perhaps to the very end. Sometimes, special weapons and armor will be exactly what the story of your adventure needs. If it is, be sure to add them. If not, leave the *non-plus-point* magic up to your magic user.

## 2.6.2 Catalog of Ensorcelled Items

The following catalog gives you samples of known magical items. It should help as a guideline in making decisions on your players' proposal for ensorcelling objects, and it also can help you put together magic items for NPCs or for treasures. You shouldn't feel bound by any of the definitions in this catalog, but instead consider these definitions to be guidelines.

### Ball of Fireballs

Minimum Caster Level: 3  
 Minimum Effective Magic Points: 3  
 Aura: Evocation  
 Alignment: All  
 Type: Charges or Permanent  
 Prerequisites: Red ruby worth 1,000 GP, Spell *Fireball*  
 Minimum Cost to Create: 1,500 GP  
 Minimum Price: 3,000 GP  
 Weight: 4 ounces/115 grams  
 Bulk: Small

The small ruby is thrown toward the intended target. As soon as it leaves the user's hand, it turns into a rolling fireball, 5ft/150m in diameter, which functions just as if it were created directly by the *Fireball* spell. It returns automatically to the user. The charged version can hold up to 10 charges. The permanent version can be used three times daily.

### Ball of Iceballs

Minimum Caster Level: 3  
 Minimum Effective Magic Points: 3  
 Aura: Evocation  
 Alignment: All  
 Type: Charges or Permanent  
 Prerequisites: Diamond worth 1,000 GP, Spell *Iceball*  
 Minimum Cost to Create: 1,500 GP  
 Minimum Price: 3,000 GP  
 Weight: 4 ounces/115 grams  
 Bulk: Small

The small diamond is thrown toward the intended target. As soon as it leaves the user's hand, it turns into a rolling iceball, 5ft/150m in diameter, which functions just as if it were created directly by the *Iceball* spell. It returns automatically to the user. The charged version can hold up to 10 charges. The permanent version can be used three times daily.

### Candle in the Darkness

Minimum Caster Level: 1  
 Minimum Effective Magic Points: 1  
 Aura: Evocation  
 Alignment: All  
 Type: Charges  
 Prerequisites: Small candle, Spell *Light*  
 Minimum Cost to Create: 25 GP  
 Minimum Price: 50 GP  
 Weight: 2 ounces/60 grams  
 Bulk: Small

The candle can be as small as 3 inches/7.5cm and as thin as ½ inch/12.5mm can glow like a torch, shedding bright light in a 20ft/6m radius and dim light for an additional 20ft/6m from the candle. Light taken into an area of magical darkness does not function, but lighting a second candle can ban magical darkness. Per charge, the candle burns 10 minutes per Caster Level of the creator. It can hold up to 10 charges.

### **Chime of Sleep**

Minimum Caster Level: 1  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 1  
Aura: Enchantment  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: Small hand chime, Spell *Sleep*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 10 GP  
Minimum Price: 20 GP  
Weight: 8 ounces/225 grams  
Bulk: Small

Tapping the chime and making it sound causes a magical slumber to come upon a number of living creatures that equals the Caster Level of its creator. Each target can escape the effect with a successful Stamina check against the Caster Level + 10. Creatures with the lowest Character Levels are affected first. Among creatures with equal Character Levels, those who are closest to the chime at the time it is struck are affected first. Sleeping creatures are helpless. Slapping or wounding awakens an affected creature, but normal noise does not. Awakening a creature is a one-round action. Sleep does not target unconscious or undead creatures. The chime can be used three times daily.

### **Cloak of the Spider Bat**

Minimum Caster Level: 7  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4  
Aura: Transmutation  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: High quality cloak, Spells: *Invisibility*, *Spider Climb*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 750 GP  
Minimum Price: 1,500 GP  
Weight: 1 lbs/500 grams  
Bulk: Medium

The wearer is half invisible: In dark shadow, he or she is fully invisible. In middle strong shadow, he or she is partly transparent and difficult to notice. Only with a specific and successful *Notice Objects & Movement* check against DL 20 will the wearer be perceived. However, in normal light, the half invisibility becomes fully ineffective. The wearer also can climb and travel on vertical surfaces or even traverse ceilings as well as a spider does. The wearer must have its hands free to climb in this manner. He or she gains a climb speed of 20ft/6m. Furthermore, the wearer need not make checks to traverse a vertical or horizontal surface (even upside down). Motionless, it can hang upside down without a check, much in the style of a bat. A spider climbing creature retains its Dexterity bonus to its Reflex defense if any while climbing, and opponents get no special bonus to their attacks against it. It cannot, however, use the run action while climbing. The half invisibility facet of the cloak always is active. The climbing function last 10 minutes per Caster Level of the person who ensorcelled the cloak.

### **Counter-Magnetic Cloak**

Minimum Caster Level: 14  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 7  
Aura: Abjuration  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: Fine cloak of silver silk, Spell *Repel iron*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 900 GP  
Minimum Price: 1,800 GP  
Weight: 3 lbs/1.5kg  
Bulk: Medium

The cloak is an invention of the light elves that functions constantly. Half-elves learned this magic from their light elven kin. The cloak magically draws strong, non-magical magnetic energy from the earth and applies it to all iron



within range. A counter-magnetic field covers the entire range, a 400ft/120m radius from the cloak. This field strongly repels all iron and any alloy of iron. A bearer of iron must make a Strength check against DL 30 to overcome the field in order to bring iron into it. A failed attempt can be repeated, but each attempt is a full, one-round action. However, once the iron is within the field, it becomes highly magnetic and will draw itself to heavier items of iron or iron alloys and draw lighter items of iron or iron alloys to it. As an example, a warrior with iron full plate armor, an iron helmet, an iron shield and an iron sword would find that the helmet, shield and sword are bound magnetically to the full plate armor. With a successful check for Strength check against DL 30 the bearer again can overcome the field and separate these items, but as soon as he or she releases, the magnetism will draw them back together. A failed attempt can be repeated, but each attempt is a full, one-round action. If the bearer has only one iron item and his or her companions have none, he or she can wield or use it normally. However, as soon as two or more such items are in the magnetic field, they will begin to draw each other. Under these conditions, there is an appropriate penalty of -10 for the use of separated items. A sword wielder, for instance, will have an attack penalty and a Dexterity penalty of -10. A wearer of armor and/or bearer of a shield will have penalties of -10 on the Armor and Reflex defenses. Because the magnetism itself is natural and non-magical in nature, iron's resistance to magic is ineffective.

### **Crystal Ball**

Minimum Caster Level: 7

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4

Aura: Divination

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Glass Crystal Ball, *Spell Divining*

Minimum Cost to Create: 600 GP

Minimum Price: 1,200 GP

Weight: 4 lbs/2kg

Bulk: Small

The user can see and hear the sounds of some creature or at a certain location. If any living or undead creatures at the location being divined become aware or even suspicious of the divination, they can block the divination with a successful Stamina check against DL 10 + the Caster Level of the crystal ball's creator. The user loses sight of each creature, its words, its deeds, etc., when it makes its check. If all divining targets succeed in their check, the effect ends abruptly. In that case, the user may not repeat a divining attempt for another 24 hours with any creature at any scene where the attempt has failed. The crystal ball can be used up to three times daily.

### **Crystal Ball, Greater**

Minimum Caster Level: 13

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 7

Aura: Divination

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Glass Crystal Ball and *Spell Divining, Extended*

Minimum Cost to Create: 1,000 GP

Minimum Price: 2,000 GP

Weight: 4 lbs/2kg

Bulk: Small

The user can see and hear the sounds of some creature or at a certain location. One also can apply the Skills *Detect Magic*, *Read and Write Magic*, *Sense Magic*, *Sense Mechanics* and *Sense Motive* and can use all *Detect* and *Sense* spells at the divined location. If any living or undead creatures at the location being divined become aware or even suspicious of the divination, they can block the divination with a successful Stamina check against DL 10 + the Caster Level of the crystal ball's creator. The game master checks automatically for the target if a *Detect* or *Sense* spell is used. The user loses sight of each creature, its words, its deeds, etc., when it makes its check. If all divining targets succeed in their check, the effect ends abruptly. In that case, the user may not repeat a divining attempt for another 24 hours with any creature at any scene where the attempt has failed. The crystal ball can be used up to three times daily.

### Dimensional Talisman

Minimum Caster Level: Cast *Absolute Magic*  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: *Absolute Magic*  
Aura: Universal  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: Unknown  
Minimum Cost to Create: Unknown  
Minimum Price: Unknown  
Weight: 2 ounces/30 grams  
Bulk: Small

*Dimensional Talismans* are the product of elven absolute magic. They require magic beyond the normal 15-point system. With such a talisman, one can cross the border between the Middle Dimension and the Dimension of Life. A *Dimensional Talisman* functions only by moonlight and then only when the talisman is within 20ft/6m of a ley stone. When these conditions are fulfilled, the talisman will transport all who are willing to go and within 20ft/6m of the talisman into the other dimension. A *Dimensional Talisman* can remain at the most for 3d4 hours in the Dimension of Life. After that it vanishes and returns to its place of storage in the Middle Dimension. Such talismans are immune to all magic of the normal 15-point system. A *Dimensional Talisman* is a figure of a rowan tree made of black ebony 3 inches/7.5 cm tall with a weight of 2 ounces/30 grams.

### Elven Rope

Minimum Caster Level: 3  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 3  
Aura: Transmutation  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: High quality silk rope, Spells *Spider Climb* and *Animate Objects*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 400 GP  
Minimum Price: 800 GP  
Weight: 3 lns/1.5 kg  
Bulk: Medium

The lore of ensorcelling such ropes is believed to have come from the ancient light elves, although any caster can ensorcel them today. The 60ft/18m length of thin silk rope can support up to 500 lbs/250 grams. Upon command, the rope snakes forward, upward, downward, or in any other direction at 10ft/3m per round, attaching itself securely wherever its owner desires. It can unfasten itself and return in the same manner. The user must hold one end of the rope when its magic is invoked. An *Elven Rope* can be used as often as one wishes.

### Fire Buccina

Minimum Caster Level: 11  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 6  
Aura: Evocation  
Alignment: All  
Type: Charges or Permanent  
Prerequisites: Buccina of masterwork quality, salamander powder, Spell *Firebolt*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 300 GP  
Minimum Price: 600 GP  
Weight: 2 lbs/1 kg  
Bulk: Medium

The buccina gives any user the ability to issue a blast of fire similar to dragon breath that causes 1d8 points of fire damage per every two caster levels at which the horn was ensorcelled. All of the guidelines for dragon breath apply. The range is 80ft/24m. The fire spreads out from the buccina to a maximum width of 30ft/9m at the end of the range. The buccina is an antique rounded brass horn similar to a hunting horn.

### Flame of Confusion

Minimum Caster Level: 7  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4  
Aura: Illusion  
Alignment: All  
Type: One use  
Prerequisites: One fire, Spell *Confusion*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 0 GP  
Minimum Price: 0 GP  
Weight: none  
Bulk: Large

One can ensorcel a fire just like any other object and then cast the spell *Confusion* into it. Any living or undead creature of intelligence who looks into the flames will experience the effect of a *Confusion* spell. The effect lasts until the fire burns out.

### Fork of Silence

Minimum Caster Level: 1  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 2  
Aura: Abjuration  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: Quality tuning fork, Spell *Silence*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 30 GP  
Minimum Price: 60 GP  
Weight: 8 ounces/225 grams  
Bulk: Small

Tapping the tuning fork with its hammer causes complete silence within a radius of 400ft/120m rather than producing a tone. All sound is stopped. Conversation is impossible, spells with verbal components cannot be cast, and no noise whatsoever issues from, enters or passes through the area. The effect can be ended only by using *Ban Magic* upon the point where the tuning fork was when it was struck. Its magic can be called three times a day.

### Hypnotic Spectacles

Minimum Caster Level: 1  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 1  
Aura: Enchantment  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: Masterworks Spectacles, Spell *Hypnosis*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 100 GP  
Minimum Price: 200 GP  
Weight: 4 ounces/115 grams  
Bulk: Small

The spectacles allow you to gain the effects of an *Hypnosis* spell but without having to make the gestures or droning incantation required for the spell. The magic functions as long as you wear the spectacles. The wearer can draw this magical effect from the glasses three times daily.

### Key of Liberation

Minimum Caster Level: 19  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 10  
Aura: Abjuration  
Alignment: All  
Type: Charges or Permanent

Prerequisites: Golden Key, Spell *Liberate*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 4,500 GP  
Minimum Price: 9,000 GP  
Weight: 4 ounces/115 grams  
Bulk: Small

A creature who possesses a *Key of Liberation* can free him- or herself or a target from spells and effects that restrict movement, including binding, entangle, grappling, imprisonment, mazes, paralysis, petrification, pinning, sleep, slowing, stunning, stasis and webs. To free a creature, the possessor of the key must know its name and must direct the effect toward the spot where it was entombed or banished into the maze. The charged version can hold up to 10 charges. The permanent version can be used three times daily. One use lasts 10 minutes per level at which it was cast.

### **Ley Stone**

Minimum Caster Level: Cast *Absolute Magic*  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: *Absolute Magic*  
Aura: Transmutation  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: Unknown  
Minimum Cost to Create: Unknown  
Minimum Price: Unknown  
Weight: 600 lbs/300 kg  
Bulk: Large

Ley stones are the product of elven absolute magic. They require magic beyond the normal 15-point system. In ancient times, the light elves set the ley lines of the world and placed the ley stones within them. They were intended to strengthen the power of the Light against the Darkness, and to a certain extent, they do that yet today. They also serve as the doorway between the Dimension of the Life and the Middle Dimension. Ley stones concentrate the light magic of the ley lines of the world. Draugs, devils, demons and even dragons that have allied with the Darkness will come only reluctantly within 500ft/150m of a ley stone. Within that range, they lose all of their magical powers and all use of magic. Even their magical items become temporarily non-magical. A dragon within that range also is unable to use its breath weapon. A vampire cannot of its own power come within 500ft/150m of a ley stone. It can come within this range only if it is in its own coffin resting upon its native soil and it is being transported by some other creature or force. If a vampire is forced outside of its coffin to enter this zone against his or her will, it is destroyed as if it had entered sunlight. Trolls that come within 500ft/150m of a ley stone are turned to stone immediately, just as if they had come into daylight. Orcs, ogres, worgs and other servants of the Darkness (but not all evil creatures) that come within 500ft/150m of a ley stone suffer immediate penalties of -4 to Strength and Stamina, and this loss continues until they leave that area. Dark elves who come within 500ft/150m of a ley stone suffer discomfort and unease, destroying their initiative bonuses and giving them a Dexterity penalty of -1. Draugs, devils, demons and even dragons that have allied with the Darkness, and orcs, ogres, worgs and other servants of the Darkness that touch a ley stone are destroyed immediately and permanently. Anyone who attempts to damage or deface a ley stone will find his or her ability points all temporarily reduced to 2. This ability loss continues until the creature removes itself to a distance at least 1,000ft/300m from the stone. Ley stones are similar to gravestones in appearance, standing about 3ft/90cm high. They usually bear elven inscriptions and the symbol of the elven principdom in which they one stood.

### **Magic Carpet**

Minimum Caster Level: 7  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4  
Aura: Transmutation  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: Hand-woven carpet of high quality, Spell *Fly*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 1,200 GP  
Minimum Price: 2,400 GP  
Weight: 20 lbs/10 kg  
Bulk: Large

One of the reasons for the high cost is the need to use a carpet of truly luxurious quality. A standard magic carpet can fly up to three times daily for 1 minute per caster level at which it was ensorcelled. With the expenditure of 12 spell or magic points and a minimum caster level of 23, the carpet can be commanded to fly at will for any amount of time.

### **Magic Mirror**

Minimum Caster Level: 13

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 7

Aura: Universal

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Masterwork hand mirror in gold frame, Spell *Turn Magic*

Minimum Cost to Create: 1,000 GP

Minimum Price: 2,000 GP

Weight: 8 ounces/225 grams

Bulk: Small

When the mirror's owner holds it in the direction of a foe, it can turn spells and spell-like effects that are targeted on him or her are back upon the enemy caster three times daily. The mirror turns only spells that have the mirror's owner as a target. Effect and area spells are not affected. Spell turning also fails to stop touch spells. The mirror can turn 1d4+6 spell points of magic per use. The exact number is rolled secretly by the game master. If the user and a spellcasting attacker both are warding by spell turning effects in operation, a resonating field is created. A roll of 1d100 is necessary to determine the result.

d100	Effect
01-70	Spell drains away without effect.
71-80	Spell affects both of you equally at full effect.
81-97	Both turning effects are rendered nonfunctional for 1d4 minutes.
98-100	Both of you are teleported to a random location.

### **Magic Padlock**

Minimum Caster Level: 1

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 2

Aura: Abjuration

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: One masterwork padlock, Spell *Magical Lock*

Minimum Cost to Create: 100 GP

Minimum Price: 200 GP

Weight: 6 ounces/170 grams

Bulk: Small

Ensorcellment of the lock removes its keyhole. Normally, it can be opened only with a command word defined by the caster who ensorcelled it. An object secured with a *Magic Padlock* can be opened only by breaking in or with a successful *Ban Magic* or *Open Magical Lock* spell. Add 10 to the normal DL to break open a door or portal affected by this spell. An *Open Magical Lock* spell does not damage a *Magic Padlock*; it only opens it.

### **Magical Instrument**

Minimum Caster Level: 5

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 3

Aura: Enchantment

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Bardic song, fire medium, in some cases song to be ensorcelled

Minimum Cost to Create: 250 GP

Minimum Price: 500 GP

Weight: varies  
Bulk: Medium

Magical instruments function only for users with the talents of the Bardic classes. They can be made of various musical instruments. Most common are lutes and small, handheld Bardic harps. Their abilities vary. Most simply increase the success chances of a Skáld or Blue Druid in the use of his or her Bardic abilities. However, the greatest magical instruments also are enchanted with their own magical songs. When an instrument is ensorcelled, dried holly leaves and elderberry twigs must be burned.

### **Orb of Domination**

Minimum Caster Level: 9  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 5  
Aura: Enchantment  
Alignment: All  
Type: Charges  
Prerequisites: Diamond worth 4,000 GP, Ivory handle worth 500 GP, *Dominate* spells  
Minimum Cost to Create: 5,500 GP  
Minimum Price: 11,000 GP  
Weight: 2 lbs/1 kg  
Bulk: Medium

An Orb of Domination is made by seating a diamond worth at least 4,000 GP into a claw-like holder at the end of an ivory handle worth at least 500 GP. The diamond can be ensorcelled with up to 10 charges. Each charge can hold any of the following spells that the caster is able to use: *Dominate Beast*, *Dominate Dragon*, *Dominate Mutation* or *Dominate Undead*.

### **Orb of Fiery Rain**

Minimum Caster Level: 25  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 13  
Aura: Evocation  
Alignment: All  
Type: Charges  
Prerequisites: Red Sapphire worth 4,000 GP, Ivory handle worth 500 GP, Spell *Fiery Rain*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 5,500 GP  
Minimum Price: 11,000 GP  
Weight: 2 lbs/1 kg  
Bulk: Medium

An *Orb of Fiery Rain* is made by seating a red sapphire worth at least 4,000 GP into a claw-like holder at the end of an ivory handle worth at least 500 GP. The sapphire can be ensorcelled with up to 10 charges of the spell *Fiery Rain*.

### **Parachute Cloak**

Minimum Caster Level: 1  
Minimum Effective Magic Points: 2  
Aura: Transmutation  
Alignment: All  
Type: Permanent  
Prerequisites: Cloak worth at least 50 GP, Spell *Gentle Fall*  
Minimum Cost to Create: 300 GP  
Minimum Price: 600 GP  
Weight: 1 lbs/500 grams  
Bulk: Medium

If the person wearing a *Parachute Cloak* begins to fall, the cloak automatically activates a *Gentle Fall* spell that last for 1 round per Caster Level of the ensorcellment. The cloak will function up to 3 times daily.



### **Scepter of Bronze Transmutation**

Minimum Caster Level: 29

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 15

Aura: Transmutation

Alignment: All

Type: Charges or Permanent

Prerequisites: Bronze scepter with copper head; Spell *Mass Iron to Bronze*

Minimum Cost to Create: 3,500 GP

Minimum Price: 7,000 GP

Weight: 2 lbs/1 kg

Bulk: Medium

The scepter turns all iron items within 25ft/7,5m into bronze. These items are very rare in the Dimension of Life. They usually are used when light elven guests are expected to prevent their being slain by the lethal effects of iron. However, it also can reverse the effects of a *Bronze to Iron* spell, which will restore a transmuted object's lost magical properties. The charged version can hold up to 10 charges. The permanent version can be used three times daily.

### **Scepter of Winter**

Minimum Caster Level: 29

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 15

Aura: Evocation

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Silver scepter, Spell *Little Fimbul Winter*

Minimum Cost to Create: 10,000 GP

Minimum Price: 20,000 GP

Weight: 1 lbs/500 grams

Bulk: Medium

The scepter creates a deeply cold area that damages anyone within it without magical protection from cold. The emanated cold deals 2d6 points of damage per minute to living creatures protected with normal winter clothing and 6d6 points per minute to persons without winter clothing. The intense cold freezes water out of the air, causing constant snowfall and wind. The snow and wind produce a blizzard effect within the area. Temperatures average -50°F/-51°C. Druids will not use this scepter when it could damage flora and fauna, but they will use it in the winter season in areas where the temperature could drop to -20°F/-29°C or lower. The scepter can be used only once weekly.

### **Sconce of Light**

Minimum Caster Level: 7

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4

Aura: Divination

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Small mountable sconce, diamond worth at least 2,000 GP, magic staff, Spell *Caster's Lasting Light*

Minimum Cost to Create: 3,000 GP

Minimum Price: 6,000 GP

Weight: 3 ounces/85 grams

Bulk: Small

The special mini-sconce works only if it is mounted on a staff that is attuned to the caster who creates the *Sconce of Light*. The diamond must be fastened to the sconce. At the staff possessor's wish, the staff creates a brilliant light with illumination that only its bearer can perceive. The light lasts as long as the bearer wishes. For the staff bearer's eyes only, the light illuminates everything within 50ft/15m of the staff.

### Seeing Spectacles

Minimum Caster Level: 7

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4

Aura: Divination

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Masterworks Spectacles, Spell *See in the Dark*

Minimum Cost to Create: 100 GP

Minimum Price: 200 GP

Weight: 4 ounces/115 grams

Bulk: Small

The wearer has the ability to see over a radius of 120ft/36m in the darkness. The spectacles are constantly effective as long as they are worn. They do not enable sight in magical darkness.

### Skeleton Key

Minimum Caster Level: 9

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 5

Aura: Divination

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Air, Spell *Divining*

Minimum Cost to Create: 500 GP

Minimum Price: 1,000 GP

Weight: none

Bulk: Small

The substance of a Skeleton Key is nothing more than a translucent block of air that forms into the shape of any key within the user's thoughts. If the key is inserted into a mechanical lock, it will not set off traps because it is so insubstantial. Instead, it will give the user a clear mental picture of all of the internal elements of the lock. This in turn gives the user a bonus of +10 on all Open Locks and Enable/Disable Device checks for the lock that is examined.

### Spectacles of Spying

Minimum Caster Level: 11

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 6

Aura: Divination

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Masterwork Spectacle, Spell *Spying Eyes*

Minimum Cost to Create: 500 GP

Minimum Price: 1,000 GP

Weight: 4 ounces/115 grams

Bulk: Small

The spectacles create a number of invisible magical eyes equal to the Caster Level of their creator. These eyes move out, scout around, and return as the wearer mentally directs them to do. Each eye can see over a range of 120ft/36m (normal vision only) in all directions. The individual eyes are quite fragile, but they're not visible. Each eye is about the size of a small apple, that has 1 hit point, and Armor, Endurance, Reflex and Stamina scores of 14. They fly at a speed of 30ft/9m with perfect maneuverability, and have a +16 Sneak modifier and a *Notice Objects & Movement* modifier equal to the Caster Level of their creator. They are subject to illusions, darkness, fog, and any other factors that would affect your ability to receive visual information about your surroundings. An eye traveling through darkness must find its way by touch. When the spectacles create the eyes, the wearer specifies instructions he or she wants them to follow in a command of no more than 25 words. Any knowledge he or she possesses is known by the eyes as well. In order to report their findings, the eyes must return to the spectacles. Each eye replays in the wearer's mind all it has seen during its existence. It takes an eye 1 round to replay 1 hour of recorded images. After relaying its findings, an eye disappears. If an eye ever gets more than 1 mile/1.5km away from the wearer of the spectacles, it instantly ceases to exist. The wearer's link with the eye is such that he or she will not know if the eye was destroyed because it wandered out of range or because of some other event. The

eyes exist for up to 1 hour per Caster Level of the spectacles' creator or until they return to the wearer. *Ban Magic* can destroy the eyes. Roll separately for each eye caught in an area *Ban Magic*. The spell is effective only when the user wears the spectacles. They can be used up to three times daily.

### **Stash Sack**

Minimum Caster Level: 11

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 6

Aura: Conjuration

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Sack, leather bag, etc., stash room, Spell *Teleport*

Minimum Cost to Create: 300 GP

Minimum Price: 600 GP

Weight: varies

Bulk: Medium

The *Stash Sack* can be anything from a small leather pouch to a large burlap sack. One requirement is that it is empty at the time it is being ensorcelled. Anything one places in a *Stash Sack*, *Bag* or *Pouch* immediately is teleported to whatever location is defined as a stash site by the caster who ensorcelled it. If one gains possession of another person's sack, one can cast *Ensoresel Magic Item* a second time to redefine the stash location.

### **Tarnhelmet**

Minimum Caster Level: 9

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 5

Aura: Illusion

Alignment: All

Type: Charges or Permanent

Prerequisites: Bronze helmet, Spell *Extended Invisibility*

Minimum Cost to Create: 100 GP

Minimum Price: 200 GP

Weight: 2 lbs/1 kg

Bulk: Small

The *Tarnhelmet* is a human facsimile of a dwarven *Tarnhelm*, but it is less powerful than a *Tarnhelm*. It is a normal bronze helmet ensorcelled to make its wearer invisible. The lesser *Tarnhelmet* with charges makes the wearer invisible for 10 minutes per caster level at the level at which it was charged. The permanent version lasts until the wearer removes the helmet. The permanent version can be used once a day for every five caster levels at which it was ensorcelled.

### **Telepathic Headband**

Minimum Caster Level: 20

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4

Aura: Divination

Alignment: All

Type: Permanent

Prerequisites: Headband with gold or silver lining, Spell *Telepathic Network*

Minimum Cost to Create: 900 GP

Minimum Price: 1,800 GP

Weight: 6 ounces/170 grams

Bulk: Small

The wearer of the headband can open a Telepathic Network at will up to three times daily. The network links the wearer with one willing, intelligent creature per Caster Level of the creator. Each creature included in the network is linked to all the others. The creatures can communicate telepathically through the network regardless of language. No special power or influence is established as a result of this link. Once the network is formed, it works over any distance. If desired, the wearer of the headband may leave him- or herself out of the network. This decision must be made at the network is forged. The network functions for 10 minutes per Caster Level of the headband's creator.

### Teleportation Dust

Minimum Caster Level: 11

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 6

Aura: Conjuration

Alignment: All

Type: One use

Prerequisites: Phosphorous dust in a vial, Spell *Teleport* or *Teleport Perfectly*

Minimum Cost to Create: 300 GP

Minimum Price: 600 GP

Weight: 4 oz/115 grams

Bulk: Small

The version with *Teleport Perfectly* requires at least 8 spell points and has a minimum caster level of 15. With both versions, the user of the dust throws the powder to the ground, which causes it to flare up briefly in flame. As soon as that happens, the user vanishes and arrives immediately at his or her destination, using the definition of the *Teleport* or *Teleport Perfectly* spells.

### Veiling Band

Minimum Caster Level: 15

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 8

Aura: Abjuration

Alignment: All

Type: Charges or Permanent

Prerequisites: Leather headband, Spell *Divination Shield*

Minimum Cost to Create: 500 GP

Minimum Price: 1,000 GP

Weight: 4 ounces/115 grams

Bulk: Small

The headband gives the wearer the benefit of the spell *Divination Shield*. The version with charges is effective for 1 hour per caster level. The permanent version is effective whenever the veil is worn.

### Veiling Veil

Minimum Caster Level: 7

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4

Aura: Abjuration

Alignment: All

Type: Charges or Permanent

Prerequisites: High quality silk veil, Spell *Divination Veil*

Minimum Cost to Create: 200 GP

Minimum Price: 400 GP

Weight: 8 ounces/225 grams

Bulk: Small

The veil gives the wearer the benefit of the spell *Divination Veil*. The version with charges is effective for 1 hour per caster level. The permanent version is effective whenever the veil is worn.

### Witch's Broom

Minimum Caster Level: 7

Minimum Effective Magic Points: 4

Aura: Transmutation

Alignment: All

Type: Charges or Permanent

Prerequisites: High quality broom, Spell *Flying*

Minimum Cost to Create: 900 GP

Minimum Price: 1,800 GP

Weight: 1 lbs/500 grams  
Bulk: Medium

A *Witch's Broom* can fly for 1 minute per caster level at which it was ensorcelled. The version with charges can hold up to 10 charges. The permanently ensorcelled version can be used up to 5 times daily.



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## 2.7 Runic Magic

Conventional magic derives from the magic of the Light that has been drawn into the world by elves, where much of it has been neutralized and some of it even turned evil by the Darkness. Runic magic is substantially different from conventional magic. Runecutters, also known as Runestainers, work with the planet's own internal energy. Theirs is a neutral type of energy that is drawn from the bedrock of the earth and the fires that burn within it.

Of all the folk who inhabit the world, only the dwarves and giants have the necessary affinity with these elements to allow them to draw upon this energy. However, this natural magic is relatively latent rather than dynamic, in comparison to the magic of the Light. It can be drawn from the earth in large and powerful quantities, but only slowly, in small amounts at a time.

For that reason, it is impossible to employ this magic for spells. A single, simple attacking bolt of magical energy probably would take the better part of a day to cast, if indeed it could be cast at all as a spell. To our knowledge, no one ever has tried to do so, at least with success.

Despite that, the dwarves and the giants, who understand such energy, each learned in their own time how to draw upon this power, contain it and then unleash it at a later time. What the two races learned is that each various element of natural magic has its own true name, and that these names can be written in symbols. Once that is done, a giant or dwarf can call the magic into it and define how and when it can be unleashed.

Those who learn runic magic can cut and stain runestones, rune tablets or runesticks. Only dwarves make runestones. They also make rune tablets on thin sheets of stone and rune sticks of beechwood. Giants make rune tablets and runesticks of beechwood.

Runestones are cut into standing rock. They usually are staves intended to serve a permanent protective purpose. Rune tablets are cut into tablets made of thin rock or beechwood. They may contain permanent magic or charges. Runesticks are round pieces of beechwood, perfectly turned and polished, with a length of 8 inches/20cm and a diameter of ½ inch/1.25cm. Runestainers cut and stain their staves into the runesticks. Their magic can be unleashed once; then they are useless.

Dwarven and giant runecutters also can cut and stain runic staves in the blades of bronze weapons, and, in the case of dwarves, middle silver weapons, but not in those made of iron or iron alloys. Ensorcelling weapons with runes requires that a master smith and a Runestainer work together to cut the runes into the weapon. Once the runes have been finished, the Runestainer must complete his or her work alone, staining the freshly cut staff.

It should be noted that the giants have no deep mines from which they can win the ore of middle silver, nor have they ever learned to smelt this rare ore and forge metal products of it. Only dwarves know how to ensorcel middle silver weapons with runes.

Dwarves also have an unlimited ability to learn and command the earth magic that powers runestones, rune tablets and staves in weapons. Giants, by their very nature, are attuned more to physical labor than to intellectual pursuits, which also limits the level of runic staves they are able to cut and stain. However, it should be noted that the more intellectual members of the giants' race tend to be sorcerers of low to middle level rather than Runestainers.

Runic magic is written in staves that contain one or more symbols, which, in turn, are called runic radicals. Staves must be cut precisely into stone, beechwood or weapon. Afterwards, they must be stained with potions brewed by the Runestainer. Staining takes place in various stages. Part of it must be done in the darkness of the world's depths. Part of it must be done in the Light of the sun. The final phase of staining must take place in moonshine.

The potion that the Runecutter uses to stain his or her staves is a different formula for each Runestainer. The call of earth magic into the staff is an act that is performed individually by each Runecutter. Likewise, he or she brews his or her own secret staining potion. Only one ingredient is common to the more powerful staining potions: They include the blood of the enemy. For the dwarves, this usually is the blood of mountain orcs. For the giants, it's the blood of dwarves or humans.



There are three basic classes of runestones and tables:

- **Lesser:** A runestone or tablet with one stave that can be used only once, like a runestick, expending its magic.
- **Higher:** A runestone or tablet with a limited number of charges. Such runestones and tablets cannot be recharged. Only the most powerful runestones and tablets may hold more than one stave.
- **Greater:** A runestone or tablet that always retains its magic permanently and needs no charges. Such staves also are those used to ensorcel weapons.

## Stave Points:

- **Staves have stave points** established by the game master (and the Runecutter's player, if the Runecutter is a PC) at the time the stave is defined. Stave points are similar to spell and magic points.

## Runestone Limitations:

Regardless of level, the ability of a Runecutter to stain runes is limited by his *Magical Aptitude* according to the following table:

### Runestone Limitations

Magical Aptitude	Lesser Runestone	Higher Runestone	Great Runestone	Radicals	Staves per Radical
12	Yes	No	No	1	1
13-15	Yes	Yes	No	2	2
16-18	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	3
19 and above	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	4

**Defining Staves:** The development of runic staves is a work apart from the cutting of new runestones that employ staves already defined by the Runecutter. A Runecutter can cut only the staves that he or she has defined personally. The definition of a stave is somewhat similar to the development of a new spell. Each stave is a personal creation of the Runecutter. He or she begins with radicals that he or she already has learned. This list of radicals usually is chosen by a PC Runecutter.

The Runecutter must draft a definition of the stave, its properties and abilities and present the draft to the game master, to be worked out so that it is acceptable for both. After agreement is reached, the Runestainer can begin attempting to master his or her new stave.

As a guideline for defining new staves, both the player and the game master can use the arcane spells for Magi in the *Players Guide*. The base level of a stave depends in most cases upon the level of its highest radical. The ultimate level is determined as follows:

Composition	Level	Time
Two radicals, lesser stave	Base Level	1 day
Higher stave	+2 levels	4 days
Greater stave	+4 levels	7 days
Third radical	+1 level	+3 days
Each additional radical	+3 levels	+4 days

The definition of a new stave usually but not always incurs material costs. To define and master a new stave, the Runecutter must cut and stain it in a manner similar to that used to produce a runestone. However, during the cutting and staining of the new stave, the powers and forces being bound must be present, and the Runecutter must sing his or her own elementary chant to bind the forces called by the radicals into the stave.

The chant lasts 10 minutes for each day of cutting time, as listed in the table above. At the end of this time, the required materials, if any, are sacrificed and consumed by the called forces or powers, binding the magic of the earth into the new stave.

Most staves are powered by a power radical, and these usually must be cut and stained in the presence of the element represented by the power radicals. A stave powered by the fire radical *Eldr*, for instance, must be cut in the presence of fire, which will consume whatever materials might be required.

The decision which radical will be a stave's prime radical is determined in the agreement reached between the Runecutter and the game master. Most staves will require a power radical, but some known staves are driven instead by the honor radical *Senda* or the necromantic radicals *Líf* (life) and *Dauði* (death), etc.

Attempts to define new staves are not automatic. A newly cut and stained stave requires a success check. If the Runecutter fails that check, he or she may repeat the check after 1d4 + 10 days and after a new expenditure of 10% of the original material costs.

The success check is a d20 check against a Difficulty Level calculated as follows:

$$10 + \text{Stave level} - \text{Magical Aptitude modifier} - \text{applicable skill bonuses} = \text{DL}$$

Most staves should be similar to so-called *growing* spells. In other words, instead of defining damage as a fixed 2d8 points damage, 1d4 or 1d6 points per Runecutter level would be more appropriate. And it is better to define range, duration, etc., in a similar fashion.

Runic staves use the same schools of magic as spells in the *Players Guide*. However, the choice of a school is dependent upon the Runecutter's definition of *how* his spell works, and that often has to do above all with the radical that powers it. Each Runecutter must determine the correct sequence of importance of the radicals in binding a stave. The first radical is the most important.

It should be noted that radicals of the school of illusion do not appear to exist, perhaps because radicals are the true names of realities and illusion is unreality. There is no record anywhere of dwarves or giants ever having created runic illusions. Runic radicals belong to the schools of Abjuration, Conjunction, Divination, Enchantment, Evocation, Necromancy and Transmutation. Unlike in conventional magic, runic magic does not differentiate between White and Black Necromancy, nor is it aligned with Light or Darkness.

Most dwarven Runecutters are limited to learning radicals and making staves of them that combine up to three radicals. The greatest Runecutters have the ability to create staves with as many as five radicals. They also have the ability to research radicals. This does not mean that they can create new radicals, but rather that they could conduct research that would regain knowledge of forgotten radicals or perhaps radicals that have not yet been discovered.

**NOTE:** The abilities of a Runecutter also are limited by the information to which he or she has access. A Runecutter well may have the statistical ability to learn more radicals, for instance, than there is information at hand to actually learn. A runecaster who has spent his or her life in deep dwarven halls, for instance, *never* will be able to learn the sun *Sól* or the tree radical *Tré*, regardless of talent or level.

## **The Runecutter or Runestainer**

This character class is defined in the *Players Guide*.

There is and can be no such thing as a complete catalog of runes. The dwarven and giant masters who cut and stained the ancient runes learned to understand the powers represented by the runes. They learned the true names of these powers and the shape of these names, cutting these shapes into stone, ore, metal and wood, staining these staves and calling into them the secrets they knew to awaken the powers whose names the runes represented.

The runic system works somewhat like the written Chinese language of our own world, Earth. Runecutters and master smiths began by learning the basic powers, their true names and the staves that fit those names. The basic runes represented sources of power rather than the powers themselves, constituting runic radicals.

Useful runes combined radicals to bring varying powers together, to achieve very specific goals. This building of powerful, composite runic staves out of individual runic radicals is the most difficult part of the Runecutter's art. There are many old tales of adventuresome Runecutters who combined radicals they did not understand fully, unintentionally wreaking devastation upon themselves as well as or even rather than their foes.

How many radicals actually exist is an open question. Most sages who are aware of runic magic speak of ancient texts that mention the *"runic radicals, four times nine in number,"* suggesting that the ancient Runecutters had 36 radicals or base runes with which to work.

However, adventurers once found a non-magical runestone in the ruins of a fallen dwarven hall in which was written, *"Four times nine in number, are the runes from which the master smiths shape their staves, but nine times nine number the runes, that the master stainer can call into his art,"* suggesting that the overwhelming number of 81 radicals may have been known to runecutters at one time, with only the 36 "lesser" radicals known to the master smiths. Then again, it may be that all 81 still are known in the depths of some dwarven halls.

The number of staves that can be fashioned from these radicals is a quite different question. It is sometimes said that there once were as many composite staves as there were Runecutters. While this certainly is an exaggeration, there doubtless is a grain of truth within it.

Radicals seldom were used alone. Composite staves are a Runecutter's or master smith's descriptions of the names of basic powers. To combine these runic radicals into staves, each Runestainer or smith must understand the power behind each radical and also how these powers work together and how they conflict with one another. With the smith, that process is intuitive. With a Runecutter, it is both academic and intuitive.

To make radicals work together within a runic staff, the lines of each cut and stained radical must turn in a manner so that its forces flow together and cooperate. For this reason, it is not possible here to make an extensive list of known staves that every Runecutter or master smith has a chance to learn, as is the case with magicians' spells in the *Player's Guide*.

Instead, we can list only better known runic radicals and some of the composite combinations that have been known to be used successfully in days of yore. These are the staves your PCs are most likely to encounter in exploring dwarven ruins, and they are the staves one is most likely to find upon magical dwarven weapons and armor, if they were inscribed with runes.

Many of the runic radicals and staves listed below are marked with an asterisk (\*). Magic marked in this manner can be learned only by the rarest of Runecutters or smiths, because the runes require a deep and encompassing understanding of things above the world's surface. Runecutters and smiths, by their very nature, only seldom leave their dwarven halls and ascend to the surface, except to cut runes by the light of the moon, stars and sun. Therefore, they never are privy to such knowledge.

Only Runecutters and smiths who spend time before learning their art on the surface, and who have concentrated themselves deeply upon knowledge of their environment, will be able to learn such runes and staves. You may not have to explain to your PCs how this knowledge was gained, but you should be able to explain it to yourself, if you want to run a credible campaign.

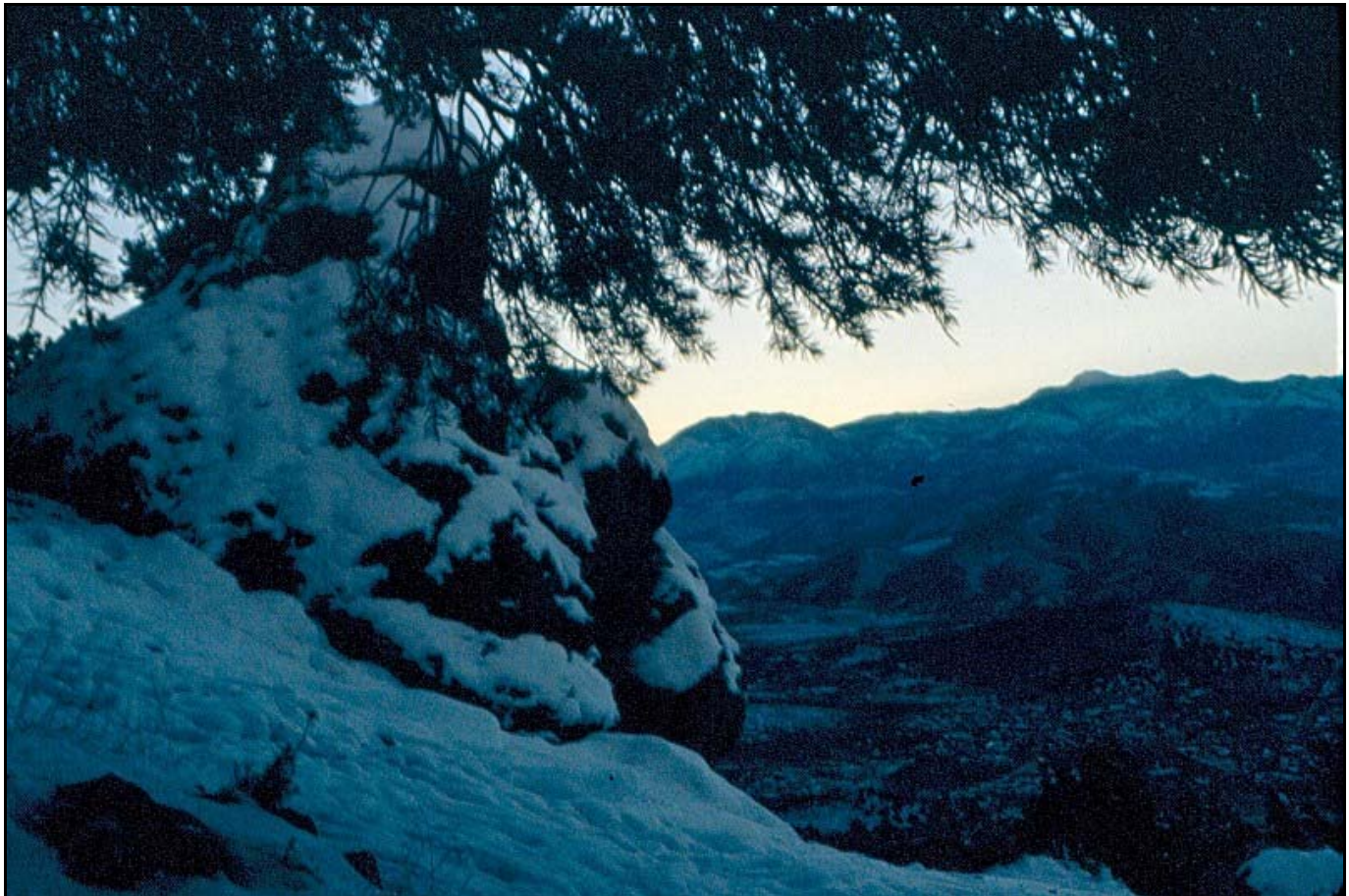
Interestingly, the magical power behind the sun and tree radicals - while inaccessible to most Runecutters - belongs to the natural talent of a dwarven master smith. He or she gains this understanding through the knowledge of the materials with which he or she works.

**Runic Point Designations of Radicals:** These designations correspond to the spell and magic point levels for users of conventional magic. To create a staff, a Runestainer or smith must understand the chosen radical and be able to use staves of that point level.

**Runic Point Designations of Staves:** A composite stave usually has the runic point level of its highest radical, unless it consists of more than two radicals.

***Reading the Stave Definitions:***

- **Runic Points:** The number of runic points that the runecutter must expend.
- **Runic Level:** Describes how the stave can be powered – as a lesser, higher or greater stave or as a greater stave that can be sent only to a receiver stave.
- **Creation Time:** This is a Runecutter's creation time for a lesser stave. For a higher stave, the time doubles. For a greater stave, it triples. If it can be sent, it quadruples, in addition to the extra costs for including the radical of sending *Senda*.



***Winter, trolls and rune-cutting giants in the mountains and dwarven halls beneath them***

## 2.8 Runic Radicals and Staves

### Gamer Master's Note

You'll find detailed information on spells and cleric rites in the *Players Guide*. That's because the spells are necessary for both the PCs who roles the players play and for the NPCs that you as game master have to play. The situation is different with runic magic.

PCs who play Runecutters are rare. There is very little that a Runestainer can contribute to day-to-day adventuring. They are not trained to fight, steal or cast spells. The magic they create must be made over a relatively long period of time and stored in runic staves before it can be unleashed upon a foe.

Runecutters do their work mostly alone, although they sometimes work together with a smith. Once they're finished with their work, they pass their ensorcelled weapons, rune tablets and runesticks on to the Warriors and Specialists of their dwarven clan or giant tribe, and these, not the Runestainer, use the magic that the Runecutters have stored in their creations.

To the extent that runes play a role in your campaign, they usually will be introduced by you, the game master, as the creations of NPCs. If your PCs have no experience themselves as Runestainers, which usually will be the case, they have no idea what the runic radicals or staves mean. For that reason, their players should have no access to the lists on the pages that follow. In almost all campaigns, these lists are strictly game master tools.

If your PCs start exploring the ruins of fallen dwarven halls (or have the misfortune of wandering into those that still are inhabited), they're certain to encounter many runic staves that contain traps in waiting. In this section, you'll find a listing of frequent runic staves, but don't hesitate to invent your own as well.

To use the runes in your own texts, you need to install the TrueType fonts *Germanic Runes* (RUNE\_G.TTF) and *Rune English 2* (RUNENG2.TTF), created by Daniel Smith, and the Public Domain font *Common Tongue* (COMMON.TTF). Daniel Smith's fonts are available on his Internet site, which is devoted to runic lore: <http://www.acondia.com/fonts/index.html>. All three fonts also are included in the *Dungeons Daring* download file for game masters.

### 2.8.1 Runic Radicals

#### Known Unique Runic Radicals

◀ - **Samein**. The melding radical (Transmutation – 15 runic points)

*Samein* is a very difficult radical for a Runecutter to understand and extremely difficult to cut successfully, for it goes to the very root of nature, as Dwarves understand it. Only epic level Runecutters with the skill *Master Senda and Samein* have access to it. In nature, it is impossible for two objects to occupy the same space at the same time. *Samein*, which is a revelation one gains only after learning to deeply understand *Steinn*, is the secret of having *two* objects occupy the same space at the same time.

▶ - **Senda**. The radical of sending (Conjuration – 15 runic points)

*Senda* is the most difficult of all known radicals to learn. Only epic level Runecutters with the skill *Master Senda and Samein* have access to it. It is the radical that a Runecutter must use to create a rune that he personally can read to *send* the magical effect of the rune to another location. Only the greatest master Runecutters ever learn *Senda* well enough to use it effectively. And only the few greatest of *these* masters ever learn it well enough to cut and stain a staff that *someone else* can use to send a rune's magic. To do so, the Runecutter must cut *Senda* twice in the staff, once at the beginning and once at the end.

## The Prime Elemental Radicals

**ᚦ - Eldr.** The fire radical (universal – 1 runic point, automatic)

*Eldr* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw the power of fire into their staves, causing not only fiery magic but also the magic of light beneath the surface of earth.

**ᚱ - Jörð.** The earth radical (universal – 1 runic point, automatic)

*Jörð* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw the physical power of the earth itself into their staves. *Jörð* refers to the world.

**ᚱ - Vindr.** The air and wind radical (universal – 1 runic point, automatic)

*Vindr* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw power of the air and the wind into their staves.

**ᚱ - Vatn.** The water radical (universal – 1 runic point, automatic)

*Vatn* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw the power of water into their staves.

## Other Prime Runic Radicals

**ᚱ - Bannfæra.** The dismissal radical (Abjuration – 4 runic points)

*Bannfæra* is the prime radical used in staves that ban magic, banish outsiders, defeat magical effects, etc.

**ᚱ - Dvergr or Jötunn.** The folk radical (Necromancy – 4 runic points)

The dwarves call this rune *Dvergr* (dwarf) and the giants call it *Jötunn* (giant). It really is the folk radical. It is the prime radical used in staves that deal with the very essence of dwarves or giants. There are no known radicals for humans, elves, halflings, etc., although there may be a lost alien radical known as *Ókunnung*, which represents the non-dwarven and non-giant races.

**ᚱ - Stjarna.** The star radical (Conjuration – 3 runic points)

*Stjarna* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw power of the elven stars into their staves.

**ᚱ - Líf.** The life radical (Necromancy –6 runic points)

*Líf* is a key rune in necromantic staves, and it is believed that some master Runecutters could use it in staves to rescue dead dwarves who had not succeeded in merging into the earthstone from the clutches of Hela in Deep Hell. *Líf* refers to the force of *all* life upon earth, not just dwarven or giant life.

**ᚱ - Dauði.** The death radical (Necromancy –6 runic points)

*Dauði* is a key rune in necromantic staves. *Dauði* refers to the force of *all* death upon earth, not just dwarven or giant death.

**ᚱ - Tungl.** The moon radical (Conjuration –4 runic points)

*Tungl* is a power source rune. Runecutters and smiths use it to draw power of the moon into their staves.

**ᚱ - þróttur.** The energy radical (Transmutation – 8 runic points)

*þróttur* is a power source rune. It is the essence of all non-living energy upon the earth. Only accomplished Runecutters and smiths can work directly with *þróttur*. It draws the non-living energy of the world into their staves. Some sages dispute whether *þróttur* is a prime radical. They contend that it is a subset radical of a lost nature radical known as *Náttúra*.

**ᚱ - Sól \*.** The sun radical (Conjuration – 4 runic points)

*Sól* is a power source rune. Runecutters and smiths use it to draw power of the sun into their staves. Dwarves also interpret *Sól* to mean *blind* or *blinding*, and it often is used with this meaning in battle runes.



## Known Runic Subset Radicals

**Y - Breyta.** The transmutation radical (Transmutation - Subset of Bannfæra – 7 runic points)  
Breyta requires a deep knowledge of the physical nature of the item or being to be transmuted.

**B - Tilfinning.** The motion or movement radical (Conjuration - Subset of þróttur – level 8)  
*Tilfinning* represents movement, but to be effective, it usual requires inclusion in a compound rune that defines what motion will be magically created. As an example, to pass through stone, a Runecutter combines *Steinn*, *Tilfinning* and *Samein* - stone, motion and melding (the latter a very difficult rune to master).

**M - Stormr.** The storm radical (Conjuration - Subset of Vindr – 4 runic points)  
*Stormr* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw the power of storms into their staves. *Stormr* also can evoke the fury of nature in general.

**J - Djúp.** The fall radical (Transmutation - Subset of þróttur – 10 runic points)  
*Djúp* is used for most staves that involve falling or the lowering of objects.

**t - Málmgrýti.** The metal (ore) radical (Conjuration - Subset of Jörð – 4 runic points)  
*Málmgrýti* represents the power of metal, although it relates to this power from an understanding of metal in its natural state as ore.

**H - Elding.** The lightning radical (Conjuration - Subset of Vindr – 4 runic points)  
*Elding* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw the power of lightning into their staves. *Elding* works only above ground, where natural lightning can occur. In the depths, dwarves use the composite stave **MNR**, *eldrstormglötun*, which produces an electrical blast in the depths. On the other side of the coin *eldrstormglötun* can produce only erratic, chaotic storms with uncontrollable lightning in the surface world.

**F - Heill.** The good fortune radical (Evocation - Subset of Dvergr/Jötunn – 5 runic points)  
*Heill* is used in composite staves intended to improve the fortunes of friends and allies. In the old tongue, *heill* also means good luck, good fortune, favorable chances.

**J - Heimför.** The reversal radical (Transmutation - Subset of Bannfæra – 10 runic points)  
*Heimför* requires a deep knowledge of the nature of the condition that is being reversed and also an equally deep understanding of the nature of the condition's opposite.

**l Sæmd.** The honor radical (Enchantment - Subset of Dvergr/Jötunn – 5 runic points)  
*Sæmd* usually refers to honor in dealings, negotiations, treaties, etc.

**♦ - Ís.** The ice radical (Conjuration - Subset of Vatn – 3 runic points)  
*Ís* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw the power of ice into their staves.

**l - Klifra.** The flight radical (Transmutation - Subset of þróttur – 10 runic points)  
*Klifra* is used for most staves that involve climbing, flying or the lifting or elevating of objects.

**R - Glötun.** The radical of dissolution (Transmutation - Subset of Bannfæra – 7 runic points.)  
*Glötun* usually causes destruction, decomposition, etc.

**S - Steinn.** The stone radical (Conjuration - Subset of Jörð – 1 runic point)  
*Steinn* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw the power of stone into their staves. In runic magic *steinn* tends to relate to fundamentals of the dwarven or giant spirit. Among dwarves, it often is used to represent good faith, truth and other dwarven values of lawfulness.

✚ - **Töfra**. The merging radical (Transmutation - Subset of Dvergr/Jötunn – 6 runic points)

*Töfra* draws upon the dwarf's or giant's own essence to merge powers into an object. *Töfra* is an essential radical for the creation of many magical objects and weapons.

↑ - **Ógæfa**. The ill fortune radical (Evocation - Subset of Dvergr/Jötunn – 6 runic points)

*Ógæfa* is used in composite staves to effect curses. In the old tongue, *ógæfa* means ill fate, doom, ill luck, etc..

⚔ - **Vernd**. The protection radical (Abjuration - Subset of Bannfæra –1 runic point)

*Vernd* is used for most staves that provide shelter or protection against specific threats.

ℒ - **Tré \***. The tree radical (Conjuration - Subset of Lif – 8 runic points)

*Tré* is a power source rune. Runecutters use it to draw the power of wood into their staves, but it is accessible mostly only to giant Runecutters, because most dwarves have no relationship to forests or trees. *Tré* evokes the life power of trees, forests and wood.

✎ - **þekking**. The knowledge radical (Divination - Subset of Dvergr or Jötunn –6 runic points)

*þekking* is used in a wide variety of staves, most in the area of divining, but some also intended to communicate by telepathic and similar means. In the old tongue, *þekking* means knowledge, lore, etc.

## The Forgotten Radicals

These are among the radicals have become lost to the runestainers of the era in which *Dungeons Daring* adventures take place, as far as is known. Of course, they could be found again, and their finding could be a part of an adventure. They are provided here for your use as game master.

Υ - **Galdra**. The greater magic radical (Universal – 13 runic points)

Only the most accomplished Runecutters, those who have a deep understanding of the relationship between runic forms and earth magic, could create metamagical staves with this radical. *Galdra* also is the word in the old tongue for the type of wizardry practiced by humans and elves.

⚔ - **Gannda**. The lesser magic radical (Universal – 4 runic points)

*Gannda* was used for common metamagical staves, usually those that expended no more than 6 runic points. *Gannda* also is the dwarven word for the type of wizardry practiced by human, elven and giant sorcerers.

Ƒ - **Náttúra**. The nature radical (Necromancy – 5 runic points)

This radical is similar to *Dvergr/Jötunn*, but it deals with the essence of plant and animal life rather than that of dwarven or giant life. Its use by dwarves in connection with animal and plant life upon the surface was limited to those dwarves who have spent considerable time upon the surface.

ℒ - **Ókunnung**. The outsider radical (Necromancy – 7 runic points)

This radical is similar to *Dvergr/Jötunn*, but it deals with the essence of alien life rather than that of dwarven or giant life. Alien life includes humans, elves, halflings and non-magical mutations. The life of magically created beings can be addressed with *Galdra* or *Gannda*.

## Prime, Subset and Unique Radicals

The term *prime radicals* encompasses an entire great element, such as *Eldr* in the case of fire or *Dvergr/Jötunn* in the case of the folk radical. The elements described by these radicals often have many facets, and the radicals that describe the great element sometimes have within them so-called subset radicals that describe these facets.

A good example is the prime element water radical *Vatn*. Ice is a facet of water, but ice is much more specific than water in general, which could manifest itself as steam as well, the opposite of ice. As a result, *Vatn*, as a prime radical, has within it the subset ice radical *Ís*.

It well may be that *Vatn* also has within it a subset steam radical which would be called *Gufa*. However, if the subset radical *Gufa* (steam in the old tongue) does exist, either the giants and the dwarves have yet to discover it or it may be a forgotten radical.

Almost any effect that can be achieved with a stave that contains *Ís*, the ice radical, also can be achieved by substituting *Vatn*, the water radical, for *Ís*. However, the stave with *Vatn* would be weaker than the stave with *Ís*, because the stave with *Vatn* must deal with all facets and forms of water and then single out ice, while *Ís* focuses all of its power upon ice.

An interesting area of speculation is the subset metal or ore radical *Málmgrýti*. It comes from within the prime radical *Jörð*. However, *Málmgrýti* not only is a subset radical of *Jörð*, but some sages speculate that *Málmgrýti* in turn also has its own subsets. These would be such second-level subset radicals such as *Gull* (Gold), *Silfur* (Silver), *Miðsilfur* (Middle Silver), *Kopar* (copper), *Blý* (lead) and perhaps even *Járn* (iron).

However, these theories have not been proven. They are matters of pure speculation. If such second level subsets exist, one easily can picture that the 81 radicals mentioned in the ancient runestone discovered by adventurers being a reality. If that is indeed the case, there still are a number of forgotten radicals waiting to be found!

Speculation also is the only answer available regarding unique runes. *Senda* and *Samein* are the only unique radicals known to exist. They are not known to be subsets of any other radicals, nor do they have "children" of their own. Dwarven longbeards do not believe that these powerful unique radicals can be subsets themselves or have subsets of their own. For that very reason that are defined as unique.



***Deep under the high mountains are the treacherous halls of the dwarven thanes.***

## 2.8.2 Runic Staves

### Earth Staves

#### ⚔️ - Jörðstormglötun (Evocation)

**Runic Points:** 8

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 21 days

**Range:** Long (400ft/120m + 40ft/12m per level)

**Area:** 80ft/24m Radius

**Defense:** see the description of the magic spell *Cause Earthquake*

This staff creates an earthquake. The mass and depth of the quake are dependent upon the Runecutter's abilities. When you cast an earthquake, an intense but highly localized tremor rips the ground. The shock knocks creatures down, collapses structures, opens cracks in the ground, and more. The effect lasts for 1 round, during which time creatures on the ground can't move or attack. The specific effect of an earthquake depends on the nature of the terrain where it is cast. For details, see the description of the spell *Cause Earthquake* in the *Players Guide*.

#### ⚔️ - Jörðsameinvatn (Evocation)

**Runic Points:** 9

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 30 days

**Range:** Long (400ft/120m + 40ft/12m per 2 levels)

**Area:** 100ft/30m Radius per level

**Defense:** None

The staff is similar to the *Players Guide* magic spell *Transmute Elements* regarding earth and stone, but it functions on a larger scale. It brings the element of water into the soil, making wet mud of it. The rune must be stained with clear, pure water.

#### ⚔️ - Vatnstormjörð (Abjuration)

**Runic Points:** 9

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 12 days

**Range:** Close (25ft/7.5m + 5ft/150cm per 2 levels)

**Area:** 10ft/3m Radius per level

**Defense:** None

The staff is a reverse version of *Jörðsameinvatn*. It drives water from mud, making normal soil of it. The rune must be stained with a pigment made from loam.

### Fire Staves

#### ⚔️ - Eldrjörðsamein (Conjuration)(Epic only)

**Runic Points:** 15

**Runic level:** Lesser only

**Creation time:** 30 days

**Range:** 10 miles/16km

**Area:** One volcano

**Defense:** None

This staff is reserved for the greatest dwarven Runecutters. It will cause a dormant (but not extinct) volcano to erupt. This rune must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine with blood of the enemy. The stain must be burnt with fire.

### ᚦᚨᚱ - Eldrdauðiglötun (Evocation)

**Runic points:** 8

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 21 days

**Range:** Long (400ft/120m + 40ft/12m per level)

**Area:** 50ft/15m radius area

**Defense:** Reflex

The effect is similar to a *Balls of Fire* spell, but it usually covers a wider area than the spell. Damage is calculated at 1d6 per runecaster level. The rune must be stained in sunlight with powdered sulfur that is burnt under moon- and starshine with the flame of burning phosphorous.

### ᚦᚢ - Eldrmálmgrýti (Transmutation)

**Runic Points:** 4

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 12 days

**Range:** Close (25ft/7.5m + 5ft/150cm per 2 levels)

**Target:** Same as spell *Metal Temperature*

**Duration:** 7 rounds + 1 round per stainer level, minimum 20 rounds

**Defense:** None

The stave is a slightly more powerful version of the heating element of the spell *Metal Temperature*, but, when stained by a powerful enough Runecutter, it also can be used to heat metal to temper it. The rune must be stained with nitric acid. For more information, see the description of the spell *Metal Temperature* in the *Players Guide*.

### ᚦᚾ - Eldrlíf (Evocation)

**Runic points:** 6

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Components:** VSM

**Creation time:** 15 days

**Area:** 10ft/3m square per stainer level

**Duration:** 10 days per stainer level or until dispelled

**Defense:** None

The stave makes a cold space warm and livable. It establishes a continual temperature of 72°F/22°C. The rune must be stained with a potion made of 1oz./2.5ml of the stainer's own blood in one pint/500ml of pure water. The rune must be cut in sunshine and stained under moon- and starshine.

## Water and Ice Staves

### ᚦᚨᚱ - Ísdauðiglötun (Evocation)

**Runic points:** 10

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 21 days

**Range:** Long (400ft/120m + 40ft/12m per level)

**Duration:** 1 round per stainer level or until dispelled

**Defense:** None

This stave create a freezing cloud of icy mist shot through with sharp, freezing darts of ice. The cloud obscures all sight as a fog cloud does. In addition, the freezing ice darts within the cloud deal 4d6 points of cold damage to everything within the cloud per round. The cloud moves away from the rune's location. Calculate the cloud's new spread each round based on its new point of origin, which is 10ft/3m farther away from the rune's location. By concentrating, you can make the cloud's center point move as much as 60ft/18m each round. Any portion of the cloud that would extend beyond the maximum range dissipates harmlessly, reducing the remainder's spread thereafter. Wind disperses the cloud. The rune is ineffective underwater.

### ✧† - Ísrmálmgrýti (Transmutation)

**Runic Points:** 4

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 9 days

**Range:** Close (25ft/7.5m + 5ft/150cm per 2 levels)

**Target:** Same as spell *Metal Temperature*

**Duration:** 7 rounds + 1 round per stainer level, minimum 20 rounds

**Defense:** None

The stave is a slightly more powerful version of the freezing element of the spell *Metal Temperature*. The rune must be stained with nitric acid. For more information, see the description of the spell *Metal Temperature* in the *Players Guide*.

### ✧✧ - Ísrlíf (Evocation)

**Runic Points:** 6

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 15 days

**Range:** 10ft/3m square per stainer level

**Duration:** 10 days per stainer level or until dispelled

**Defense:** None

The stave usually is used to make a warm space cold and uninhabitable. It establishes a continual temperature of -30°F/-34°C. The rune must be stained with the melted blood of a corpse of the enemy after it has stood frozen through one winter.

### ✧✧✧ - Ísrjörðbreyta (Evocation)

**Runic Points:** 8

**Runic level:** Lesser and Higher only

**Creation time:** 21 days

**Range:** 100ft/30m per stainer level

**Area:** 100ft/30m square per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 day per stainer level or until dispelled

**Defense:** None

The temperature drops immediate in the affected area to -50°F/-46°C. The rune must be stained with the melted blood of a corpse of the enemy after it has stood frozen through one winter.

## Air Staves

### ✧✧✧ - Vindrstorm (Evocation)

**Runic points:** 4

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 9 days

**Area:** 100ft/30m high and 1 mile/1.6km square per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 hour per stainer level or until dispelled

**Defense:** None

This stave creates a windstorm with a velocity of 10mph/16kmh per Stainer Level. The person who uses the stave determines the direction of the wind and its velocity, up to the stave's maximum. The rune must be cut and stained with a brew of oak bark and burnt with fire under open skies and then stained anew with icy water under moon- and starshine.



### ≡ - Vindrlíf (Evocation)

**Level:** Stainer 5

**Runic level:** Lesser and Higher only

**Components:** VS

**Creation time:** 15 days

**Area:** 10ft/3m cube per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 hour per stainer level or until dispelled

**Saving throw:** None

**SR:** No

*Vindrlíf* can create a pocket of fresh air in water or in a vacuum, it can replace polluted or poisoned air with fresh air and it even can resuscitate a living being who has stopped breathing. The rune must be cut and stained with a brew of oak bark and burnt with fire under open skies and then stained anew with icy water under moon- and starshine.

### ≡H - Vindrdauði (Evocation)

**Runic points:** 7

**Runic level:** Lesser and Higher only

**Creation time:** 18 days

**Area:** 10ft/3m cube per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 hour per stainer level or until dispelled

**Defense:** None, see text

*Vindrdauði* can create a pocket of deadly poisonous air in water or in a vacuum, it can replace fresh air with polluted or poisoned air, and it even can stop a living being from breathing. Poisoned air causes 1d6 points damage per round. To stop a living being from breathing, you must make a successful spell attack against the victim's Endurance defense. The rune must be cut and stained with a brew of oak bark and burnt with fire under open skies and then stained anew with icy water under moon- and starshine.

## Stone Staves

### ≡> - Steinpekkingeldr (Transmutation)

**Runic points:** 7

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 18 days

**Area:** Square 1ft/30cm on a side per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 year per stainer level or until dispelled

**Defense:** None

*Steinpekkingeldr* alters the appearance of underground stone, to hide seams, traps, runes, doors, etc. The rune must be cut and stained underground. It is stained with a potion made from black humus of decayed mushrooms.

### ≡XT - Steinsóleldr (Conjuration)

**Runic points:** 5

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 18 days

**Area:** Square 1ft/30cm on a side per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 year per stainer level or until dispelled

**Defense:** None, see text

*Steinsóleldr* alters the appearance of above-ground stone, to hide seams, traps, runes, doors, etc. The rune must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine. It is stained with a potion made from black forest humus.

### ↻ - Steindjúp (Conjuration)

**Runic points:** 5

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 12 days

**Area:** 3 cubic yards/meter per stainer level or create one stone

**Duration:** 1 round

**Saving throw:** See text

*Steindjúp* can cause anything from a rockslide to a mountain avalanche of rock. The rune must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine. It is stained with oil.

### ↻ - Steineldr (Transmutation)

**Runic points:** 2

**Runic level:** All, no sending

: VSM

**Creation time:** 12 days

**Area:** Cube with 1ft/30cm sides per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Defense:** None

*Steineldr* causes stone to begin flaming, causing 1d8 points of damage to all within 10ft/3m and 1d4 points to all within 20ft/6m. Victims make a Constitution Check vs. DL 16 to avoid collapsing unconscious from pain. The rune must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine. It is stained with oil.

### ↻ - Steinvatnbreyta (Conjuration)

**Runic points:** 8

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 21 days

**Range:** 30 ft/9m

**Area:** 30 cubic feet/9 cubic meter per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Defense:** Reflex

*Steinvatnbreyta* causes stone to liquefy and flow but without heat. The runebearer cannot direct the path down which the liquid flows. It is steered entirely by gravity. The rune must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine. It is stained with pure water. If the victim has a chance to dodge the flow, the Runestainer must make a successful spell attack against the victim's Reflex defense.

### ↻ - Steinbreyrtlfinning (Evocation)

**Runic points:** 10

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 36 days

**Range:** 100ft/30m per stainer level

**Area:** 1 cube with sides 100ft/30m long per stainer level

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Defense:** See text

*Steinbreyrtlfinning* causes a boulder or even small mountain to explode. The shrapnel endangers all persons within 300ft/90m of the outer perimeter of the exploded stone. The damage is 1d6 for each cube of area exploded. Beings within 100ft/30m check for Dexterity for half damage. Beings between 101 and 300ft/31 and 90m check for Dexterity for no damage. The DL is 19 + Magical Aptitude bonus of the stainer. The stave must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine. It is stained with oil, which must be burned. The material component is the affected stone.

**ΣΥ - Steinheimförbreyta** (Evocation)**Runic points:** 10**Runic level:** All, no sending**Creation time:** 36 days**Range:** 100ft/30m per stainer level**Area:** 10 minutes per stainer level**Duration:** Instantaneous**Defense:** None

*Steinheimförbreyta* uses at least three sizeable rocks or boulders as poles of a defensive triangle or circle that foes cannot enter. Those within the circle gain a bonus on all defenses of +5 within the shielded area. Those within it can be hit by runic magic unleashed outside of the shield only on a roll of 1-3 on 1d20. All other rolls affect the attacker, reflecting the runic magic back upon him or her. *Steinheimförbreyta* turns all conventional magic automatically back upon the caster. Spell users and stave bearers inside of the shielded area can continue to work spells and use runestones, but magic that sends attacks outside the shield are ineffective. The rune must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine. It is stained with molten lead.

**ΣΥ - Steineldrbreyta** (Transmutation)**Runic points:** 8**Runic level:** All, no sending**Creation time:** 21 days**Range:** Immediate**Area:** 1 runestone**Duration:** See text**Defense:** See text

*Steineldrbreyta* is ineffective on the surface. It functions only underground. It can be carried dormant by a runebearer on an enchanted runestone. If the runebearer touches another stone - regardless of size - with the enchanted runestone, *Steineldrbreyta* will etch itself unstained into the stone with which it came in contact. 1d4+6 rounds will pass before the stave has been completely cut. After that time, it will stain itself with blinding light the first time a creature comes within 10 feet/3 m of the etched stone, and then dissolve itself again and vanish. All who look upon this rune will be blind for 1d4 days and have impaired vision for another 1d6 days. Victims can check for Stamina against DL 25 to reduce the duration by 50%. The runebearer must take special care with *Steineldrbreyta*. The stave also will do its work if the runestone comes accidentally and unnoticed into contact with another stone. Neither the runebearer nor members of his party are immune to the blinding effects of the etched rune! The rune must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine with phosphorous, which must be burned.

**ΣΧΥ - Steinsólbreyta** (Transmutation)**Level:** Stainer 7**Runic level:** All, no sending**Components:** VSM**Creation time:** 21 days**Range:** Immediate**Area:** 1 runestone**Duration:** See tent**Saving throw:** See tent**SR:** Yes

*Steinsólbreyta* works exactly like *Steineldrbreyta*, except that it functions on the surface of earth and not in the depths. The stave must be cut under moon- and starshine and stained in sunlight. It is stained with phosphorous, which must be burned. The material component is the stone upon which the active rune will be etched.

### ᚱᚢᚦ - Steintilfinningsamein (Transmutation)

**Runic points:** 12

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 30 days

**Range:** Immediate

**Area:** 1 segment of stone with dimensions of 5ft n 3ft n 10ft/150cm n 90cm n 3m per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 round per stainer level or until dismissed

**Defense:** None

*Steintilfinningsamein* allows the affected being(s) to pass through stone. The stave must be stained with salt water. Some Runestainers have created more powerful versions that will transport persons and objects through stone to a specified destination. In such versions, a successful Stamina check against the DL of the Runecutter's stave will negate the effect.

### ᚱᚢᚦ - Steinbannfaerasamein (Transmutation)

**Runic points:** 11

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 30 days

**Range:** Immediate

**Area:** 1 segment of stone with dimensions of 5ft n 3ft n 10ft/150cm n 90cm n 3m per stainer level

**Duration:** 1 round per stainer level or until dismissed

**Defense:** None

The stave prevents passage by any means, physical or magical, through the target area of stone. The Runecutter can, however, stain this stave in such a manner that it will make an exception for a spoken password.

### ᚱᚢᚦᚱᚱ - Steinelldrheimförlifradjúp (Transmutation).

**Runic points:** 12

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 30 days

**Range:** 100ft/30m per stainer level

**Area:** 1 cube of stone with sides of 1ft/30cm per stainer level

**Duration:** Until discharged

**Saving throw:** Reflex

*Steinelldrheimförlifradjúp* is an extremely difficult stave, because it binds *five* radicals. It is one of relatively few known staves ever successfully cut and stained that has bound so many radicals. Few Runecutters can bind more than three radicals into a stave. *Steinelldrheimförlifradjúp* allows the runebearer to place an invisible stone in the air that falls upon a creature walking beneath it. Those hit by the falling stone sustain 1d6 damage per cubic foot volume of stone. If the victim somehow becomes aware of the stone's threat and has room to dodge it, the Runecutter must make a spell attack against the victim's Reflex defense, or the stone misses its target. The DL is 30 + the Magical Aptitude bonus of the stainer. The stave must be cut under moon- and starshine and stained in sunlight. It is stained with the blood of the enemy.

## Necromantic Staves

### ᚱᚢᚦ - Lífbreytdauði (Necromancy)

**Runic points:** 13

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 21 days

**Range:** Within 30ft/9m of visible stave

**Duration:** Until discharged

**Defense:** None

*Lífbreypdaudi* slays a group of living creatures. If only a single creature sees the stave, it dies if it has 200 or fewer injury points remaining. If *Lífbreypdaudi* affects a group, it kills all creatures within a 20-foot/6-meter radius of the stave that have 50 or fewer injury points remaining. It slays up to a total of 200 injury points of such creatures. The spell affects creatures with the lowest injury point totals first until the next creature would put the total over the limit of 200. The stave must be cut in sunlight and stained under moon- and starshine. It is stained with the blood of the enemy.

### NYF - Dauðibreytalíf (Necromancy)

**Runic points:** 13

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 21 days

**Range:** Within 30ft/9m of visible stave

**Duration:** Until discharged

**Defense:** None

*Dauðibreytalíf* can return a dead dwarven or giant corpse to life if the creature's spirit has not already merged into stone or been dissolved in Deep Hell. The stave will trigger itself automatically in the presence of a dwarven or giant body. The stave must be cut under moon- and starshine and stained in sunlight. It is stained with the blood of the enemy.

### F1Y - Lífklifrabreyta (Necromancy)

**Runic points:** 10

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 27 days

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** One being

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Defense:** None

A creature exposed to *Lífklifrabreyta* will be totally healed of all physical and psychological maladies and have full hit points and in many cases ability scores restored. The healing includes wounds, diseases, effects of poison, energy drain, feebleminding, etc. The stave cannot end a curse, but it can ban all physical and psychological effects of a curse. It will not restore ability score losses that are defined as being *permanent*, but it will restore other lost ability points. The stave must be cut under moon- and starshine and stained in sunlight. It is stained with the blood of the enemy.

## Staves of Other Base Radicals

### Hf - Eldingeldr (Transmutation)

**Runic points:** 5

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 12 days

**Range:** Close (25ft/7.5m + 5ft/150cm per stainer level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Until negated

**Defense:** None

When this stave is read, it makes the reader invisible. It works only upon the surface world. The effect ceases when an invisible creature attacks. The stave does not conceal sounds made by the recipient or trails it leaves such as footprints, and it does not conceal anything that lands upon the recipient after the stave has done its work. The stave must be cut under moon- and starshine and stained in sunlight. It is stained with mercury.

### **Mǫ - Stjarneldr** (Transmutation)

**Runic points:** 5

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 12 days

**Range:** Close (25ft/7.5m + 5ft/150cm per stainer level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Until negated

**Defense:** None

This stave is identical to Eldingeldr except that it functions underground rather than upon the surface.

### **HMJ - Eldingstjarnheimför** (Transmutation)

**Runic points:** 10

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 27 days

**Range:** Long (400ft/120m + 40ft/12m per stainer level)

**Target:** Any number of creatures within range

**Duration:** 1 Round per stainer level

**Defense:** None

*Eldingstjarnheimför* grants invisibility, but the effect does not end when the invisible creature attacks. If the stave bearer takes no other measures, the stave will make all creatures within range invisible, regardless of whether they are friend or foe. Through concentration the stave bearer can designate only specific creatures within range as targets. However, this requires 1 round of full concentration per 10 recipients. The stave must be cut under moon- and starshine and stained in sunlight. It is stained with mercury.

### **MHR - Eldingdauðiglötun** (Evocation)

**Runic points:** 8

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 21 days

**Range:** Long (400ft/120m + 40ft/12m per stainer level)

**Area:** Line up to 400ft/120m long

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Defense:** Reflex

The stave calls a Lightning Bolt upon the world's surface that causes 1d6 damage per stainer level. To be effective, weather conditions must be conducive to produce lightning. If the target attempts to dodge the bolt and has room to do so, you must make a successful spell attack against the target's Reflex defense or your bolt misses. The stave must be cut and stained under sunlight. It is stained with mercury.

### **MHR - Eldauðiglötun** (Evocation)

**Runic points:** 8

**Runic level:** All

**Creation time:** 15 days

**Range:** Long (400ft/120m + 40ft/12m per stainer level)

**Area:** Line up to 400ft/120m long

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Defense:** Reflex

This stave is identical to *Eldingdauðiglötun* except that it works underground and not upon the surface. It is not dependent upon weather conditions. The electricity is drawn from the charges of various underground elements.



### ᛚ - Sæmdeldr (Enchantment).

**Runic Points:** 6

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 15 days

**Target:** Group of willing recipients

**Duration:** Duration of agreement

**Defense:** None

*Sæmdeldr* binds parties to a contract, treaty or other agreement to hold honorably to that agreement. Failing to uphold a bound agreement can result in a curse, death, etc., based upon the will and power of the Runecutter. The stave must be cut under moon- and starshine and stained in sunlight. It is stained with a potion made of 1oz./2.5ml of the stainer's own blood in one pint/500ml of pure water.

### ᛚᛞ - Sæmdeldrsteinn (Enchantment).

**Runic points:** 5 or 8 (see text)

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 15 days or 24 days

**Target:** Group of willing recipients

**Duration:** 1 minute per stainer level (level 5), 1 hour per stainer level (level 8)

**Defense:** Will (5-point version only)

*Sæmdeldrsteinn* prevents the targets from lying. It works only upon recipients who agree to accept the effect. In the 5-point version, deceptive recipients can attempt to resist its compulsion with a successful Stamina check against a DL equal to 10 + Runestainer level + the Runestainer's bonus for *Magical Aptitude*. The 8-point version cannot be resisted. If a recipient agrees to accept the spell and then attempts to resist the stave, it will reveal telepathically to all that this recipient lied when he or she agreed to accept the stave. *Sæmdeldrsteinn* must be cut under moon- and starshine and stained in sunlight. It is stained with a potion made of 1oz./2.5ml of the stainer's own blood in one pint/500ml of pure water.

### ᛚᛞᛞ - Sæmddauðitöfra (Necromancy).

**Runic points:** 7

**Runic level:** All, no sending

**Creation time:** 18 days

**Target:** One object

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Defense:** None

*Sæmddauðitöfra* is the infamous stave used to produce the feared dwarven death geas torques. This magic is beyond the ability of giant runestainers. Under the supervision of a master runestainer, a dwarven master smith can cut *Sæmddauðitöfra* into jeweled metal neck torques. Afterward, the Runecutter stains the stave. When the torque is placed around the neck of a creature and a mission is laid upon the torque wearer, the torque will begin reducing its size and strangle the wearer if he or she has not fulfilled the mission by the deadline that was set. Any magical or physical attempt to remove the torque also will start the shrinking process.



*Underground rivers supply the power of water for runic staves.*

## 2.9 Items of Runic Magic

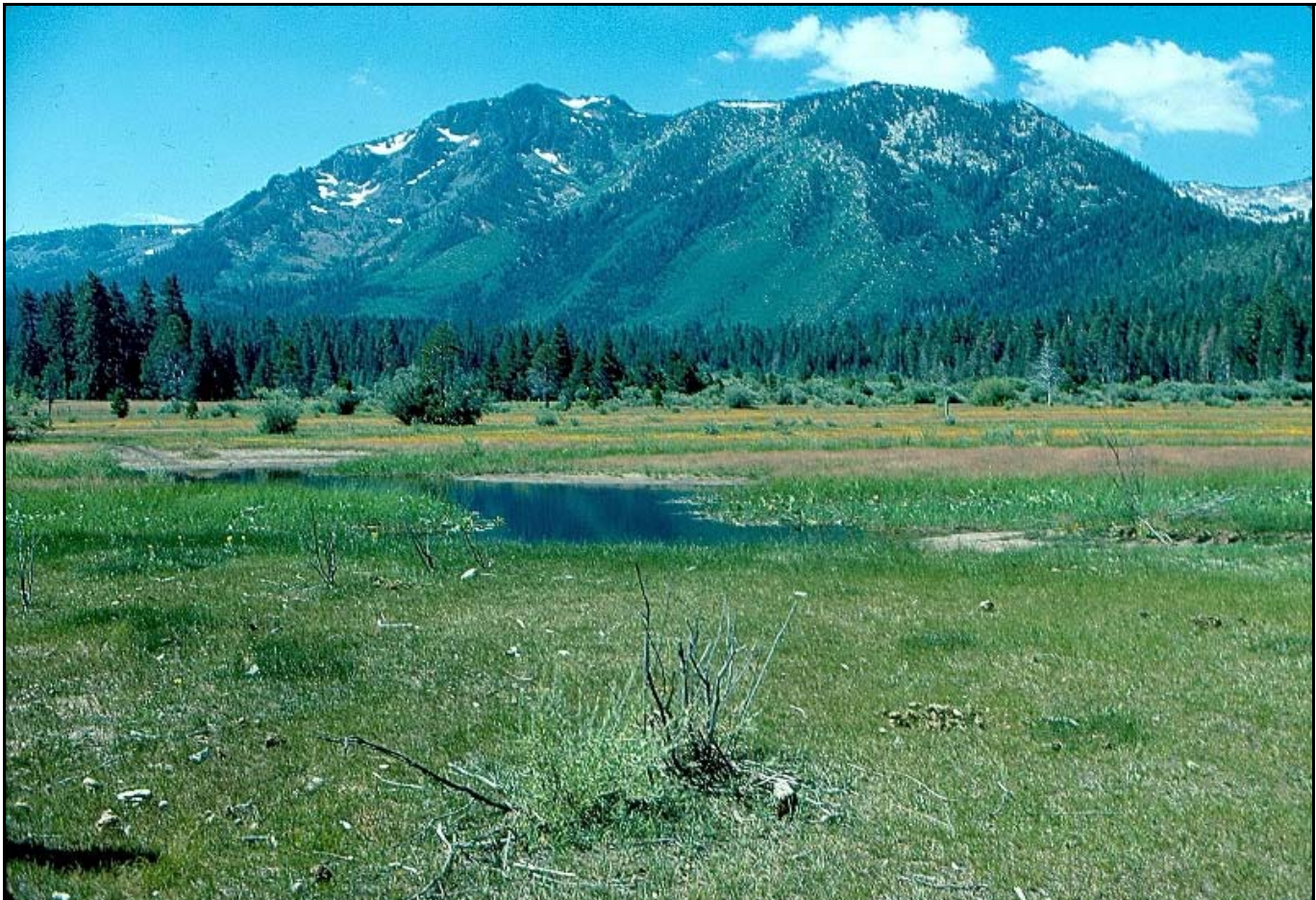
Both the dwarves and the giants have learned to create items of runic magic, although the things they ensorcel through cutting and staining differ somewhat. To that comes the fact that the giants are somewhat limited in the use of runic magic, where the talents of ancient dwarven runestainers seem to know few bounds.

Runestones and runic tables, which to a certain extent are the counterpart of spells, song, diction and rites in the runic arts, already have been covered in the previous section. In this section, we deal instead with magical weapons, armor and other rune-ensorcelled objects. We also should note at the start that runecutters produce no counterparts for potions, staves, wands and similar objects of conventional magic. Dwarven runestainers and smiths have worked together to create magical rings, but most works of runic magic fall into the categories of weapons, armor and miscellaneous items.

Dwarves cut their greatest runes into objects made of precious middle silver. With few exceptions, they keep such items for themselves, although in ancient times, they did make a few gifts of middle silver. A human, halfling or half-elf in possession of runic ensorcelled items of middle silver are owners of priceless rarities. They are few and far between. Some items, above all chain mail and shirts and the like, can be used only by halflings, whom they fit loosely.

In most trade with these races, dwarves sell raw iron, which they refuse to use themselves, and wares made of bronze. Some dwarven clans have made rune-ensorcelled bronze weapons or armor for humans, but this is very much the exception rather than the rule. Dwarves tend to keep their middle silver and their runes to themselves.

Giants are more chaotically organized than the dwarves. In their early days, the large folk were collected in one huge giant kingdom, but it fell together with the royal house in the ancient wars with the dwarves. Today, most giants live in scattered tribes that have little interest in one another in most cases and that are hostile to one another in some cases.



*Trolls in the low swamp, giants below the tree line and dwarves in the mountains*

Thus, there is no general line of trade that can be defined between giants and humans. Many tribes have little or no contact with humans. Others, in border areas, deal frequently with humans trading wares with them. There is no friendship between giants and humans, but the lure of trade sometimes brings them to tolerate one another.

Unlike the dwarves, the giants usually have neither middle silver nor iron to trade with humans. What little they have of either is booty gained in ancient battles with dwarves. Bronze is their chief item, although they do sell some bituminous coal to humans too. Giant smiths and runestainers happily accept well-paid contracts from humans to produce runic ensorcelled weapons of bronze.

Humans, on the other hand, have become wary of such goods. Although there is no history of warfare between humans and giants, the large folk have no love for other races and view all of them, in the best light, as creatures who are dedicated to cheating the giants. As a result, magical items that humans have commissioned giants to make for them sometimes have included extra staves that cause unpleasant results for the human users.

Nonetheless, the dwarves are unmastered in the making of runic ensorcelled weapons that contain deadly staves. The most famous of all such weapons is *Dáinsleif* (Dáin's Heirloom). It was forged cut and stained in ancient times by a dwarven thane's son named Dáin who had been captured by a giant tribe.

The giant chieftain promised Dáin that he would release the dwarf if Dáin would take captured dwarven middle silver and reforge it into a mighty giant's sword ensorcelled to the chieftain's specifications. Dáin did this deed, and after presenting the blade to his captor, he was slain with it by the giant chieftain.

However, giants cannot read the more powerful staves that dwarves can cut and stain, nor do they understand some of the more powerful runic radicals known to the stout folk. Therefore, the chieftain did not know that Dáin not only had given the sword the powers he had demanded but also that he had cut powerful curses into it.

Whenever a possessor of *Dáinsleif* draws the sword, he or she cannot sheath it again until it has slain someone. Furthermore, anyone who slays another with *Dáinsleif* is doomed to be slain himself one day by the sword. To date, the sword has fulfilled Dáin's runic curse with every owner it has had.

Nonetheless, not all runic magic of dwarves and giants is suspect or evil. If legends tell the truth, the greatest blade ever forged is the runic ensorcelled *Mímung*, which the dwarves of yore gave to the king of the light elves in ancient times when dwarves and elves still were kin and bound in friendship.

Although it would be theoretically possible to make runic ensorcelled items of iron, which does not resist runic magic, the dwarves refuse to work with the metal. They do mine iron ore, and they do smelt it, but they sell all of the raw iron they make, most of it to humans. They have no love for iron and do not work with it. The giants lack both the knowledge and the anthracite coal necessary to forge iron. Therefore, one will seek only in vain after iron items that are ensorcelled with runes.

The lists that follows give examples of some of the legendary or better known magic wares produced by dwarves and giants.

## 2.9.1 Runic Armor

Halflings can make use of dwarven armor, although it usually will fit loosely. Giant armor is too large for humans and half-elves to use, unless, of course, it has been tailor made for them. In most cases, if a PC group gains dwarven or giant armor, with or without runic staves, it will be useless to them.

The only known types of runic ensorcelled armor are made of bronze and, in the case of dwarven works, middle silver as well. There are no runic ensorcellments known beyond plus enhancements. All but a few such items are within the range of +1 to +5. However, it is possible for giants to ensorcel armor up to +10 and for dwarves to create magical armor as high as +15. Dwarven middle silver armor has a natural enhancement of +3 without runic ensorcellment. The table lists the types of runic ensorcelled armor that are known. The usual staff is ...

 – **Bannfæraverndtöfra** (Minimum 6 magic points, maximum 21 points in two stainings)

... for a +1 ensorcellment. For each additional plus point, another magic point is expended. The maximum number of plus points is the maximum number of magic points the runestainer can expend. The staining can take place in two sessions when the runecutter has too few magic points to complete the staff in one session.



## Dwarven Armor

Description	Magic Enhancement	Middle Silver	Total Enhancement	*Price
Dwarven runic chain shirt, bronze	+1 to +15	0	+1 to +15	7+100 GP/point
Dwarven runic chain shirt, middle silver	+1 to +15	+3	+4 to +18	500+100 GP/point
Dwarven runic chain mail, bronze	+1 to +15	0	+1 to +15	25+100 GP/point
Dwarven runic chain mail, middle silver	+1 to +15	+3	+4 to +18	3,500+100 GP/point
Dwarven runic full plate, bronze	+1 to +15	0	+1 to +15	500+100 GP/point
Dwarven runic shield, bronze	+1 to +5	0	+1 to +5	500+100 GP/point

**NOTE:** These items are available only in dwarven sizes!

## Giant Armor

Description	Magic Enhancement	*Price
Giant runic chain shirt, bronze	+1 to +10	7+80 GP/point
Giant runic chain mail, bronze	+1 to +10	25+80 GP/point
Giant runic full plate, bronze	+1 to +10	500+80 GP/point
Giant runic shield, bronze	+1 to +5	500+80 GP/point

\* **Price:** The first figure is the base price. Add the total GP price for the points to this.

## 2.9.2 Runic Weapons

Although such weapons are rare, both dwarves and giants do forge battleaxes, war hammers and swords with special powers. These are described in the next Section 2.9.3 *Other Runic Items*. The great majority of the weapons produced by dwarves and giants fall in a few standard categories, regardless of whether they have been ensorcelled with runic staves. They are ensorcelled only with plus points:

- **Dwarves** make only three kinds of weapons for their own use: Battleaxes, war hammers and crossbows. Dwarves make battleaxes and war hammers of middle silver and bronze. They fashion crossbows of rowan wood and the shafts of crossbow bolts of hazelwood. When dwarves have made magic swords, it has been for non-dwarven users. These invariably are forged of bronze. Only a few dwarven swords of middle silver are known to exist.
- **Giants** fight with spears, large swords, clubs and thrown stones. The only weapons they enchant for their own use are large swords and spears. Such swords are made of bronze and usually are 6ft/180cm and more long. Spears are made of rowan wood with bronze points. The usually have a length of 7ft/210cm and more. Giants cut and stain their runes into the blades of swords and the wooden shafts of their spears. However, they also make smaller swords and spears for human customers. The prices in the table below are valid for all giant-made weapons, regardless of their size.

When dwarves and giants ensorcel weapons with plus points, the stave usually is ...

**HT** - **Dauðógæftöfra** (Minimum 6 magic points, maximum 21 points in two stainings)

... for a +1 ensorcellment. For each additional plus point, another magic point is expended. The maximum number of plus points is the maximum number of magic points the runestainer can expend. The staining can take place in two sessions when the runecutter has too few magic points to complete the stave in one session.

## Standard Dwarven Runic Weapons

Description	Magic Enhancement	Middle Silver	Total Enhancement	*Price
Dwarven runic battle axe, bronze	+1 to +15	0	+1 to +15	5 + 100 GP/point
Dwarven runic battle axe, middle silver	+1 to +15	+3	+4 to +18	300 + 100 GP/point
Dwarven runic war hammer, bronze	+1 to +15	0	+1 to +15	8 + 100 GP/point
Dwarven runic war hammer, middle silver	+1 to +15	+3	+4 to +18	500 + 100 GP/point
Dwarven runic crossbow, rowan	+1 to +15	0	+1 to +15	25 + 100 GP/point
Dwarven runic shaft, hazelwood	+1 to +5	0	+1 to +5	1 + 25 GP/point

### Standard Giant Runic Weapons

Description	Magic Enhancement	*Price
Giant runic spear, rowan and bronze	+1 to +10	1 + 80 GP/point
Giant runic sword, bronze	+1 to +10	15+80 GP/point



**Bronze Dragon of the giant runestainers**

Product Identity

### 2.9.3 Other Runic Items

The following is a catalog of other known runic items. However, it is by no means a complete listing. We suggest that you use these descriptions as examples to generate your own runic items for use as needed in your campaign.

#### Bronze Dragon

Number: Multiple  
 Creating Folk: Giants  
 Magic Points: 6  
 Price: 4,000 GP  
 Weight: 750 lbs/375kg  
 Bulk: Large  
 Stave: Eldjötunógæfa

⌂↑

The *Bronze Dragon* is a powerful runic warding object that hangs over the entrances to the strongholds of some giant tribes. The object is a large, bronze metal sculpture of the head and neck of a dragon. The warding stave detects whether approaching creatures are giants. If not, and if the proper password is not spoken from the watch tower above the sculpture, it will unleash a breath weapon attack upon the road to the entrance below. The breath attack covers a circular area 60ft/18m in diameter and does 1d8 points of magic fire damage per magic point expended in staining the rune, always a minimum of 6d8.

**Dáinsleif Sword**

Number: Unique  
 Creating Folk: Dwarves  
 Magic Points: 15  
 Price: 14,000 GP  
 Weight: 10 lbs/5kg  
 Bulk: Medium  
 Stave: Galdrglötundauðógæftöfra

YRHT

The name from the old tongue means *Dáin's Heirloom*. The long sword in giant's size, 6ft/180cm long and with a +18 bonus (+15 runic, +3 middle silver), was forged cut and stained in ancient times by a dwarven thane's son named Dáin who had been captured by a giant tribe. Not even modern runestainers can completely understand the five-radical stave used to ensorcel *Dáinsleif*, because it uses the lost radical *Galdr*, which has passed from knowledge. The giant chieftain for whom the sword was made promised Dáin that he would release the dwarf if Dáin would take captured dwarven middle silver and reforge it into a mighty giant's sword ensorcelled to the chieftain's specifications. Dáin did this deed, and after presenting the blade to his captor, he was slain with it by the giant chieftain. However, the chieftain did not know that Dáin not only had given the sword the powers he had demanded but also that he had cut powerful curses into it. Whenever a possessor of *Dáinsleif* draws the sword, he or she cannot sheath it again until it has slain someone. Furthermore, anyone who slays another with *Dáinsleif* is doomed to be slain one day himself by the sword. To date, the sword has fulfilled Dáin's runic curse with every owner it has had. There is no known way to free a person of the sword's magic except perhaps to throw it into a volcanic fire or melt it in a dwarven furnace. The current whereabouts of *Dáinsleif* are unknown.

**Death Geas Torque**

Number: Multiple  
 Creating Folk: Dwarves  
 Magic Points: 7  
 Price: 1,500 GP  
 Weight: 1 lbs/500g  
 Bulk: Light  
 Stave: Sæmddauðitöfra

IN

These infamous bronze neck collars embossed with the stave *Sæmddauðitöfra* are devious traps for outsiders whom dwarves wish to perform an agreed-upon quest. Many of these torques have been created over the ages. Dwarves use these torques, when they can, to enforce the *honor* aspects of contracts with outsiders, which are nearly holy to them. After an agreement is sealed, the dwarves strongly will urge their outsider partner to wear the torque, at least until their dealings with the dwarves are done. The dwarves will tell the outsider truthfully that the torque is ensorcelled to make it impossible to decapitate the wearer. If the situation fits and it is necessary, the dwarves may even invent an imaginary foe that decapitates victims and try to convince the outsider that he or she is threatened by this foe. However, the victim, whether deceived or for some other reason, must accept the torque of his or her own free will. If it is placed forcibly upon the victim's neck, its magic is ineffective. Once the victim is wearing the torque, the dwarves will tell the wearer of its remaining abilities. They will give the wearer a certain number of days, months or even years to fulfill the contract that he or she has made with the dwarves. When the contract is fulfilled, the dwarves will remove the torque. If the contract is not fulfilled by the deadline, the torque will begin tightening 1d10 days later, choking the wearer to death. The dwarves will tell the wearer truthfully that any attempt to remove the torque by force will animate the magic immediately. They also will claim, not quite so truthfully, that any attempt to remove the torque with magic will have the same effect. In truth, there is only a 50% chance (1-10 on 1d20) that conventional magic will trigger the torque's magic instead of banning it. The torque also can be removed by being touched with a rune tablet or rune stick inscribed with the stave *Sæmdbannfæra*:

IN.

## Dvergrdrepur Spear

## Dvergrdrepur Sword

Number: Multiple

Creating Folk: Giants

Magic Points: 6 or more (dependent upon plus enchantment), maximum 10

Price: 1,000 GP and higher

Weight: 4 lbs/2kg (spear), 8 lbs/4kg sword

Bulk: Medium

Stave: Lífdauðitöfra



The name *Dvergrdrepur* means Dwarf's Bane in the old tongue. Except for the weapon form, these items are identical in ensorcellment. Such weapons are common among the higher ranking members of giant tribes. They are master rowan wood spears with bronze points and bronze giant long swords with bonuses of at least +1. Special staining with dwarven blood gives them an additional bonus of +3 when battling dwarves. The finest of these weapons can have a bonus as high as +10. However, because of the slowly diminishing number of giant master smiths and runestainers, one seldom finds such weapons with a bonus higher than +5. The spears are 10ft/3m long. The swords are 8ft/240cm long.

## Endalaus Dauði Metamorphic Weapon

Number: Unique

Creating Folk: Dwarves

Magic Points: 15

Price: 18,000

Weight: varies with form

Bulk: varies with form

Stave: Sameineldjörðvindvatntunglsóldauði



*Endalaus Dauði* is the most powerful item of runic magic ever made. Its stave is the only stave ever successfully cut with eight radicals, and it also is the only stave ever successfully cut with both the mighty rune of melding, *Samein*, and the four basic elemental radicals. The weapon is the creation of the greatest of all master smiths, Völundr, from the first dwarven generation. In some cultures, he is referred to as Wayland. Although only a few surviving greybeards ever have seen this weapon, it still is a legend among dwarves. *Endalaus Dauði* is a metamorphic weapon that automatically takes the shape of its bearer's preferred melee weapon with a damaging metal part. In other words, it would be of no use to a giant proficient only with a wooden club, but it would serve a spear wielder, because a spear's point can be of metal. When assuming a new form, all metallic parts of *Endalaus Dauði* are of middle silver. In most respects, *Endalaus Dauði* is a +18 (+15 runic, +3 middle silver) version of whatever weapon form it has assumed. However, its special powers come into play above all against draugs. When *Endalaus Dauði* hits a draug below dark draug level with a natural roll of 20, the draug automatically is destroyed and dissolved into nothingness. Its soul is shattered into oblivion, returning to Hela's pool of life. If a dark draug is destroyed by *Endalaus Dauði* in ordinary round-to-round combat, it shares the same fate. Any living creature slain by *Endalaus Dauði* is irreversibly dead. The soul or spirit reaches its final destination in Hela's domain (or in the stars, in the case of some elves), and there is no means by which that soul or spirit can be restored to life. The greatest mystery regarding *Endalaus Dauði* is what became of it. Völundr forged and stained it, but there is no record of it ever having been seen since. Even in the great wars, where draugs were among the strongest foes, *Endalaus Dauði* was not seen.



**Gram Sword**

Number: Unique

Creating Folk: Dwarves

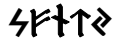
Magic Points: 10

Price: 12,000 GP

Weight: 8 lbs/4kg

Bulk: Medium

Stave: þróttulífmálmgrýtógæftöfra



Dwarves of the earliest generations are said to have forged this mighty blade. However, modern dwarves dismiss this myth as a *jötnarsaga* (giants' tale) in the old tongue. The weapon was in fact ensorcelled secretly by ancient, first generation dwarves at the bequest of a member of the creator race named Smiðaföð (father of smiths). He, in turn, told the dwarves only that he needed it for the elves. Because Smiðaföð swore the dwarves who took part in its forging and ensorcellment to secrecy, there is no dwarven lore regarding the sword, other than the recognition of an unbelieved myth. After Smiðaföð departed the dwarven halls with the sword, nothing more ever has been heard of this weapon. It is a +13 (+10 runic, +3 middle silver) two-handed sword that can sunder any substance. It is a deadly weapon when used against draugs. Any injury points that a draug loses to *Gram* are forever lost to its undead body. A draug wounded by *Gram* can return to its full measure of injury points only by acquiring a new body. The blade is 6ft/180cm long and made of middle silver. It has the disadvantage that it loses its magical properties when it becomes dull, and it can be sharpened only upon a grindstone known in the old tongue as the *Trollhverfisteinn* (troll grindstone). Dwarves also laugh at the tale of the grindstone. The meaning behind the name *Gram* is lost in time.

**Great Gauntlet**

Number: Unique

Creating Folk: Giants

Magic Points: 10

Price: 8,000 GP

Weight: 1 lbs/500 grams

Bulk: Small

Stave: Jötunmálmgrýtheimförógæfa



The *Great Gauntlet* is a masterful runic trap created by a giant chieftain who also is a master runestainer and wise in the ways of dwarves and humans, both of whom are unwelcome in the giants' lands. The gauntlet in question is a normal bronze gauntlet in a suitable size to fit a giant. It usually is left in the open at a location where intruders are likely to go. The gauntlet has the ability to sense when elves, dwarves, humans, halflings, half-elves, draugs or mutations come within 3 miles/5 km of it. Whenever they do, the gauntlet begins enlarging itself until it reaches a length of 50ft/15m with a wrist opening 10ft/3m high and 25ft/7.5m wide.. This process takes 10 minutes. Once the gauntlet reaches its full magical size, it magically draws valuable gemstones and captured weapons and armor from the chieftain's horde into the fingers of the gauntlet. When this process is completed, the inside walls of the glove begin to glow weakly but sufficiently so that someone standing outside of the gauntlet's wrist opening can see clearly what is in the fingers. If living or undead creatures enter the gauntlet and come within 5ft/150cm of any of the treasures in the fingers, the wrist opening of the gauntlet will snap shut, the treasures will return back to the chieftain and the gauntlet will begin reverting to its normal size. This process also takes 10 minutes. After 6 minutes, all medium-sized creatures in the gauntlet will be crushed to death. After 5 minutes, halflings, dwarves and all other small-sized creatures in the gauntlet will be crushed to death. The crushing process can be stopped by using runic abjuration magic or by physically breaking through the gauntlet. In its magic form, it has an Armor defense of 20 and 50 effective injury points. When it reaches 0 effective injury points, one may assume that one has broken through the gauntlet to freedom.

**Jötundrepur Battleaxe****Jötundrepur War Hammer**

Number: Multiple

Creating Folk: Dwarves

Magic Points: 6 or more (dependent upon plus enchantment), usually at least 9

Price: 3,000 GP and higher

Weight: 5 lbs/2.5kg (battleaxe), 4 lbs/2kg war hammer

Bulk: Medium

Stave: Lífdauðitöfra



The name *Jötundrepur* means Giant's Bane in the old tongue. Except for the weapon form, both of these items are identical. Such weapons are widespread in dwarven clans. Usually as many have been forged, cut and stained as the supply of middle silver and the number of master smiths and runecutters allows. All are master battleaxes and war hammers with bonuses of at least +4 (+1 runic, +1 middle silver). Special staining with giant blood gives them an additional bonus of +3 when battling giants. The finest of these weapons can have a bonus as high as +18 (+15 runic, +3 middle silver). However, because of the slowly diminishing number of dwarven master smiths and runestainers, one seldom finds such weapons with a bonus higher than +10 (+7 runic, +3 middle silver). The hammers are 2ft/60cm long. The axes are 30 inches/75cm long.

**Jötundrepur Sword**

Number: Multiple

Creating Folk: Dwarves

Magic Points: 15

Price: 3,000 GP

Weight: 2 lbs/1kg

Bulk: Medium

Stave: Lífdauðheimförtöfra



Dwarven lore claims that the master runestainers during the ancient wars between dwarves and giants created 22 of these deviously evil and nefarious short swords of middle silver named *Jötundrepur* (Giant's Bane) in the old tongue. The swords are of the finest dwarven quality. Giant runestainers cannot unravel the four-radical stave cut into the blades, because the Heimför radical of reversal is beyond the knowledge of most giant runecutters. Instead, guessing only at the role the unknown Heimför radical played in the stave, they concluded erroneously that the swords perhaps had great powers of resurrection. The dwarves intentionally left these swords upon battlefields where great giant chieftains had been engaged, making it look like they had been lost by fallen dwarven warriors. In truth, they are magical traps. As the dwarves assumed, when such blades were found, they were turned over to the chieftains, who drew them, used them and fell victim to the swords' evil magic. Upon first use, the giant chieftains discovered that they had mighty blades indeed, albeit small for a giant to use. All 22 swords were enchanted with a bonus of +18 (+15 runic, +3 middle silver). However, once a giant chieftain began using the sword, he or she also began developing a nearly uncontrollable urge to slay his or her own kind, an urge to which he or she sooner or later fell victim. These chieftains began turning upon their own until they at last were slain. Where the 22 blades are today is uncertain. It is unlikely that they were destroyed. Instead, some of them probably still are being held by giant tribes and others are waiting to be found wherever they were lost or hidden in ancient times. If your PCs come upon such a trapped weapon, they may be in grave danger. The staves are just as effective as they were in ancient times. If a PC begins to use a *Jötundrepur*, he or she will feel a strong urge once daily to slay as many of his or her own kind as possible. He or she can overcome this urge with a successful Stamina check against DL 20 the first time, but on each succeeding day, the DL increases by 1. The only way to break the sword's hold on a person who has been overcome by it is to destroy the weapon. The first (and last) time the affected character loses the Stamina check, he or she will become unswervingly determined to regain the weapon and will be able to sense where it is, regardless of how it is hidden. Because it is of middle silver, such a weapon probably can be destroyed only by throwing it into a volcanic fire or asking dwarves to melt it down in an anthracite furnace. For purposes of the stave and the affected person's perception of his or her own kind, humans, halflings and half-elves all would be a *single kind*.

**Mímung Sword**

Number: Unique

Creating Folk: Dwarves

Magic Points: 15

Price: 20,000 GP

Weight: 3 lbs/1.5kg

Bulk: Medium

Stave: Galdrþekkingdauðtilfinningógæftöfra

YSHBTZ

*Mímung* is the second most powerful item of runic magic ever created, after *Endalaus Dauði*, according to old dwarven lore. The sword was forged in ancient days when dwarves and light elves still considered one another to be close kin and friends. The long sword, has a 5ft/150cm blade and a +18 (+15 runic, +3 middle silver) bonus to attack and damage and a +15 bonus (runic) for initiative. It can cut through any substance. The dwarves who forged it tested it by sundering the anvil upon which it was shaped. *Mímung* was forged as a gift of honor for the king of the light elves. It is assumed that it still is in his possession in the elven lands of the Middle Dimension. *Mímung* not only is a powerful +15 sword, but it also has the power to divine a potential opponent, determine its true intentions and establish telepathic communications with it, if the bearer desires. The equivalent of 10 minutes of speech by each party can be exchanged in an instant as a free action with the help of *Mímung*. The dwarven smiths and runestainers created this ensorcellment to ease the elven king's worries that he would have to slay creatures in future conflicts who had no real reason to be an enemy but who rather were acting on the basis of misunderstandings. The blade also transmits to a foe a true picture of the weapon's power and speed, to convey that defense against it is nearly hopeless. Not even modern runestainers can completely understand the rare six-radical stave used to ensorcel *Dáinsleif*, because it uses the lost radical *Galdr*, which has passed from knowledge.

**Mistilteinn Sword**

Number: Unique

Creating Folk: Giants

Magic Points: 10

Price: 2,500 GP

Weight: 3 lbs/1.5kg

Bulk: Medium

Stave: Málmgrýtógæftöfra

TIZ

*Mistilteinn* is one of the more feared weapons created by the giants. Before the great wars, it was made by the giants on commission from a powerful nobleman who later became a dark draug and servant of the Darkness. *Mistilteinn* is a powerful +10 long sword that never goes dull. The sword is 5ft/150cm long and is made of bronze. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

**Trollhverfisteinn Grindstone**

Number: Unique

Creating Folk: Creator Race

Magic Points: 15

Price: 6,000 GP

Weight: 300 lbs/150kg

Bulk: Large

Stave: Sameineldjörðvindr

TIZP

The true name of this object is, in the old tongue, *Smíðaföðshjól*, which means Smith Father's Grindstone, although modern myths that tell of the mysterious grindstone call it by the old tongue name *Trollhverfisteinn*, which means Troll Grindstone. The myths say that the grindstone appears and disappears as at will, and when it appears, no one can operate it or do anything else with it. It only becomes functional when an ancient, grizzled troll sits at it at night and begins pumping the foot pedal, which brings the grindstone at last to turn. When the troll works the grindstone, myth claims, it can sharpen any blade, regardless of its condition. Further, it will restore corroded or

tarnished metal to its original condition and even reverse all rusting of iron. Although dwarves laugh at this myth and call it a *jötnarsaga* (giants' tale in the old tongue), it is for the most part true. It was created by an ancient member of the creator race named *Smiðaföð* (father of smiths), and only he can operate it. That he appeared in the form of a troll may have been a test of the mettle of those who sought to have him sharpen something, or perhaps it was mere strange humor. Whatever the case may be, there is no living memory of the grindstone or the troll ever having been seen. It also is unknown whether *Smiðaföð* is among the members of the creator race who still are among us or whether the grindstone still exists.

## Runic Tools

Number: Unique

Creating Folk: Dwarves and Giants

Magic Points: 1 or more

Price: varies

Weight: varies

Bulk: usually medium

Stave: usually Jörðsteinn



Neither dwarven nor giant smiths and runestainers limit their ensorcellments to weapons of combat. Both, but above all, dwarves, also use these arts to make more efficient tools, especially tools for mining, foundry and the smithy. A wide variety of tools have been made, most with bonuses between +1 and +3. Apprentice smiths and runestainers often made such tools as a key part of their training.

## Tyrfing Sword

Number: Unique

Creating Folk: Dwarves

Magic Points: 12

Price: 10,000 GP

Weight: 3 lbs/1.5 kg

Bulk: Medium

Stave: prótturmálmgrýtsteintöfra, originally prótturmálmgrýtsteinógæftöfra



*Tyrfing* is one of the more interesting swords produced by dwarves for others. Its history is not unlike that of the great *Dáinsleif* sword, except that its runic curse already has been fulfilled and no longer is active. *Tyrfing* was forged and then cut and stained with runes in the first days when humans began invading the giants' domains in the mountains. However, this is a dwarven tale, not a giant tale. As the story goes, a commander of a human incursion came upon two dwarves who are said to have been brothers. They were a runestainer and a smith who were in a hidden mountain area, preparing to ensorcel a fine sword made of middle silver. No tale tells for whom this sword was intended. The human took the dwarves captive and gave them the choice between ensorcelling the sword for his use and according to his desires or being slain. The dwarves begrudgingly chose life and began doing the human's bidding, but they gave the sword even more than had been demanded of them. They cursed the sword so that, upon being drawn, it would slay the first living creature seen by its bearer. They also added a second curse that would cause three great tragedies to their captor and his descendants. Only when these three curses were fulfilled would the evil banish from its blade. The three curses have been fulfilled; the blade ended up destroying the dwarves' captor and two of his innocent descendants. After the third tragedy, the ill fortune radical, Ógæfa, vanished from the runic stave in the sword's blade. Today, *Tyrfing* is a majestic long sword, 5ft/150cm long, with a bonus of +15 (+12 runic, +3 middle silver). Anytime it hits on a natural 20, it automatically slays its target. The blade is unbreakable. It can cut through metal or stone with ease. It probably can be destroyed only by melting it in an anthracite-burning dwarven furnace or by throwing it into volcanic fire. The name *Tyrfing* is believed to come from an ancient human tribe known as the *Tyrfingar*, of which the dwarves' captor was a chieftain. The tribe, in turn, is believed to have taken its name from its first chieftain, Tyrfing. Little more is known about the human history of the sword. *Tyrfing* has not been seen for more than 500 years. Its current whereabouts are known.

## Waiting Door

## Waiting Gate

Number: Multiple

Creating Folk: Dwarves

Magic Points: 4

Price: 300 GP

Weight: varies

Bulk: Large

Stave: Verndbannfæra



The stave is cut into doors and gates that have no means for opening them on the entry side. Such doors and gates open automatically when a password is spoken. Without the password, one can pass only by breaking down or through the gate or door.



Product Identity

***Exit of a one-way Waiting Door. The opposite side has neither lock nor handle.***

## 2.10 Game Master's Notes on Selected Spells, Songs, etc.

Full descriptions of all spells can be found in the *Players Guide*. This section contains special information that a game master needs for certain spells.

### **Animate Dead Bodies and Bones**

School: Necromancy, Black  
 Spell/Magic Points: Magi Class: 5  
 Attack Throw? No  
 Gestures or Wand? Yes  
 Words? Yes  
 Material? No  
 Casting time: 1 Round  
 Duration: Partial concentration  
 Range: Medium  
 Target: 1 or more corpses, skeletons  
 Alignment: Darkness

The necromancer creates animated skeletons and zombie draugs without souls out of human, halfling or half-elf corpses and bones. He or she can create a total number of draugs equal to 5 times his or her caster level per use of the spell. The draugs fulfill his or her commands until they are destroyed or until the necromancer loses concentration. He or she must fully concentrate for 1 round per minute to keep the undead under your control and animate.

Zombie and skeleton draugs do not communicate in any manner but they can fight in armed melee combat the same as a Level 1 Warrior.

**Life Points:** None (not alive)

**Injury Points:** 2d4+2

**Abilities:** Strength 12, Dexterity 8, Stamina 12, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 1, Knowledge 1.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +2

**Defenses:** AC 9\*, Endurance +11, Reflex 9, Will +11.

**Attacks:** Fists 1d6, Weapons (standard damage)

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magic Items Useable:** None without the skill *Use Magic Device*.

**Armor inclination:** \*Whatever armor was worn at time of death

**Resistances:** None

**Alignment inclination:** None

**Key ability:** Strength

Zombies and skeletons can continue to fight on until their flesh and/or bones are so damaged that they no longer are animate. As game master, you may wish to start charging penalties to the zombies as they take damage, representing limbs and the like that the necromancer no longer can steer.

The necromancer must concentrate completely upon his or her control of the draugs or they simply slump to the ground. He or she can do nothing in self defense without losing control of the pseudo-draugs. Lost control can be regained only through a new use of the spell. Because they are animations rather than true draugs or undead, zombies and skeletons have no animating spirit of their own. Only the magic and control of the necromancer animates what otherwise is dead flesh and/or bones.

### **Attune Wand or Staff**

School: Universal  
 Spell/Magic Points: Magi Class: 1  
 Attack Throw? No  
 Gestures or Wand? No  
 Words? Yes  
 Material? Yes



Casting time: 1 minute  
Duration: Permanent  
Range: Touch  
Target: 1 Wand or Staff  
Alignment: All

This spell must be used to attune a staff or wand to its owner. A fire must be made by the spellcaster in which components he or she chooses are burned while the magical words are spoken. These components must have a value of at least 50 GP for a wand and 500 GP for a staff. After attunement, the wand or staff recognizes the caster as its sole owner. An heir also may be designated. The wand will begin doing its work as a spell conduit, and the staff will begin serving its master. It is impossible for a spellcaster to take control of another caster's wand. A spellcaster can gain control of another caster's staff only through use of the *Dominant Staff* spell. **Note:** A wand or staff will recognize a designated heir *only* if the original owner is truly dead.

### Ban Magic

School: Universal  
Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 3, Magi Class: 3, Green/Nature Druids: 4  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? No  
Words? No  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: Instantaneous  
Range: 100ft/30m +30ft/3m per level  
Target: 1 caster, creature or object  
Area of Effect: 20ft/6m  
Alignment: All

**Note:** This spell has no effect upon artifacts or runic magic.

### Bronze to Iron

School: Transmutation  
Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 15 Magi Class: 12  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: Permanent  
Range: Close  
Target: One bronze item  
Alignment: All

### Iron to Bronze

School: Transmutation  
Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 15 Magi Class: 12  
Green/Nature Druids: 12  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: Permanent  
Range: Close  
Target: One iron item within range  
Alignment: Light

**NOTE:** These spells make unusual calls upon magic. With both, the conventional magic of the Light calls upon the magic of the earth that usually is available only to runic magic, and the actual transmutation is done by the earth magic. For that reason alone is iron affected by these spells. If your PCs take interest in the inner workings of these spells, they well might find other ways to use this indirect call upon earth magic.

### Cause Insanity

School: Enchantment  
Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 4, Magi Class: 6, Green/Nature Druids: 8  
Attack Throw? Will  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: Permanent  
Range: Medium  
Target: One creature, living or undead  
Alignment: All

The spellcaster can make a creature, living or undead, insanely feeble-minded. To succeed, he or she must make a successful spell attack against the target's Will defense. The spell reduces the target's intelligence to idiot level and makes his or her actions chaotic and unpredictable. The affected creature is unable to cast spells, understand spoken or written words or communicate coherently. Still, it knows who its friends are and can follow them and even protect them. The subject remains in this state until a *Restore Sanity* spell or rite cancels the effect.

**NOTE:** When a PC is reduced to idiocy by this spell, the game master makes the overriding decision on what the PC does in any situation. However, you should explain the situation clearly to the PC's player. It's also a good idea to get advice from the player on how he or she thinks the PC, as an idiot, might react in certain situations.

### **Charm Person**

School: Enchantment  
Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 1, Magi Class: 2, Green/Nature Druids: 3  
Attack Throw? Will  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: 1 Minute/Level  
Range: Medium  
Target: 1 Undead  
Alignment: All

You delude a human, halfling, half-elf, elf, dwarf or giant into regarding you as its trusted friend your attitude as friendly. To succeed, you must make a successful spell attack against the person's Will defense. If the person is being threatened or attacked simultaneously by you or your allies, the spell is ineffective. The spell does not enable you to control the person, but it perceives your words and actions in the most favorable way. An affected person never obeys suggestions that would cause it to harm itself, but it might be convinced that something very dangerous is worth doing.

**NOTE:** It must remain clear to your players that the PC is deluded in his or her perceptions, not robbed of his or her free will. If a PC argues credibly that his or her character wouldn't react in a certain manner even if the delusion were true, you should accept this argument.

### **Conduit**

School: Conjuration  
Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 9, Magi Class: 6  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: Permanent  
Area of Effect: Up to 125 cubic yards/100 cubic meters  
Alignment: All

**NOTE:** The guidelines in the *Players Guide* state that the size of a conduit can be increased by creating two or more conduits that are in direct contact with one another. Such adjacent conduits automatically merge into a larger conduit, which cannot be divided back into lesser conduits. If such a double conduit is created unintentionally, look carefully at the sequence in which it will release spells. Unintentionally created conduits usually are created without anyone being aware of it. Depending upon the sequence in which they release spells, they can unleash chaos and wreak havoc, disaster and even cause catastrophes.

### Curse

School: Necromancy, Black  
Spell/Magic Points: Magi Class: 5, Green/Nature Druids: 4  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? Yes  
Casting time: 1 Minute  
Duration: Until removed  
Range: Touch (spell), Unlimited (rite)  
Target: Target creature  
Alignment: Darkness

A curse normally works one of the following three effects:

-6 decrease to an ability score (minimum 1).

-4 penalty on attack rolls, defenses, ability checks, and skill checks.

Each turn, the target has a 50% chance to act normally; otherwise, it takes no action.

With this spell, the spell user also may invent his or her own curse, but *it should be no more powerful than those described above*. The magic user must touch the target creature well enough to smear ashes of his or her own burnt hair and blood upon the target's skin. This requires a successful spell attack against the target's Armor defense.

**NOTE:** If a PC invents his or her own curse, ponder not only its main effects but also possible secondary effects. If you don't do that adequately, you may unwittingly allow curses that, in the long run, have far wider reaching effects than should be possible for 4- and 5-point spells.

### Death Wail

School: Necromancy, Black  
Spell/Magic Points: Magi Class: 10, Green/Nature Druids: 12  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: Instantaneous  
Range: Close  
Target: 1 living creature/Caster Level  
Area of Effect: 4ft/12m radius from caster  
Alignment: Darkness

You call upon the Darkness to enable you to utter a powerful, deadly scream that slays all living targets up to the limit within range who clearly hear the wail. The victims may not be of a higher Character Level than the caster.

### Deep Dungeon

School: Abjuration  
Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 14, Magi Class: 10  
Attack Throw? Will  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: Instantaneous  
Range: Touch  
Target: Creature touched  
Alignment: All

You can touch a creature and entomb it in a state of suspended animation within a small sphere far beneath the surface of the earth. The subject remains there until a Liberation spell is cast at the locale where the imprisonment took place. Magical search by divination does not reveal the fact that a creature is imprisoned, only where it is entombed. To succeed in imprisoning the target, you must make a successful spell attack against its Will defense.

**NOTE:** An entombed target is alive but in stasis. It does not age or deteriorate naturally.

### Detect Thoughts

School: Divination

Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 3, Magi Class: 3, Green/Nature Druids: 5

Attack Throw? Will

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: Concentration - 1 minute/level

Range: 30ft/9m

Area of Effect: 30ft/9m radius from you

Alignment: All

You can detect surface thoughts. The amount of information revealed depends on how long you study a particular area or subject.

**1st Round:** Presence or absence of thoughts from conscious creatures.

**2nd Round:** Number of thinking minds. This spell does not let you determine the location of the thinking minds if you can't see the creatures whose thoughts you are detecting.

**3rd Round:** Surface thoughts of any mind in the area. This requires a successful spell attack against the target's Will defense. If you fail, the spell ends.

The spell can penetrate barriers, but 1ft/30cm of stone, 1 inch/2.5cm of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3ft/90cm of wood or dirt blocks it.

**NOTE:** The limitation of *surface thoughts* should be enforced strictly. Complex and weighty issues that are in the mind of the target will not be revealed.

### Elemental Wall

School: Evocation

Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 5 Magi Class: 5 Green/Nature Druids: 4

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: 1 Minute/Caster Level

Range: Medium

Area of Effect: 1ft/3m square per Caster Level

Alignment: All

The spellcaster creates a wall out of a raw substance of one of the four elements: Fire, Air, Water or Earth. The wall must consist of a raw material of these elements. One could, for instance, make a wall of copper ore but not a wall of bronze. Watery walls as a sheet of water suspended in the air usually would serve little purpose. However, one could include a damaging whirlpool in the wall's center. An ice wall would serve a defensive purpose. The same would apply to walls of hard mud or stone. A wall of air could have a devastating tornado funnel at its center and draw those within 20ft/6m of it into the funnel if the spellcaster makes a spell attack against the victims' Reflex defense. A wall of fire would do 2d4 points of fire damage to creatures within 10ft/3m of it and 1d4 points of fire damage to those between 10 and 20ft/3 and 6m of it. Lead, iron and iron ore resist magic and will not produce magical walls.

**NOTE:** You need to monitor application of this spell to be certain that elements are in their raw form and that the effects generated are possible with these elements in their raw form.

### **Erase Time's Pages**

School: Enchantment

Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 13, Magi Class: 15

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? No

Words? No

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Minute

Duration: 20 Minutes

Range: 120ft/36m

Target: One page of time

Alignment: All

All traces of events recorded on the one-year page of time for the area within range of the caster are erased from the pages of time.

**NOTE:** The effect of this spell is temporary. The erased material will be restored with time. When that happens is for you to decide.

### **Gaseous Form**

School: Transmutation

Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 4, Magi Class: 4, Green/Nature Druids: 4

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: 2 minutes/Caster Level

Range: Touch

Target: Willing creature touched

Alignment: All

Your or subject and all of your or its gear become insubstantial, misty, and translucent. Material armor (including natural armor) becomes worthless, though its size, Dexterity, deflection bonuses, and armor bonuses still apply. The target is immune to poison and critical hits. It can't attack or cast spells with verbal, somatic, material, or focus components while in gaseous form. The target also loses supernatural abilities while in gaseous form. If it has a touch spell ready to use, that spell is discharged harmlessly when the gaseous form spell takes effect. A gaseous creature can't run, but it can fly at a speed of 10ft/3m. It can pass through small holes or narrow openings, even mere cracks, with all it was wearing or holding in its hands, as long as the spell persists. The creature is subject to the effects of wind, and it can't enter water or other liquid. It also can't manipulate objects or activate items, even those carried along with its gaseous form. Continuously active items remain active, though in some cases their effects may be moot.

**NOTE:** Always consider whether a PC in gaseous form has included items in the gaseous form that might make it flammable or subject to explosion!

### **Heal**

**Heal Blindness**

**Heal Critical Wounds and Injuries**

**Heal Deafness**

**Heal Light Wounds and Injuries**

**Heal Minor Wounds and Injuries**

**Heal Moderate Wounds and Injuries**

**Heal Serious Wounds and Injuries**

**NOTE:** Always keep in mind that a single creature can benefit from only two spells in the Heal Wounds and Injuries group daily. After the second spell, the body is unable to react to additional magical healing except from Clerics. A single creature can benefit from the greater *Heal* spell only once daily.

### **Illusion**

#### **and most spells of the school Illusion**

**NOTE:** Always remember that a player must give an acceptable reason for disbelieving an illusion before his or her PC is entitled to a spell attack against the Will defense. If you believe that the reason is unacceptable, make a die roll anyway and then rule against the PC. After all, he or she has no way of knowing whether his or her belief is correct. On the other hand, if you say, *No, that reason isn't good enough*, you've suspended roleplaying and started rules lawyering.

### **Invisibility**

#### **and extended invisibility spells**

**NOTE:** In many RPG systems, *Invisibility* type spells are classed as illusions. *Dungeons Daring* invisibility spells are transmutations. The magic actually changes the physical substance of creatures and their equipment to make them truly invisible. For this reason, spells that end illusions or that offer some kind of true sight will not reveal things that are invisible.

### **Living to Zombie**

School: Necromancy, Black

Spell/Magic Points: Magi Class: 12

Attack Throw? Endurance

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: Instantaneous

Range: Medium

Target: Humans, Halflings, Half-Elves

Area of Effect: 40ft/12m radius from target point

Alignment: Darkness

The spellcaster can slay a group of humans, halflings and/or half-elves and turn their bodies into soulless zombies that are under his or her control. The caster must make a single spell attack against the Endurance defense of the targets. The spell slay can 1d4 Character Levels of living creatures per caster level. The zombies then remain under his or her control. The souls of the slain continue to hover for the normal period of time after death in the vicinity of their bodies, but they cannot reclaim their bodies, even after the zombies that inhabited their bodies have become have been destroyed. Only a Cleric using the rite Cleanse, Purify & Restore can restore a zombie body to a condition where it again can be a host to its soul.

Zombies do not communicate in any manner but they can fight in armed melee combat the same as a Level 1 Warrior.

**Life Points:** None (not alive)

**Injury Points:** 2d4+2

**Abilities:** Strength 12, Dexterity 8, Stamina 12, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 1, Knowledge 1.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +2

**Defenses:** AC 9\*, Endurance +11, Reflex 9, Will +11.

**Attacks:** Fists 1d6, Weapons (standard damage)

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magic Items Useable:** None without the skill *Use Magic Device*.

**Armor inclination:** \*Whatever armor was worn at time of death

**Resistances:** None

**Alignment inclination:** None

**Key ability:** Strength



Zombies can continue to fight on until their flesh and bones are so damaged that they no longer are animate. As game master, you may wish to start charging penalties to the zombies as they take damage, representing limbs and the like that the necromancer no longer can steer.

The necromancer must concentrate completely upon his or her control of the zombies or they simply slump to the ground. He or she can do nothing in self defense without losing control of them. Lost control can be regained only through a new use of the spell. Because they are animations rather than true draugs or undead, zombies and skeletons have no animating spirit of their own. Only the magic and control of the necromancer animates what otherwise is dead flesh and/or bones.

### **Metal Temperature**

School: Transmutation

Spell/Magic Points: Healer/Herbal Witch: 2, Bardic Class: 4, Magi Class: 5

Green/Nature Druids: 2

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? Yes

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: 7 Rounds

Range: Close

Target: One metal object per 2 caster levels

Alignment: All

You can make the metal weapon or other metal object of a creature either freezing cold or burning hot. You need to state in advance whether you choose heat or cold. The spell does not affect iron. The spell's affects accrue over 7 rounds:

Round	Metal Temperature	Damage
1	Cold or Warm	None
2	Icy or Hot	1d4 points
3-5	Freezing or Burning	2d4 points
6	Icy or Hot	1d4 points
7	Cold or Warm	None

**NOTE:** If the object is being held in bare hands, the character should make a check for Stamina in rounds 3-5 or drop the object. The DL is 18.

### **Observe Companions**

School: Divination

Spell/Magic Points: Healer/Herbal Witch: 2, Bardic Class: 2, Magi Class: 3, Green/Nature Druids: 3

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: 1 Hour/Caster Level

Range: Touch

Target: One creature/3 Caster Levels

Alignment: All

You can mentally monitor the relative positions and general conditions of your companions when they are separated. You are aware of direction and distance to them and any conditions affecting them: unharmed, wounded, disabled, staggered, unconscious, dying, nauseated, panicked, stunned, poisoned, diseased, confused, etc. Once the spell has been cast upon the subjects, the distance between them and the caster does not affect the spell.

**NOTE:** This spell cannot overcome the barriers that lead or iron make, if applicable.

### **Preserve Corpse**

School: Necromancy, White

Spell/Magic Points: Healer/Herbal Witch: 2, Magi Class: 4, Green/Nature Druids: 4

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: 1 day/Caster Level

Range: Touch

Target: Corpse touched

Alignment: Light

You can preserve the remains of a dead creature so that they do not decay or otherwise degenerate. Doing so effectively extends the time limit that the body is capable of regaining its soul or spirit without being restored magically. Days spent under the influence of this spell don't count against the time limit. Additionally, this spell makes transporting a fallen comrade more pleasant. The spell also works on severed body parts and the like. The spell does not, however, extend the time before the soul or spirit departs for Deep Hell or its next destination.

**NOTE:** This spell does not extend the period of 6 to 16 days before a soul reaches Deep Hell.

### **Telepathic Network**

School: Divination

Spell/Magic Points: Bardic Class: 4, Magi Class: 6, Green/Nature Druids: 7

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: 10 Minutes/Caster Level

Range: Close

Target: Target creatures

Area of Effect: Within 30ft/9m of caster

Alignment: All

You forge a telepathic network among yourself and a number of willing, intelligent creatures. Each creature included in the network is linked to all the others. The creatures can communicate telepathically through the network regardless of language. No special power or influence is established as a result of this link. Once the network is formed, it works over any distance. If desired, you may leave yourself out of the network. This decision must be made at the time of casting.

**NOTE:** Iron and lead can block magical telepathic communications.

### **Teleport**

#### **Teleport Perfectly**

#### **Teleport Trace**

**NOTE:** Iron and lead can block a Teleport Path.





*Clerical rites are an important income source for most temples.*

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## 2.11 Game Master's Notes on Selected Clerical Rites

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Clerics may perform either rites of the Light or rites of the Darkness but not both. Which type they perform is based upon the thinking of the deity or deities that they serve. In addition to the rites listed in the Players Guide, Clerics also are entitled to additional rites specific to the purpose of the deity's faith. Because there are no specific deities for the Dungeons Daring guidelines system, you should create the rites needed for your campaign based upon the definitions of the deities in the campaign world you are using. In most cases, you should select spells from the Players Guide and convert these to rites. There is no official number of special rites for an individual deity, but we suggest two rites for each Magic Point level from 1 to 10.

### Atonement

School: Necromancy, White  
 Magic Points: 5  
 Rite duration: 5 hours  
 Range: Touch  
 Target: Living creature  
 Area of Effect:  
 Alignment: Light

This rite removes the burden of evil acts or misdeeds from the subject. The creature seeking atonement must be truly repentant and desirous of setting right its misdeeds. If the atoning creature committed the evil act under some form of coercion, atonement operates normally at no cost to you. However, in the case of a creature atoning for deliberate misdeeds and acts of a knowing and willful nature, the Cleric must intercede with his or her deity in order to expunge the subject's burden. This involves the burning of 100 GP worth of mixed incenses hourly for the duration of the rite. Many clerics first assign a target of this sort a quest or similar penance to determine whether the creature is truly contrite before conducting the atonement rite on its behalf.

**NOTE:** If a person is atoning for deliberate misdeeds, a deity usually will insist to his or her Cleric that the seeker perform a quest. What is more, the deity may give his or her Cleric the power to impose magical punishments that are not usually within the Cleric's power but that automatically will take effect if the atoner fails to fulfill the conditions of the quest.

### Cure Diseases

School: Necromancy, White  
 Magic Points: 4  
 Rite duration: 4 Hours  
 Range: Touch  
 Target: 1 Living Creature  
 Special: This rite cannot be ensorcelled into objects.  
 Alignment: Light

A Cleric can cure any disease of a living creature except for plants. Certain diseases may require a special check to succeed. After the rite is completed, the target gradually regains his or her sight over a period of 1d4 hours. During the four-hour rite, you must burn mixed incense with a value of 100 GP per hour.

**NOTE:** There is no official list of diseases that may require a special check. This is left to your discretion.

### Curse

School: Necromancy, Black  
 Magic Points: 3  
 Rite duration: 3 hours  
 Range: Touch (spell), Unlimited (rite)  
 Target: Target creature  
 Alignment: Darkness

The cleric place's a curse on the target creature. Choose one of the following three effects:

- -6 decrease to an ability score (minimum 1).
- -4 penalty on attack rolls, defenses, ability checks, and skill checks.
- Each turn, the target has a 50% chance to act normally; otherwise, it takes no action.

You may also invent your own curse, but it should be no more powerful than those described above. The curse bestowed by this spell cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with the Remove Curse spell or rite. Once during each hour of the rite you must burn 1 ounce/30 grams of your own hair and your own dried blood.

**NOTE:** You should scrutinize invented curses carefully. They often have hidden side effects that make the curse more powerful than the standard effects listed above. This should be avoided.

### **Ensorcel Magical Items**

School: Universal

Magic Points: 1

Rite duration: 1 hours per magic point

Target: Item to be ensorcelled

Area of Effect: Item

Alignment: All

With this rite you can:

- Brew Magical Potions
- Ensorcel Magical Rings
- Create and Ensorcel Other Magical Items

The Cleric has the ability to brew magical potions and to create magical rings and many other types of magical items. The possible items correspond to those rites that he or she can use. The number of magic points actually expended is dependent upon the number of magic points required for the magic being cast into the item. For every magic point being cast into non-permanent items, the Cleric must expend two magic points. That means that for objects that require high magic point expenditures or that incorporate more than one rite, the Cleric may have to perform the *Ensorcel Magic Items* rite more than once to complete the item.

**NOTE:** A Cleric can ensorcel only the magic of rites that he or she can perform into magical objects. Also remember that certain designated rites cannot be ensorcelled into objects.

### **Heal**

**Heal Blindness**

**Heal Critical Wounds and Injuries**

**Heal Deafness**

**Heal Light Wounds and Injuries**

**Heal Minor Wounds and Injuries**

**Heal Moderate Wounds and Injuries**

**Heal Serious Wounds and Injuries**

**NOTE:** Always keep in mind that a single creature can benefit from only two rites in the *Heal Wounds and Injuries* group daily. After the second rite, the body is unable to react to additional magical healing from Clerics although it still can respond to healing from spellcasters. A single creature can benefit from the greater *Heal* rite only once daily.



**Locate Soul or Spirit**

School: Divination

Magic Points: 3

Rite duration: 3 Hours

Range: Unlimited

Target: 1 Soul or Spirit

Alignment: All

You can determine whether the soul or spirit of a dead creature still wanders the world of the living or whether it has gone to Deep Hell or elsewhere. The rite will reveal where the soul currently is but it will give no other information. This rite works upon the soul of a destroyed draug, but it will give no information about the soul of an undead. One necessary material component is either a piece of the target's body or one of its personal possessions. Another is mixed incense in the value of 100 GP, with this amount being burned in each of the three hours.

**NOTE:** Lead and iron can block information from this rite.



*The path to the Light*

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## 2.12 Absolute Magic

Player Characters seldom, if ever, will reach levels higher than the 30<sup>th</sup>. If they do so in Character Classes that use magical spells, song or diction, they gain no new spell points or other conventional magical abilities, but they do begin to be able to use *absolute magic* in the same manner that the light and dark elves to do.

Until now, no human, halfling or half-elf ever has gained the ability to use absolute magic. However, there is nothing to prevent one of your PCs from being the first to do so, if you decide to take your campaign into such lofty epic levels.

Users of absolute magic have many benefits not available to beings with Character Levels of 30 or lower:

- Beginning with the 31<sup>st</sup> level, a magic user other than Cleric or Runestainer can begin using magic that expends one or two magic or spell points as absolute magic. This is further explained below. The number of spell points that can be expended grows with additional levels.
- The command of absolute magic brings aging to a partial stop. Humans, halflings and half-elves can reach the threshold of immortality. For each Caster Level beginning with the 31<sup>st</sup>, the power of magic will bring all natural aging to a stop for five years. If a character reaches a new Caster Level before the five years are up, he or she still gains the full, cumulative 10-year benefit of both levels.
- As of the 31<sup>st</sup> level, the magic user also can begin using communal magic. This ability also grows with additional levels. This concept also is explained in more detail below.

### Magic and Age Progression

Caster Level	Absolute Magic Point Levels	Cumulative Aging Stop	Communal Group Size
31	1-2	5 years	2
32	3-4	10 years	2
33	5-6	15 years	3
34	7-8	20 years	3
35	9-10	25 years	4
36	11	30 years	4
37	12	35 years	5
38	13	40 years	5
39	14	45 years	6
40	15	50 years	6

It should be noted that that progression is not limited to the 40<sup>th</sup> level. It continues at the same rate upward. The cumulative aging stop and the communal group size also continue to grow after the 40<sup>th</sup> Caster Level, using the same progression as shown in the table above. Once the caster reaches the 41<sup>st</sup> level, he or she can employ instantly conceived spells that had not been heretofore developed.

### Absolute Casting

The table above shows us that the caster has learned magic so thoroughly that he or she can simply call upon magic to perform any task that could be done within the scope of spells, songs and diction that expend one or two magic points. No advance preparation is necessary. No spell must be developed. The caster simply calls upon magic to do a job.

When the character reaches the 40<sup>th</sup> Caster Level, he or she can cast such simultaneous magic to gain any magical effect that could be achieved with the expenditure of 15 magic points. However, the caster remains limited to those types of spell activity that are available to his or her Character Class and to the schools of magic which are open to his Character Class.

Commanding absolute magic also gives a character the ability to call upon magic to perform any deed that a Cleric Rite can achieve, provided that the rite is of a school that the caster can use. Absolute magic is, after all, the tool



that deities use to give their Clerics such magic. When a caster uses this ability, the magic point expenditure is 5 points higher than it is for the identical Cleric Rite.

There are limitations on absolute casting, however. When working magic where a result is based in part upon the Caster Level, 30 is the maximum that is calculated in absolute magic, regardless of the true Caster Level,

## Communal Magic

Communal magic is the level at which absolute casters can begin achieving magical results beyond the limits of defined spells. Communal magic is joint casting by two or more casters who join minds to cast the same magic simultaneously. This is a very strenuous process. The number of magic casting minds with which a caster can communicate is limited. The limits for casters of Levels 31-40 is shown in the column *Communal Group Size* of the table *Magic and Age Progression* on the previous page.

There are two ways in which casters can work magically communally:

- They can share the magic or spell point expense.
- They can strengthen defined magic in certain respects.

**Sharing the point expense** is a relatively simple matter. If two casters use absolute magic communally, each could expend 5 points, as an example. However, few casters of Level 31 and higher have much use or need for this ability. They usually have the magic or spell points they need to cast what they wish to.

**Strengthening defined magic** can be a very complex matter for you, the game master. Communal magic cannot increase the power of magic, but it can take the accumulated accomplishments of single casters and combine them to broaden the scope of magic. Here are examples to help you make the judgments that a game master must make. We'll start with samples of things that communal magic *can* do:

- It can add the maximum number of targets for *each* communal caster and make the magic effect the sum of targets.
- It can add the individual casters' areas of effect and combine them into one larger area of effect.
- It can add the duration values for the individual casters and extend the duration to the sum of those values.
- It can add the maximum range of the individual casters and extend the range to the sum.
- It can add the effects of the individual casters and extend the effect to the sum.

There also are many things that communal magic cannot do:

- It cannot increase the damage done. If a spell can do 1d8 points damage per Caster Level, the total damage is 1d8 for the sum of all caster levels (maximum 30 per caster), but the damage roll can't be increased to 1d10, as an example.
- It cannot eliminate the need to make a spell attack where it is required.
- It cannot raise the DL against a spell attack. Where Caster Level determines the DL to a certain extent, only the Caster Level 30 is calculated.
- It cannot increase the maximum level of affected targets. If magic affects only targets up to Level 20, communal magic cannot extend it to targets above Level 20.
- It cannot perform tasks that are above the abilities of defined spells that expend 15 magic or spell points.
- It cannot combine absolute and conventional casting. All casters in communal magic must cast the same magic and it must be absolute magic.

## Elven Absolute Magic

All living light and dark elves are more than a million years old. If one were to attempt to calculate the Caster Levels of elven magic users, the results would be in five or six figures. There are no light or dark elven casters who are not absolute casters or who cannot cast absolute magic that expends 15 points.

If necessary, elves can bring thousands of casters together to perform communal magic. Almost all elven casters have Magical Aptitude scores of 25. Humans and halflings cannot have a Magical Aptitude score higher than 20 and half-elves cannot have a higher Magical Aptitude score higher than 23. This also makes human, halfling and half-elf casters weaker in magic than elven casters.



*In the land of the giants – a tunnel into the unknown*

Product Identity

# III. Playing the Game Master's Role

## 1. Is *Dungeons Daring* the Right Game for You?

If you've reached this point, and if you have experience with other RPGs, you probably have come to the conclusion that there are some substantial differences between *Dungeons Daring* and many other games. Before starting a *Dungeons Daring* campaign, it's a good idea to ponder what kind of campaign and game you want to run and then ask yourself whether *Dungeons Daring* really is the best system to help you reach these goals.

The RPG scene includes a wide variety of gaming and campaigning styles. The big commercial RPGs on the market try to include a large spectrum of different elements that attempt to make their product useful to many if not all of these RPG variations. *Dungeons Daring*, on the other hand, was designed for a specific segment of the RPG market. It is anything but the right solution for all gamers.

The following describes our target user:

- Our user likes an RPG that strongly emphasizes role-playing and story telling and that de-emphasizes rules issues.
- He or she sees the world in which one adventures as a variation upon the real Planet Earth rather than as a totally strange planet in an alien galaxy.
- Our user enjoys reading classical fantasy literature and mythologies. He or she would like to have elements of both within the adventure being played.
- Using one's own fantasy and imagination are important elements of the RPG experience of our user.

Fulfilling those desires were the authors' goals in developing *Dungeons Daring*. You, the potential users of the game, will decide whether we have succeeded.

In pondering whether *Dungeons Daring* is the right game for you, you probably should consider the following points which make *Dungeons Daring* somewhat different from many other RPGs.

- *The Dungeons Daring books contain no artist renditions of people or places. Instead, you see numerous photos of real world items and locations that resemble places in a fictitious parallel Dungeons Daring world.*

We opted for photos rather than drawings for two reasons. The photos are intended to create an image of a parallel world to our own, where the events of real Earth mythology might have taken place.

- *Dungeons Daring tends to concentrate magic in the character classes that have learned to use it. Most magical effects in a Dungeons Daring game should come from spells, bardic song and diction or Cleric rites rather than from a plethora of objects that work magic and that can be used by anyone.*

This is an element of *Dungeons Daring* that warrants consideration on your part in deciding whether to use *Dungeons Daring* or another RPG. High and widespread magic, with some of it in everyone's hands, are what make many RPGs or campaign settings very popular with some gamers and very boring to others. As a game master, you can shift this focus within *Dungeons Daring* by creating magic objects on your own. But if you prefer a campaign where every PC has three or four or more magical objects, there probably better choices for you than *Dungeons Daring*.

- *Magical weapons and armor in Dungeons Daring have been made superior to conventional armor and weapons through the assignment of bonus plus points. There are very few weapons with special characteristics, and most of those that do exist were created long ago with runic magic of dwarves or giants.*

This really is a continuation of our last theme. We see spellcasters as people who concentrate upon using their own magic, learning new magic and developing their own arcane skills. We do not see spellcasters as people who run magic weapon factories. In the *Dungeons Daring* concept, if one needs the benefit of a spell, one should get

the services of a spellcaster rather than drawing a sword that has been ensorcelled to do a Wizard's work. However, there are some types of specially ensorcelled weapons in the mythologies and fantasy literature that can add interesting elements to an RPG adventure. In literature, most of these are rune-powered works of dwarven or giant smiths, and that is the case in *Dungeons Daring* too. The sections on runic magic in this book give you all the necessary tools to create such legendary weapons, if they are needed in your campaign.

- *Healing and the resurrection of the dead are much more limited in Dungeons Daring than in many other RPGs.*

That's correct. The authors have taken part in many campaigns with other RPG systems where injury and death had all but ceased to exist for PCs. Once the adventure groups reached higher levels, every damaging round of combat ended up with a round of nearly complete healing, and every dead companion was brought back to life with various types of magical resurrection. It's been our observation that this situation not only takes a lot of the adventure out of an adventure, but it also diminishes the credibility of the campaign and tends to make what should be exciting into a routine and boring situation. We've tried to contain healing at a credible level. Resurrections are expensive, can be performed only in major temples and can be performed only for a limited time after death. In *Dungeons Daring*, many more dead PCs will remain dead than in a large share of the other RPGs on the market.

- *All things that have to do with comeliness, intelligence, charisma, wisdom, etc. are related strictly to roleplaying. There are no ability scores for these attributes.*

This is probably the most controversial departure from conventional RPG theory that you'll find in *Dungeons Daring*. It already was the subject of considerable online debate even before the first alpha release of the *Dungeons Daring Players Guide*. Most RPGs have ability scores for these character attributes. Where any of these attributes come into question in a PC's or an NPC's dealing with others, dice rolls based upon the scores for these abilities decide the issue, not the actions and words created by the player for his or her PC. The main argument against eliminating scores for these attributes is that without them, a dumb player cannot successfully play a smart PC. Exactly that was the goal of the authors is eliminating scores for these abilities. *Dungeons Daring* strives to place the focus of as much of the game as possible upon role playing. It's difficult to role play many of the tasks that are decided by Strength, Dexterity or Stamina in a tabletop RPG session. That's not the case with comeliness, intelligence, charisma or wisdom. These abilities are perfectly suited for role playing. But the *Dungeons Daring* system in this respect does make it difficult for a dumb player to play a smart PC. That factor isn't everyone's cup of tea.

- *There are a lot of potential situations that aren't covered by specific rules and guidelines in Dungeons Daring. Other game systems seem to be more comprehensive, with a table and a dice roll to handle just about everything.*

That's correct. *Dungeons Daring* tries to be a relatively rules-light system that's more dependent upon common sense and logic than upon repeated dice rolls and extensive rules.

- *This situation gives the game master too much power.*

Among alpha and beta testers and others who commented online about *Dungeons Daring* in its development stages, this theme was the second most controversial. There are a number of ways to look at this issue. First one must ask, *How much is too much?* It's a key question that leads back to the key answer: *Dungeons Daring* is not the right system for every game master. The *Dungeons Daring* system works only when the game master is both competent and essentially fair. There are many game masters who see themselves foremost as the actors who play the PCs' opponents and the adventure as something of a contest between the game master and the PCs. We've seen quite a number of groups that really enjoy such a system. However, the *Dungeons Daring* system is not at all well suited to such a playing style. *Dungeons Daring* can succeed only if the game master views him- or herself as a neutral narrator and referee who is willing to look at all sides of a situation and then render a judgment that is fair to all sides.



## 2. OK! So Where do I Start?

What came first? The chicken or the egg?

Unfortunately, that's the dilemma most game masters face when they start a campaign. There are two essential things you need to get going:

- A group of players. You'll need at least three for things to run well.
- An adventure.

What comes first? That's often the difficult question.

Sometimes you'll need an adventure to sell your friends on starting a game. Sometimes you'll need to learn what kind of adventure will lure your friends into joining your group. We can't solve this dilemma for you specifically, but we can give you some tips that usually help to get the show on the road.

- Before you start recruiting a group, decide where you'll get your adventure.
- If this is your first experience with an RPG, you might want to start with the introductory adventure at the end of this book. It contains a lot of helpful information that isn't a part of most adventures.
- If you plan on writing the adventure yourself, make a good and thorough outline of it so that you can describe it in detail when you're trying to recruit players.
- If you plan to use a commercial adventure or an adventure from another source, take a look at several of them. Pick a few that you think are best and use these ideas to hook your players. Get their preferences while you're at it. That will help you to pick an adventure that's likely to get your campaign off to a good and successful start.

What comes next? After you have a group and an adventure, you'll need supplies:

- Every player needs a copy of either the PDF or paper version of the *Dungeons Daring Players Guide*. Since it's free and you can pass it out legally, that should be no problem.



**At the gaming table**

You and each player need either a complete RPG dice set or a computerized dice roller. A complete set includes the following dice: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12 and d20. A d100 die also can be used, but it's optional. The freeware *Die Roller* program can be downloaded from the *Dungeons Daring* website: <http://www.dungeons-daring.org>.

- Next you need a firm set of play dates. Always try to schedule your next two or three dates in advance, and get firm commitments from your players that they'll be there. Nothing kills a good adventure as quickly as missing players.
- Determine who will be the host of the gaming sessions. Some groups always play in the game master's home or some other fixed location. Others rotate from apartment to apartment. If you do the latter, make sure that the host's schedule is clear to everyone.
- See to it that there's a good supply of beer, soft drinks, snacks, etc. on hand.

### 3. Optional Computer Tools for the Game Master

Using a computer at the gaming table? That's another issue that's controversial among tabletop RPG gamers. Some game masters and players wouldn't think about starting a gaming session without having a laptop before them on the table. Others think that the idea of having computers at the gaming table is more evil than the worst villains in the adventure.

Fortunately, we don't have to pick sides on that one. *Dungeons Daring* is designed to offer a number of advantages to those who want to work with computers, but it's also designed in a way that makes them completely optional and unnecessary. We'll say a little more on this theme farther below.

However, the gaming table isn't the only place where a computer can be of help. One example is the electronic character sheet that comes with *Dungeons Daring*. It's not at all necessary in a *Dungeons Daring* campaign to use the electronic character sheet. In fact, if you print the three PDF books, you don't need a computer at all for a *Dungeons Daring* campaign.

Now, if that's as far as your interest in computers and RPGs working together goes, you can skip the rest of this material and jump ahead to Section 4. You won't miss a thing that's vital or of value to you.

For those who still are with us, let's take a look at next at some of the ways you can use a computer to ease and/or improve your game master's chores between gaming sessions. The most important computer tool for a game master is a good word processing program. If you're using a PC running under Microsoft® Windows® or if you are using an Apple® computer, the chances are pretty good that you have Microsoft Word or maybe even the entire Microsoft Office package on your machine.



Word is the market leader in word processing. But if you don't have Word and don't want to pay the price it takes to get it, don't be concerned. If you have an Internet connection, simply download and install the free open source package OpenOffice.org. The address is:

<http://www.openoffice.org> .

There are OpenOffice.org versions for the following operating systems: Windows, Linux®, Linux PPC, Sun® Solaris® SPARC, Solaris x86, Apple Mac OS X and Free BSD. Within OpenOffice.org, you'll find the programs OpenOffice.org Writer and OpenOffice.org Calc. OpenOffice.org Writer is an excellent word processing program that is quite similar to Word and does just about everything that Word does, except that it's free.



Why is a word processing program such a boon to a game master? If you already use one, the answer probably is obvious. If you start writing your own adventures, you'll find that a word processing program is worth gold to you. One of the things that you do frequently when you write an RPG adventure is make modifications. If you work with a pencil and paper, you'll be erasing and rewriting frequently. If you use a word processor, you simply do quick edits, and you can make better use of the time you would have spent erasing and rewriting.

It's also a game master's lot to have to make calculations frequently. That can involve calculating treasure values, experience points and much more. The best time saver for this work is a spreadsheet program like Microsoft Excel in the Microsoft Office package or OpenOffice.org Calc in the free OpenOffice.org package. You'll also need either Excel or OpenOffice.org Calc to use the electronic character sheet provided with *Dungeons Daring*.



If you write your own adventures, another area where you can get tremendous help is in making maps. There are several good map-making programs on the market. Our recommendation goes to *Fractal Mapper™ 8* from NBOS Software, the official *Dungeons Daring* mapping program. There are other programs that can make maps that are just as good as those produced by *FM8*, but we've found no other mapping program that is both as easy to learn and as well documented as *FM8*.



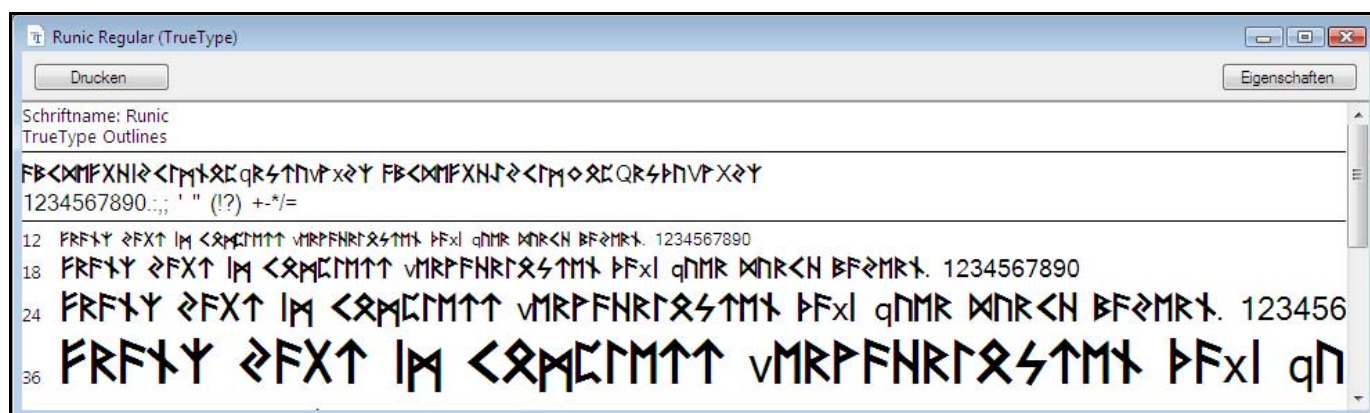
*Fractal Mapper* is not a free program. At the time of this writing, it costs US \$34.95 for the download version and US \$39.95 for the CD version. You can get more information on *FM8* or download the free trial version at:

<http://www.nbos.com> .

You can find out how to purchase the program at the following address:

<http://www.nbos.com/order.htm> .

One last computer tool is the collection of TrueType® runic fonts included in the download file. If you use dwarven or giant runic magic in your campaign, these fonts will let you quickly type in any runic staves that your PCs may see rather than having to draw them by hand.



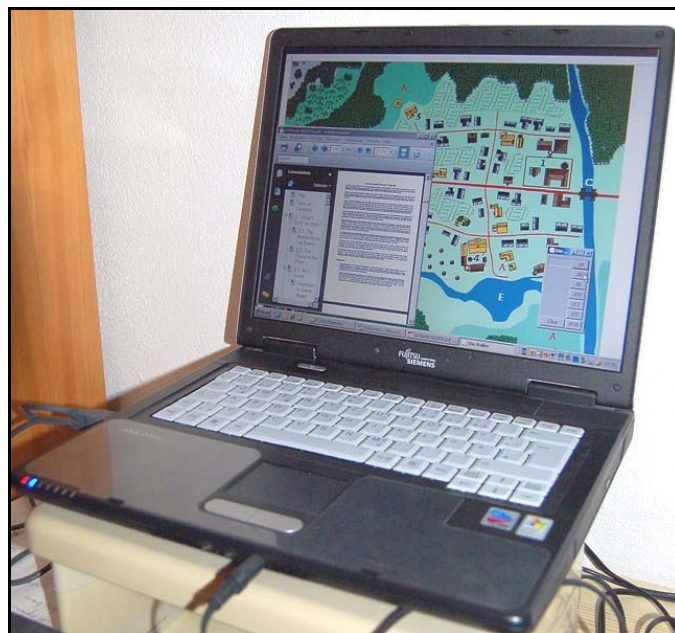
A runic font

Open Game Content

So, now let's go back to the theme of a laptop at the gaming table. If you're among those who are totally opposed to this idea, you can skip the rest of this material and jump ahead to Section 4. You won't miss a thing that's vital or of value to you.

As you gain experience as a game master, you'll start to see that one of the things you'll experience at the gaming table is the need to constantly look up information. You'll need to check on things in the *Dungeons Daring* guidelines. You need to look regularly at your dungeon plans. You need to roll dice, often hundreds of times in one gaming session.

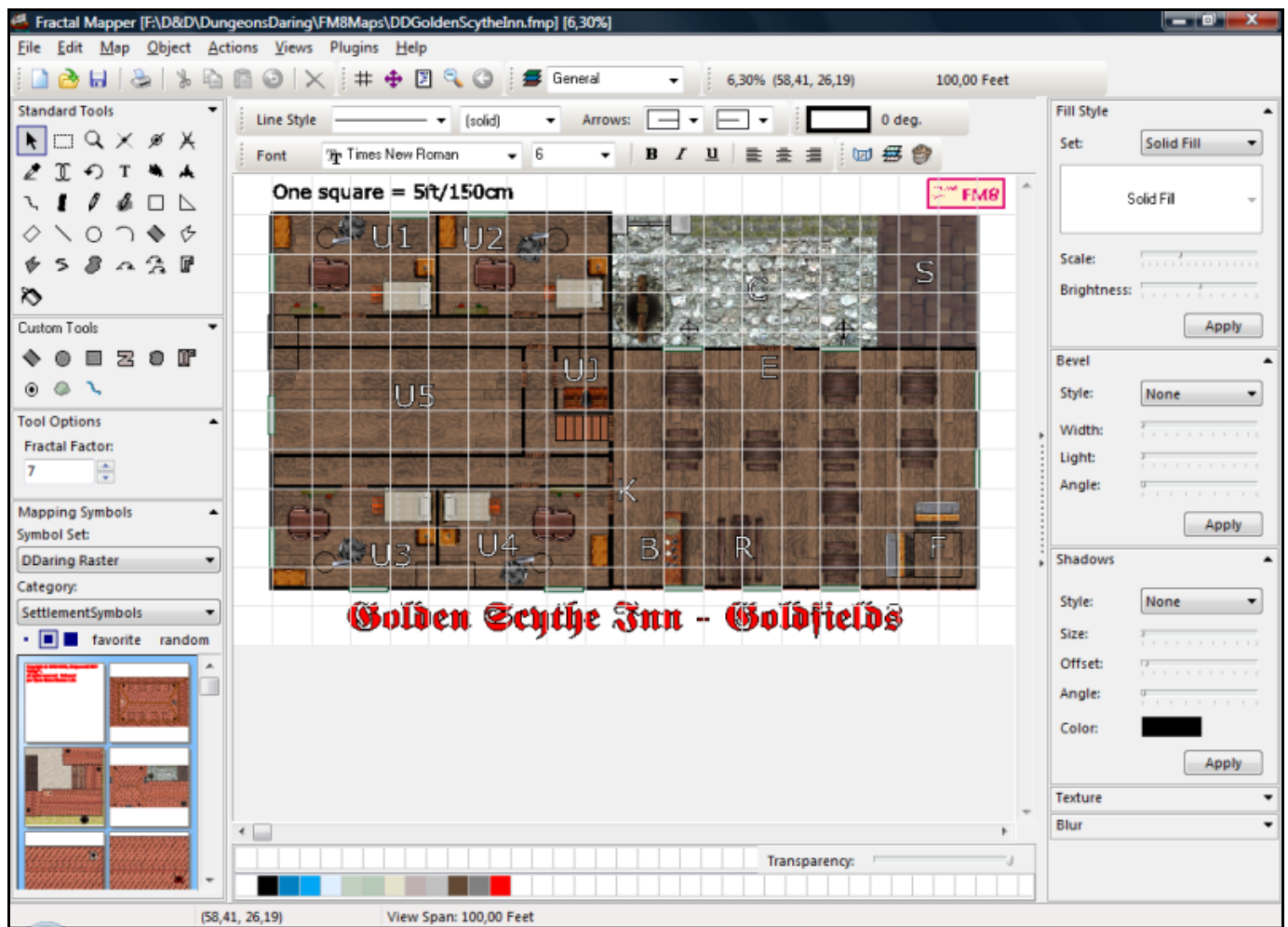
The problem with all of these game master activities is that each of them interrupts the game in a time-consuming manner. While you're looking things up, your players are sitting there and – if things are going well – they're doing nothing. More often than not, however, they'll revert to their real world personalities and start chatting with one another. That's not a crime, of course, but it does break the pace of your adventure, and it tends to derail good role playing somewhat.



Open Game Content

Laptop at the gaming table – curse or blessing?





**Floor plan in Fractal Mapper™ 8**

Open Game Content

However, that's only the beginning of what a good cartographic program can do for you. As we'll discuss in the next section, most campaign groups sooner or later put together a playing board with a 1 inch/2,54 cm grid drawn onto it. Some use a background sheet with a colored backdrop behind the grid. You'll find an example on the next page. The backdrop shown there is a commercial product made by the company Wizards of the Coast® Inc.

These measurements were chosen to represent an area 5ft/150cm square at the scale used by most companies that make tin figures or miniatures, in the current parlance. Some gaming groups buy miniature figures to represent the PCs and others to represent the foes they encounter most often. Other groups use paper or cardboard markers or pegs from other board games.

Their idea is to give everyone a visual example of what's happening at any particular point in time, to show the positions of creatures in an encounter in relation to one another and to make distances between parties in an encounter absolutely clear.

The use of miniatures is very popular and widespread in RPG circles today, but we predict that it will begin declining. As more and more people acquire digital projectors or large screen home entertainment systems that accept computer input, the more such systems will replace gridded boards and tin figures.

One needs only one gaming evening's experience to see the great advantages of having a large screen that shows the map or plan of everything the PCs see. Character symbols are used to represent the individual characters and their foes. With the *Windows* drag-and-drop ability facilitated in *Fractal Mapper*, the game master easily can use the mouse to move all creatures to their new locations.

After our own first experiences with such systems, we were astonished at the immediately increased comprehension the players had of the situation in which their PCs were.



## 4. Other Tools for the Game Master



**Tin figures, a 1 inch/2.54cm grid and a set of RPG dice**

Open Game Content

One of the good aspects of *Dungeons Daring* and many other RPG systems is that they require very little investment. Now, you may know someone who has invested a few thousand dollars in role playing. That's possible too. There are some commercial RPG systems for which the manufacturer has been putting out various accessories for more than 30 years.

If you're really addicted to such a system, you can invest the price of a car or a solid down payment on a new house in your game. However, if you talk to people who've spent their money in that manner, you'll find that they've never used much of what they've purchased. At the most they've read some of it, but after that it makes up part of a collection for the bookshelf.

It's not possible to spend your money like that with *Dungeons Daring*. The game's core products all are free. That won't keep you from buying accessories for other games and adapting them, of course, but if you do that, it's a matter of choice; it's never necessary.

That notwithstanding, there are some costs you'll probably need to incur before your campaign is up and running. The first cost to calculate is the fee you paid to your Internet service provider, if any, for downloading the *Dungeons Daring* books. If you and your players all plan to use laptops at the gaming table, that may be sufficient. If not, you might use the printer of your computer to print the books. That adds the cost of paper and printer toner or ink to the initial download costs.

What that will cost depends upon the printer you're using, the number of copies you need to print and how much of each book you need to print. You can, for instance, leave all the pages with spell descriptions out of copies of the *Players Guide* that go to non-spellcasters. To save even more, compare the per-page costs of your printer with the per-page costs of your local copy shop. Usually the copy shop will be cheaper. If that's the case, print a master copy of the *Players Guide* and make the additional copies at your copy shop. That's 100% legal.

After that, you or your players need to go to a hobby or gaming shop and buy a set of RPG dice. There are six dice in a set: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12 and d20. Some sets will have a seventh die, either a special 100-sided die or a second d10 die number in steps of 10 from 10 to 100. You can see such a die in the upper right of the picture above. Such a die is useful but not necessary. You can roll d100 or d% by rolling d10 twice. Use the first result as the left digit and the second result as the right digit of the final result.

Once you have the books in the desired form and the dice, you have everything you need. All you have to do is put your adventure on the plate. Anything else you buy is gravy.

However, as we mentioned in the last section, there are a few other useful tools that most gaming groups end up acquiring. If you don't use a PC at the gaming table, the one that's really worthwhile is a gaming board with miniature figures. Let's look at a minute out of a new game master's campaign at the gaming table:

**Game Master:** *You turn round the bend and suddenly see four armed creatures 30ft/9m away from you. All are bearing long swords. There's a dirty smell about them. They have black hair, dark grey skin and look like corrupted elves. They see you and grin, revealing fangs. They draw their long swords and begin to move in your direction.*

At this point, the only thing that your players can see is a vision in their own minds. To each of them, the creatures that you've described will look somewhat different. Each player will translate your description into the vision of his or her own imagination. Each player also will draw a mental picture of the distance of 30 feet or 9 meters. There will be some differences in the mental picture different players have of this distance.

There isn't necessarily anything wrong with that. RPGs have worked like that since the original *Dungeons & Dragons®* by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson was published by the former TSR® Inc. in 1974. However, many game masters and players have concluded that situations are better understood and that the game flows better when a grid board and miniature figures or markers are used to represent the creatures in the encounter.

The picture on the previous page shows you a typical encounter as it's portrayed by miniature figures on a grid. Here we see a giant encountering a band of five adventurers. The scene uses a commercial grid produced by the company Wizards of the Coast® Inc., but you by no means need to spend money on a grid.

You can make a quick and totally adequate grid board yourself with a piece of wood or heavy cardboard. Simply take a felt tip marker and draw the grid yourself. The squares should have sides 1 inch or 2.54 cm long to represent scale 5-foot squares.

You don't need to buy miniature figures. You can just as easily use pegs from some board game or chess or checkers pieces, or you can cut markers out of a thin sheet of cardboard and write the names of the PCs or creatures that they represent upon them.

Miniature figures on a grid board are unnecessary, but they do give you an advantage: Your players not only can see distances clearly, but they also can see how the other creatures in the encounter look, rather than leaving this visual image up to their imaginations.

The miniatures on the previous page were made by the company *Ral Partha®* in the 1990s and sold as unpainted tin figures. They were painted by an RPG gamer who had a large collection of such figures and made a hobby of painting them. Today, not only *Ral Partha* but several other companies offer miniature figures. The higher quality figures usually are poured with pewter or lead, but lower quality plastic figures also are available.

If you and your gaming group have a set of printed books, sets of dice, a grid board and markers or figures, you're already equipped at luxury level and at a total cost for the entire group of less than US \$100. Buying a single set of books can cost that much and more with commercial RPGs.

## IV. Building Your Adventure

This section is intended to help all game masters, but above all, it's important to those who want to create their own adventures. If you're experienced as a game master and have written your own successful adventures already, you may just wish to scan this chapter to see if there's anything new for you. On the other hand, if you're new to the game master's role, we hope you'll stick with us for some tips out of our own experience.

Some of the authors have been gaming since the introduction of the original *Dungeons & Dragons* RPG in 1974. We certainly haven't learned everything in that time, but we have seen quite a number of things that do and don't work, and, just as important, things that can make your campaign run better.

The first thing one usually must do is determine the story line of the adventure. Where do you want your PCs to go? What is there for them to do there? And first and foremost, what will motivate them to go where you want them to go? That question's important, because campaigns in which the game master leads the player around by the nose tend to flop. The PCs should decide themselves where they are going. You need to supply them with what motivates them to go your adventure's way.

Let's dwell on the last point first. There are certain phenomena that come up in an RPG session that really frustrate a game master. We've seen them pop up most frequently in sessions where the game master is new and still getting his or her feet on the ground, but we've also seen them happen in adventures done by experienced game master, and that includes in the authors' own campaigns.

We'll assume that you've just put together what you think will be an exciting adventure, one that your players and their PCs won't want to miss. The new adventure starts out in a village tavern or other location you've picked. Your PCs are there, probably short on cash and looking for an adventure to put some coin into their pouches. Or perhaps they're politically motivated, and they're waiting to help bring down the evil baron whose border is only a few miles or kilometers away.

You bring about whatever plotline you've developed to open the door to your new adventure, and the PCs aren't interested. Even worse, perhaps, they decide to go somewhere else!

The second of those situations usually is the easiest to handle. When the PCs decide to go somewhere else, it's because you've opened too many paths to them, and you've misjudged which of them would be more interesting to the group. If you're starting an adventure, and the adventure path goes from, say, the village of Middlethorpe northwards into Black Valley, then it's a bad idea at that point to tell your players about anything else that might interest them in another direction.

However, if that's not the case and the NPCs in your tavern give the PCs all of the right hints and nudges, and the PCs still say that they're not interested, that they'll wait until something better comes along, then things have gone wrong. Let's look at some ways to avoid getting off to such a disastrous start.

Building a successful first adventure starts at the time that you and your players are developing the player characters. When we discussed character creation, we emphasized the need to develop a good background history and personality for each PC. We'd like to stress that again.

If you've done your part of the job well at character creation time, you'll have the knowledge you need to put together a successful adventure. You'll have a good general picture of your characters' history and experiences before the adventure begins and – because you insisted that they give you that information during character creation – you also know what will motivate the PCs to move forward. Some ideas:

### A Mage

If one of your PCs is a Wizard, Sorcerer, etc. you should know why he or she turned to magic, where he or she was trained (if at all, in the case of the sorcerer), why the mage decided to make a career of his or her magical talents and what he or she wants to achieve. These answers tell you what will motivate the PC. You need to put what he or she wants on the path of your adventure.



## A Fighter or Ranger

PCs of both of these categories have decided to devote their lives, to a certain extent, to the sword. A Fighter can have a wide variety of reasons for choosing such a life. A Ranger usually serves as a defender of general druidic principles in nature. Why did the PC choose this path through life? Where and from whom did he or she receive his or her training? What does he or she hope to achieve? The answers are the key to motivation.

## A Thief or Other Specialist

Here we have a PC who has learned some of the tools of the seamier side of life, regardless of his or her own alignment inclinations. Why? What put the PC on his or her path? From whom did he or she learn these things? Under what circumstances? The PC has decided to use these abilities as an adventurer. Why as an adventurer? What does he or she hope to achieve? Again, the answers are the key to motivation.



*The Road Goes Ever On – J.R.R. Tolkien*

Product Identity

# 1. The First Steps

Once you have these answers, you know what's necessary to put together the right adventure, *if that's possible*. We italicize that, because the information you have at this stage could reveal some other things instead. You might see, for instance, that the desires of the players within your group are totally incompatible with each other. You might also determine that you and your potential players are on totally different wavelengths.

As an example, it might be that what you really want to do is run a campaign based upon vampire hunters. Swords and sorcery adventures in Tolkienesque style aren't your cup of tea. During character creation, you've determined that your players want to do nothing but fight evil wizards and orcs. In both cases, you've discovered that you have probably irreconcilable differences.

What should you do? Forge ahead anyway? We'd recommend against that. It is possible that you would discover after your adventure starts that you like sword and sorcery after all. It's less likely that your entire PC group would discover that it likes vampire hunting after all. If you forge ahead, either with your own goals or theirs, your campaign stands a good chance of being a flop. In the process of failing, you might turn off a few of your players and yourself as well to the idea of fantasy role playing, before any of you even have given the game a fair chance.

When you start an RPG campaign, you should do your best to see that it has loads of ingredients that will make it enjoyable for both you and *all* of your players. If there are irreconcilable differences between you and your potential player group or irreconcilable differences within the group, it's best to put on the brakes immediately and to try anew to assemble a group of players that are on the same basic wavelength as you are. When you do that, you've found the road to success. It's up to you now to follow it.

## 1.1 Formulating the Idea

Once you've settled upon an adventure idea that fulfills your desires and those of your players, you need to start outlining how that adventure will work and in which classes or classifications it should fall. There are three general adventure categories. However, most adventures fall in one of more categories because they have various elements. Still, one needs to understand each of the categories, because they are developed somewhat differently:

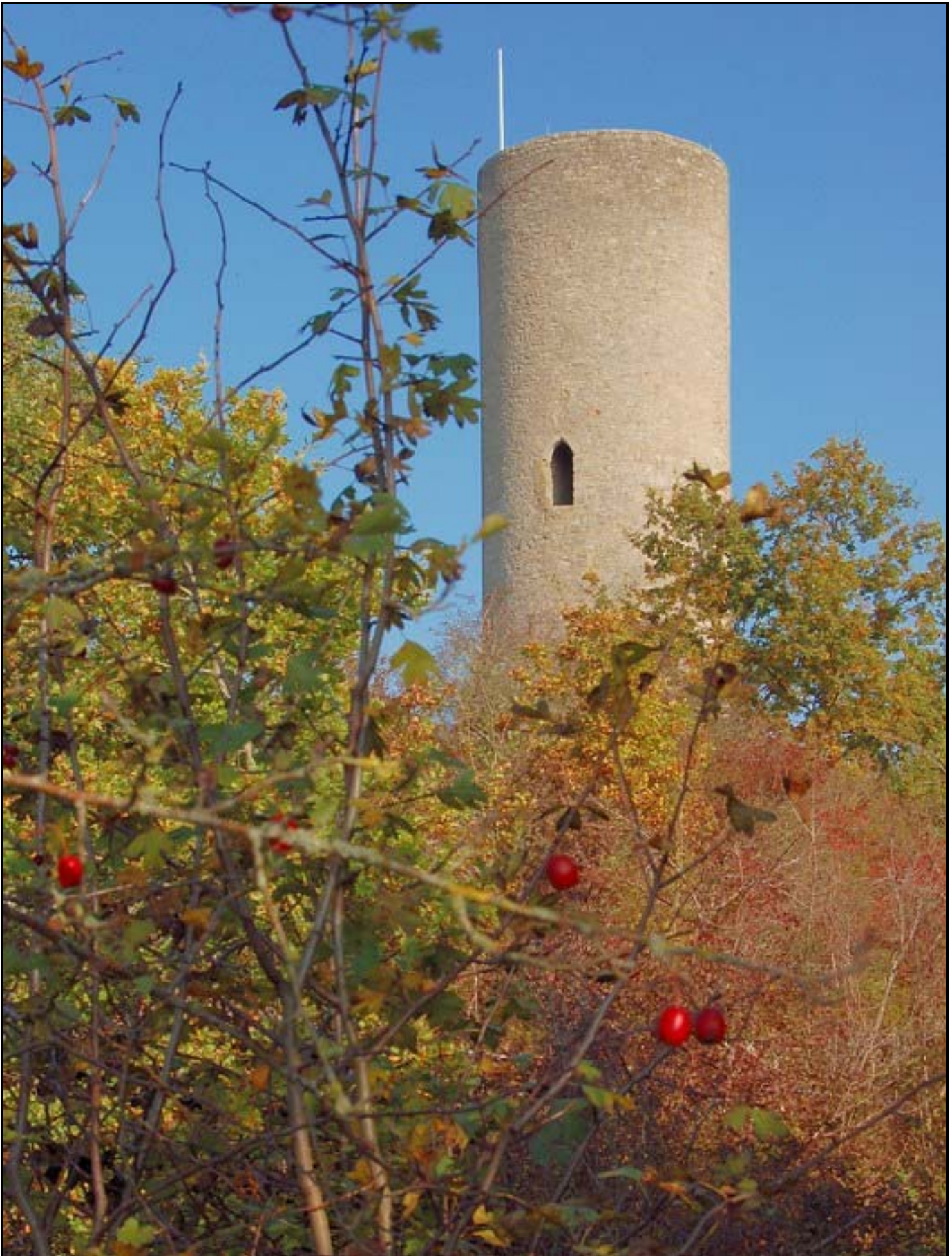
- **Location Adventure:** Such adventures take place within a village, town, city or other relatively small and defined geographical area. Most or all of the adventure takes place above ground.
- **Overland Adventure:** These adventures take place in a larger geographic region. They make stops in several villages, towns or cities and also at geographical sites, ruins and the like. Most or all of the adventure takes place above ground.
- **Dungeon Adventure:** Such adventures take place in a relatively large series of rooms, chambers and/or caves that are connected. Most or all of the adventure can take place underground, but it also is possible to have a dungeon adventure that, for the most part, takes place above ground. A huge fortress castle complex could be the site of an above ground dungeon adventure.

It often works best to design an adventure backwards, that is, to start out defining the adventure's end goal and then, from end to beginning, define all of the things on the way to that goal. Sometimes, in developing your end destination, you will discover that your adventure goal would be helped by having some things happen or be found earlier. After doing that, you then can make an outline of the adventure from beginning to end, identifying each element by its type, *Location*, *Overland* or *Dungeon*, so that you know how these elements need to be defined. Going from beginning to end, here's an example of how such an outline could work:

- *Location:* The PCs are in their home town, Slovan City, looking for a way to earn money. A commission or an idea for a profitable adventure would be preferable to hiring on at the local sawmill.
- *Location:* The PCs are spending an evening in their favorite pub when a few bureaucrats from the local margrave's palace come in and take seats at a table. The PCs learn that the margrave is getting very upset over the kidnapping of peasants in the north of his march by undead servants of the draug Baron Nundlung in the war-ruined lands north of his border. The margrave is willing to pay 1,000 GP for the undead head of the draug baron.

- *Location:* The PCs visit the margrave's castle and accept a commission to destroy the draug baron. The margrave gives them a 10% advance (100 GP) to buy additional equipment and says they'll receive the remaining 900 GP if they return with the undead baron's severed head.
- *Location:* As the PCs are on the way back to their lodgings, a pickpocket swipes the pouch with the 100 GP from the margrave. The PCs chase the pickpocket to a rundown house.
- *Dungeon:* The PCs follow the thief into the house but find no trace of him or anyone else. Only rats scuttle about now and then. The PCs see a rat run into a dark corner and investigate. They discover that the rat has vanished through a trap door that remained ajar after being closed.
- *Dungeon:* A PC Thief says she wants to check the door before the PCs do anything with it. She discovers a spring trap that would have ejected a hidden knife blade into the first PC to go through the trap door. She disarms the trap.
- *Dungeon:* The PCs descend the ladder at the top of the trap door and find that it leads into an abandoned mining tunnel. They turn right, but discover that this leg of the tunnel leads only to a cave-in. They back track and find the pickpocket just starting to climb the ladder upward again. It comes to combat and they slay the pickpocket, leaving his body in the old mineshaft.
- *Dungeon:* The PCs investigate the mineshaft in the second section. It too leads to a cave-in, but at the point where the tunnel ends there is a small supply room to the left. It's obvious that the thief used this room as his hideout. In it, they find not only the pouch with the 100 GP from the margrave but also a small chest with another 6 GP and a piece of parchment.
- *Dungeon:* The parchment is a pre-war floor plan for the draug Baron Nundlung's castle in the town of Tingl's Mill. The town now is in the war-ruined area north of the march. Today, people call it Dark Valley. That's where Baron Nundlung is, so this must be an old floor plan for his castle, the PCs' goal. They take the plan and the 106 GP with them and climb back out of the mineshaft, leaving the thief's dead body for the rats.
- *Location:* The PCs are back in town now. They buy the supplies they're seeking and head northward on the two-day ride to Dark Valley.
- *Overland:* Nothing occurs during the PCs' first day on the road. They reach the farming settlement of Goldfields without difficulty. All the rooms in the Golden Scythe Inn are free. They have no trouble booking one. They go down to the public room for a meal and a few rounds of drinks.
- *Overland:* While they are there, the PCs observe the locals, who have a few concerns on their mind. First of all, a band of 15 to 20 brigands appears to have settled into the hills northwest of town. They've been raiding farmers around the village of Lastmill and the few travelers still on the northern road. Their biggest concern, however, are the reports of draug warriors coming down from the war-ruined barony to the north. They reportedly have abducted several villagers in Lastmill. Will these draugs eventually trouble Goldfields as well? Will the brigands start troubling the village too? What is the margrave in Slovan City doing about it?
- *Overland:* The PCs leave Goldfields the next day and head north toward Lastmill. At mid-morning, as they come to the edge of the forest, they see that the road heads slightly upward into a group of hills that would be a perfect place for an ambush. The Thief in the group is no Scout, but she has acquired a number of Scout's talent skills. The group sends her in to spy out the hills.
- *Overland:* The Thief returns and says she has spotted three brigands in the hills waiting to ambush travelers. She knows a way for the PCs to leave the forest, enter the hills from behind and ambush the ambushers. They do just that and are gaining the upper hand when arrows start flying against them from the hills on the other side of the road. The PCs' Wizard sends an *Aural Illusion* spell creating a raging giant against the archers. They shout and vanish. The PCs slay the three ambushers, find the ambushers' horses, which they take, and go down to the road, heading on to Lastmill.
- *Overland:* As they ride out of the hills, the PCs see two riders in the distance in the West, heading into a forest. They assume that these are the two archers whom they scared off. They also assume that the brigand leader might seek revenge. Therefore, they should try to reach Lastmill as quickly as they can.





*Draug Baron Nundlung's tower in Dark Valley*

- *Overland:* The sun has been down nearly an hour when pinpricks of light from the lamps of Lastmill can be seen a few miles in the distance. But as the PCs look ahead toward the border village, they see the dark forms of three persons taking shape in the road before them. All three draw steel. One of the three urges the PCs to surrender. The male voice says the he and his companions do not want to slay the PCs, they wish to take them to Baron Nundlung in Tingl's Mills.
- *Overland:* The PCs recognize the name. Nundlung is the draug baron in Dark Valley, the one whom they've been sent to destroy. They draw their weapons and narrowly succeed in slaying the three undead Warriors. They sever the draugs' heads, throw them into a sack and ride on into Lastmill, where they heads are smashed and burned to prevent the draugs' bodies from being animated.
- *Overland:* The village of Lastmill has a small inn, where the PCs find lodgings. Most of the villagers show up in the common room. The PCs hear how the villagers have been living in fear lately, and how they were hit with a new, severe blow the previous night. A farmer discovered in the morning that the Last Mill, the village's grain mill, had been attacked and slightly damaged during the night. The mill still can operate, but the miller and his wife have disappeared. No doubt, draugs have taken them to Dark Valley. The villagers are desperate. No one in the village knows how to run the mill properly, and yet, without it, they are likely to starve.
- *Overland:* The PCs explain their intentions to the villagers and that they are there on commission from the margrave. The people of Lastmill are happy for the help, but they are worried for the PCs and urge them to turn back despite their own troubles. When the PCs stand firm, the villagers say they can offer them little help, but they send two Herbal Witches who live in Lastmill to help heal the PCs' wounds from their battle with the draugs. The PCs spend the night in the River Inn.
- *Overland:* From their rooms during the night, the PCs hear a commotion. They see three draug Warriors banging their swords on a house door, demanding that the occupants come out and go with them to the baron. The PCs fight and destroy the draugs, decapitating the corpses and destroying the draugs' heads.
- *Overland:* On the following day, the Herbal Witches return to offer more healing. They also give the PCs several healing potions and herbal remedies to use while in the draug lands. The villagers tell the PCs that they can reach Dark Valley in less than a day's time, but to attempt to do their business in Dark Valley, they will have to spend at least one night there in the domain of the undead.
- *Overland:* The villagers of Lastmill say that the draugs are inactive by day. As far as the villagers know, undead do not like or may not even be able to stand daylight. However, they become quite active after the sun sets. They also are dangerous by day inside buildings and dungeons where no daylight enters. The villagers warn them about the land itself, too. Since the wars, not only are many of the buildings north of the border in ruin, but parts of the landscape also tend to be dead and ill. Wiry, thorny bushes that bear poisonous berries and a few noxious weeds are the only plant life that tends to survive in those areas.
- *Overland:* People who enter the draug lands tend become infected, the Herbal Witches warn. They say that the spores of a dangerous mould are in the air of the draug lands. This mould can infect and slowly destroy the lungs. They give the PCs herbal potions that will counter the mould. They also warn the PCs that the Baron of Tingl's Mill was a smalltime mage, and his draug doubtless still is. With that, the PCs depart Lastmill and follow the traces of the old road that once went northward from Lastmill into what now is no living man's land.
- *Overland:* As the PCs cross the border into the war-ruined lands, they conclude that the villagers' descriptions were correct. Many areas are as desolate as the villagers described. Only a bit of coarse brush survives. But then there are other areas where grass and small trees, some up to 20 years old, are growing again. Perhaps the draug lands at last are recuperating from the war.
- *Location:* In the early afternoon, the PCs at last reach the ruins of Dark Valley, known in its time as the town of Tingl's Mill, taking the name of the mill there. They're surprised by what they see. Only a stone tower and one ramshackle building still stand, the latter direct on the river shore. Everything else in sight is in ruin. Rows of broken stone walls dot the town site. Some have gaping empty widows. Inside of some of the walls are the closed openings to what seem to be cellars of some kind.

- *Location:* The PCs circle the tower and examine it closely. It stands about 80ft/25m high, has a stair and a door at the base and a window bricked shut about 50ft/15m high. The defensive wall at the tower's base is crumbling, but the tower itself seems to be perfectly intact. They draw the conclusion that going through this door won't be simple.
- *Location:* The PCs decide to closely examine the ramshackle building. Enclosing it on three sides (with the river on the fourth) is a strip of flourishing ramson (wild garlic) 10ft/3m across. Beyond the ramson, lush spring grass is up, flowering with dandelions and wild English daisies. The PCs examine the building closely and notice a waterwheel shaft on the rear side, above the riverbank. They conclude that this building had been Tingl's Mill. Because of the unblocked windows, the dandelions and the strip of ramson, they also conclude that the building might offer them a degree of sanctuary. Sunset is only hours away.
- *Location:* The PCs enter the unlocked building and check it out. A part of it is a dusty grain mill that hasn't produced flour or oil in years. The rest is a small living quarters. The PCs find a small dining table, where two partly clothed inanimate skeletons droop from chairs. The clothing suggests that one was a woman and the other a man. The miller and his wife? They also find a box of small candles that seem to have an aura about them. *Magical Candles in the Darkness?*
- *Dungeon:* Before the sun sets, the PCs decide to investigate several of the underground entrances. The doors of all are closed and locked, but the PC Thief manages to open them. However, she is not willing to go deeper into the tunnels below than the daylight reaches. She senses danger beyond the sunlight.
- *Location:* Before the sun disappears beneath the horizon, the PCs return to the mill building, where they bar the doors and block the window openings as well as they can. They make a watch plan and set up defensive positions. Then they wait.
- *Dungeon:* It's not a long wait. The PCs are uncertain whether the full moon is a curse or a blessing, but it does light up the land beyond what had been the now dead town of Tingl's Mill. About an hour after sunset, human-like creatures and skeletons bearing swords begin emerging from the various cellar doors and approaching the mill. The draugs hang back but the skeletons press forward, trampling the ramson and marching to the building, where they begin battering the window barriers and blocked doors with old dull swords.
- *Dungeon:* Rather than allowing the skeletons to batter down all of the barriers blocking the mill building's openings, the PCs attempt a tactic. Although it's heavy, the PCs manage to shove an old millstone to within a few inches of the main door and then they open the door. The unthinking skeletons, carrying out magical orders, crowd to the door and try to push through it.
- *Dungeon:* The tactic works. The skeletons keep trying to press through the door, with little room to swing their swords, and the PCs succeed in lopping off their skulls, bringing an end to their mockery of life. When the last of the skeletons has lost its animation, the PCs are weary, but there is no trouble. Some of the draug warriors begin crossing reluctantly into the ramson, as though an external force is pushing them onward. They continue the attack on the door but also begin battering the blocked windows.
- *Dungeon:* The battle goes on. The draugs seemed to be somewhat disoriented after they cross the ramson and unable to battle at their full capacity, but they are not so weakened that they are unable to wound the PCs. The attack begins taking its toll upon them.
- *Dungeon:* Before the PCs fall in defeat, the first traces of light begin appearing on the eastern horizon. The draugs suddenly break off battle and return to their cellars. The PCs leave the mill building when it seems safe and decapitate the draug bodies. They smash the heads and skeleton skulls and make a huge bonfire to burn them, to prevent their being restored or animated.
- *Dungeon:* After destroying the slain undead and skeleton skulls, the PCs rethink their strategy. They decide that they are better off fighting the draugs underground by day than defending themselves at night. They hope this strategy will limit hostile contact to those draugs in one cellar complex rather than having to face all the draugs from all of the cellars. Before they begin, however, they use healing potions from the Herbal Witches of Lastmill and they get a few hours of sleep.



- *Dungeon:* After awakening, the PCs study the layout of the cellar openings around the tower. They decide to begin with the opening nearest to the tower in the hope that it will have a tunnel that leads directly to the tower. They take the candles found in the mill with them, in the hope that they are *Candles in the Darkness*. They enter the cellar passage. The doorway is not locked. As they reach the point where the last rays of daylight fade, they light the first of their candles, and their hopes are fulfilled. It is indeed a magical *Candle in the Darkness*. The PC Wizard carries the candle, holding up the rear, while the others move carefully forward, battle ready.
- *Dungeon:* Within minutes, it comes to a first battle with draugs. The PCs are successful. They decapitate the draug corpses and smash the skulls. They then come to a fork in the tunnel and go in the direction that they have calculated to be the way to the tower. After a few minutes, they hear voices and send the Thief ahead to check the matter out. She returns, reporting that the tunnel opens upon what appears to be the tower's cellar. In the chamber she has seen are two draug Warrior guards and a series of cells in the stone walls with barred doors. Three are occupied. Each of the first two cells houses a male adult. In the third are a man and a woman. The PCs decide to sneak forward and have their Warrior attempt to hit the two draugs with arrows. He succeeds, slaying one and wounding another.
- *Dungeon:* The PCs run into the chamber and attack the remaining draug, slaying it. The Warrior then decapitates both draugs and smashes the heads. He'll burn them later. One of the draug corpses has the keys to the cells. The prisoners are freed. They identify themselves as the miller, his wife and two farmers who were abducted from Lastmill. They tell the PCs that Baron Nundlung had appeared before them and told them that the duke's Necromancer was en route to Tingl's Mill (the town name still used by the draug baron and his undead). When the Wizard arrives, the baron told them, he would demand that they submit to transfiguration into draugs or be tortured until they submitted to transfiguration. The Warrior and Thief backtrack to get the swords of the two slain draugs behind them. These and the swords of the two draug guards are given to the freed prisoners.
- *Dungeon:* The PCs decide to press on while there still is daylight outside. The freed prisoners point out a door through which the baron went after trying to intimidate them. The PCs decide to go that way. The Thief is in the lead, with the PCs and the freed prisoners following her. They come into a new chamber with a spiral staircase. The Thief is sent ahead to see what's in the tower above.
- *Dungeon:* The Thief reports that the staircase is lit with torches. Most of the lower rooms are empty and are filled with dust and furniture that appear not to have been used since the last life left the tower. However, at a level of some 50ft/15m, she finds the room with the blocked window. In it are two draugs, one of whom wears a Wizard's robe. The other is a somewhat better outfitted Warrior than those they had encountered. She assumes that the Wizard is the draug baron. She says he was angry but perhaps also worried by the PCs' survival during the night, and he wants them to be slain or be taken prisoner during the coming night, regardless of the cost. The room also had a bookshelf with parchment books and a Wizard's workbench.
- *Dungeon:* The PCs and the freed prisoners, all prepared to fight, ascend the stairs as quietly as they can. They encounter no resistance along the way. Finally they can hear the voice of the ranting Baron Nundlung above them. He apparently still is having a tantrum with the draug Warrior in his chamber. The PCs decide to stop for a bit and listen. The baron is shouting that the duke's Wizard will be arriving within days, and that the situation must be resolved well before his arrival. The baron wants at least 10 Warriors guarding the prisoners at all times. Nothing can go wrong, the baron shouts. The duke is demanding more draugs, the baron shouts, and *both of us will pay dearly if he is dissatisfied with us.*
- *Dungeon:* Of a duke, the PC's know nothing, but they know that what they've heard probably will be valuable to the margrave in Slovan City. They decide to sneak up the stairs to the chamber entry and make a surprise attack on the baron and his draug Warrior captain. They are a tough match for the PCs and the freed prisoners, but through their greater numbers, the PCs and the former prisoners win the battle. The PCs decapitate both draug corpses and destroy the Warrior's head. They throw the heads into a sack.
- *Dungeon:* The PCs and the freed prisoners make their way back through the tunnels to daylight. Along the way, they encounter more draug warriors, but they succeed in slaying and decapitating them, and they collect their heads. When they're back in daylight, they smash all of the heads except the baron's and then build a bonfire to destroy the remnants of the heads. They will take the baron's head back to the margrave. They gather their belongings from the mill house, and the entire group heads southwards and out of the draug lands before sunset.

- *Overland:* The rest consists of post-adventure events in Lastmill and Goldfields. Between Goldfields and Slovan City, the PCs might encounter brigands again. After that, the PCs return to the margrave in Slovan City, ending this adventure and going onto the threshold of the next.

This is a rather proven method for developing an adventure, but it's not the only method that works. If you have one that you prefer, go ahead and stick with it. The main thing is that it brings you to the desired goal. The idea summary above is, by the way, the plot line for the introductory adventure at the end of this book.

We suggested earlier that an adventure outline comes quickest to the desired result when it's designed backwards, that is from the end to the beginning. Let's take a look at how this idea was used in the outline above. Remember that it was done from the end to the beginning and then, in a manner of speech, turned around in the right order in the outline above.

The first important point is that this adventure was designed for a group of 1<sup>st</sup> level PCs. That means that their opponents had to be of similar total levels or be disadvantaged for the PCs to have a fair chance of success. You'll find that many players drop out of the game when their game master regularly throws challenges at them that are beyond their ability (although some players do, indeed, thrive on such challenges).

We started designing with the key encounter of the adventure, that with the undead Baron Nundlung and his draug Warrior officer. By the time the PCs attacked, they had all of the things they needed for the encounter. A spiral staircase was there to give them a path to the baron. At their levels, no Mage would be available to fly, teleport or otherwise magically transport themselves to the baron's chamber.

The draug baron was shouting at his officer, making it easier for the enlarged but still weak group of PCs to sneak up to his chamber. Although the group had four new combatants, two farmers, a miller and a miller's wife add little firepower to the party. The baron draug and the officer were planned as 3<sup>rd</sup> level PCs. Therefore, we had the baron have a tantrum to keep his focus and hearing away from the PCs. This brought some balance into the encounter, in which the baron, with initiative in the first round, could have used spells too powerful for the PCs. Because they could surprise the draugs, they automatically gained the initiative in the first combat round and could do damage before they sustained any.

Before the PCs encounter the baron, they hear him ranting about the demands of a duke for more draugs. This is the first that the PCs have heard of a duke, but the news makes clear to them that the draug baron is just the first chapter of a much bigger story. This is called an adventure hook. You can build further adventures upon it, or you can ignore it.

We could have placed the four prisoners in their cells without their having any idea what was intended. Instead, the draug baron already has taunted them. This has several effects. It tells the PCs what happened to the other villagers of Lastmill who were abducted. When they return to Lastmill, the villagers there will hope that they have this news, even though it is ill news.

Of more immediate importance, the prisoners noticed which way the baron went after taunting them. This put the PCs on the right path immediately. That was necessary to keep the adventure in balance. With a more advanced group, a game master might leave out anything that would guide the PCs in a certain direction.

If the 1<sup>st</sup> level players in our adventure had wandered through various tunnels before finding the way to Nundlung, they might have been so badly wounded by the draug Warriors there that they would have had little or no chance of defeating the baron when they finally found him. In this type of 1<sup>st</sup> level adventure, it's necessary for the game master to give the PCs a somewhat visible path to get in, do their work and get out again while they still have a chance to survive. The PCs can, of course, choose to do something else, but then that's their decision.

We could have placed only the miller and his wife in the cells, but we thought the balance required a little more firepower to back the PCs up in their encounter with the draug baron. The miller would be the toughest of the prisoners. A miller in a village like Lastmill probably would be a 3<sup>rd</sup> level Artisan. That means a +1 attack bonus with a draug's sword, 3 life points and 3-24 damage points ... not all that threatening for the baron and his draug officer, but a little extra punch. The miller's wife and the two farmers would be 1<sup>st</sup> level Commoners with 1 life point, 1-4 hit points and an attack roll with a penalty of -3. At the most they would be a diversion for opponents. They well might die after being hitting once or twice. But their presence and possession of draug swords complicate things a bit for Baron Nundlung and his officer, Thund.

Going the next step backward, we come to the old mill in Dark Valley. Magic and mills don't mix well, but either the miller or his wife ... probably the wife ... must have had a bit of craft with spells. The magic *Candles in the Darkness* suggest that she might have been a born sorcerer. However, they could have been given to her in exchange for a service, perhaps healing.

There is a bit stronger indication that she might have been an Herbal Witch. The knowledge required to grow the ramson strip along with the fertility in the mill yard suggest that kind of knowledge. The ransom strip, dandelions, English daisies and the fact that the mill house still is intact, in turn, give inexperienced players and their PCs a hint that the building might offer a certain degree of sanctuary in the land of the undead.

Probably no one ever will solve that riddle, but it's unimportant. The PCs found the *Candle of Darkness*, which made it possible for them to see in the tunnels of the baron's dungeon. Without them, they could have been subject to ambush attacks by draug Warriors in the tunnels who literally know their way around in the dark there. We also placed an old millstone in the mill house to give the PCs a tool with which they could fashion a barrier against skeletons and draugs.

The events in Lastmill give the PCs vital knowledge and introductory experience with the kind of foe they'll encounter in Dark Valley. It also is the last bit of training offered to the inexperienced players before the bigger encounters in the draug domain. Such preparatory encounters are important for inexperienced players. They need to get something of a feel for combat in an RPG before the going gets rough.

With the draug and skeleton encounters that we had planned for Dark Valley, we also needed to give the PCs a means for healing themselves. It's always best to do without magical healing as much as possible in your adventures, but we put too much enemy firepower in Dark Valley for the PCs to have a fair chance of coming out alive without magical healing.

In our backward design, we can solve the problem we made by adding the Herbal Witches and the potions that they give the PCs. Note that we haven't given the PCs any powerful, permanent magic that might make them too powerful in future adventures. The potions can be used once and they're gone from the campaign.

Continuing backwards, we come to the encounter with draugs south of Lastmill. Just as with the encounter in Lastmill, this gives the PCs some introductory experience in combat with a few draugs, in order that they understand what combat with draugs is like before they encounter larger numbers of them in Dark Valley. They also learn what happens to people who are abducted. As the PCs probably expected, the prisoners are taken to draug Baron Nundlung in Dark Valley.

The draugs are their second encounter the PCs have after leaving Goldfields. By daylight, they also came into combat with brigands, and we used this scenario to give the PC an opportunity to use her spying skills before they have their first acid test in Dark Valley.

Before that, the PCs were in Goldfields. Just like real people, your PCs can travel only so far in a day's time. Goldfields gives them a safe place to rest on their first night out. The hours spent in the public room also give the PCs the first real detail of the adventure that's ahead of them. Goldfields is a typical overland element in an RPG adventure. The town and its details outside of the inn aren't particularly important to the adventure. What is important is that the PCs have places to spend the night and sources of information.

The place where the adventure begins, Slovan City, sets the adventure's foundation. Here the elements come together that put the PCs on their path. The episode with the thief also serves as training for the new adventurers, above all for the Thief, whose talents are in demand later in Dark Valley. In this episode, we also introduce another tool that we decided was necessary when we started out by designing Baron Nundlung's tower.

Keeping in mind that the PCs all are 1<sup>st</sup> level characters and their need to get in and out of danger quickly, the old pre-war plan that was found gives the PCs some valuable advance knowledge of the physical layout of the tower.

## 1.2 Location Elements

Now that we've put our ideas together, we'll take a look at the location elements that are necessary for this adventure. Location elements usually are cities, villages or settlements where your PCs have several options open to them. However, lumberjack camps, military encampments and the like also can be location elements.

When your PCs move across your adventure or campaign setting, there are some places where they will stop and spend some time. They'll find a place where they'll stay and they'll seek out locations there where they can buy supplies, seek information and, when they have enough money, get to temples for healing and even resurrections.

Neither you nor your players will know ahead of time exactly where they will go once they're in a place that ranks as a location element, but it's up to you to prepare considerable information in advance. You'll need to do a lot of good guesswork on what the PCs will do when a location element is the stage for their actions. Once you've done that, you need to sketch out the details on those places:

- Determine in advance whether the PCs might have hostile encounters or encounters that require skill or ability checks with PCs at the location. Develop the necessary statistics for all of them in advance, and also ponder what personalities these NPCs will have when you have to play their roles.
- You'll need a floor plan for the ground floor, the public room and the PCs' own guest rooms of the inn where your PCs are staying. PCs have a strong tendency to want to know who and what is where in the areas of the inn where they go.
- You will have to play the role of the innkeeper and waitresses at your PCs' inn. Develop names and personalities for the in advance.
- If the PCs will be buying supplies, you need to determine in advance who has those supplies and what they will cost. The *Players Guide* gives you base price guidelines. Before setting local prices, ponder what the origin of the products is. Products that come from far away might be twice as expensive as the *Players Guide* price. Products that are produced locally might cost only  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the *Players Guide* price.
- If the PCs might visit a temple, you need to know who the Clerics are and you might need to know the temple's layout and. You need basic statistics for those Clerics with whom the PCs might deal, you need to know which rites they can perform and you need to know what they charge. You also should set a personality for those Clerics with whom the PCs might have to deal.

That's only the surface of it, however. Developing a location element can require a fair amount of work on your part, if it's to fulfill the role it needs to play. There are many additional questions that need to be answered to build a *credible* location element:

- Why does this location exist? What drew people there and why do they remain.
- Who rules or runs the location? How did he or she get into that position? Does he or she have the support of the locals, or are they under his or her thumb?
- Who enforces the law? Are they corrupt? Are they lawful and law-abiding in the enforcement of the law or chaotic and arbitrary?
- What is the population? Who are the key NPCs and what are their base statistics? What is the base alignment of the population?
- How much money does the location have? What's the source of this money? How does the local population earn a living?
- What is the attitude of the location in regard to outsiders and the outside world? Keep in mind that this attitude is shaped to a great extent by the attitude of the outside world and outsiders toward the location. If – like Slovan City – the location is threatened by a nearby hostile land or location, people at this location will have a tendency to be suspicious and defensive. If, on the other hand, the location is in a secure area, money and business, including that of the PCs might be more important. If the location is severely threatened, the locals could view the PCs as either saviors or a dangerous threat.



Product Identity

*Only a wide river separates this small city from the threat of the dungeon in the ruins above.*

- How does the location manage to survive? What protects it from whatever threatens it, so that it hasn't been overrun and destroyed by its enemies? If it's a small settlement, what keeps evil or chaotic bands of adventurers from running amok and destroying the place? Why do people stay there despite the threats?

Now that we've placed all of these questions on the table, let's look at how we can come up with some answers.

The best place to start is with the location's origins. If this location is a small village near a larger town or a city, its origins probably have a lot to do with that dominant city or village. However, regardless of how small it might be, if the location is the dominant location in its area, then it needs a reason in its own right to be there.

Such a location usually should be on a river or creek that has enough water flow to provide water power. At a minimum, a village should be able to mill its own grain. In most cases, that requires a water flow that can turn a waterwheel reliably throughout the year. In a larger location, you also might need a water-powered sawmill and/or smithy.

There are rare exceptions. If the natural resources are alluring enough, an area might draw settlers without a river or an adequate creek. One can grind grain and hammer oil with treadmill power. But one also needs a place to grow the grain.

Perhaps a picture is beginning to form in your mind. People move to a new area when they have good reason to believe that they can live better there than where they are at present. To draw people, the area must have potable water, a source of food and resources that can be used to make a living. Unless an area offers a chance to become truly rich and then get out, it will draw few people if it is in constant danger of war.

However, the question of how a location came to be is quite different from the question of why it continues to exist. Once people settle an area, build homes and work its soil, the location becomes a part of the person. After people come to view a location as home, most folks will defend it as long as possible, often fighting to the death. But such a defense has its limits. If the enemy is overwhelming, the surviving defenders one day will have to choose between fleeing or fighting until they're dead. Either way, the location ceases to be what it was, and it may cease to be a location at all.

Many RPG designers don't take such things into account. There is a once highly popular commercial campaign setting that places little villages out in the wilderness, villages populated with nothing more than Commoners and Fighters of the lowest levels. The next settlements are said to be more than 50 miles/80km away.

According to the official descriptions, hundreds of thousands and maybe millions of hungry, human-hating orcs are within a day's time of these settlements. However, they never do anything, and the settlements continue on day to day and month to month, with the settlers constantly worried that the orcs are about to attack.

When questioned online about this strange situation, the designers responded that the reason the orcs don't attack is a mystery. That's not a reason. It's a bad excuse for worse design. If you commit this kind of illogical nonsense in your design, don't be surprised if your players snicker and fail to take your design as seriously as you wish.

Extend these thoughts to the supposed threat too. If there are hundreds of thousands or even millions of orcs in the mountains a day's ride from your settlement, why are they there? What keeps them there? What do they eat? You'll need a better answer than that given by the game designers mentioned. When asked online, the questioner reminded them that such a huge concentration of orcs would have hunted the mountains clean of game years earlier. The official answer was that the orcs live off of mushrooms grown in their farms in subterranean caverns. Say what?

Before you give your players an answer like that, look at things from their viewpoint. Some of your players may have read J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* books, but even more will have seen the film version of the trilogy by Peter Jackson. Their impression of an orc probably was shaped by during Part 2 of the trilogy, *The Two Towers*, when a mixed group of orcs from Isengard and Mordor are rushing captive Merry and Pippin off to Saruman.

The orcs are hungry and want to eat Merry and Pippin. They're hungry for *man flesh*. Pippin and Merry may be Hobbits rather than humans, but the orcs are hungry enough to settle for that. The Mordor orcs are so hungry that they're willing to begin a fight among each other and risk Saruman's wrath just to eat Merry and Pippin.



Now, the game designers in questions are trying to convince us that these same creatures are willing to eat mushrooms rather than make raids on a number of defenseless settlements populated by *man flesh* and their edible farm animals. We urge you not to make the same mistake with your players. There are many reasons why people join RPG groups, but we have yet to find a single player who does it because of an overwhelming desire to be treated like an idiot.

The best rule of thumb when defining locations is to know why the population or occupants are there and how they sustain life, regardless of whether they're cities, villages, settlements or huge orc encampments. If you do that, your players will have the feeling that they're in a sensible place when they go there. They also will be able to make a relatively accurate assessment of what might motivate those whom they encounter, which is necessary when the PCs have to deal with people or other creatures.

The following tables are guidelines to help you develop an infrastructure for locations:

### Municipal Levels

Population	Level	Top Price	Minimum Wealth	Maximum Wealth
up to 100	Encampment	500 GP	1,000 GP	5,000 GP
101-200	Settlement or Hamlet	700 GP	5,000 GP	10,000 GP
201-500	Village or Thorpe	1,200 GP	10,000 GP	50,000 GP
501-2,000	Town	5,000 GP	25,000 GP	200,000 GP
2,100-10,000	Small City	50,000 GP	100,000 GP	1,000,000 GP
10,001 & upwards	City	unlimited	500,000 GP	unlimited

**Population:** Population of the location element.

**Level:** Classification based upon population.

**Top Price:** The highest price that's likely to be paid for anything.

**Minimum Wealth:** The total value of the location element is at least this high.

**Maximum Wealth:** The total value of the location element wouldn't exceed this level.

The following table shows the highest levels of NPCs likely to be found in the average listed location elements. However, you need to keep in mind the certain NPCs, particularly members of the Magi and Naturalist classes, tend to locate in smaller areas, either to isolate themselves or because of the purposes of their classes.

### Highest NPC Levels

Level	Highest Official	Highest Enforcer	Highest Mage	Highest Other NPC
Encampment	3	3	2	2
Settlement or Hamlet	4	3	2	2
Village or Thorpe	5	5	3	3
Town	7	6	4	4
Small City	9	8	6	6
City	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited

**Highest Official:** The highest level likely for the person who governs the location. If the location is governed by a group, this would represent the level of the highest group member.

**Highest Enforcer:** The highest level likely for the person who heads enforcement of the law and of government edicts.

**Highest Mage:** The highest level likely for the most powerful mage at the location (excluding a mage who might be the highest official or the highest enforcer).

**Highest Other NPC:** The highest level likely for the most powerful NPC at the location who is not a mage and is not affiliated with the government.

## Political Systems

Nature	Description	Forms	Alignments
Benevolent	The government views its main purpose as serving its citizens. It taxes as little as possible, protects its borders or boundaries as well as possible and attempts to produce prosperity.	Royal or noble rule, guild rule, merchants rule, leading citizens' rule	All lawful and neutral, good and neutral
Special interest	The government tries to maintain peace and protect its citizens, but special interests have a strong ear in governing circles and influence many decisions.	Royal or noble rule, guild rule, merchants rule, leading citizens' rule, benevolent dictators	All non-chaotic
Political machine	The government tries to maintain peace and protect its domain for its own sake. Citizen interests concern the government only to the extent that people's contentment make the government function smoothly.	Royal or noble rule, guild rule, merchants rule, dictators	All non-chaotic
Evil	The government chooses between peace and war to suit its own needs. Citizens are for most intents and purposes slaves of the government.	Royal or noble rule, dictators	All non-chaotic
Chaotic	The government is run by people incompetent to govern. Regardless of its intentions, it works in an arbitrary manner. Decisions and actions often have no proper follow-up.	Any	All chaotic

## Typical Taxes

Government	Visitor Gate Tax	Inn Tax	Crop Tax	Product Tax	Sales Tax
Benevolent	0-1 CP	2%	5%	2%	5%
Special interest	0 CP-1 BP	5%	5%-10%	5%	5%
Political Machine	1 BP-1 SP	5%	10%	5%	5%
Evil	1 SP upwards	5% upwards	10% upwards	5-10%	10% upwards
Chaotic	1 CP upwards	2% upwards	5% upwards	2% upwards	5% upwards

**Visitor Gate Tax:** The tax people have to pay to pass a gate into the location. Such taxes usually are collected only in towns and cities.

**Inn Tax:** The tax paid by overnight guests upon room, food and drink fees at an inn.

**Crop Tithe:** The percent of the harvest that must be turned over to the government. Theoretically, this tithe is stored in siege cellars to feed the people in times of emergency. However, unscrupulous governments often sell all or a part of these crops.

**Product Tax:** The tax charged on the price of sold manufactured products or resold wholesale goods.

**Sales Tax:** The tax charged on goods sold in retail trade.

How these taxes are determined and collected varies from location to location. Some locations accept the statements of those who pay as long as there is no reason to doubt their truthfulness. Some send out assessors who carefully examine books and determine the taxes. Still others send out assessors who arbitrarily set taxes, often based on the connections the taxed person may or may not have to the ruling authority. Enforcement of tax levies varies as well. Benevolent governments usually have an appeals system. The worst governments often collect unpaid taxes with violence.

**Average Business and Economic Density**

<b>Business</b>	<b>Encampment <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Small City</b>	<b>City</b>
Armor-/Weaponsmith	0	0-1	1-2	2-4	4-12
Assayer	0-1	0-1	0-1	1-2	2-4
Bakery	0	1-2	1-3	2-4	4-15
Barrelmaker	0	0-1	1-2	2-4	3-8
Boat Builder	0	0-1	0-2	0-8	0-15
Bookbinder	0	0	0	0-1	0-4
Bookkeeper	0	0	0-1	1-4	4-15
Brewery <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0	0-1	0-2
Butcher	0	1-2	1-3	2-4	4-15
Candlemaker	0	0	1	1-3	2-8
Carpenter	0-1	0-1	1-2	2-6	4 upwards
Cartographer	0	0	0	0-1	2-4
Coachman	0	0	0-1	0-4	1-8
Coal Dealer	0	0-1	1-2	2-4	4-10
Cobbler	0-1	1	1-3	2-5	5-15
Consulting Mage	0	0	0-1	1-4	2 upwards
Dairy	0-1	0-1	0-2	0-3	1-6
Distillery <sup>3</sup>	0	0-1	0-10	1-25	5-50
Docks	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-4	0-10
Feed dealer	0	0-1	1-2	1-3	2-4
Firewood Dealer <sup>4</sup>	0	0-1	1-6	2-10	6 upwards
Foundry	0	0	0-1	0-1	1-2
General Store	0-1	1	1-3	2-5	5-15
Glazier	0	0-1	0-2	1-4	4-8
Goldsmith	0	0	0-1	0-2	1-4
Grain Mill	0-1	0-1	1	1	1-3
Harbor	0	0	0	0-1	0-1
Herbal Apothecary	0	0	0	0-1	1-4
Herbal Witch	1	1	1-4	2-6	6-15
Horse Trader	0-1	0-1	1-2	1-3	2-6
Inn	0	1-2	2-4	3-6	6-20
Jeweler	0	0	0-1	1-2	2-6
Kiln	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-2	0-4
Library (Private)	0	0-1	0-4	0-6	1-20
Mason	0	0	0-1	1-2	3-8
Mercenary Company	0	0	0-1	0-2	0 upwards
Money Changer	0	0	0-1	1-4	5 upwards
Painter	0	0-1	0-2	1-4	4 upwards
Parchment Maker	0	0	0-1	0-2	1-4
Professional Healer	0	0	0-2	2-4	4-10
Professionals	0	0	0-1	2-8	4 upwards
Public house with rooms <sup>5</sup>	0-1	2-3	3-6	4-10	8-40
Public house <sup>5</sup>	0-1	2-4	3-8	5-12	10-50
Raftsmen	0-6	0-6	0-10	0-10	0-10
Rendering (Tallow)	0	0-1	0-1	0-1	1-2
Sage	0	0-1	0-1	0-2	1-6
Sawmill	0-1	0-1	0-1	1	1-4
School	0	0	0	0-1	1-10
Scribe	0	0	0-4	1-8	6-20
Shipbuilder	0	0	0	0-1	0-6
Slaughterhouse <sup>6</sup>	0	0	0	0-1	1-2
Smithy	0-1	0-2	1-3	2-5	4-10
Spinning Mill	0	0	0-1	1-2	2-6
Stone Quarry	0-1	0-1	0-1	1-2	1-4

Business	Encampment <sup>1</sup>	Village	Town	Small City	City
Tailor/Seamstress	0	1	1-3	2-5	5-15
Tannery	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-2	1-4
Temple with Services	0	0	0-1	1-4	2 upwards
Timber Operation	0-1	0-1	0-2	0	0
Tinker	0-1	1-3	2-4	4-8	6-20
Tinsmith	0	0	0	0-1	1-4
Toolmaker	0	0	0-1	0-2	1-4
Trading Coster	0-1	0-1	0-3	0-6	4-12
Village, Town or City Hall	0	1	1	1	1
Vintner	0-2	0-25	0-50	0-16	0-16
Wainwright	0	0-1	1-2	1-3	2-6
Warehouse	0	0	0-2	1-6	3-12

<sup>1</sup> Encampments often have at the most a small camp store. If another business exists, it is an exception rather than a rule.

<sup>2</sup> Beer and ale usually are brewed by public houses and inns. Locals who want beer or ale at home go to public houses and inns with large tankards which they have filled. In small cities there may be a communal brewery with shared usage by several public houses and inns. Cities might even have a private or court brewery that sells its brew to one or more public houses and inns.

<sup>3</sup> Spirits usually are distilled by the farmers who harvest the fruit. Larger distilleries that make whisky usually are found only in towns and cities.

<sup>4</sup> Farmers fell firewood in winter, stack it to dry and sell two-year-old firewood direct and to dealers.

<sup>5</sup> Public houses with rooms have 1-4 guest rooms. For every pubic house with guest rooms, subtract one from the total of public houses without guest rooms.

<sup>6</sup> Farmers and butchers usually do their own slaughtering. A central slaughterhouse usually is found only in cities.

By no means should you take the suggestions in the table above as being rules of any sort. Location elements define themselves; their reason for existing also decides what is there. A mining town, a farming town and a center for making lumber out of timber each will have entirely different balances of trade and facilities. The table represents nothing more than suggested averages.

Once you've identified a certain site as a location element, you also should decide what the location needs and would have, using the table above as a guideline. When you start your campaign, we strongly urge you not to put more into your first location elements than you really need, because much of what you place in a location element needs to be fleshed out and detailed, often with a floor plan or map.

Now that we seen the basic guidelines for developing the location elements of an adventure, let's look back again at the adventure outline we made a few pages back. This time we'll start at the beginning of the adventure and go forward, just as they the PCs will do.

If we look at the purpose of Slovan City, we probably can see quickly why we need to know a lot about it and develop it thoroughly. Slovan City is a special kind of location element. It's the PC's base point. That's a kind of site you'll need for most of your adventures. Consider:

Your adventure is likely to get off to a shaky start if you begin by putting your PCs just beyond the enemy camp or at the entrance to the dungeon that you want them to explore. Your players will have the same ideas for the PCs that real folks would before going off on a dangerous adventure. They'll want to get the supplies that *they* think they need, not the supplies that *you* think they should have, and they probably will want to check around and see what information they can get about the creatures or locations that will be the targets of their adventure.

The starting location often is the hometown of a starting group of PCs. If it isn't, it's at least their temporary base of operations. But if you plan or hope to run a long-term campaign with this group of PCs, it's a wise idea to set up a hometown for them in about the middle of the area in which you set your adventures and make it their current hometown. This not only gives the PCs a home to which they can return, but it also can save you a lot of time. If your PCs always are landing at a new base of operations, you are going to be spending a lot of time detailing location elements that otherwise would be easier to create as overland elements.

Wherever your PCs make their current base, they're going to expect a lot of information from you. They want to know – at a minimum - where they can buy weapons and armor, trail supplies and probably horses and pack animals. They'll usually want to know where they can go to get reliable information about their goal and where they can go to get whatever scuttlebutt there is. Expert information often comes from paid sages or bureaucrats who work for the local government. Scuttlebutt is best found in taverns, in other words, public houses and the public rooms of inns.

If you give the table *Average Business and Economic Density* above a glance, you'll find a number of people and places your PCs might wish to visit before departing on their adventure:

- Armor-/Weaponsmith
- Cartographer
- Cobbler
- Consulting Mage
- General Store
- Herbal Apothecary
- Herbal Witch
- Horse Trader
- Inn
- Professional Healer
- Public House
- Sage
- Smithy
- Tailor/Seamstress
- Temple with Services
- Village, City or Town Hall
- Wainwright

Let's take a look now at some of these sites and see how your PCs might use them. For each of the following locations, you need to create at least barebones statistics and names for the key NPCs.

- **Armor-/Weaponsmith:** Before your PCs go to buy weapons and armor, you need to determine what is available and what the items cost. In an average location, you simply can use the guideline prices in the *Players Guide*. If you're right near a foundry, prices will be slightly lower. On the other hand, if metal needs to be shipped over a long distance, items might cost twice as much as the *Players Guide* price. There is no ready-to-wear full plate mail. It needs to be commissioned. It will take about a month to be finished. The PCs may wish to commission other custom forged items as well. A sword will take about 10 days and a metal shield 4 or 5 days. You can use these as time guidelines for other items. Ordinarily there is no need to make a floor plan of a smithy.
- **Cartographer:** Your campaign generally will run smoother if your PCs have maps of the areas they plan to visit. At a site location, like Slovan City, it's often a good idea to simply give them a city map with a key that lists the easily identifiable locations by name. Why? It represents nothing more than what the PCs can see when they walk the local streets. However, the PCs should have to come up with their own regional maps or maps of distant locations with which they are unfamiliar. After all, maps don't fall like pennies from heaven. They shouldn't be gifts from the game master. The PCs should buy their maps. Cartography still is a young art in the *Dungeons Daring* environment, but many cities have cartographers, and they even can be found in towns that are the embarkation point for numerous travelers and adventurers. If your PCs are at a location that is too small to support a cartographer, it should be possible for the PCs to buy used maps from a retired adventurer or the like. Ordinarily there is no need to make a floor plan of a cartographer's business.
- **Cobbler:** Most PCs heading out on their first adventure will need to buy a set of boots (or two) that are up to the journey they're facing. Ordinarily there is no need to make a floor plan of a cobbler's shop.
- **Consulting Mage or Sage:** We've lumped these two professions together because they provide the same basic services in most cases, knowledge. However, it might also be possible to buy some minor magic items or scrolls with spells from NPCs of the Mage class. Ordinarily there is no need to make a floor plan of their studios or towers.
- **General Store:** The store offers a wide variety of goods, but not weapons or armor. If there is a local tannery, leather items usually are available there rather than in the general store. In most cases, there is no need to make a floor plan of a general store. However, it could become necessary if a PC thief decides to steal wares rather than buying them.

- **Herbal Apothecary, Herbal Witch, Professional Healer or Temple with Services:** Again, we've lumped several locations together. All four are places that PCs go for healing, healing potions and (temples usually excepted) herbal medicines. Ordinarily there is no need to make a floor plan of an Herbal Apothecary, the hut of an Herbal Witch or the rooms of a Professional Healer. Under some circumstances, you might need a floor plan for a temple.
- **Horse Trader:** There may be some local farmers who raise better quality horses at lower prices, but the horse trader is the usual source of riding mounts, pack animals and draught horses to pull wagons. Ordinarily there is no need to make a plan of an animal lot.
- **Inns and Public Houses:** Be prepared to make detailed plans of every inn and public house that you place upon your settlement, village, town or city map! In addition, you'll have to detail thoroughly the inn or public house(s) where the PCs have their rooms. There are few sites within a location element where your PCs will want to know so precisely what they see. In public rooms, your PCs not only will want to know where the other guest tables are but also what the descriptions of the customers are who are sitting at them. At the site where your PCs have their rooms, they will want to know exactly what's in every corner. They may wish to set traps in certain areas. They also will want to know all about the stairway leading to their rooms, the hallway and how many other guest doors open onto the hallway. In some cases, they even will eavesdrop at other doors or watch to see who goes into which rooms. You need to prepare all of this information in advance. For inns and public houses where the PCs do not have rooms, they still will want at a minimum to know the exact details of the public room. They also will want to know what drinks are available, what food's on the menu and what it all costs. Consider this carefully when deciding how many inns and public houses you place on the map of any location site. For each one you put there, you have a detailing job to do!
- **Smithy:** This is the local blacksmith, not a maker of weapons or armor. Ordinarily there is no need to make a floor plan of a smithy.
- **Tailor or Seamstress:** If your PCs decide to buy clothing, this is where they'll head, unless they're in a larger location with a spinning mill. You should set prices ahead of time. A floor plan usually is unnecessary.
- **Village, City or Town Hall:** This is where the PCs can get information, buy permits and pay taxes and fines. Under some circumstances, your campaign might demand a partial or even full floor plan. In some locations, a castle may have the function of a town hall.
- **Wainwright:** This is where your PCs have to head if they want to take a wagon or sleigh along on their adventure. Set prices ahead of time. Ordinarily there is no need to make a floor plan of such a business.

The first location element in our adventure outline above, Slovan City, also includes a dungeon element. We'll discuss that in the pages to come.

Once your PCs have done all they need to do at their base location, they're off on their adventure. However, depending upon the size and scope of the adventure, you probably will have at least one more location element to define, at the adventure's goal, and it's possible that you'll have to define many more location elements along the way. This is particularly true if your PCs need to make temporary operating bases along their way.

In the adventure outline farther above, the PCs make overnight stops in the villages of Goldfields and Lastmill. While one could consider these to serve briefly as temporary operating bases, the PCs' stay is so short in both that it probably would serve no purpose to treat either location as a location element. It's sufficient to make them a part of the overland element between the starting point and the goal.

The only other location element in our outline is the draug settlement of Dark Valley, which was known as Tingl's Mill in the days when the living still populated it. Dark Valley needs to be detailed just as thoroughly as Slovan City. This is where the PCs have the decisive encounters of the adventure. They need to know exactly what they see there, what the distances are between important points, etc.

This is one case where you often need provide the PCs with a detailed map of the encounter location, in our adventure the settlement of the undead, albeit one that betrays no secrets. You not only need to map the surface of the location, but you also have to detail the old millhouse of Tingl's Mill and you have a dungeon with which you must deal (more on that soon). The map they gain from the thief's lair serves this purpose.



## 1.3 Overland Elements

Overland elements of an adventure usually are the easiest to define. They include roads, hills, mountains, valleys, rivers, forests, brush, swamps and also settlements where your PCs are likely to spend little time, too little to make the detailing of a location element worthwhile.

Even if your PCs don't buy a map of the overland area they'll be crossing, you'll need one yourself to show the various geographical areas you'll be crossing with your PCs. If potential encounters can occur within an overland area, you need to show on your map where they can take place. In addition, you may need to make a scene plan of the potential encounter sites.

Overland elements often include settlements, villages, towns and cities where the PCs spend only a small bit of time. You probably will need to make a map of these sites, but often the only building that has to be detailed is the public house or inn where the PCs stay. You'll also need statistics for the NPCs that they'll encounter there. If you plan encounters in these locations, you may have to do a bit more detailing for them and their sites too.

Going back to our adventure outline above and starting at the beginning, we find a series of overland elements. The first thing that we need is a map of the entire stretch that the PCs will travel, from Slovan City to Dark Valley. There are some basic things this map will need: The four sites Slovan City, Goldfields, Lastmill and Dark Valley, the road from Slovan City to Dark Valley and one or more rivers or creeks to flow through these locations, to turn the mill waterwheels in them.

The next steps in planning the map require some deliberation. What kinds of landscape fill the rest of the map? What's the highest area and what's the lowest? This latter question is very important, because it decides where your rivers and creeks flow and in which direction. We also need to place hills and/or forests in certain areas to hide the enemies we've placed for encounters, and we need a map or other graphical scheme of the areas where the PCs will encounter the bandits and the draugs. Finally, we need NPC statistics for these foes.

In our adventure outline, there is nothing to detail between Slovan City and Goldfields; no encounters are planned along this stretch. The same is true to a certain extent of Goldfields. No *hostile* encounters are planned there. However, there are encounters. The PCs spend the night at the Golden Scythe Inn. We aren't going to designate any other inns or public houses in Goldfields, mostly because we want to save ourselves the work of having to detail them. Instead, we'll make all of the information available in the Golden Scythe that otherwise would be available to the PCs only if they went bar-hopping.

That gives us only one building to detail in Goldfields, the Golden Scythe Inn. We'll need a floor plan of the public room and one of the floor upon which the PCs will have their rooms with detailed plans only for their own rooms. You need only base statistics for the NPCs to be encountered in Goldfields. We'll say more yet about the content of base statistic blocks. The village has nothing that should trigger a hostile encounter that would lead to combat.

The overland element of the adventure continues in the hills north of Goldfields where brigands lay in wait to ambush the PCs. When we place hills at a certain map location, we have to ask whether we face a watershed question. For instance, if we decide to have a single river flow through Slovan City, Goldfields, Lastmill and Dark Valley, we need to decide what happens when the river meets the hills.

This is an interesting question, one that actually can give you some adventure design tools. When a stream comes up against hills, it usually does one of two things: It either makes a bend and goes around the hills, or it has cut a pass in an earlier age through the hills. Both options are open to us here.

We need a road that goes through the hills, dividing them into eastern and western parts. Nothing makes a more natural path for a road to follow through hills than a river valley, and that's the option that we're choosing. However, because we want to place brigands in the hills on both sides of the road, one needs a means for crossing the river. That can be either a bridge or a ford. We're choosing the latter.

Even that choice needs to be pondered in some situations. Except in flood situations, a ford *always* can be crossed. A bridge, on the other hand, can be crossed only when it's there. However, it's quite possible that either the PCs or the NPC opponents that they're facing might destroy the bridge.

At the point where the PCs encounter the brigands, we need a close-up plan of the terrain and encounter statistics for the NPC brigands. Such statistics are more detailed than the base statistics given for the NPCs in Goldfields, but they have less content than a full character sheet. We'll say more yet about the content of encounter statistic blocks.

We're designing our encounter to have the road follow the east bank of the river through the hills. That means that the encounter with the brigands will take place in the eastern part of the hills. We have two more NPC brigands in the hills across the river on the west side of the road, brigands who will flee into a forest west of the hills rather than engaging the PCs seriously in combat. Because our outline includes no possibility for a direct encounter with these NPCs, we need no statistic blocks for them, but we do need to remember to place the forest in the west on our map.

Our adventure needs to make a time and moon note for the stretch between the hills and the village of Lastmill. According to our plan, the brigand encounter in the hills should delay the PCs sufficiently to make it impossible for them to reach Lastmill by daylight. As a result, you need to describe the setting of the sun while the PCs still are en route and how the full moon provides sufficient light for the PCs to make out the road well enough to ride onward.

It's under these circumstances that the PCs encounter the three draug warriors on the road, as they finally see the lights of Lastmill in the distance. This encounter is something of an exception. You really can do without preparing a site map. We simply can describe the width of the road and that it's open to either side. But we do need encounter statistics for the three draug warriors.

The next point in our overland element is the village of Lastmill. Like Goldfields, it's a one-night stop for the PCs. It doesn't merit the full location element treatment. But we do need a basic village map. We also need floor plans for the common room of the River Inn and the PCs' rooms there. The encounter with the three draug warriors takes place on the open road; therefore no detailed encounter map should be necessary. The location on the village map should give the PCs all of the graphic information that they need. However, we do need a set of encounter statistics for the three draug warriors.

The last segments of our overland element are the stretch between Lastmill and Dark Valley and the return trip of the PCs, if they survive.



***Sunset approaches. Soon the draugs will come.***

## 1.4 Dungeon Elements

Dungeons often are the most difficult adventure elements to design, and the mapping of a dungeon plan easily can be more demanding of a game master than even a well detailed city as a location element.

Most facets of location and overland elements relate directly to historical precedents out of our real life world. We all have experience with villages, towns and cities, and most of us have traveled across a variety of natural landscapes. We've watched rivers and creeks flow, and we've climbed and descended hills and perhaps mountains too. Most of us have walked in a forest as well.

However, most of us never have been in a real dungeon. Gamers who've lived in or visited Europe may have seen real models for certain kinds of dungeons, but those who've never left North or South America are short on genuine historical examples.

That makes for frequent problems in dungeon design. Many game masters who design their first dungeon come up with silly combinations of subterranean nonsense that really would have had no reason to be built whatsoever. However, we don't want to write off that type of dungeon completely. One of the most popular and successful dungeon adventures ever written falls into this category:

***S1 Tomb of Horrors***, for *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*® (1<sup>st</sup> Edition), by E. Gary Gygax, TSR® Inc. (now Wizards of the Coast Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro® Inc.), 1978.

Not even the maddest monster would design and build such a complex, illogical and pointless dungeon. In the text, it was built by a wizard named Acererak who had become an undead of a variety known as *lich* in *AD&D*®. In truth, the only person who would create such a dungeon is a game designer like the late Gary Gygax, and its sole purpose was to entertain people who were playing *AD&D* back in 1978.

In that respect, it was quite successful. And it's a tribute to Gygax' skills that this short module still is popular with gamers today. However, those who play it today recognize it as the highly unrealistic bit of nonsense that it is but also that more than 30 years later, it's one of the most entertaining gaming dungeons you can enter. *Entertainment* is the key idea here.

Whether a modern author creating a dungeon today with so much illogic and nonsense would be anywhere near as successful is doubtful. Today, we have 34 years of RPG history, development and advancement behind us. We've witnessed the introduction of computer gaming. And we have the experience of computer-enhanced fantasy films like Peter Jackson's cinematic adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Today, most gamers expect their dungeons to have reasons, substance and logic.

Perhaps for that reason *Wizards of the Coast* took a second look at Gygax' old *Tomb of Horrors* 20 years later and had staffer Bruce R. Cordell bring the original into a more modern follow-up context with a boxed mega-adventure that also includes the original:

***Return to the Tomb of Horrors***, for *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*® (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), by Bruce R. Cordell, TSR subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast Inc., 1998.

Even with 10 years under its belt, this remains among the best dungeon adventures we've ever seen. The best of them all, though, in our opinion, comes from the same house:

***Axe of the Dwarvish Lords***, for *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*® (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), by Skip Williams, TSR subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast Inc., 1999.

*Axe of the Dwarvish Lords* is the perfect model of credible, logical but nonetheless superlative dungeon design, even today, with nine more years of dungeon design experience in the gaming industry as a whole. If you're interested in gaining inspiration from any or all of these three products before doing your own first dungeon design, they're available as downloads in PDF format for U.S. \$4.95 each at:

<http://www.rpgnow.com> .

That's a total investment of less than U.S. \$10.00 (*Tomb of Horrors* is included with *Return to the Tomb of Horrors*.).

With that said, if you wish to create a dungeon that meets the expectations of modern day gamers, start out by asking yourself what the "*reality*" of your planned dungeon is, and then, as you're designing, repeat that question for all of the individual locations that you design within that dungeon.

The ruins of the dwarven Mines of Moria are the greatest dungeon in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. It's a perfect example of a logical and sensible dungeon. As you follow Frodo and his fellowship through the mines, you never have to ask yourself why in the world this or that is there. The dungeon consists of the ancient dwarven mines, and it's quite clear why the dwarves put everything where they did. At the same time, the dungeon design in no way interferes with the adventure, which involves deadly battle against hordes of orcs and a balrog.

Your first dungeons probably will be smaller than the Mines of Moria, as is our dungeon complex in Dark Valley. But don't let that keep you from trying to design a dungeon that is just as logical as Tolkien's creation. During your design contemplations, ask yourself these questions:

- Why is this dungeon where it is?
- If it's a subterranean dungeon, why was it built underground?
- Who built it (or developed it from a natural cave complex)?
- How did it serve its purpose?

Most dungeons consist of individual chambers and halls that are linked by connecting passages. As you lay out your dungeon, ask yourself two questions:

- Why was this room or area originally built?
- With what did it have to be furnished to serve its purpose?
- How did the builder get these furnishings there?
- If the furnishings no longer are there, why were they removed and by whom?
- Does the removal of furnishings make sense? (Removal of a huge subterranean foundry furnace from deep dwarven halls hardly would be possible, much less be sensible.)
- If you're using a passage, why weren't the areas simply created next to one another rather than being connected by passages?

Dungeons often have a number of treasures, secret passages, secret doors and traps. Here are some more questions to pose:

- Why was the treasure brought into the dungeon?
- Why is it still there?
- For what reason were secret doors and/or passages desirable?
- For whom were the traps intended?
- How did the rightful occupants get past the traps?

Once you've answered these questions, you can plan the detail work that's awaiting you:

- Determine in advance which encounters the PCs might have that are hostile or that require skill or ability checks. Develop the necessary statistics for all of them in advance. Also ponder what personalities the NPCs that they might encounter will have. You'll have to play their roles.

- You'll need to make detailed floor plans for all critical encounter locations. PCs have a strong tendency to want to know who and what is where in the areas of a dungeon where they go.

In line with these questions, keep in mind that a good dungeon should tell its own story as the PCs go through it. The tale of the complex and its purposes should unfold as the PCs traverse it. It could be a horrible tale, a magnificent tale or both, as in the case of the Mines of Moria. A well-designed large dungeon should have the PCs feel a bit of awe. Any well-designed dungeon should keep them in a state of suspense.

Our adventure outline has two dungeon elements:

- The small sewer lair of the thief who robs them in Slovan City.
- The complex of draug Baron Nundlung in Dark Valley.

Let's look at each separately:

- The dungeon beneath Slovan City is the remnant of an old mining shaft from a time when humans mined bituminous coal there. The room described as a small supply room has broken shelves and a few mining tools in it, to give the PCs an idea why it is there. Most of the supplies (furnishings) were removed when the mines were abandoned. The only connecting passages are mining shafts. The only treasure is the stash of the thief who laired there. The trap was set by the thief to stop pursuers like the PCs. It can be disarmed and reset. Presumably the thief disarmed it before going through the trap door and then reset it again.

To understand the dungeon design in Dark Valley, we have to know more about its occupants than we've explained so far. The full details can be found in Book 3, the *Creature Guide*. We know in the larger campaign world where this small adventure takes place that there was a great war in the North, sometime in the past.

A large part of the northern territory remains in ruins, and death still ravages even patches of its landscape. The defeated foe was a realm ruled by Necromancers. The survivors of that realm are draugs, a class of undead beings in the *Dungeons Daring* definitions. Low-level draugs shun daylight. During the day, they remain underground or in tightly shuttered buildings.

Slovan City, Goldfields and Lastmill lie just south of the war-ruined area. The southernmost district of the necromantic realm was the Barony of Tingl's Mill. The ruler was a low-level Necromancer, Baron Nundlung. Many of his subjects also had submitted to transfiguration into draugs, and in the last days before the barony's fall in the great wars, Nundlung tried to force all of his subjects to accept transfiguration.



**Dungeon entrance**

Product Identity

Two holdouts were the miller and his wife in the millhouse of Tingl's Mill. They had planted a thick strip of ramson around the millhouse, which not only spared and still spares their garden from the curse of death upon the land but also repels lower level draugs who approach it. It appears that the couple died natural deaths within the millhouse, but the ramson prospered and continued to hold the draugs back over the years. In truth, they probably lost interest in the millhouse after the death of the miller and his wife.

- The rest of the buildings either were destroyed in the war, or they crumbled in ruin with time. Only the tower of draug Baron Nundlung's castle complex still stands. The draugs, who shun daylight, live underground. The dungeon complex consists of the buried cellars of old buildings, where the draugs lair, and the cellar and tower of the castle, where the draug baron lairs. The dungeon of Dark Valley was built as individual cellars of buildings once used by living people. The passages were made by the draugs, to allow them to pass back and forth without going into daylight. Those furnishings that still are of use to the draugs are in their cellars. The cells in the cellar of the castle served as the barony's jail. What treasure there is belongs to the draugs who still lair there. The traps were set by the draug baron to hold off intruders. He knows how to disarm the traps, to pass personally.

## 1.5 Statistical Blocks

Published material for *Dungeons Daring* uses information blocks to describe the main statistics for each location, overland and dungeon element in an adventure. Above all, these blocks are intended to give you, the game master, quick information over the element.

Encounters also have similar but smaller statistical blocks on three different levels: *Base Statistical Blocks* for encounters that are unlikely to produce combat, *Encounter Statistical Blocks* for simple encounters that may provoke combat and *Full Statistical Blocks* for encounters with key NPCs. *Full Statistical Blocks* are completed character sheets, like those that your players filled out for your PCs. The only *Full Statistical Block* that might be necessary for the adventure in Dark Valley is that of the draug Baron Nundlung.

You may wish to adopt this system for adventures of your own creation. The following are templates for element statistical blocks:

### Location Element Blocks

The template is:

#### Name

**Municipal Level:** Encampment, Settlement, Hamlet, Village, Thorpe, Town, Small City, City, Other

**Ruler:** Name and Title

**Enforcement:** System for enforcing the law, such as constabulary, watch, etc.

**Population:**

**Alignment inclination:** General average alignment of the population

**Wealth:** Total value of the location site

**Political System:** Benevolent, Special Interest, Political Machine, Evil or Chaotic

**Taxation:** Visitor Gate Tax, Inn Tax, Crop Tax, Product Tax, Sales Tax

**Extraordinary laws:** (if any)

**Key Locations and Map Numbers:** Locations (and names, when applicable) of government, enforcement unit, temples, inns, public houses, healers and businesses

#### Key NPCs

- Highest official, highest enforcer, highest mage, highest other NPC, other important NPCs with *Name, Position, Race, Gender, Age, Character Level, Class(es), Class Level(s), Additional Pertinent Data*.
- Watch: *Number, levels, classes*.

### Overland Element Blocks

The template is:

#### Name or Description

**Political Entity:** Ungoverned, Contested, Barony, County, Duchy, Princedom, Kingdom, Empire, etc.

**Ruler or Main Contestants:** Name and Title

**Enforcement:** System for enforcing the law, such as constabulary, watch, etc.

**Alignment inclination:** General average alignment of the population

**Political System:** Benevolent, Special Interest, Political Machine, Evil or Chaotic

**Extraordinary laws:** (if any)

**Key Locations and Map Numbers:** Settlements, Dungeons, etc.

#### Key NPCs

- When applicable: Highest official, highest enforcer, highest mage, highest other NPC, other important NPCs with *Name, Position, Race, Gender, Age, Character Level, Class(es), Class Level(s), Additional Pertinent Data*.
- Patrols (if any): *Number, levels, classes*.
- Enemy patrols (if any): *Number, levels, classes*.



## Dungeon Element Blocks

The template is:

### Name or Description

**Ruler:** Name and Title

**Enforcement:** System for enforcing the law, such as constabulary, watch, etc.

**Population:** Various occupant groups and numbers

**Alignment inclination:** General average alignment of the occupants

**Wealth:** Total value of the location site

**Key Locations and Dungeon Plan Numbers:** Encounter sites and chambers, etc.

**Special Circumstances:** If any, with dungeon plan numbers.

### Key NPCs

- Where applicable: Highest ruler, highest enforcer, highest mage, highest other NPC, other important NPCs with *Name, Position, Race or Beast or Mutation Type, Gender, Age (where applicable), Character Level, Class(es), Class Level(s), Additional Pertinent Data*.
- Enforcement Units: *Number, Race or Beast or Mutation Type, levels, classes*.
- Wandering occupant bands: *Number, Race or Beast or Mutation Type, levels, classes*.

The statistical blocks for encounters are a bit different: *Base Statistical Blocks* for encounters that are unlikely to produce combat are in paragraph form. *Encounter Statistical Blocks* for simple encounters that may provoke combat are itemized. *Full Statistical Blocks* for encounters with key NPCs are completed character sheets, like those that your players filled out for your PCs. Here are the templates for *Base* and *Encounter Statistical Blocks*:

### Base Statistical Blocks

- **Name of NPC**, Position, Race or Beast or Mutation Type, Gender, Age (where applicable), Character Level, Class(es), Class Level(s), initiative bonus, weapons with attack roll and damage for each, special attacks (where applicable), the four defenses, special defenses (where applicable), injury points, life points, Talent Skill bonuses, prepared spells, songs, diction etc. (where applicable), available Spell/Magic points (where applicable), additional pertinent data.

### Encounter Statistical Blocks

#### Name of NPC

**Position:** (if any)

**Race/Beast Type/Mutation Type:**

**Size and Physical Description:**

**Gender:** (where applicable)

**Age:** (where applicable)

**Character Level:**

**Class(es):**

**Class Level(s):**

**Initiative Bonus:**

**Weapon(s):** With attack roll and damage for each. Natural attacks by beasts and mutations are included here.

**Special Attacks:** (where applicable)

**Armor Defense:**

**Endurance Defense:**

**Reflex Defense:**

**Will Defense:**

**Special Defenses:** (where applicable)

**Ability Scores:** Strength Score + Modifier, Dexterity Score + Modifier, Stamina Score + Modifier. Knowledge Score + Modifier, Magical Aptitude Score + Modifier, Mechanical Aptitude Score + Modifier

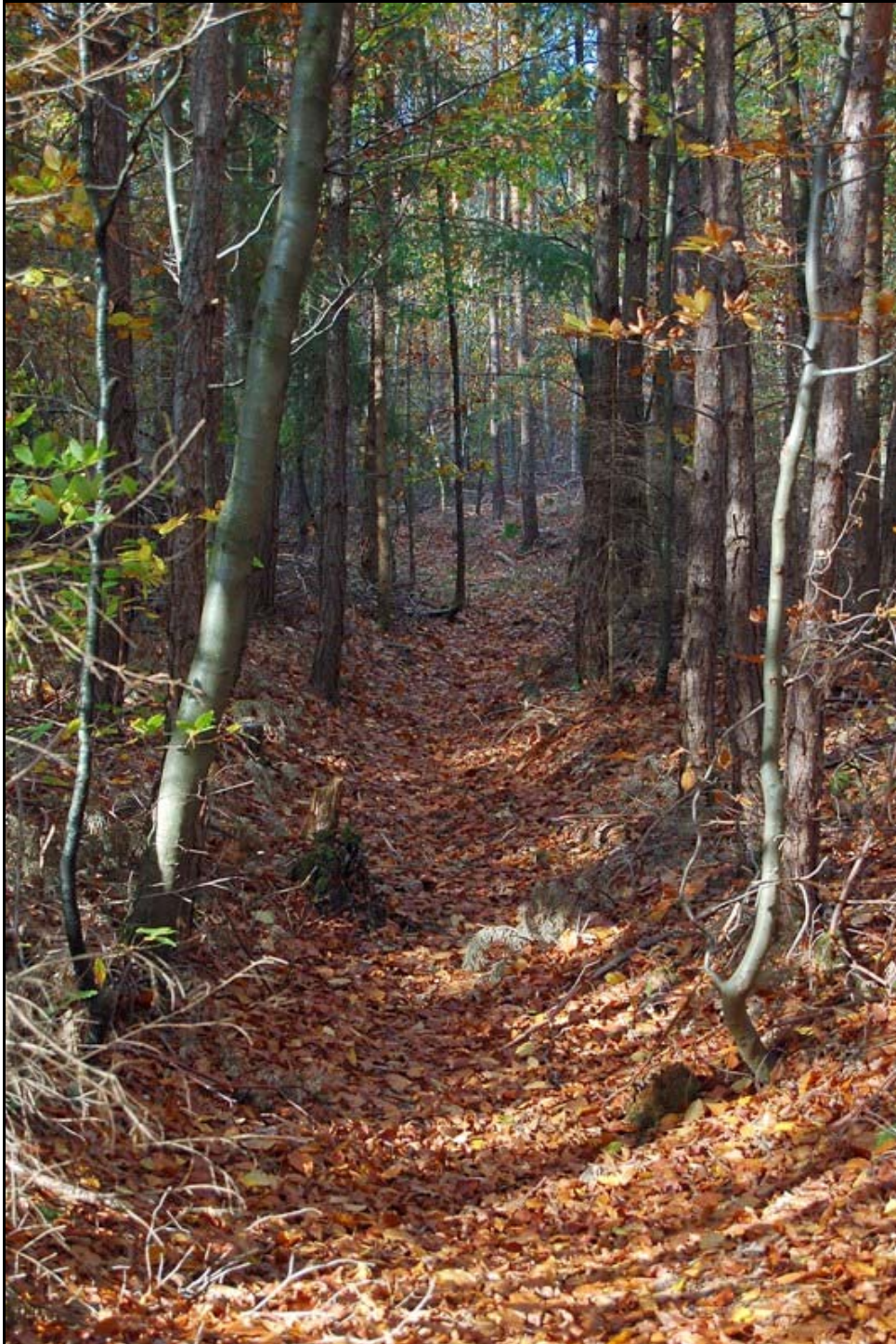
**Spell/Magic Points Available:** (where applicable)

**Prepared Spells, Songs and Diction:** (where applicable) Name of each with Spell/Magic points expended.

**Descriptive Paragraph:** Contains background information on the NPC with particular emphasis on information that helps the game master play the NPC's role. The paragraph also includes pertinent information that is not listed above.

## **Full Statistical Blocks**

The complete character sheets of the NPCs are used. To this add a list of prepared spells, songs and diction (where applicable) with the name of each, the Spell/Magic points expended and detail information that you as game master need to work the spell on behalf of the NPC.



***Any trail can lead to adventure.***

## 2. Fleshing Out Your Adventure

In this section we'll look at some of the secondary elements we can use in adventures to make them more credible, realistic, interesting, challenging and/or enjoyable.

### 2.1 Encounters

In *Dungeons Daring* we use the term *encounter* in a broader sense than is the case with many other RPGs. A *Dungeons Daring* encounter occurs whenever the PCs come across something that challenges them in some manner, even if only to require a minor decision. A broken directional sign with a divided path that goes in more than one direction is an encounter. Coming upon a trap is an encounter. Meeting NPCs is an encounter. Finding a magical or poisoned object is an encounter.

Not all encounters are hostile. An encounter can just as easily be *friendly*, in that it has the potential for helping the PCs rather than injuring or hindering them. Most mundane encounters are neutral. They have no effect upon the PCs. They occur simply because they're there on the PCs' path or because they happen for reasons that have nothing to do with the PCs.

Encounters that can have an effect upon the PCs should be given an Encounter Level rating. In determining which encounters you place in your adventure, you need to consider the Effective Character Level of your PC party and then design an encounter or chose an already prepared encounter with an Encounter Level that corresponds to your PC party's Effective Character Level.

In most *Dungeons Daring* adventures, you need a PC party with at least three members to be able to get through all of an adventure's challenges. The following PCs usually are necessary:

- A fighter of some sort. This might be a member of the Fighter Class or a Ranger of the Naturalist Class. In all cases, the PC is proficient in melee and ranged combat.
- A magic user. Your frontline PC in this respect should be a Wizard or Sorcerer.
- A thief of some type. This PC doesn't necessarily have to choose the Thief Class, but he or she should be a member of the greater Specialist Class.

In addition, there needs to be a good spread of Talent Skills within the group. The key points for determining proper Encounter Levels, however, is the number of PCs or NPCs in a party and their modified Class Levels. The modifiers are determined by you and are based upon your appraisal of the power of the magical objects in the party members' possession.

It is assumed that each member of a party has 0 to 1 magical objects; therefore there is no modifier for the *first* magical object that a character possesses. If a spellcaster is required to use a wand or staff to cast spells, the wand or staff also *does not* count as a magical object for this calculation. Here are some guidelines for determining modifiers:

**Magical Item Modifiers**

Type of Additional Magical Objects	Recommended Modifier
Potion	+0.25
Weak item, single usage	+0.25
Weak item with charges	+0.5
Weak item, permanent usage	+0.75
Average item, single usage	+0.5
Average item with charges	+0.75
Average item, permanent usage	+1
Powerful item, single usage	+0.75
Powerful item with charges	+1
Powerful item, permanent usage	+2
Weapon or armor, per plus point	+0.5

Here's how the Effective Character Level of a PC or NPC party is determined. The parentheses are mathematically necessary!

**The Effective Character Level =**

- ◆ (The sum of all party members' Character Levels + Modifiers for additional magical items)
- ◆ divided by three.

As mentioned, an encounter not only can have other creatures of some sort on the opposing side. It might also have challenges from traps, poisons, etc. on the opposing side. Farther below, we'll see how the Encounter Levels for traps, poisons and the like are determined. Here we see how Effective Character Levels of creatures and the Encounter Levels of objects and occurrences determine the full Encounter Level of an encounter:

- **The Encounter Level of an NPC-only encounter** equals the Effective Character Level of the opposing NPC party.
- **The Encounter Level of an encounter without NPCs** is the sum of the individual Encounter Levels of the objects or events that constitute the encounter.
- **The Encounter Level of a mixed encounter with both NPCs and non-NPC elements** is the sum of the individual Encounter Levels of the objects or events that constitute the encounter plus the Effective Character Level of the NPCs.

An adventure isn't interesting if all encounters are balanced equally. A campaign is fun for your PCs when they can take hostile beings out of action with little difficulty at times. Surviving is fun, even when the foe or endangering circumstance isn't all that threatening. On the other hand, an adventure tends to become dull if the PCs never are severely challenged.

There are game masters who enjoy creating killer adventures that are nearly impossible for their PCs to master. Some players enjoy killer adventures, but most will lose interest in your campaign if you offer their PCs little other than chances to commit suicide. The majority of the encounters in a good campaign are balanced, with some of the remaining encounters being more difficult and others being easier. Encounters can be analyzed according to their Difficulty Rating as in the following table. The second table gives you guideline recommendations (and by no means rules) on how to divide up encounters with various Difficulty Ratings.

### Difficulty Ratings

Effective Character Level	Rating
+3 or more higher than opposing Encounter Level	Simple
+2 higher than opposing Encounter Level	Easy
+1 higher than opposing Encounter Level	Advantaged
Same as opposing Encounter Level	Balanced
-1 lower than opposing Encounter Level	Disadvantaged
-2 lower than opposing Encounter Level	Difficult
-3 or more lower than opposing Encounter Level	Lethal

### Encounter Frequency

Difficulty Rating	Percentage of Encounters
Simple*	0%*
Easy	5%
Advantaged	10%
Balanced	70%
Disadvantaged	10%
Difficult	5%
Lethal*	0%*

\* *Simple* and *Lethal* encounters should be placed in an adventure only when they directly serve an important purpose of the adventure.



**Rule of the Thumb:** Anytime you place an encounter with a Difficulty Rating of *Difficult* or *Lethal* in an adventure, ask yourself what two ways are to survive the encounter. If you can't find an adequate answer, ask yourself what warns the PCs how dangerous the encounter can be, and how can they avoid it? If you can't answer that satisfactorily, you probably have designed a bad encounter; you should go back to work upon it.

## 2.2 Information

Information is a great bit of adventure dressing that is underused by many game masters. In a good game master's hands, information is like a two-edged blade being wielded by a master swordsman. On the one hand, information can give PCs invaluable help in reaching their goals. On the other, it can lead them marvelously astray. In other words, information can be both correct and incorrect.

Let's look at some of the more frequent sources of information in an RPG campaign and how reliable they are, on the average. However, reliability can change considerably upward or downward based upon circumstances.

### Overhearing

**Reliability:** 50%

Your PCs are sitting in their favorite watering hole, slowly going broke and pondering how they can muster up a few gold pieces. Two scurvy looking figures are sitting at a nearby table talking in low tones, but your Thief is used to listening in, and she manages to overhear their conversation. The two are shepherds who graze their sheep in meadows within hills about 2 miles/3km south of town.

The shepherds have noticed that a wanted outlaw with a 50 GP price on his head is holed up in an abandoned ranger's shack in the hills south of town. The shepherds are discussing how they could capture the fugitive, but they're neither Warriors nor Thieves. They also are afraid of being slain. Now that the PCs know where the fugitive is hidden, they can leave the shepherds behind and try to capture the outlaw and the 50 GP reward for themselves.

- **False Information Factor:** If the PCs know that the two men really are local shepherds, the reliability factor of this encounter probably could be raised to 90% or higher. Shepherds probably wouldn't invent this kind of tale unless it were true. However, they don't necessarily have to be shepherds. Perhaps they're the fugitive's henchmen, and they're trying to divert attention from their leader's true hideout north of town (not south, as was said) in order to safely move him elsewhere. The two intentionally are allowing themselves to be overheard here and there, in the hopes that local headhunters and a part of the watch will head to the shack south of town, so that they can move their leader out of his hideout north of town without being observed.

### Gathering Information

**Reliability:** 10-90%

One of the easiest ways to get information is to make the rounds and ask people. Unfortunately, this method can produce a plethora of partly contradicting answers of considerably varying factual quality.

- **Secondary Effect:** The information you're seeking also may point to activities of other NPCs or even organizations. The PCs may not be aware of them, but these creatures or organizations can become aware of the questions that the PCs are asking and also can become concerned that the PCs are getting too close to their secrets. Such questions can bring the PCs quickly into jeopardy.
- **False Information Factor:** There are many reasons why people will give your PCs false or misleading information:
  - ♦ Their information once was true, but circumstances have changed; it no longer is correct.
  - ♦ They don't know that it's false. They believe it to be true.
  - ♦ They want to leave the impression of being in the know. Therefore, they manufacture answers.
  - ♦ They PCs rub them the wrong way. They intentionally give the PCs false information.

- They have reasons to want the PCs to fail in their quest. They intentionally give the PCs misleading information.
- They are allied with foes of the PCs. They want to set a trap for them.

## **Research**

**Reliability:** 60-90%

Research can be done verbally or through written materials. For verbal information, the PCs can seek or even buy information from Sages, consulting Magi, Skáld or other local experts. Freely given information is somewhat less reliable than paid information. Sages and others who charge a fee for information usually are on the high end of the reliability scale. If they gain a reputation for selling false or misleading information, they're bound to lose business.

Written information is a different matter. First of all, one must keep in mind that written information in the *Dungeons Daring* age predates the time in real world history, in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when Johannes Gutenberg introduced the printing press. Books in the *Dungeons Daring* age are the handwritten work of scribes who wrote their inscriptions in books of parchment.

As you might guess, this period predates the founding of the first public libraries. What libraries there are, are in the castles and mansions of the wealthy, the towers of magi and the studios of sages. To do research with written materials, the PCs either must pay for access to the writings or convince the owner of a private library to allow them to use it.

- **False Information Factor:** There are several reasons why research may produce false or misleading information:
  - The information source is or was misinformed.
  - The information was recorded long ago and no longer is valid.
  - The misinformation was recorded intentionally to delude someone other than the PCs.
  - The information source has been hired to delude the PCs, or he or she has a secret personal stake in deluding them

## **Maps**

**Reliability:** 50-100%

There are a number of sources of maps for your PCs:

- Government offices maintain highly reliable maps of their jurisdictions. In non-evil locations, the PCs should be able to view such maps and make their own crude copies of them either free or for a fee.
- In some towns and many cities, cartographers can be commissioned to make maps, and they may already have some maps available for sale. The quality varies widely, depending upon the degree and quality of knowledge that the cartographer has of the mapped area.
- Libraries and sages (see *Research* above) may have maps.
- Maps can be found in treasures or in dungeons.
- People who commission the PCs to do a job or who urge them to go on an adventure may provide them with maps.
- Trade costers usually have maps. They usually are of high quality, because they're vital to the coster's business. PCs may be able to view and copy them for free or for a fee.
- Maps might be available from retired soldiers, mercenaries and adventurers.
- Commoners might have maps inherited from their ancestors.



- **False Information Factor:** There are several reasons why maps might be inaccurate:
  - ♦ The world's borders change frequently. Settlements that once stood may have been destroyed in war or have been abandoned and left to crumble. New settlements have arisen. Earthquakes have destroyed parts of hills and mountains and caused others to rise. They also can cause rivers to change their courses, lakes to dry up and others to be formed. Ancient maps probably show things that no longer exist and lack other features that did not yet exist when the map was made.
  - ♦ Many cartographers never have seen the areas they map. Their maps are based upon often inaccurate descriptions and distance estimates of other persons.
  - ♦ Some maps were made with intentional errors to divert others from reaching certain locations. With ancient maps, the targets of those diversions probably are long dead and forgotten. With new maps, the PCs might be the target of the diversion.
  - ♦ A map can be inaccurate without being totally false. It might be a quick copy of an accurate map. The copyist knows or knew where distances were out of scale, but the PCs don't.

## Divining

**Reliability:** 90-100%

One of the most reliable sources of information is magical divining. Most consulting magi and many sages can provide magical diving services.

- **False Information Factor:**
  - ♦ There is countermagic that causes divining to fail or show false results. In most cases, the target is not aware of the divining attempt and therefore does not employ such countermagic, but that is not always the case.

## Observation

**Reliability:** Variable

When one traverses a dungeon or explores another adventure site, one can see more than just the path and its surroundings. Turning again to the example of Prof. Tolkien's Moria, anyone who went through these mines with open eyes would gain considerable knowledge of them. The trail through Moria not only reveals a path but also unveils the technical operation of the mines and their history. These details were not of primary importance to Tolkien's adventurers, but in a different adventure, they might have given the PCs important clues to things that they were seeking.

- **False Information Factor:**
  - ♦ The results of observation have two parts: What one sees and what one concludes because of those observations. It's always possible that the PCs misinterpret what they see.
  - ♦ Clever builders of a dungeon who want no intruders (dwarven clans would make a good example) might intentionally create false structural objects that lead intruders down false paths.

## Public Performances

**Reliability:** 50%

Skáld are famous for earning their room and board by entertaining customers in the inns that are along the path they're following in their travels. And they also are well known for the entrancing ballads they sing and poems they recite from the ancient days of yore. It is possible that your PCs might be in the audience of such a Skáld some night and hear the Skáld sing a song of ancient lore that gives the answers to many of the riddles that they've been facing.

- **False Information Factor:**

- ♦ Skáld are very serious students of lore. However, they distinctly separate lore scholarship from entertainment. When a Skáld performs in an inn, he or she usually wants to entertain. The songs sung and the poems recited do have roots in ancient lore, but they've been passed down from Skáld to Skáld over the generations, with each Skáld embellishing and tailoring the story to make it more entertaining but in the process less accurate. A Skáld well may give the PCs all the answers to their riddles, but many of those answers might be 100% wrong.

## Commissioned Work

**Reliability:** Usually 90-100%

The PCs' contract from the margrave in Slovan City in our sample adventure outline is a good example of this information source. The margrave wanted the PCs to eliminate draug Baron Nundlung, and he gave them the information that he had before they departed on their adventure. This is the pattern of initial information flow for almost any adventure in which a group of PCs sets forth to achieve something for someone else.

- **False Information Factor:**

- ♦ Sometimes the person who commissions an adventure has entirely different reasons to do so than those that he or she gives the PCs. He or she may be sending them on a wild goose chase or on a mission that is of little real importance to him or her or, and, in the end, to the PCs too. The reason for doing this is that the person who gives the PCs the commission has entirely different foes with whom he or she are dealing, and the PCs are being sent off as a red herring, to delude those foes into thinking that he or she is taking one course of action when quite a different course has been charted. In such a case, the *"information"* given to the PCs might be worthless.



*Skáld meet at the market seeking new adventures.*

## 2.3 Poisons

Many RPGs offers lists of real, fictitious or both kinds of poisons, define an effect, give the victim's DL to escape all or part of the poison's effect and then go on to the next poison definition.

*Dungeons Daring* implements a system for defining the effects of poison that attempts to approach the working of real poisons in the real world. Some people in the real world can survive usually deadly poisons, but anyone who is poisoned with more than a miniscule dose of a toxin usually takes some kind of damage from it. That's the case with most poisons in a *Dungeons Daring* campaign too. The only way for a victim of poisoning to completely evade all effects of a toxin is through an antidote or magic.

In deciding which poisons you might wish to use in your campaign, you need to use the basic encounter rules described earlier in this chapter, applying them to toxins. Contact with poison also is considered to be an encounter in *Dungeons Daring*. Every toxin has an Encounter Level, and you can decide which poisons are appropriate for encounters with your PC party by comparing the PC party's Effective Character Level with the toxin's Encounter Level. The two tables in Section IV.2.1 *Encounters* show you the acceptable spread of poison encounter levels for your party.

Anytime a living creature is poisoned, it must make a Stamina check against the DL of the poison. If the victim succeeds, he or she takes damage per Encounter Level of most toxins. Some special mild poisons may cause damage or another effect upon a successful Stamina check. If the PC fails in his or her Stamina check, he or she sustains this damage and also the ultimate effect of the poison, which may be sleep, unconsciousness or even death, among other things.

The Encounter Level of a toxin indicates the strength of its dosage. Because some poisons are more powerful than others, not all of them begin at Encounter Level 1. Likewise, only few poisons can achieve a toxicity of Encounter Level 30. Our tables show the minimum and maximum encounter levels for each poison.

Our tables define two categories of poison. Alchemist's poisons are those that are brewed chemically. Natural poisons are those that are made from organic plant, animal or mutation substances. Some of these are described in more detail in Section II.4.2.7 *A Catalog of Herbs and Herbal Medicines* of the *Players Guide*.

Here is a key to the following tables:

- **Poison Type:** Identity of the toxin.
- **Stamina DL at Minimum Level:** The DL for the poison at its minimum Encounter Level. For each additional level, the DL increases by 1.
- **Encounter Level/Minimum:** The weakest possible dosage.
- **Encounter Level/Maximum:** The strongest possible dosage.
- **Base Damage:** The damage caused at the minimum encounter level, regardless of whether the Stamina check succeeds. This increases by one die for each additional Encounter Level.
- **Ultimate Effect:** The effect when the victim fails his or her Stamina check. Unless otherwise indicated or in the case of death, listed durations are *per Encounter Level* of the dosage.

### Alchemist's Poisons

Poison Type	Stamina DL at Minimum Level	Encounter Level		Base Damage	Ultimate Effect
		Minimum	Maximum		
Lethal Poison	14	3	20	1d8	Death
Knockout Poison	11	2	15	1d6	10 minutes unconsciousness
Sleep Poison	10	1	10	1d4	10 minutes sleep
Nausea Poison	10	1	10	1d6	2 hours nauseous
Blinding Poison	13	3	15	1d6	1 hour blinded
Paralyzing Toxin	12	2	15	1d8	10 minutes paralyzed
Coughing Poison	10	1	6	None	10 minutes coughing fit

## Natural Poisons

Poison Type	Stamina DL at Minimum Level	Encounter Level		Base Damage*	Ultimate Effect
		Minimum	Maximum		
Autumn Crocus	13	4	20	1d6/Nausea	Death in 2d4 days
Belladonna	26	15	25	1d8/Nausea	Death in 1d4 hours
Cranberry Snowball	12	3	20	1d6/Nausea	Death in 3d4 days
Death Cap Toadstool	30	21	28	3d8/Nausea	Death, See <i>Players Guide</i> description
Dragon Blood	39	30	30	4d8/Nausea	Instant Death
Demon/Devil Blood	39	30	30	4d8/Nausea	Instant Death
Elderberries	10	1	4	None	Nausea 1d6 hours
Fly Argaric Toadstool	17	8	20	1d4/Nausea Hallucinations	Coma, Death at Encounter Level 12 or higher
Foxglove	14	5	15	1d6/Nausea, Diarrhea	Heart stop, Death at Encounter Lvl 12 or higher
Holly Berries	12	3	10	1d6/Nausea	Death at Encounter Lvl 10
Monkshood	34	25	30	4d8/Nausea	Death, See <i>Players Guide</i> description
Spindle Tree	14	5	15	2d4/Vomit, Short Breath	Unconsciousness, from Encounter Lvl 12 Death
Venom**	13	4	16	1d8/ Unconscious	Unconsciousness, from Encounter Lvl 13 Death

\* Additional effects are in hours per Encounter Level    \*\* Includes all animal poisons such as snake venom, lethal spider bite, etc.

## 2.4 Traps

In *Dungeons Daring*, traps also are considered to be encounters. In deciding which traps you might wish to use in your campaign, you need to use the basic encounter rules described earlier in this chapter, applying them to traps. Every trap has an Encounter Level. You should decide which traps are appropriate for encounters with your PC party by comparing the PC party's Effective Character Level with the trap's Encounter Level. The two tables in Section IV.2.1 *Encounters* show you the acceptable spread of trap encounter levels for your party.

In general:

- The damage done by most traps is decided with the d8 die.
- A trap of the 1<sup>st</sup> Encounter Level usually causes 1d8 damage, a trap of the 2<sup>nd</sup> level 2d8, etc., until the maximum of the 30<sup>th</sup> Encounter level is reached at 30d8 damage. Magical traps add the Magic/Spell point expenditure to the base Encounter Level with mixed traps and use the Magic/Spell point expenditure as the base Encounter Level for purely magical traps.
- The DL for the Talent skills Search (mechanical traps), Sense Traps (magical traps) and Enable/Disable Device is 10 for 1<sup>st</sup> Encounter Level traps, 11 for 2<sup>nd</sup> level, etc., until the maximum of the 30<sup>th</sup> Encounter level is reached at DL 39. The DL is calculated by adding 9 to the Encounter Level of the trap.
- Setting or resetting a mechanical trap requires a successful Enable/Disable Device check against the trap's DL. Failure means that the trap has been triggered. The original magic must be repeated to reset a magical trap.
- Enhancements, such as multiple attacks, poison, magical effects, etc., increase the Encounter Level of the trap by the Encounter Level of the poison or the Magic/Spell Point cost of the magic. A multiple attack increases the Encounter Level by +1 for every additional 1d8 damage that the multiple attacks can do.
- Anytime it is physically possible for a potential victim of a trap to dodge it, he or she is entitled to make a Dexterity check against the trap's DL to determine whether the dodge succeeds.



Like NPCs that may be encountered, traps always are defined with a statistical block that contains the information on how the trap functions:

### Trap Name

**Encounter Level:** 1 to 30

**Difficulty Level:** 10 to 39, equals Encounter Level +9. Some traps must make attack checks to hit.

**Attack bonus:** (where applicable): +1 per Encounter Level.

**Damage:** Usually 1d8 per Encounter Level

**Trap type:** Magical or Mechanical

**Trigger type:** Contact and delayed for mechanical traps, magical for magical traps

**Temporary disabling:** Lock, bar or magical.

**Enhancement:** Mechanical: Poison, multiple attacks, magical effects.

**Trap Description:** Full details of the trap's location and function.

### Definitions

**Attack Bonus:** When a trap attacks with a hidden blade, darts, arrows, etc., the trap must make a normal attack against the victim's Reflex defense. However, if the victim is wearing no armor and it is impossible for the trap's weapon to miss the victim, no Armor Defense check is necessary. A victim wearing armor always has the chance that the weapons will not penetrate the armor. The attack must also be sufficient to overcome the Armor Defense.

**Trigger Type/Mechanical:** All mechanical traps are triggered by contact with a trap element. Some mechanical traps may contain a mechanism that causes a certain time delay between contact with the triggering element and the actual springing of the trap.

**Trigger Type/Magical:** In setting a magical trap, the magic user often can define a magical trigger. This can cause the trap to be sprung when one comes within range of it, when a sound is made, when a symbol is read or seen, when a spell condition is fulfilled, etc.

**Temporary Disabling:** It's often necessary for the person who sets a trap to have a means for passing it him- or herself. With magical traps, this is a matter of the magical formulation used in creating the trap. Mechanical traps usually can be disabled temporarily by locking them or by building them with a barring element that prevents the trap from being sprung. When a creature confronts a mechanical trap with a disabling device, it can choose between disabling the trap completely (Enable/Disable Device check) or using the temporary disabling mechanism (Open Locks check). Temporary disabling methods often are hidden. To find them, a creature must search separately for them and make a separate Search check to find them. They use the same DL as the trap.

**Enhancement:** Many mechanical traps not only cause normal mechanical damage but also are enhanced to cause additional damage through poison or magic. Others are multi-traps; instead of releasing one damaging item, they can release two or more, each causing its own damage. If a victim is hit by a trap with multiple effects, it suffers the physical damage of each effect. It also must make separate Endurance checks for poison, and it can be subjected to attack rules against various defenses for spell-like attacks.

### Magical Traps

There are no general descriptions for magical traps. They are individual inventions of the magic users who make them, or they are spells that are, in effect, traps in their own right. Many trapping spells require their caster to make a spell attack against one of the intended victim's defenses. This requirement and the results that can come from the check are an inherent part of the magical traps that might be made using such spells.

The following spells, songs, diction and rites are among those that can be used to create magical traps or that constitute magical traps in their own right. Other spells also can be used in the proper formulations.

Acid Cloud  
Animate Objects  
Balls of Fire  
Blindness

Choking Smoke Cloud  
Confusion  
Deafness  
Destruction

Disintegration  
Disjunction  
Doze  
Fear

Fire Trap	Killer Cloud	Slay
Fireball	Life Drain	Slay Undead
Firebolt	Life Theft	Sleep
Icebolt	Massive Frog Conversion	Slow
Iceball	Mirage	Song of Oblivion
Illusion	Nauseating Cloud	Soul Cage
Illusion, Aural	Paralysis	Spell Drain
Illusion, Full	Repel Elves	Trigger
Implosion	Repel Iron	Ward
Imprison Soul or Spirit	Shattering Sound	Ward, Greater
Instant Death	Silence	Ward, Permanent

## Mechanical Traps

There are many kinds of mechanical traps. Some of them are hand made while others can be manufactured. There also are structural traps, such as floor pressure plates that release the trap's attacks. Giant mountain lairs and subterranean dwarven halls and other dwarven constructions often have structural traps. These are structures with keystones and the like that can be removed to make a structure collapse when there is a certain amount of pressure on it. When the dwarves wish to move across or through the triggering area without danger, they simply see to it that the keystone or missing element is back in its proper place. The traps of giants usually are less refined.

Dwarven structural traps have a DL bonus of +10 if the creature seeking them is not dwarven, unless the person has the skill *Sense Traps* of the Talent *Perception* (but not of the Talent *Skullduggery*). Dwarves can find such traps with the skills *Search* or *Sense Traps*, regardless of the Talent from which they stem. Giants' traps can be found with normal trap-seeking methods and DCs. Dwarven structural traps also can be enhanced with dwarven rune magic. Giants' traps can be enhanced with either conventional sorcerers' magic or runic magic.

The following table is not intended as an exclusive list of official *Dungeons Daring* traps. Rather, it is intended as a guideline for developing your own traps for your adventures or for the conversion of traps in adventures written for other RPG game systems.

### Possible Mechanical Traps

Trap	Minimum Encounter Level/DL*	Maximum Encounter Level/DL*	Base Damage	Base Attack Roll	Possible Enhancement	Description
Hidden arrow with pressure plate trigger	1	10	1d6	+1	Poison	Shoots one arrow per Encounter Level. With Encounter Level +3 automatically reloads 1 arrow per base Encounter Level to attack additional targets.
Trapdoor with spiked pit and pressure plate trigger	1	10	1d8	+1	Poison	One 1d8 spike per Encounter Level, drop 3ft/90cm.
Portcullis trap with pressure plate trigger	1	10	1d8	+1	Poison	Barred metal gate drops from portcullis.
Scythe trap with pressure plate trigger	1	1	1d8	+1	Poison	A scythe drops from a wall crevice. Only one blade drops. Search DL reduced by -2
Rolling rock trap with pressure plate trigger	1	10	1d8	+1	Magic	One rock rolls down chute per Encounter Level. With Encounter Level +2 automatic release of only one rock at a time with automatic reset to attack additional targets.

\* The DL always equals the Encounter Level + 9.

\*\* Roll at minimum Encounter Level, +1 per each additional Encounter Level.



## Possible Mechanical Traps

Trap	Minimum Encounter Level/DL*	Maximum Encounter Level/DL*	Base Damage	Base Attack Roll**	Possible Enhancement	Description
Hidden spear with pressure plate trigger	1	10	1d8	+1	Poison	Shoots one spear per Encounter Level. With Encounter Level +3 automatically reloads 1 spear per base Encounter Level to attack additional targets.
Needle Trap, pressure plate or trip wire trigger	1	30	0	+1	Poison	Damage is dependent upon poison.
Ceiling stone drop with pressure plate trigger	2	15	1d8+1d8 per 100ft /30m	+2	-	Drops one stone or brick from the ceiling per Encounter Level. Calculate as ranged attack with range increment 100ft/30m. Dodge DL -2 at 200ft/60m range and -5 at 300ft/90m range.
Large Net Trap with pressure plate trigger	2	10	0	+2	-	Drops a net from the ceiling. Calculate as ranged attack with range increment 100ft/30m. Dodge DL -2 at 200ft/60m range and -5 at 300ft/90m range.
Ceiling Pendulum with pressure plate trigger	3	20	1d8	+3	-	Search necessary only for trigger if the pendulum is still. The pendulum, which reaches from the ceiling almost to the floor, always is visible.
Collapsing Column with pressure plate trigger	4	20	1d8	+3	-	The column always is visible. One must be within 3ft/90cm of it to detect signs of a trap. Dwarves often use several pressure plate triggers.
Flooded room trap with pressure plate trigger	5	25	0	-	Magic	Trigger shuts and locks doors and floods room with water. Damage is drowning.
Falling block trap with pressure plate trigger	5	25	1d12 +d12 per 100ft /30m	+5	-	Drops a stone block from the ceiling weighing 30lbs/15kg per Encounter Level. Calculate as ranged attack with range increment 200ft/60m. Dodge DL -2 at 400ft/120m range and -5 at 800ft/240m range.
Collapsing Wall with pressure plate trigger	6	25	2d8 per sq. yd/m wall	+6	-	Collapses a wall at 1 square yard/meter per Encounter Level. Calculate as ranged attack with range increment 10ft/3m. Dodge DL -2 at 20ft/6m range and -5 at 30ft/9m range.
Compacting room with pressure plate trigger	7	30	dead	-	Magic	Causes the room to compact, eventually squashing everything in it to death.
Collapsing Ceiling with pressure plate trigger	10	30	1d8	+10	Magic	Collapses the ceiling to collapse. If there is a dodge possibility, calculate as ranged attack with range increment 10ft/3m. Dodge DL -2 at 20ft/6m range and -5 at 30ft/9m range.
Collapsing Building with pressure plate trigger	15	30	1d8	+15	Magic	As collapsing ceiling, but all ceiling and walls collapse simultaneously.
Floor pit trap with pressure plate trigger	15	30	1d8+1d8	+15	Magic	1d8 floor collapse damage + 1d8 damage per spike per Encounter Level per square yard/meter.

\* The DL always equals the Encounter Level + 9.

\*\* Roll at minimum Encounter Level, +1 per each additional Encounter Level.

## Employing traps

Once you decide to place a trap somewhere in your campaign, you should start out by doing a statistical block as described a few pages back. You need to develop more information about your specific trap, however, than that which we've listed in the *Descriptions* column of the *Possible Mechanical Traps* table. There are a number of things that you need to know about your trap to make it work properly in your adventure. And remember that as your PCs start searching for, finding and then trying to disarm traps, they are going to be asking you for a lot of detail on what they are seeing. Here are some points that you need to answer:

- Exactly where is the trap?
- Exactly what area will be affected by it if it is triggered?
- Will any or all PCs have enough room and perhaps time to dodge the trap?
- If a PC finds the trap and tries to disarm it, what does he or she see?
- Exactly what kind of mechanism does the trap have to trigger it?
- How does it look?

## 2.5 Overland Challenges

Anytime the PCs are above ground and in the great outdoors, they face all kinds of potential problems and uncertainties. Most of them can make your adventure more interesting, and some of them make valid tools to get your PCs back on the track of your adventure if they're traveling off of it.

One of the first things on your priority list in overland adventuring should be to insist that what the PCs say they will do is realistic and possible. Let's look at an example. A favorite ploy of PCs' players is to tell the game master, *We'll ride (or walk) on through the night*. In most cases, your answer (silently, to yourself) should be, *Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin!*

In the age in which your PCs are on the road, they're not heading west on Interstate 10 to Los Angeles with their high beams on. Nor are they racing east of Munich on the A8 Autobahn to Salzburg with the headlights of their Porsche lighting the way. In the age in which they're traveling, they're on a lousy dirt road *at best*, one filled with potholes and possibly rutted by wagon traffic.

If they're walking and there's a bright full moon, they probably can go on successfully at half tempo, leading their horses, if they have any. However, there are only a few days of full moon each month, and in some months, there will be no moonlight from the full moon because the sky is overcast. With the black sky of a new moon, where only stars twinkle in the sky, or by a heavy overcast, the PCs can see almost nothing.

Of course, they can light torches and proceed slowly, but that will tip their presence to all hungry animals and beasts in the area as well as to evil NPCs and mutations. They're begging for foes that they cannot see but who can see them to ambush them. These same animals and NPCs may think thrice about attacking a band of adventurers that dares the outdoors at night and has enough courage to light a campfire. Such folks usually know how to set a guard and how to defend themselves. They might even have set traps for intruders.

On the other hand, if the PCs do go on when they can see nothing, they're bound to trip now and then, and sooner or later, one or more will injure themselves in a fall. Sometimes even worse, a horse will fall and be lamed. Unless the PCs are traveling with magical horse medicine, the animal will not be able to go on. The commotion that often results from a fall, particularly the fall and injury of a horse, also may draw hungry animals or enemies.

However, the thoughtlessness with which PCs want to travel through the night may not be all their fault. It's your job as game master to paint a clear picture of what they see and then convey that picture to the PCs' players. It's your job to make them understand how dangerous the road is upon which they're traveling and also how dark it is, what the weather conditions are, etc. The times of sunrise and sunset often are of vital importance to adventurers. It's your job to make sure they know when it will get dark and what the time is.



*The winter road ... beautiful but treacherous.*

Product Identity

### January (1)

Date - Sunrise/ Sunset - AM/PM	Weather Summary
26 SR: 7.56 SS: 5.01	Partly cloudy, calm, High 13°F/-11°C, low 8°F/-13°C, snow cover 47 inches/117.5 cm
27 SR: 7.55 SS: 5.03	Clear, calm, High 16°F/-9°C, low 0°F/-18°C, snow cover 46 inches/115 cm
28 – Full Moon ○ SR: 7.54 SS: 5.04	Clear, calm, High 22°F/-6°C, low 16°F/-9°C, snow cover 45 inches/112.5 cm
29 SR: 7.53 SS: 5.06	Clear, calm, High 27°F/-3°C, low 24°F/-4°C, snow cover 44 inches/110 cm
30 SR: 7.51 SS: 5.07	Clear, calm, High 32°F/0°C, low 29°F/-2°C, snow cover 43 inches/107.5 cm
31 SR: 7.50 SS: 5.09	Clear, calm, High 34°F/2°C, low -30°F/-1°C, snow cover 43 inches/107.5 cm

*Six days in January from a sample campaign*

Open Game Content

Many adventures include calendars for 12 months or more that contain the kind of information shown in the sample calendar above. If one isn't provided with the adventure or if you're writing your own adventure, you should provide one. It's an important tool.

While discussing calendars, it might also be good to mention that adventurers often take the deep winter off and use it for training and/or resting. They also might take on winter work as guards or even an early version of detectives in a town or city until spring comes. Some adventurers who want no rest plan the winters for the exploration of subterranean dungeons that might keep them busy until spring, but if your PCs choose to do that, make sure that they explain to you how they keep themselves fed in the four or five months that they plan to spend dungeoneering.



Some inexperienced PCs are foolish enough to try to continue doing overland adventuring in cold winter months. You should see to it that they learn quickly that this is the most dangerous time of year to be on the road. Not only do they face all of the perils that are there in summer, but they also have to deal with very short days and very long nights. Gathering enough dry wood to keep a campfire going through a 15-hour night in a snow-filled landscape is as good as impossible.

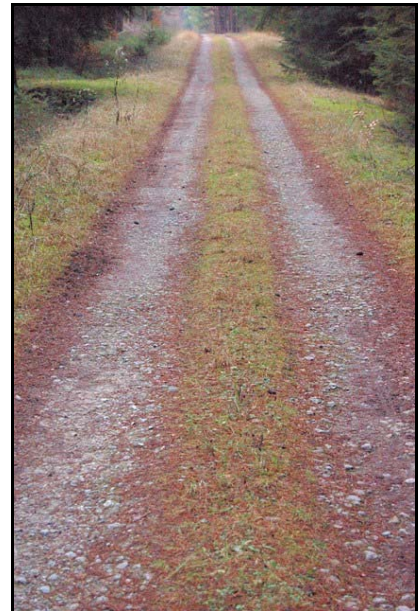
In addition, in winter they have to wear heavy, warm clothing, which reduces their Dexterity, they need to pack much more and they need to be able to change clothing in case they get wet. Remember too that wet clothing won't dry if it's frozen solid.

Whatever you do, don't be the kind of sucker some game systems would have you be and make all kinds of silly magic available to your PCs to relieve them of winter's burdens or to feed them when they go where there's nothing to eat. An adventure and success at the end of it are most enjoyed when the PCs have endured hardship and difficulties. They also should endure the hardship and difficulties that the world itself has created for them. After all, that's a part of the adventure!

Let's look next at individual aspects of overland adventuring and then some ideas on how you, as a game master, not only can deal with them but also make them come to life in your campaign.

## 2.5.1 Streets, Roads, Trails and Paths

This is the point where we can dispel unwanted visions of Interstate Highways and the German Autobahn system from our preconceptions when entering our RPG world.

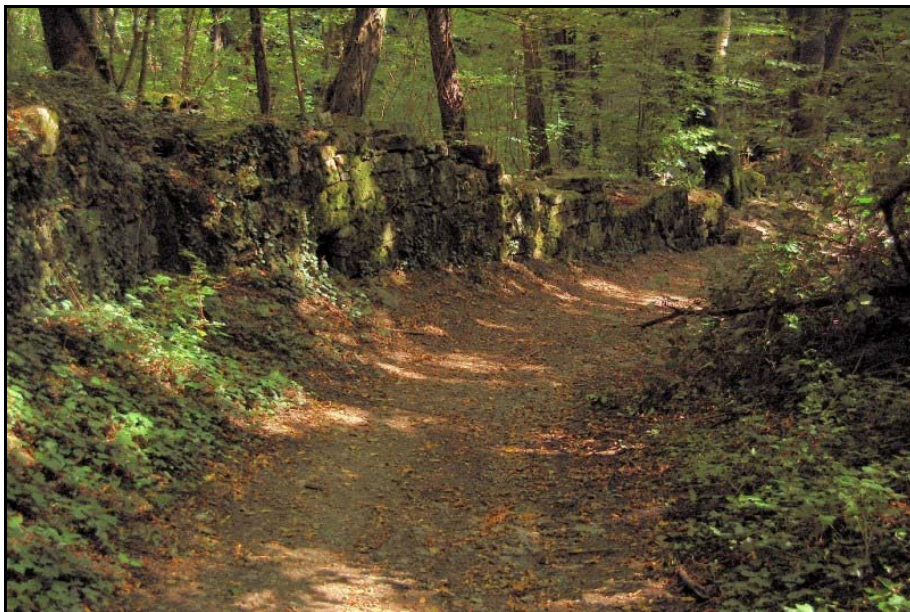


*City cobblestone, left, and a typical road near a city, right*

Product Identity

- **Streets** are found in settlements, from the smallest up to cities. The majority of the streets that we'll encounter are simply a variation on dirt roads. They're made of mud, that is, they consist of bare earth. The soil is bare because one walks and rides upon it too often for grass to grow. Main thoroughfares in cities, many towns and even some well-to-do villages are made of cobblestones. City streets usually vary between 8 and 30ft/240 cm and 9m in width. Narrower streets usually are called alleys or lanes.
- **Roads** run outside of settlements, connecting to streets when they meet a settlement, village, town or city. Roads usually are thoroughfares made of mud (see the picture, upper left, on the following page). When they get very near to a prosperous village, a town or a city, roads might instead be a two-rut track with the ruts filled with gravel to keep the roadbed relatively smooth and free of potholes (see the picture, right, above). In the countryside and the wilderness, roads have little substance. They tend to vary in width between 10ft/3m and 6ft/180cm. The closer the road is to a settlement, the wider it tends to be.





*Typical overland dirt road, left above, a prairie track, right above, and forest trails, below*

Product Identity



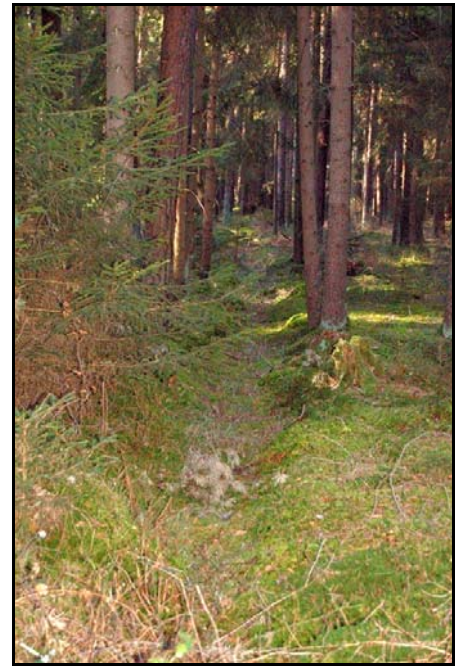
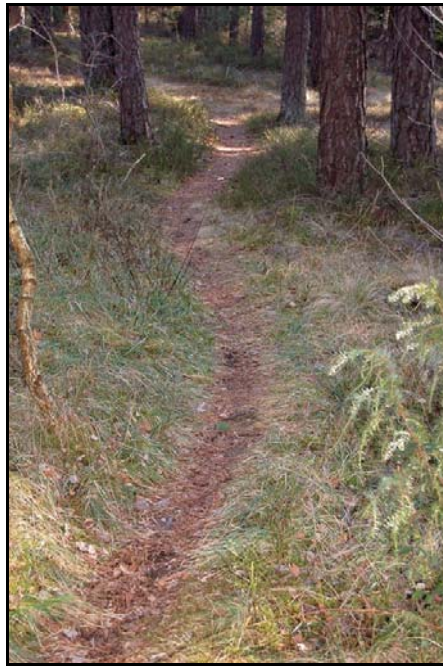
- **Trails** are narrower cousins of roads. They tend to be in areas where there is a lower level of traffic than in those with roads. Trails seldom leave room for two to ride abreast, although two to three people usually can walk next to one another upon them. As one follows a trail, its quality tends to be irregular. In areas where the terrain is hard or where its usage is heavier, a trail may be just as flat as a dirt street in a city. In other places, where there are many large rocks and boulders or thick brush, trails may be pinched to the width of a path. In some places, where a trail hits a low point and tends often to stand in water or be mucky, one often can find not only the trail but also three or four paths that attempt to detour around the problem area. Trails tend to be 4 to 7ft/120 to 210cm wide.
- **Paths** really should be understood to be footpaths at the most. They aren't suited for riding a horse, and many are too narrow and grown in by brush or pinched by boulders to make it possible to lead a horse along them. Some paths are made by the usage of creatures that live or lair along them, and their purpose really is to be footpaths. Most, however, are so-called deer paths. These are paths made by deer, boar and other wild animals. They can lead clearly over some distance and then suddenly seem to end in the middle of nowhere. These seeming end points actually are path junctions, where animals tend to go off in different directions without making clear paths in any of them. Rangers can find these continuations, but they offer adventurers no useful trail. Paths seldom are 3ft/90cm wide, and they can narrow to less than a foot/30cm.



- **Pathless Travel:** This point really is outside the described category, but it relates well to it. Sometimes your PCs need to travel where there are no roads, trails or paths. That's not necessarily a problem if they're crossing open plains or a prairie, but in most other landscapes, traveling without at least a path is problematical to say the least. It becomes a critical problem if the PCs are without a reliable map and have gained no expert knowledge of the lands before them. On such a journey, it often can be foolish to take along riding or pack animals. The party may come to a point where the animals can't go on. The PCs then will face the choice between turning back or abandoning their animals. If they are using a pack animal, that probably also will mean abandoning most of the possessions that the animal is carrying.

As we can see, roads, trails and paths and their conditions as well as the lack of any kind of path can have a rather substantial effect upon your adventure and the PC party that's on that adventure. For that reason, these conditions also can offer you as a game master valuable tools with which you can steer your adventure in the directions you wish without pulling your PCs around by their noses.

If the PCs are going the "*wrong*" way, you can make travel in that direction extremely difficult. At the latest, when the PCs reach the point where they have to abandon their animals (if they have any), they usually will reconsider their choices and pick another direction. If you suspect in advance that the PCs might go astray, you can help them find the "*right*" path by seeing they have a bit of advance information on what territory is ahead of them. When they find they're in totally different country, they'll change their minds easier.



***Dangerous road with ruts, left; Rangers' footpath, center, and deer path, right***

Product Identity

## 2.5.2 Forests

There are many ways to categorize forests in terms of their effects upon RPGs. Let's look at some of them:

- **Evergreen Conifer:** The forest has predominantly yew, spruce, pine and/or fir trees. It is darker most of the year than mixed and deciduous forests. The forest floor has better wind protection than in other forests. Natural (not planted) evergreen forests tend to be in northern areas. Usually such forests are relatively thick and have little ground vegetation.
- **Mixed Northern:** The forest has a more or less balanced evergreen conifer and deciduous trees that lose their leaves in winter. The evergreen conifers tend to offer some wind protection even in deep winter. Forest floors are relatively clean, although there may be patches of brambles and high grass. Natural mixed northern forests usually are found only on the borderlines between cold and temperate regions.



- **Deciduous:** The forest has predominantly deciduous trees that lose their leaves in winter. The rustling of the leaves can make it difficult to hear in the summer wind, but wind protection is good. In winter, there is little protection from the wind, but sunlight penetrates well. The undergrowth in most deciduous forests consists of relatively small plants that hinder travel little. Natural deciduous forests often include wild nut and fruit trees which can provide travelers with seasonal nourishments. Wild berries also thrive on the edges of them. Such forests predominate in temperate areas.
- **Mixed Southern:** The forest has a more or less balanced deciduous and broad-leafed evergreen trees. The leafed evergreens tend to offer some wind protection even when the deciduous trees are bare. Forest floors often have large patches of high grass and undergrowth up to a yard/meter high. Passage can be difficult and slow. Natural mixed southern forests usually are found only on the borderlines between tropical and temperate regions.
- **Broad-Leafed Evergreen:** The forest has predominantly broad-leafed evergreen trees. Most such woods are jungles and/or rain forests. Wind protection is good, but the thick and lush undergrowth makes passage all but impossible. A machete is standard equipment for passage away from the trails in such a forest. Such forests are found only in tropical areas. They often have wild tropical fruit trees and berries which can provide adventurers with nourishment. They also are home to many venomous and vicious beasts.

## Forests by Density

- **Thin Forests** usually have a separation of 2 yards/meters or more between tree trunks. Only evergreen conifer, mixed northern and deciduous forests tend to be thin. They have little or no undergrowth, but fallen branches on the forest floor often can impede movement through them. Branches, sticks, etc., usually cover so much of the forest floor that it's very difficult to move unheard through them. In such forests, *Sneak* checks have a +10 penalty when there is no wind. There is no penalty when the wind is strong in an evergreen conifer forest, and with strong wind, there is a bonus of 5% in mixed northern and 10% in deciduous forests on *Sneak* checks. Persons, mounts and pack animals can move through a thin forest at 50% their normal tempo if they aren't making a concentrated effort to *Sneak*. Visibility in a thin forest usually ranges between 81 and 100 feet (1d20+80) or 25 to 30m (1d6+24). All established and natural evergreen conifer, mixed northern and deciduous forests are thin forests.
- **Medium Density Forests** are, at least to a certain extent, unnatural forests. They are younger forests and therefore are not natural virgin timber. Young forests either were planted or seeded naturally after the destruction of an earlier forest. Such destruction can, of course, have resulted from logging operations or in the harvest of firewood, if the area's not too large. It also can have occurred as a result of forest fires, storms or the like. The main point is that the virgin forest is gone and younger wood is replacing it. The result is that many trees, with still thin to medium trunks, stand less than a yard/meter apart. Because the forest neither has been thinned nor has it thinned itself, many small branches are scattered across the ground making it difficult to *Sneak*. In such forests, *Sneak* checks have a +10 penalty when there is no wind. There is no penalty when the wind is strong in a medium density evergreen conifer forest, and there is a strong wind bonus of 5% in medium density mixed northern and 10% in medium density deciduous forests on *Sneak* checks. Persons, mounts and pack animals can move through a medium density forest of non-conifers at 10% their normal tempo and through a medium density forest with at least 50% conifers at 5% their normal tempo. Visibility in a medium density forest usually ranges between 31 and 50 feet (1d20+30) or 10 to 15m (1d6+9).
- **Dense Forests** either are young conifer forests, unthinned and less than 20 years old, or jungles. Young conifer forests often are planted with trees less than 18 inches/45cm apart. By the time they reach the age of 10, they usually will have been thinned and then become medium density forests. Jungles wax densely in the rainy tropics and are filled with lush undergrowth. Both kinds of dense forests are impossible to pass without cutting a path, which makes *Sneak* efforts impossible without magical help. Cutting one's way through a dense forest usually limits the tempo to about a mile/1.6km daily. Visibility in a dense forest usually ranges between 11 and 20 feet (1d20+10) or 3 to 6m (1d4+2).

## Fantasy Forests

In the real world, forests evolved from stands of primeval trees into the modern life forms that we know today. Only two known descendants of the early generations of trees survive today, the Ginkgo and the Wollemi Pine (not a true pine) of Australia. In the second generation, much of the northern part of our world was covered with yews, the first of the conifers. When men began cutting forests, the yew receded, although yews still are among us today.

*Dungeons Daring* takes a somewhat similar approach to forests. The *Dungeons Daring* concept includes partly sentient forests, a theme more broadly described in Book 3, the *Creature Guide*. We'll discuss it briefly here in order that you can examine it and decide whether it fits into your campaign concepts or whether you might wish to modify this concept to suit your needs. If you wish to take a different approach, you basically need only to eliminate or modify two official *Dungeons Daring* creatures, the tree herder and the elven tree.

*Dungeons Daring* forests are based closely upon the concepts used in the *Jörðgarð™ World* made for the *Dungeons Daring* game. In this concept, there are three forest generations:

- The first generation, somewhat like the primeval trees of our own world, was made by a creator race.
- When the light elves came into the world, the creator race gave them the responsibility for the husbandry of the forests. The elves hybridized the many trees of this second generation, most of which still are in the gaming world today.
- The third born, the humans, are not yet advanced enough to understand plant hybridization (in contrast to humans of the real, modern world). But they have cleared large areas of second generation forest for their settlements, farming lands and for timber and firewood. In the latter case, older and slower growing trees, above all yews, but to a certain extent even oaks and beeches, have vanished from many areas and have been replaced by faster growing trees like pines, fir and spruces which the humans have planted.

This concept will have some effects upon your campaign. *Dungeons Daring* envisions a world with two types of forest that provide contrasting adventuring experiences:

There still are the so-called elven woods. Rather than elves, these forests today are tended mainly by Rangers, Green Druids and Nature Druids, above all those of half-elven blood. However, these woods, great stands of ancient oaks and beeches in some areas, of yews in others, also still are the home of sentient elven trees and the tree herders who tend them. Both can be quite dangerous to careless adventurers.

These two types of woodland creatures are part of an ancient tale. After the light elves inherited the forests from the creator race, some elves loved the forests so much that they turned from the Light and bound their spirits not with the Darkness but rather with the Balance and its woodlands. In their earlier years, they retained their elven natures, working as Nature Druids and Rangers in the woodlands. In these times, they gave birth to the dryads, sprites and nixies that still inhabit many forests and woodland waters. These also were the years when elven cross-breeding produced most of the second generation trees that grace the world at the time period when your PCs are wandering through it.

Time also brought change to the wood elves, as they called themselves in these pre-human times. Just as the light elves at times longed for their true nature as stars in the heavens, some of the wood elves yearned to become one with the trees that they were warding. Gradually, their spirits merged with those of the trees, and they became sentient trees, or *Elven Trees* as they are named.

Others, like those light elves who still remain upon the Middle Dimension of the gaming world, were not ready yet to become something else. Their hearts were with their woodlands, but they remained driven by their duty to tend to the forests, a sense of duty that had grown with the knowledge that many of their brethren had become one with the forest they warded.

These elves gradually evolved into something other than light elves, just as their brethren who went into the depths became black elves, now known as dwarves. The wood elves grew tall as the trees they warded. Their skin became bark, like that of a tree. With time, branches with leaves even began to grow from their bodies. And yet, for all of that, they remained unrooted, mobile beings with a voice. Tree herders, they call themselves, and that is the name that men give them.



*Where the ancient yew stands, tree herders and elven trees may be nearby.*



Tree herders, elven trees and also their relatives, the dryads, sprites and nixies, basically are neutral in respect to questions of Light and Darkness. They view themselves as being of a general neutral good alignment in their own environment, although humans, from their viewpoint, would tend to view most of these creatures as being neutral and elven trees as being neutral evil.

Tree herders and elven trees, working together, can indeed be a more formidable foe than the worst of dragons. In the ancient woods that once listened to the voices of the light elves, the trees could be taught to move. They also learned to withdraw their outer roots, even their fine hair roots, into their main root system and to use their main roots to walk in a fashion through the ground. As a result, tree herders can call out to their elven trees to move with them against an enemy if need be. The elven trees, like sergeants, pass the order on to the normal trees of the wood, and they follow them.

Tree herders look upon humans for what they are, a young race that still understands little about the world in which it lives or the tender balances that must be preserved for the world to remain healthy. Most humans do look upon forests as little more than natural resources that are waiting to be mined. That is indeed what forests are to a certain extent to nature and to the earth mother who planned such things.

It is in the nature of trees to overproduce, to seed themselves too thickly. As in many other areas of nature, the forest is a place where only the fittest are intended to survive. The tree herders know this and the elven trees once knew it, although that knowledge grows somewhat foggy within them now. Even as light elves were warding the early forests, they also were harvesting them toward the same ends as humans, to gain fuel and building materials.

Unlike the humans, however, the elves understood that forests grew too thickly, for the forests' own sake, the elves' sake and for the sake of those races yet to be born. All races that use wood were intended to thin the forests in order that the healthiest trees might grow to their full strength, but to thin a forest well requires an ability to understand which trees should stand and which must fall.

When humans began coming to the forests, they saw only trees, not forests. Their saws and axes began felling as many trees as the humans wanted or needed with no regard for maintaining the balance within the wood. This drew the ire of the tree herders and the wrath of many elven trees. In some forest areas, human logging teams entered and never returned. The unwitting loggers found themselves suddenly being crushed to death by very pliable tree branches that stuffed the bodies in the root zones beneath their trunks as fertilizer.

The tree herders stop such attacks when they are aware of them. They know that warfare with humans does no service to the forests or to the world in which they stand. Tree herders are very wary of most humans, but they have built trusting relationships with Nature Druids, Green Druids and Rangers, all of whom continue the traditions and teachings of the light elves in their dealings with the woodlands.

The tree herders and elven trees left the Light to journey into the forests, where they became one with the Balance, which is allied with the Light in the search for harmony. In the current era of *Dungeons Daring*, there is a chance of encounters with tree herders and elven trees at anytime when your PCs enter a forest still dominated by evergreen yews in the North and by ancient oaks, beeches and ashes in temperate zones. Although unthinking PCs may find themselves in serious trouble in these forests, they have little to fear from the Darkness, because the tree herders and elven trees still ward these woodlands against the servants of evil.

However, the Darkness certainly has laid its claim to parts of the forests that are younger than tree herders and elven trees or those older forests that they have abandoned. The Darkness does all in its power to prevent the inhabitants of the gaming world from achieving harmony, but at the same time, it demands its own share of all things, and the forests are no exception.

In the darkest pockets of many forests, one can find the webs of spider draugs and their keepers, the herder draugs. Spider draugs are the lowest of all servants of the Darkness although not necessarily the least powerful among them. As a punishment, the Darkness takes the souls of draugs that have fallen in battle and failed miserably in their missions and places them in the bodies of giant mutated spiders. These spiders can survive physically only by consuming meat and blood. Normally their diet consists of forest animals that they trap.

When they are lucky, human flesh may fall into their traps. However, the spider draugs are not allowed to consume such prey immediately. When they are tightly woven into the undead forest spiders' webs, human victims are confronted by the spiders' master, a herder draug.

These fell creatures are fallen intermediate draugs who once were human. They too failed miserably in their service to the Darkness, and they are being punished by forced service in the spider draugs' domain. It is their job to convince the spiders' captives to yield and accept transfiguration into undead draugs rather than being eaten alive by the spider draugs. If the captives refuse, the herder draug departs and allows the spider draugs to have their feast.

Herder and spider draugs usually fulfill their duties with absolute dedication. A spider draug has nothing to lose. It already is as low as a draug can be. If it is slain, no worse fate awaits it than to be restored again in the body of another mutated spider and to continue on as a spider draug. Once it has won over enough captives as new draugs for the Darkness, it can be rewarded by being restored as a draug of higher order.

The conditions are nearly the same for a herder draug, higher only than a spider draug in the hierarchy of the undead. If it fails, the worse that can happen to its soul is to be restored as a spider draug. If it succeeds, it can gain a second chance as a draug of higher order. The absolute lack of fear of destruction by spider draugs and the limited fear of destruction by herder draugs make both determined, dangerous foes.

## **The Nature of Forests**

Regardless of whether the PCs are in an ancient northern forest filled with yews and populated with tree herders and elven trees or whether they're in a southern mixed forest with evergreen and deciduous broad-leafed trees, they'll find that almost all forests have certain common characteristics. However, jungles, because of their density, are exceptions in certain cases.

Forests generally need a reliable water table beneath their surface. In a landscape with little water, there may be hardy trees but there will be no forests. If a forest is dominant in deep-rooted trees like oaks and beeches or pines, the water table usually is at a lower level. If spruces, birches, wild fruit trees and the like are predominant, the water table is likely nearer to the surface.

Large forests tend to be on rolling if not hilly land. At higher levels, there usually are springs that produce creeks. These can be the sources of streams that turn into major rivers. They also can be the sources of small tributaries that flow into rivers. In some cases, if there are basins with heavy soils, they also might flow into them, forming moors that have outlets only when flooded but that otherwise slowly drain the water into underground bodies of water. The largest of forests often are cut by rivers that flow from a higher point somewhere into a lower area somewhere else that opens an eventual path to the sea.

If your band of PCs enters a forest that none or few have entered before them, they well may have to blaze their own trail through the wood or rely, to the extent that they can, upon deer paths. However, if the forest is one that is used by others, there already will be paths, trails and perhaps roads leading into and through it.

In general, roads and rivers will avoid smaller forests. It's easier to ride around a small forest than to clear a road through it. Riding around a forest gradually creates such a road. However, if a large forest is in the way of a river, the river probably will cut a path through it. If a large forest blocks the way between two important destinations, a road will be cut through it.

The logic of roads and rivers can be carried further. Still assuming that we're dealing with a large forest that blocks the route between two destinations, the chances are good that both of those destinations are on a river. If that's the case, you can be certain that the road follows the river on one bank or another. There are a few reasons that will lead people to choose the river as the path for a road through a forest. First of all, the river provides an opening in the forest's canopy, which in turn provides light in what otherwise is a dark forest in places.

Beyond that, however, a road on a river also provides travelers with a partial defense. If the river is fast enough or deep enough, travelers can vanish into the forest on their own side if they're being attacked by enemies with ranged weapons on the opposite bank.

Transit through the forest is the main reason for forest roads. But if you're designing your own adventure and placing a forest in it, you'll probably have trails and paths in the forest too. Each time you're inclined to put a trail or a path somewhere, you should know why it's there. If you don't know, don't create the trail or path until you find the answer.



Forest trails and paths exist because someone or something uses them to go from one place to another. You should know who or what that is, because your PCs well might stumble upon them or it. If a trail or path that is in relatively good condition stops in the middle of nowhere for no particular reason, your design probably is faulty. No one takes the time to cut and tend a trail that has no purpose.

However, there is one possible exception: Your PCs might encounter a trail or path that *isn't* in good condition, one that's somewhat overgrown or that almost vanishes at places. In this case, you have a trail or path that appears to have gone out of use. It once led somewhere, but it doesn't necessarily do so anymore. One of the best examples is in an old logging trail. It leads to an area where loggers once fell trees, but they completed their work some time ago and moved on to other locations.

Even in this case, however, if the PCs make a close examination of the site at trail's end, they still should have a fair chance of determining what once was there. If it was a logging site, there should be old stumps available, and anyone who looks for such things should notice that the trees at that site are younger than those in the surrounding area. A Ranger, Green Druid or Nature Druid would notice such a thing automatically.

Here are some examples of reasons for cutting trails or paths into a forest:

- Roads and trails often lead to current or former logging camps.
- Hunters maintain a network of paths in forests.
- Farmers cut heavily used trails into the forests. In the age modeled, farmers frequently cleared areas in forests for firewood and then made meadows of them where they grazed cows and calves. These meadows also often had artificial ponds to provide drink for the grazing animals.
- There may be mines in a forest.
- In areas with low populations where law enforcement is weak, bandits or beasts may have their own networks of forest trails or paths.



***With time, an enemy on foot can cross, but horses must stay behind.***

Product Identity

## 2.5.3 Mountains and Hills

In the *Dungeons Daring* concept, hills are claimed by all races, while high and desert mountains are the domain of dwarves, giants, orcs and trolls. Until the recent past, men have avoided them, making incursions only into the border areas just above the foot of the great mountain ranges.

As in the real world, *Dungeons Daring* offers no official definition that separates mountains from hills. In general folk usage, the word *mountain* is applied to one or a chain of heightened points in the landscape with clearly defined summit points. Rolling and rounded rises in the landscape, on the other hand, generally are considered to be hills. The word *mountain* tends to apply to rises of 1,000 ft/300m or more. Lower rises generally are hills.

In the *Dungeons Daring* concept, many of the world's valuable natural resources can be found in mountains and hills. The knowledge that copper, lead and bituminous coal are abundant in some areas is beginning to draw humans into them. Bituminous coal is found in some broad mountain valleys where primeval forests stood and then were buried in floods.

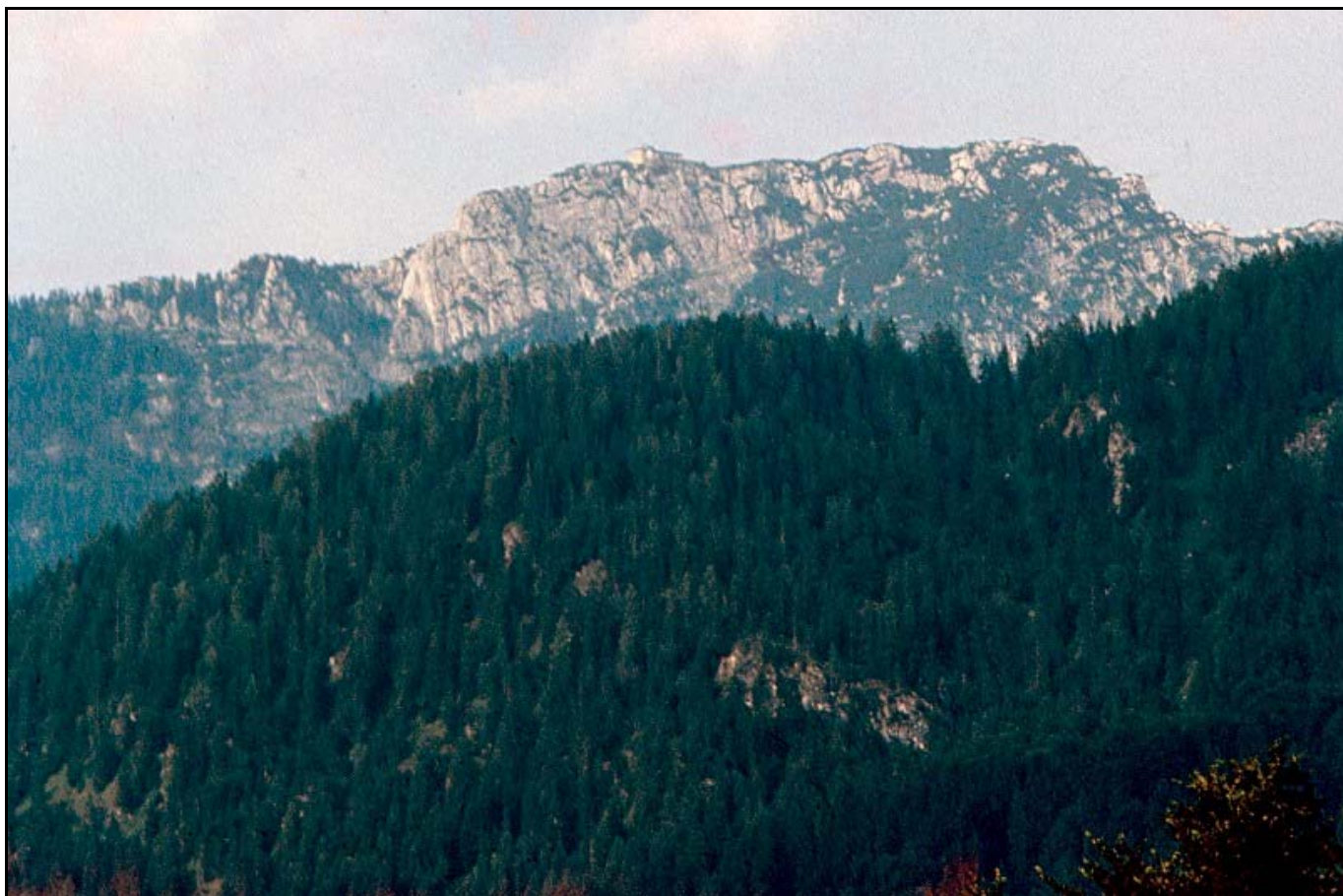
Iron, the bane of elves, and anthracite coal to this date are mined only by dwarves. Until now, iron has been found only in the depths of the northern and southern mountain ranges. There they also find that hard and black coal that is all that remains on the primal forests once fashioned by the creator race.

In terms of appearances, mountains could be classified as follows:

- **Arctic mountains:** These are large outcroppings of rock and ice in the polar caps, where the only sentient inhabitants are polar bears, penguins, undead draugs and the like.
- **Alpine mountains:** These are large outcroppings of rock that rise above the treeline and usually cover wide areas of territory. The highest peaks may be covered year round with snow.
- **Volcanic Mountains:** Basically, these are Alpine mountains that still are volcanically active.
- **Desert Mountains:** These are large outcroppings of rock, but they usually border upon or are in deserts. They have almost no vegetation and relatively little wildlife. Desert mountains that are on the borderline between high deserts and other terrain types also might be snowcapped year-round.
- **Green Mountains:** These are mountains that are completely below the tree line and are covered with vegetation. In the *Dungeons Daring* concept, as in the real world, there is no universal tree line. It is defined by many weather-related factors. In the real world, the highest tree line is in the Bolivian Andes at 17,000ft/5,200m. The lowest treeline at 2,600ft/800m is in Sweden. Most *Dungeons Daring* mountain ranges have their tree lines at about 7,000ft/2,100m.
- **Middle Mountains:** In most cases, people define middle mountains as those with heights between 2,000 and 4000ft/600 and 1,200m. Most middle mountain ranges are completely forested and below their local tree lines.
- **Low Mountains:** Many people would call low mountains hills, but those that are called mountains usually are rises that cut a distinctive line in their landscapes and that have distinctive ridge lines. Low mountains always are vegetative. Most are forested. Generally, the term low mountain is applied to rises of less than 2,000ft/600m.
- **Hills:** These are simple rises in the landscape, with altitudes below 1,000ft/300m. Low moraines also are a type of hill. The rises are gentle, often rolling or even rounded, as is the case with moraines. Ranges of hills often tend to look from above somewhat like the gentle waves of a lake rather than like a series of ridgelines.

Humans long have populated middle and low mountains, hills and many areas with green mountains. However, orcs, goblins and in some areas trolls contest their claims. Giants, orcs and in some places trolls tend to form the main population on the surfaces and in the upper depths of Alpine and volcanic type mountains. Fire giants dominate desert mountains, although a heat-resistant orc mutation appears to be penetrating these areas.





*Above and below the tree lines: Dwarves, giants, orcs and trolls.*

Product Identity



*Only fire giants can pass the volcanic kettles of the mountains.*

Product Identity



Adventurers who enter Alpine or volcanic type mountains still are charting new courses in the *Dungeons Daring* era. There have been human incursions into the mountains, to be sure, and there have even been invasions, but all have been somewhat ill-starred. Many factors conspire against humans who venture into the heights. First and foremost is their ignorance of the terrain, a lack of knowledge that gives every foe a distinct advantage.

Another factor is the set of alliances and tolerances among the human's foes in the mountains. Only the dwarves of the depths are more or less neutral in regard to humans. They have no love for the young folk, but dwarves will tolerate humans as long as they remain outside of the dwarves' domains. On the other hand, dwarves will use all of the axe power and runic magic at their disposal to deal lethally with humans who refuse their orders to leave areas near the gates to their halls, and a human has little chance of survival should they succeed in intruding into the dwarves' subterranean halls.

The greater threat comes from giants, orcs and trolls. The two latter races are mutations of the Darkness. They are mortal enemies of the three human races. Giants are of more complex alignment. The giants would view their general racial alignment as being somewhere between neutral good and chaotic good, as far as their dealings with one another are concerned. But they consider themselves to have been wronged by elves and humans. They consider both to be their mortal enemies.

One might expect them to react in the same manner with orcs and trolls, servants of the Darkness who have laid claim to and occupy what once were large parts of the old giant kingdoms in the mountains. However, the giant chieftains reacted otherwise. They see the mutations of the Darkness as the enemies of their enemies and have been willing to come to terms with them.

The giants are a diminishing and fading race. They lead long lives, but they no longer can reproduce. They are dying out, very slowly but surely. The giants have need for ever less territory. As a result, they negotiated with the orcs in areas where they came, ceding large parts of their mountain domains to them, with both folk agreeing to respect the other's territories. In areas where the Darkness sent trolls, the giants came to a similar understanding.



***Everywhere and anytime, an ambush can be waiting.***

Humans who attempt to enter high mountains face a plethora of dangers. They begin already with their direction of travel. Humans who wish to enter the mountains must start from below them and go upward, automatically giving them the disadvantage of holding the lower ground.

That's compounded by the fact that most Alpine mountains are heavily forested to the tree line and sometimes have large boulder fields above it. Both give the humans' foes excellent cover for the ranged attacks they make from their advantaged higher ground.

Humans who want to force their way into the mountains will not be able to buy or otherwise acquire anything but crude maps. Although some humans have survived incursions into certain mountain areas and sketched the paths they took, these are without accurate distance measurements and describe only those things that could be seen from the paths that they choose or cut for their ascent.

No human ever has made a thorough survey of the mountains. Most information known about them has been gleaned through magical divining, which provides reliable information about specific locations but little information about distances. One knows, for instance, approximately where some of the major tribal settlements of the giants or orcs are and what is in them, but little information is available about the trails that lead to them or what dangers may be along those trails, such as prepared landslide traps that can be triggered to cause tons of stone to roar down upon intruders.

Humans also know almost nothing about the smaller giant and orc settlements in the mountains. Even less is known about the cave-dwelling trolls, and no information is known about the deep-dwelling dwarves, whose mountain halls usually are protected from diviners by powerful runic magic.

Giants, orcs, trolls and dwarves suffer under no such lack of information. They know their own territories thoroughly. They know where the passes and trail lead because they made them. They know where the traps are because they made them. And they know almost everything else about their mountain domains because they live there.

Most of these things apply in desert mountains too, where fire giants and a small but growing number of fire-resistant orcs have the say. Fire giants are, of course, the predominant danger. They not only can survive the desert heat; they thrive on it. The desert orcs like others of their race can ill tolerate sunlight even though they seem able to withstand heat. They're night walkers in the deserts rather than day farers.

Human intruders often are reduced to the same level as the orcs. If they wish to be really active, they need to work at night, when their sight (unlike that of the orcs) fails them. Even if humans are well-trained and outfitted to survive the desert's heat, they still are at a decided disadvantage when they have to engage in combat or magical duels at temperatures up to 115°F/45°C.

## **2.5.4 Grasslands, Prairies and Steppes**

All of these landscapes are types of plains, as are some forests. The basic characteristic of a plain is that it is relatively flat.

### **Grasslands**

In this category, we find flat to gently rolling landscapes that are covered by non-woody plants, mostly grasses, sedge, rushes and forbs. After the Pleistocene Ice Ages of the real world, climate changes caused grasslands to become its dominant land feature worldwide. The world envisioned for *Dungeons Daring* still is shifting from a forested landscape into one where grasslands are dominant. However, human clearing of forests and increased grazing is slowly moving the status of grassland toward that of the real world.

The nature of grassland can vary greatly dependent upon the fertility of the soil and the annual precipitation. Less fertile and drier grasslands may be host to plants that barely reach an annual height of a foot/30 cm. Highly fertile, rain-blessed grasslands grow plants that reach heights approaching 10ft/3m.



Native non-plant life in grasslands tends to be mostly medium- and smaller-sized animal forms small enough to find shelter from predators in the vegetation. Mutations seldom are found in large grassland areas, although they may enter them to a distance of 10 miles/15km or so from other landscapes such as forests that border upon them. Draugs avoid grasslands because they provide no adequate shelter from the sun.

## **Prairies**

Prairies are a type of mostly treeless grassland that has a plant culture with deep and interconnected root systems that prevent erosion. Many prairie areas are arid. These tend to grow grasses that need little rainfall and wiry brush. As in most grasslands, native non-plant life in prairies tends to be medium- and smaller-sized animal forms small enough to find shelter from predators in the vegetation. Except for the short orcs known as goblins, mutations seldom are found on prairies that are more than 10 miles/15km from other areas. Draugs avoid them as they do other grasslands, because they provide no adequate shelter from the sun.

## **Steppes**

Although steppes can cover vast territories, they often are an intermediate landscape between high desert and another type of terrain, usually forests or prairies and sometimes both on different sides of the steppe. There are grassland steppes, shrub steppes and forest steppes. The landmarks of all steppes is dryness accompanied by high summer temperatures, low winter temperatures and a considerable span between daytime and night temperatures in the warm season. Except for the short orcs known as goblins, mutations seldom are found on areas of steppes that are more than 10 miles/15km from other areas. Draugs avoid them because they provide no adequate shelter from the sun.



***Grasslands yield to forest and mountains in the distance.***

## 2.5.5 Deserts

There are two basically different types of desert, hot and cold. Cold deserts are called tundra.

### Hot Deserts

One talks about deserts and high deserts, although the latter is not a true geographical or geological entity. High deserts are in most senses ordinary deserts except for the effects of their altitude, which usually is 2,000ft/600m or higher.

Deserts experience extremely high daytime temperatures in the summer, with cool nights, due to the lack of humidity. The highest deserts have moderate and sometimes even truly cold daytime temperatures in the winter months, with extremely cold nights.

Fire giants are the only sentient creatures who normally make their home in the desert, although they too tend to avoid the higher deserts with their frigid nights and cold winters. Mutations and draugs avoid deserts, as do most other sentient creatures not native to them. However, there are some exceptions. Deserts can be a source of valuable resources. This is particularly true of the raw mountains of the higher deserts, where settlements can be found where humans brave the temperature extremes for the sake of wealth.

Most deserts were formed by rain shadows caused by mountains blocking the path of rain or snow. For the most part, deserts are sandy surfaced landscapes. Sand dunes, stony surfaces, rock formations and desert mountains make up only a minority of a desert's surfaces. Little soil and vegetation are the mark of a desert. Nonetheless, deserts do support certain life structures.

The infamous poisonous scorpions, several types of snakes, the kangaroo rat, the coyote, the jack rabbit, and many kinds of lizards can be found in most deserts. Like undead, which are unknown in the desert, such animals tend to be night walkers. They remain hidden in tunnels or in the shadow of rock formations during the daytime heat. Vegetation includes not only cactus but also many kinds of wiry shrubs, prickly pears, the brittle bush and scrubby but hardy pines. High, cold deserts also tend to have large patches covered with hardy, drought-resistant grasses.

Windswept deserts like the Sahara of the real world with little but endless sand dunes in sight are rare. Most deserts are sandy and rocky surfaces with scattered but frequent clusters of vegetation. Although it's not an idea that occurs to one immediately, deserts also have rivers. Most of the time, desert rivers are dry. In many deserts, when rare rain does fall, it tends to come in torrents that are a part of violent thunderstorms. Such deluges cause heavy volumes of water to begin flowing suddenly in the erstwhile dry rivers. Their flash floods then can wash away anyone and anything in their paths.

When high deserts are of considerably more altitude than 2,000ft/600m and are near mountains, they can be secondary hosts to populations that usually are associated with mountains rather than deserts although the incursion of mountain creatures usually lasts only from evening to sunrise in the hot part of the year. This can bring mutations like orcs and even draugs into the border areas of such high deserts in the night hours.

Whether deserts are high or low, the temperature can reach up to 115°F/45°C on a sunny summer day. Regardless of how well a human might be outfitted or trained for the desert, he or she is at a decided disadvantage in such heat in combat with a fire giant, who thrives in such weather.

### Tundra (Cold Deserts)

Tundra is found only in the border regions of the polar circles in the northern and southern hemispheres of the gaming world. A basic characteristic of tundra is permafrost. The soil beginning at a depth of about a yard or meter remains frozen year-round, which has the effect of preventing the growth of most kinds of trees. Some shallow-rooted trees are found in scattered locations, but these are the exception rather than the rule. Most vegetation is limited to low bushes, grass, sedge, moss and lichen.



Tundra also includes some other landscape types. Shallow ponds, bogs and marshes are scattered across it. In tundra ponds, one can find cod, various flatfish, salmon and trout. Other tundra dwellers are caribou, reindeer, foxes, hares, lemmings, the musk ox, porcupines, arctic shrews, squirrels, voles, weasels and wolves. In the northernmost parts of the tundra, one even can find polar bears.

Tundra birds include the snowy owl, arctic falcons, ptarmigans, ravens, snowbirds, snow geese, gulls, sandpipers, snow buntings, tundra swans and arctic terns. Tundra insects include mosquitoes, moths, grasshoppers, flies, blackflies, moths and arctic bumblebees.

Unfortunately, trolls hunt the perimeters of the tundra at night in some areas, and the orc population is growing in many tundra regions. There also are strange draug settlements in some tundra regions. Hunters' reports of draugs in the tundra, in arctic mountains and in the border areas of the high deserts are a source of growing concern to human rulers of regions farther south.

There appears to be no immediately detectable sensible reason for draugs to be in these largely unpopulated areas, causing much speculation as to why they have come. However, there is a growing apprehension that the Darkness may be assembling a draug army in the frigid parts of the world, which are its domain, and that these draugs are in training as parts of that forming army.

One well might argue that the climate of the tundra is suited only for draugs. From the vernal to autumnal equinoxes, the long days of daylight would be inhospitable to draugs, but the dark winter season with almost no daylight at all before the winter solstice is ideal. Temperatures in the tundra are anything but inviting; in the summer months, they tend to range between 37°F/3°C and 54°F/12°C, although frost is possible at anytime. In winter, temperatures tend to range between -18°F/-18°C and -60°F/-50°C.

Nonetheless, there are seasonal ice giant and human settlements in some tundra areas, although their number is declining with the orc incursion. Hunters and fishermen in some northern lands traditionally have housed in the tundra in summer months to fish and to hunt reindeer. Until recently, summer tundra villages with meat and fish packing operations and furriers could be found in several parts of some tundra zones.

However, summer settlers returning to their part-time villages in recent years have turned back home again after discovering that their settlements had been taken over by armed orcs or simply destroyed by orcs in the winter season. Human settlers never have remained in the tundra during the frigid winters, but ice giants do.



***Course grasses, muck and bog dot the tundra in summer.***

## 2.5.6 Wetlands

Traditional wetlands fall into three broad categories:

- Bogs
- Marshes
- Swamps

### Bogs

Bogs often are found within moors, which are discussed in the next section. Unlike most wetlands, bogs are produced neither by the inflow of stream water nor by springs. Their water comes entirely from rainfall, which gives them a very acidic balance. They are rich in sphagnum moss, which turns into peat and can be viewed as an early stage in the formation of bituminous coal. Bogs are, like coal, flammable, which makes them dangerous under certain circumstances.

In some areas, particularly those that are distant from forests, bogs are heavily used by humans who mine the sphagnum peat grown there as fuel. Such peat mining is not without dangers, however. A subspecies of orcs generally called moor goblins dwells near some bogs. They attack humans, even when outnumbered, and eat their victims if they survive the battles. As a result, most bog miners go to work in large groups and in the company of well-armed warriors.

Bogs exist in cavities that have deep beds of rock or thick clay that prevent their water from percolating into the soil. These conditions provide for very acidic soil that is low in nutrients. A side product of this characteristic is the evolution of carnivorous plants, most of them small, which trap insects. There is, however, a larger species common in some bogs known as the Moor Trap which can, in fact, trap an entire human being and slowly digest his or her body. However, only strangers in a bog would be caught unawares by a Moor Trap. The huge plant is easily distinguishable and known to bog workers.

Insects comprise most of the animal life in bogs. The waters tend to be too acidic to sustain most amphibians or water reptiles. However, many types of animal life that live outside of bogs do enter them to forage. Draugs seldom are found in bogs and do not inhabit them.

### Marshes

Marshes are similar to bogs in that they hold largely stagnant water, but in contrast to a bog, their water comes from streams and there is water movement and flow at times through marshes. Because that degree of movement is limited, large amounts of organic matter accumulate in marshes and produce marsh gas which bubbles up through the water. The gas is highly inflammable, and it self-ignites at times, producing will o' the wisps.

Marshes tend to be relatively shallow. Humans usually can walk through marsh waters. Where the marsh has a sand bottom, such movement can be easy. If it has a mud bottom, feet can get stuck, making movement slow. However, poisonous, swimming water snakes can make wading a marsh dangerous.

Usually marshes are free of trees but are rich in grasses and herbs. The most common plants are grasses, reeds, rushes, sedges and typhas. They are important breeding habitats for a wide variety of wildlife and are used by many kinds of birds and insects. Fish are frequent in all but the most brackish of marshes, as are water snakes. No sentient creatures, alive or undead, live in swamps.

### Swamps

In many senses, swamps are the geological opposite of bogs. They are free of peat, play host to water-loving trees and are fed by external water sources. Water continually flows through a swamp, albeit slowly. Swamp water also tends to be considerably deeper than that of a marsh.



There are some swamps that are sources of streams. In some areas, one finds wide basins flooded with spring water. It flows out of the basin at its lowest point, forming a creek or river. However, source swamps are the exception rather than the rule. Many swamps are lake backwaters formed in relatively flat parts of the lake distant from the main current flow. Others are backwaters on wide rivers where the current is light.

A wide variety of wildlife including many types of insects and fish can be found in swamps. Exactly what lives in any specific swamp depends too upon climate. Some of the more common swamp dwellers are alligators, crocodiles, bald eagles, beavers, black bears, bobcats, cougars, cranes, crayfish, deer, dragonflies, flamingoes, frogs, hawks, herons, muskrats, newts, otters, raccoons, red wolves, scorpions, shrimp, snails, spiders, toads, turtles and water snakes including poisonous varieties.

Plant life can include algae, alpine bottlebrushes, buttercups, cypresses, duckweeds, ferns, grasses, heath varieties, herbs, lignum, mangroves, reeds, rushes, sedges, swamp mahogany, swamp oaks, water peppers, water tupelos and various vines and creepers. Draugs and most mutations avoid swamps.



***The swamp: a no man's land where nature thrives***



## 2.5.7 Heaths and Moors

Although they often appear similar at first glance and share highly acidic soils, heaths and moors are for the most part opposites. Heaths tend to be dry and warm. Moors are cold and wet, often forming the northern- and southernmost borders to tundra landscapes that approach the polar circles.

Most heaths have sandy, well-draining soils, although small bogs can be found at times where bedrock is near the surface, reducing drainage. Moorlands tend to have large bogs and heavy soils high in clay content. Quicksand can be a danger near bogs in both heath and moorlands. Quagmires, however, are frequent in moors but rare in heaths.

Heaths tend to be dominated by woody shrubs up to about 6ft/2m tall. Hot, tropical heaths can be the habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna, where temperate heaths have vegetation consisting largely of heather, heath and gorse plants.

Heaths and moors that are near populated rural areas often are used by farmers for grazing. Remote moors and heaths are becoming more dangerous. The amphibian orc subspecies known as the moor goblin is beginning to appear in significant numbers in many remote moors, staking their claims there, just as other goblins have done in prairies and on the steppes.



*A new pine forest has been planted at the edge of a heather-covered moor.*

## 2.5.8 Waterways

Waterways are one of the best geographical tools that a game master can use in planning his or her campaign setting. Waterways – just as in the real world – not only make excellent borders and barriers but also create chances to build bridges. They also are the living arteries and veins of the gaming world, just as they are in the real world. In this section we'll look at the following types of waterways:

- Lakes
- Ponds
- Rivers
- Creeks
- Brooks

Before we look at specific types of waterways, we need to recall what we learned about the water cycle during our school days:

- Rain falls from the skies and percolates into the soil.
- The water collects underground in rivulets and even underground streams, following the rules of gravity and seeking ever lower elevations.
- Sooner or later, the water pushes to the surface and bubbles out, making a spring.
- The water from the spring flows along the world's surface, forming a brook.

Once brooks have formed, there are various possibilities:

- Brooks can widen, becoming creeks and then rivers that eventually flow into the ocean.
- Some brooks end when they flow into a river or creek.
- Some creeks end when they flow into a river.
- Some rivers end when they flow into another river.



***Underground rivers are an important link in the water cycle.***





**Lake Tahoe's Crystal Bay, a closed waterway that never reaches the sea**

Product Identity

All brooks, creeks and rivers that flow into other bodies of water are called tributaries.

Now, before we continue, we should note that there is one fallacy in our schoolbook theory already. It has to do with that old but inaccurate rule of thumb: *All rivers flow into the sea*. Unfortunately, that's not true. There are some rivers that never flow into the sea.

We find a prime example in the rivers Bear, Jordan and Weber Rivers, in the state of Utah in the U.S.A. These three rivers flow into the Great Salt Lake on the Bonneville Flats. The Great Salt Lake has no outlets. Its water does not flow into the sea; it evaporates just as sea water does.

This brings us round in something of a circle, where we may be able to find a bit of accuracy in our inaccuracy after all: The Great Salt Lake is what remains of a great inland pluvial sea in prehistoric times.

Another interesting example in the U.S.A. is the link of Lake Tahoe, the Truckee River and Pyramid Lake in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California and Nevada. Melting snow from the mountains flows down into the Tahoe Basin, which is 1,645 feet/501m deep, forming Lake Tahoe. The great lake has only a single outlet, the Truckee River. Nearby Donner Lake also is a part of this system. Its outlet is Donner Creek, a tributary of the Truckee, which flows down Nevada's east face of the Sierra and across the Northern Nevada desert into another basin, Lake Pyramid, which, like the Great Salt Lake, has no outlet.

In designing our real world, nature broke some of its own seeming rules. There are rivers that don't flow into the sea but dead end instead at inland desert lakes, where the water evaporates. There also are streams that spring from the ground, forge a course along the surface and then flow into a cave system running underground once more before re-emerging to flow into the sea. The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River in the Philippines is one of the better known examples.

In designing your campaign setting, don't hesitate to break the alleged rules in the manner Mother Nature does, if it serves your campaign well. But if you do so, follow another of nature's examples: Don't overdo it. Rivers that flow back into the ground or that never reach the sea are rare exceptions. They should be that in your gaming world too.

Also scrutinize advice you read in books like this one. Not all advice on gaming world design is good. One of the best-selling and best quality RPG design books that we know contains the following sentence:

*Rivers always begin at a high point and flow toward a lower point in the direction of the equator, eventually reaching the sea:*

This sentence simply is inaccurate. We agree that rivers flow downward. We've already seen that there are some rivers that never reach the sea. The idea that all rivers flow toward the equator, however, is ridiculous. Some do. Some don't.

Contrary examples are two of Europe's greatest rivers, the Rhine, with its source in the Swiss Alps, and the stream that begins in Bohemia as the Labe, becoming known as the Elbe when it crosses the border into Germany. Both of these rivers flow toward the North Pole, emptying into the North Sea. In addition, most of the two rivers' tributaries flow northward too.

## Watersheds

Before we can design waterways, however, we have to design the contour of our lands. In doing so, we'll define watersheds, which, in turn, will decide where our waterways are and in which direction they flow. Let's take a real example from the Northern Bavarian landscape to see how that works. We'll start along one of the southernmost east-west ridges of the low Steigerwald range:

- In the valley along the south side of the ridge flows a small creek called the *Weisach*. In the valley below the north face flows an even smaller creek called the *Kleine* (Small) *Weisach*.
- The small springs on the south side of the ridge create brooks that flow into the *Weisach*. The brooks that spring on the north face flow into the *Kleine Weisach*. Therefore, the ridge marks the minor watershed line between the *Weisach* and the *Kleine Weisach*.
- The valleys descend from west to east, therefore, both creeks flow eastward. The *Kleine Weisach* flows a mere 3 miles/5km before the ridge ends in the east and it empties into the *Weisach*. Therefore, the *Kleine Weisach* is a tributary of the *Weisach*.
- The *Weisach* itself cuts only a 4-mile/7km path when it empties into a river called the *Aisch*, which is 43 miles/75km long. The southernmost ridges of the Steigerwald range and the northernmost hills of the Franconian Heights to the south form the *Aisch* watershed. The *Aisch* also flows from east to west.

One could continue on with this example, seeing ever greater watersheds claiming huge territories, as the *Aisch* flows into the *Regnitz* River and the *Regnitz* flows into the Main River. At the end, we are in the base level of one of Europe's greatest watersheds, that of the Rhine, into which the Main flows. Every brook, creek and river up to the Main's confluence with the *Rhine* was a tributary. The *Rhine*, however, is a major river that flows directly into the North Sea.

In our example, we also see how watersheds compound. The tiny brooks and the *Weisach Creek* with which we begin are parts of the *Weisach*, *Aisch*, *Regnitz*, *Main* and *Rhine* watersheds.

This is the kind of planning you need to do when you start making maps of your own campaign setting. If you don't do it, sooner or later you'll find that some of the waterways in your campaign setting will be flowing uphill. You won't be alone with that problem. We know of instances in one of the most popular RPG campaign setting ever sold where rivers do not merely flow uphill but across hills.



## Lakes and Ponds

Most lakes fall into one of two general categories:

- **Flow-Through Lakes:** This is the biggest category. Such lakes are fed water by one or more streams, and the water also flows out of the lake into another stream. Some flow-through lakes are, in fact, nothing more than the substantial widening of a river at a point where it flows into a basin. Others are water basins where there is a confluence of one or more streams.
- **Source Lakes:** Such lakes are the beginning of a water flow. They usually are found in high basins with springs that fill the basin with water, with surrounding hills and mountains that fill the basin with runoff water or a combination of the two.

Most lakes have a single outflow. The lowest point on the rim of the basin that created the lake is the point where the basin (lake) spills over when it's full. The water that runs out of the lake forms a river. Some lakes hold widely varying amounts of water in different seasons. When the lake is at its lowest levels, there is no spillover, and the river then runs dry, at least at its source. Tributaries can, of course, continue to feed water into it at lower levels.

On the previous pages, we described Lake Tahoe, in the states of California and Nevada in the U.S.A. Lake Tahoe is an ideal example of a source lake and how such a lake functions. Most of its water comes from Sierra Nevada Mountains runoff caused by snow melt. A smaller amount comes from springs in the lake's bed. The low point of the Tahoe Basin is on the California side on the north shore, where the Truckee River runs out of the lake.

If in time of drought the lake's level were to drop to such an extent that the Truckee River outlet went dry, this would not necessarily mean that the river itself would go dry. Downstream, the river also is fed by Donner Creek, the outflow from Donner Lake in the nearby mountains. Other runoffs also feed water into the Truckee on its way to the Reno area of Northern Nevada.



*Sunset over Lake Winnebago in Wisconsin from High Cliff State Park on the northeast shore*

Product Identity



A good example of a flow-through lake would be Lake Winnebago in east central Wisconsin in the U.S.A. It is one of the largest inland freshwater lakes in the U.S. Although the lake has a surface of 10x30 miles/50x16km, it is, in principal, not much more than a confluence of the Fox and Wolf Rivers and an extreme widening of the 200-mile/320km-long Fox.

When one takes a close look at these waterways, one finds the source of the Fox River in springs near Pardeeville in the south central part of Wisconsin. The Wolf, in contrast, has its source in the opposite direction, in the great woodlands of Forest County in Northern Wisconsin. The Wolf has its confluence with the Fox a bit east of Lake Winnebago in a smaller water-filled basin called Lake Butte des Morts (*Hill of the Dead*). From this small lake, the Fox flows directly into the Winnebago Basin, where it forms the huge Lake Winnebago.

The basin rim's lowest point is on its north shore by the twin cities of Neenah and Menasha, where the Fox flows out of the lake to the northeast into the large bay of Lake Michigan called the Green Bay at the city of Green Bay, made famous by the city's Packers football team.

If your RPG world is to be credible, you won't want it to have too many lakes as big as Lake Tahoe or Lake Winnebago. They should be exceptions rather than the rule. But both of them make excellent models for creating your own source and flow-through lakes for your campaign setting.

Lakes can provide your setting with both color and adventure elements. Any type of freshwater creature could dwell in a lake. That definition does not need to be limited to large muskellunge and northern pike fish. You also can add fantasy water beasts or mutations of your own choice or invention to these waterways.

Even in the real world, larger things can be found in lakes than muskies and northerns. Lake Winnebago in Wisconsin has a respectable population of huge Lake Sturgeon. These fish, survivors of primeval times, can reach lengths up to 6ft/180cm and can weigh as much as 200lbs/100kg. They not only populate the huge lake but also swim upstream in the Fox and Wolf Rivers each spring to spawn.

However, what lives in the water is only one element of a lake in your RPG setting. When people are looking or looked in the past for new areas to settle, lakeshores have been among the more desirable locations. They provide a steady source of food – fish. Lakes provide an excellent central service point for the communities that are settled along the rivers that flow into and out of them.

When new settlers come to a lake area, they should and usually do attempt to gain full control of all of its shores as quickly as possible. If they succeed in this goal, they can secure a much safer means of travel than is available by land, provided that you've placed no man-eating beasts or mutations in the lake to threaten them. When a homogenous folk secures all shores of a lake, one can cross it and travel from one lakeshore settlement to another without worry of attack from any quarter but the air. If there are no evil dragons in the area, aerial threats probably are minimal.

Any enemy attacking a lakeshore settlement from the inland has to reckon with retaliatory defenses attacking back from both flanks, and these easily can encircle the attacker, who has nowhere to go except into the lake. This defensive advantage is lost in the winter if the lake freezes over. In that case, an enemy making a surprise attack upon a lakeshore settlement also can flee by riding across the ice.

This question of safety, as mentioned, is most pertinent when you, as a game master, have placed no grave threats in the water. However, water travel can become extremely dangerous if you populate your lake with vicious and violent man-hating beasts or mutations or, for that matter, even if you populate it with large schools of piranha-like man-eating butcher fish.

Another facet of a lake that offers intriguing possibilities is its depth. Inland flatland lakes seldom will have a maximum depth of more than 15 to 20ft/4.5 to 6m. Even the huge Lake Winnebago has a maximum depth of only 21ft/6.4m. Mountain lakes are an entirely different matter. The water of a mountain lake can fill an incredibly deep basin. Lake Tahoe, which we've already used as an example, has a depth of 1,645ft/501m. The world's deepest lake, Lake Baikal in Siberia is more than a mile deep. Its deepest point is 5,371ft/1,637m below the surface.

To paraphrase *The Shadow* of radio's glorious days: *who knows what evil lurks in the depths of such a lake?* The answer is obvious: Only you, the game master knows.

The deepest lake in the U.S.A., Crater Lake in Oregon, is 4,000ft/1,220m deep. It fills a deep caldera that was formed during the collapse of the volcano Mt. Mazama nearly 3,700 years ago. If you use Crater Lake as an example, you can ask not only what lurks in its depths, but also what would happen if something, perhaps even demons or devils, were to reopen the old lava tunnels beneath such a lake and rekindle its volcanic fire.

Ponds are, by and large, not much more than small to tiny lakes. However, within that category are many variations. One often differentiates between flowing and stagnant ponds. A flowing pond, like a lake, usually has a continual supply of new fresh water and an outlet that flows into a creek. A stagnant pond is a basin with neither inlet nor outlet. It's simply a small basin in which water collects. Many stagnant ponds are brackish, but this does not need to be the case. In areas with heavy, regular rainfall, the skies produce enough fresh water to maintain desirable oxygen levels.

A large number of ponds are man-made. Waterways frequently are dammed to create mill ponds which release a controlled measure of water into a mill stream. This provides a steady flow of water to evenly turn the waterwheels that power grain mills, sawmills, hammer smithies and the like. In areas where the only flowing water is in small creeks that are unable to support a fish population, farmers sometimes build chains of ponds and channel creeks through them, in order to breed and raise fish. Ponds also are used in some locations as communal drinking water for farm animals.

Because of their small size, ponds seldom are a center point for adventures. However, there can be exceptions. A saboteur could, for instance, poison a pond. Another possible kind of sabotage would be to introduce a school of man-eating piranha-like butcher fish into a pond.

## Streams

This category includes rivers, creeks and brooks. Keep in mind that most great rivers begin with a spring. They bubble out of it and downhill as a brook, widen to a creek and then grow into a river. There are no scientific definitions for these words. In fact, U.S. Americans and Australians and Britain's have different meanings for the word *creek*. In the U.S.A. and Australia, *creek* means a small to medium-sized natural stream. In the United Kingdom and India, *creek* refers to a tidal stream that usually flows through a salt marsh or a mangrove swamp.

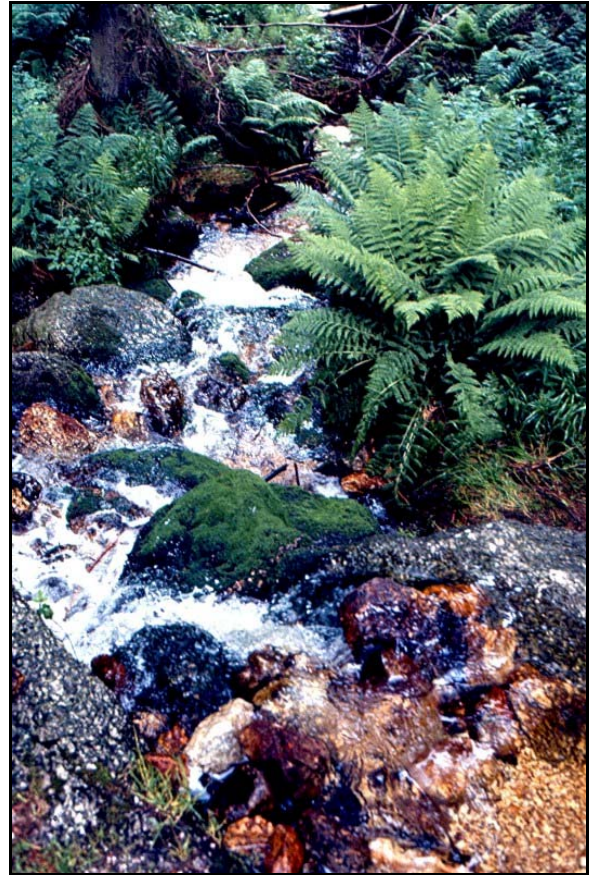
In regional areas of North America, a creek also might be called a *bourne*, *kill* or *run*. In the United Kingdom, some of the regional names for creeks are *Beck*, *Bourne*, *Brook*, *Burn*, *Stream* and *Syke*. *Dungeons Daring* uses the common North American definitions:

- **Brooks** are small streams that flow from a natural spring.
- **Creeks** are narrow but relatively steadily flowing streams with a relatively short course. They can be as narrow as a foot/30cm wide. They also can be 20ft/6m and more wide. A creek usually ends at a confluence with a river within 10 miles/15km or less of its source. However, rapid-flowing mountain creeks may at times have a considerably longer course.
- **Rivers** are larger streams that usually flow into the sea or into another chain of waterways that usually ends at the sea. A river in its early stages sometimes is said to be in its *young* or *upstream* stages, usually as narrow and shallow as a creek, but it gains in size as it flows over its course. Secondary rivers (tributaries) usually have a course more than 10 miles/15km long, and they can flow over a course of several hundred miles/kilometers. Primary rivers – those that usually have a mouth on the sea – can be even longer.

In defining such waterways for an RPG campaign, a game master easily can have a bit of a mental block, one sometimes shared by players. If one uses the words *river* or *creek*, the mind tends to conjure a vision of one certain kind of river or creek, probably a mental picture of the river or creek most familiar to this person.

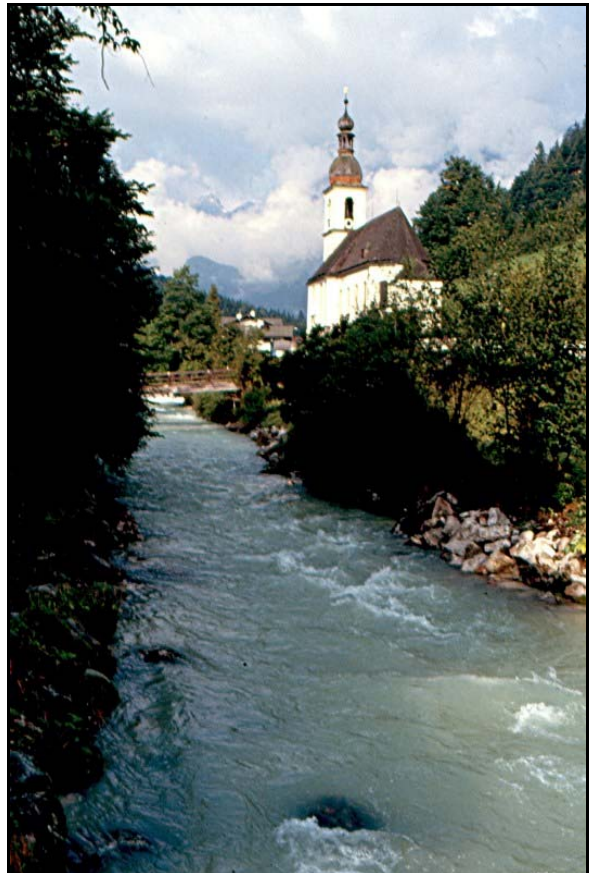
In truth, however, rivers, creeks, brooks and springs come in many shapes and forms and with very different flows. To give you a broader picture of the design possibilities open to you, we've included a collection of photos on the following pages. If you choose any of these as models for your setting, feel free to show your players the corresponding picture, so that their PCs have a better idea of what's before them.



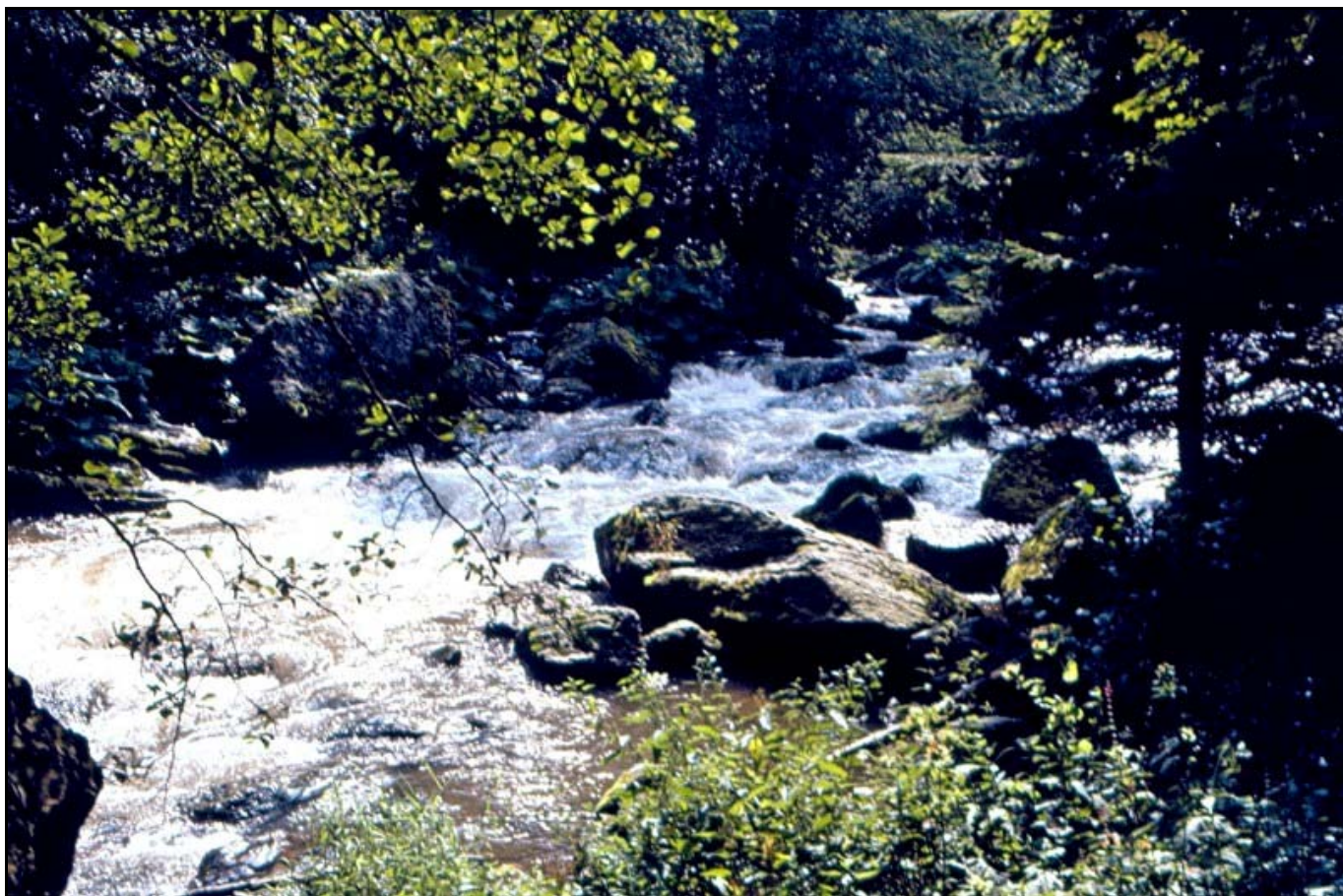


*A mountain spring, above left; a mountain brook, above right; a lazy countryside creek, below left, and a roaring mountain creek, below right*

Product Identity







*A hazardous mountain river, above, and a mountain river with a bridged-over ford, below*

Product Identity







***The great German Main River in Karlstadt, left, and the smaller Pegnitz River in Neuhaus, right***

Product Identity

Rivers and creeks are powerful game master tools in two senses:

- They give you the foundation upon which you can build your villages, towns and cities. In the age mirrored in a *Dungeons Daring* campaign, settlements without flowing water would and should be rare. Once you've developed your hills or mountains, valleys, watersheds and streams, you can create villages, towns and cities at locations where it makes sense for them to be.
- Waterways not only make typical and natural political borders, but they also give you a means you can use to develop boundaries for your adventure. A stream that's been developed to fit your needs can make it very difficult for your adventurers to travel in certain directions.

Let's focus a bit on the latter point, because it can provide you with a vital tool.

As we've already mentioned, PC groups sometimes have a tendency to go in directions quite different from those which you intended. If you let them follow those directions, you'll also find yourself scrambling to define territory that you hadn't considered earlier and that is totally irrelevant to the adventuring at hand. You may even be forced to develop a different adventure in the direction the PCs have gone.

Usually it's best to avoid that by keeping the PCs on your intended track, but that's easier said than done, particularly if you want to do it in a manner that doesn't lessen your campaign in the eyes of your players. A game master must remember first and foremost in such situations that players positively hate the idea that you're manipulating their PCs or leading them around by the nose.

When you ask people to join your campaign, you're inviting them to leave reality and the real world and to move at campaign time instead into the virtual reality of a virtual world. Most players join a campaign because they want to do just that, and your campaign will run well if you keep it at that level.



Now ... let's assume that your adventure lies to the west of your PCs' current location, but they decide to head east. The easiest way to solve this problem is simply to say, *OK guys! I know you want to head east, but the adventure's in the west. You gotta turn around!*

That's the easiest way, but probably also the worst. It's likely to earn you a bit of scorn from your players, but even worse, it pulls them out of their characters' roles and the virtual reality of your campaign world. The PCs and their world cease to exist for a bit. All you have is yourself and your real world players sitting around a gaming table in the real world. That's an occurrence you want to avoid whenever possible.

You can achieve your end better by placing credible barriers in the directions you don't want the PCs to go. If you want them to head west, you not only need to paint a scenario that makes west look like the most interesting direction, but you also can put things in the other directions that make travel that way seem undesirable to the PCs.

In the last section, we looked at the many different types of terrain you can use to build your world. You might put a vast stretch of heath to the north that gradually turns into moor and then tundra. There probably is little that would draw PCs in that direction. Beyond the borders of the kingdom in which the PCs find themselves, in the south, is desert, also not necessary alluring. So ... what about the East?

Let's assume that the East, at least for the PCs, is largely unpopulated wilderness that you have calculated into your future campaign plans, but you don't want the PCs to go there now. The perfect solution is a stream that forms a boundary between the border town where the PCs are and the eastern wilderness. Two things that cannot exist in this situation are a bridge or a ford. The next ford should be several days' ride north or south of town.

Once you've eliminated bridges and fords, you need to pick the right kind of stream. The lazy countryside creek shown bottom left on Page 207 isn't the right choice, even without the bridge. The PCs can wade it easily, and if they have horses, their mounts can wade or jump it. The same applies to the pastoral Pegnitz River pictured on Page 209. The PCs horses can't jump, but horses and riders can wade or swim it. The mountain river on the bottom of Page 208 also won't do, even if we eliminate bridge and ford. The river is too shallow and slow. The PCs and their horses can wade it.

The roaring mountain creek bottom right on Page 207 (the *Ramsauer Ache* near Ramsau in the Bavarian Alps) and the rushing mountain river at the top of Page 208 (the young *Main River* in the Fichtelgebirge or Spruce Mountains of Northern Bavaria) are different matters. Both are more dangerous than they seem to be in the photos. Horses would refuse to enter either of these streams.

Both of these streams have rapidly descending beds. Their waters roar forward at high speed and with tremendous force. The deepest areas in the Ramsauer Ache are a bit more than 3ft/1m deep, and there are large rocks in the creek's bed that also are nearly a yard/meter in diameter. The young Main seldom is more than a foot deep, but in some ways, it is even more treacherous.

A group of PCs could decide to leave its mounts behind and wade either of these streams, but they're less likely to succeed than one might think. A creek some 3ft/1m deep might not seem to be a challenge, but when it rushes downstream with the force of the Ramsauer Ache at its deeper points, it's difficult to remain standing. If a PC slips and falls, the water will begin washing him or her downstream with its full force, and it's probably only a matter of minutes before he or she is dashed violently against a rock. Many people have died in this manner.

In the young Main, the chances of being killed are minimal, but the chances of falling are greater, and that can lead to broken arms and legs that can put an adventure journey onto the side track for awhile. The problem with this river is that the rocks make up its entire bed, and all of them are extremely slimy. With streams like the young Main and the Ramsauer Ache, the chances of having a disaster increase considerably if the PC who is trying to wade the river is heavily armed and armored or is carrying a heavy back pack. The fact that the PCs can't get their horses to cross such streams will be enough to convince many PCs to rethink the direction they've chosen.

However, you can't place streams like the young Main or the Ramsauer Ache just anywhere in your campaign. These are mountain streams that rush downhill at relatively steep inclines. If you're adventuring in the plains or generally rolling hills, it's impossible for such streams to exist there.

A better solution then might be a wide, deep river, like the Main in Karlstadt to the left on Page 209, assuming there are neither bridges nor fords nearby. This picture shows a much larger Main than the one pictured some 100

miles/160km upstream at the top of Page 208. The river is too wide for the horses to swim. The PCs might be able to swim across it, but not with their weapons, armor or backpacks. Of course, a settlement on such a river might have fishermen or other people with boats. Such small craft would be unable to transport horses, but they could bring the PCs and their gear to the other side.

You can handle that problem too by having the NPCs with boats refusing to transport the PCs. It may be that the townsmen have enemies in the wilderness across the river, and anytime they cross beyond the middle of the river, arrows start flying out of the brush in their direction.

Of course, it's also possible that for other reasons a big river like the Main in Karlstadt won't fit into the location that you're designing. You might need a smaller river like the non-challenging Pegnitz in Neuhaus, shown in the right hand photo on Page 209.

If that's the case, you need to add a challenge. It's not hard to do. When your PCs arrive in their current location, have them hear almost immediately how concerned the locals are over the piranha-like butcher fish that are appearing in the river. With that, your seemingly lazy and pastoral river becomes the most difficult and impossible of all to cross.

These examples show you how you can use rivers as barriers to your adventure's advantage. Artificial machinations or the simple announcement that travel in a certain direction isn't allowed interrupts the virtual reality of your world. Sensible, natural barriers such as difficult-to-cross rivers don't. In the first case, the PCs are being blocked by you. In the second case, they're being blocked by their own decisions which they've made on the basis of the obstacles that they're facing.

## **2.6 NPCs**

We've already touched somewhat upon the idea of using NPCs as a game master's tool when we discussed using information as a tool. It usually takes NPCs to pass information on to your PCs.

In a more universal sense, NPCs are the game master's prime tool. They are the basis for his or her adventure in the sense that everything the PCs are likely to do interacts with or reacts to what NPCs somewhere at some time did or are doing. NPCs are the living (and sometimes undead) element of your gaming world.

In a game master's hands, NPCs also are an important tool for guiding your PCs and leading them along the path of your adventure. Much of the time, NPCs do this through the information they pass on to the PCs. However, NPCs also can be obstacles, just like certain types of terrain or waterways can be obstacles that keep non-suicidal PCs from veering off of your adventure's path.

In the last section, we looked at how waterways and terrain can channel a group of PCs into the desired direction. We put a vast stretch of heath to the north that gradually turns into moor and then tundra knowing that there probably would be little that would draw PCs in that direction. Beyond the borders of the kingdom in which the PCs find themselves, in the south, is desert, also not necessary alluring.

In our final example, then, we put a wide river on the east side of town, a river without a bridge or a ford. We also suggested that fishermen might refuse to boat the PCs to other side because they were afraid of arrow attacks after they passed the middle of the river. It might have occurred to you at the time that there was a potential hole in this barrier. The PCs might succeed in stealing a boat at night and making it to the other bank despite everything.

However, they might be less likely to cross the river if they know they'd be docking in evil lands ruled by a mighty Necromancer with draugs under his command, or a merciless and ruthless nobleman with a small army of powerful warriors and an orc chieftain with 10,000 orc Warriors patrolling the lands on the opposite side. A band of 1<sup>st</sup> level PCs that insists upon entering such lands with no particular purpose or goal is simply suicidal.

What does a game master do if they decide to go there anyway? Well ... nothing. Let them go, and see to it that the inevitable encounter with the superior foe takes place as quickly as possible and with as little preparation as possible on your part. The PCs doubtless will be killed or perhaps captured and thrown into chains into a dungeon tower. Maybe they'll even be faced with the choice of transfiguration into draugs or torture.

If they're killed, bury them. If they're chained captives, leave them there. If they're draugs, let them haunt their new domain. Have your players create new PCs and pick up where you left off.

Sometimes such deadly encounters are a necessary learning experience for new RPG players. Some players don't take seriously the idea that their alter ego PC can be slain and go out of existence just as easily in the virtual game world as they themselves can die by taking foolish risks in the real world.

However, having your PCs be taken captive or made into draugs sometimes is a more interesting solution. The new PCs at some time in the future when they're more powerful might journey into these forbidden lands too, either to rescue the former PCs whom their players once played or to destroy the draugs they had become.



***NPCs often make up the heart of your adventure, and they're great game master tools.***

## 2.7 Treasure

The role treasure plays in *Dungeons Daring* is quite a bit different than that in many other RPGs. In the grand-daddy of all RPGs, the original *Dungeons & Dragons*® version from 1974, treasure was the *raison d'être*. The idea of original *D&D* adventures was to go out, track down monsters or evildoers, slay them and take their treasure. A game master awarded experience points needed for new class levels based upon the amount of treasure the PCs had won.

As more RPGs developed and the gaming industry grew, the emphasis shifted from treasure to slaying, and it became more common for experience points to be awarded on the basis of monster or class levels of slain foes. As we've already discussed, *Dungeons Daring* burdens game masters with a more difficult system for recognizing experience, one based upon each PC's experiences rather than treasure, slaying monsters or the quality of role-playing.

Traditionally, treasure has been a difficult enough issue in its own right for many game masters. Many RPGs, in defining monsters and other foes, list exactly what kind of treasure they have. Other systems suggest that game masters place treasures at each goal and use random dice throw tables to decide what treasure is there. Unfortunately, these systems all create some serious problems for game masters and the campaigns that they are running.

Some randomly decided treasures place magic items in the hands of the PCs that are too powerful for characters of their class levels. Some place seemingly innocuous magic items into players hands that have no effect upon the current adventure but later make serious problems in future adventures where they are particularly useful for the PCs but also are particularly irritating for game masters.

Most treasures give the PCs more money and valuables than they need or should have. The result is that the PCs often attempt to buy magical items that will make them much more powerful than persons of their character level would be. The game master then is faced with the unsatisfying choice between making such items available or making them unavailable.

The first choice gives the adventure overly powerful PCs. The second makes the players mad and distracts from the virtual reality of the adventure, because they no longer are PCs. They are players who think about a game master who they believe is manipulating things to keep their PCs from buying what they're seeking.

In all of these cases, the treasures that your PCs have gained can end up throwing your adventure out of balance and making it a lot less fun than it should be for both you and your players. If your campaign stresses role-playing, as the *Dungeons Daring* system is intended to do, then you need to keep the focus on the goal of the adventure and its adventurers (your PCs) and away from the greed of amassing power and riches.

*Dungeons Daring* has the simplest system there is for treasure – none at all. *Dungeons Daring* was designed to serve adventuring that focuses first and foremost upon role-playing. Slaying foes often is a necessary occurrence in such adventures, and finding treasure at certain places and at certain times also is an integral part of such adventures, but they seldom serve well as the focal point of the adventure.

Most RPGs consider treasure to be the valuables found in a monster's lair, a looted dungeon, the castle of a defeated tyrant, etc. *Dungeons Daring* has a slightly broader definition. Treasure consists of those valuable found at adventure sites and in the possession of defeated foes, and it also includes those things the PCs are able to buy with the monetary part of the treasures they've accumulated.

As you might suspect by now, there are no *Dungeons Daring* rules for creating treasures. But there are the following guidelines:

- Keep magical items rare. They don't serve an RPG well when they turn into mass market consumer items.
- Don't clutter your fantasy realms with shops and wizards who sell magic and magical services. Such ideas are ridiculous. Members of the Magi classes, whether good or evil, are scholars who pursue knowledge of magic in its own right. They accept commissions only when they need money to finance their magical research. That almost never happens.



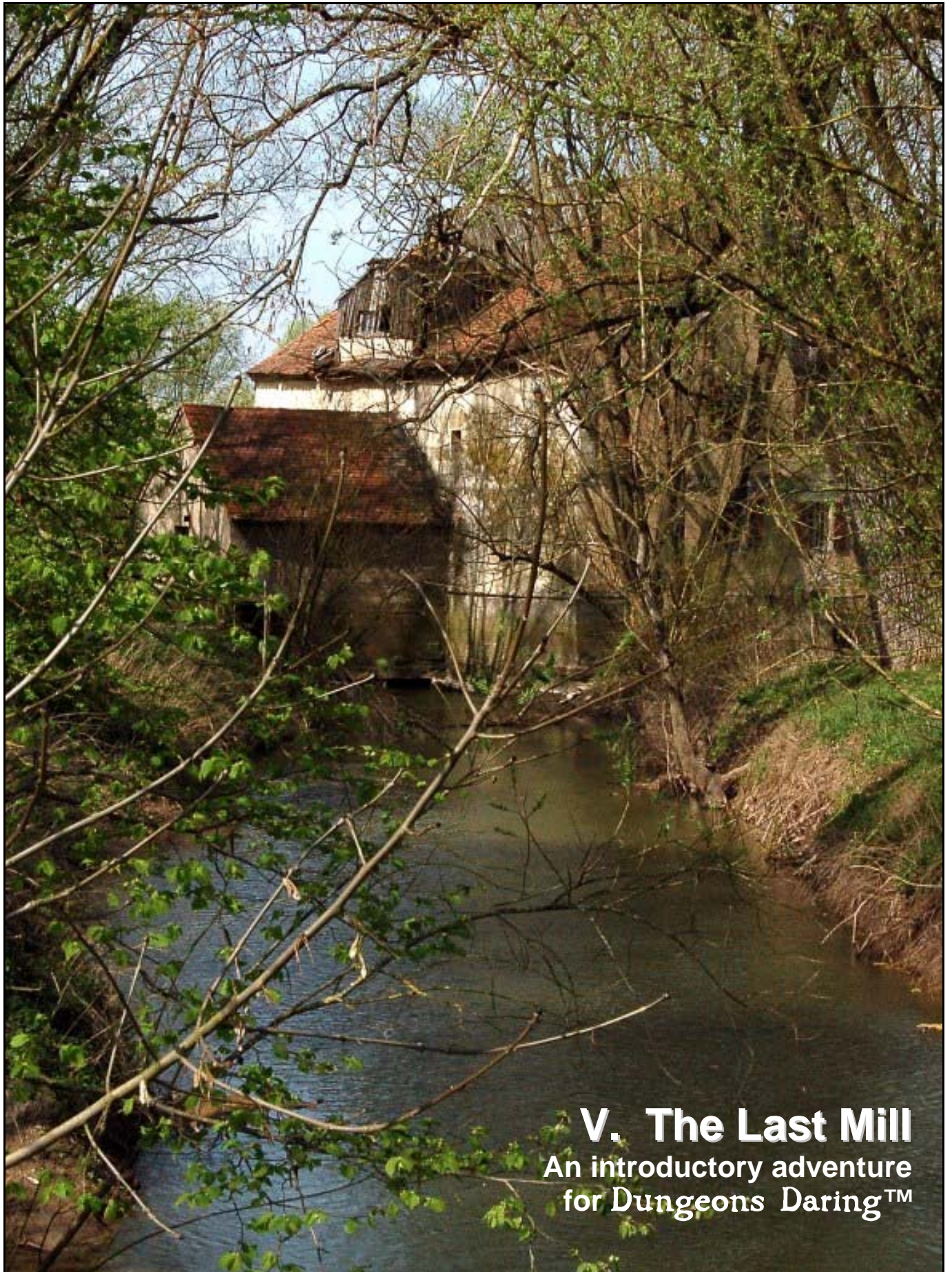
- If a magic-user does do commissioned work to earn money to support research, he or she almost always will limit it to working with a smith to produce armor or weapons with plus bonuses. Such commissioned work produces a good income with little time expenditure and produces magical items that have only a minimal probability of backfiring and being used against the mage.
- If one convinces a magic-user to give up a magical item in his or her possession or to create a commissioned work, the price probably will be another even more powerful magic item that he or she is seeking.
- People who can make magical items to help heroes like your PCs will do so only if they strongly support the cause of the heroes and believe that the magical items that they might make are important to the success of the heroes. This applies to evil heroes and magic-users as well as to good heroes and magic users.
- When a magic user creates such an item, it well might also have hidden ensorcellments that serve the magic user's purposes more than the recipient's.
- Any magic user wise enough to have advanced to the level where he or she can create magical items for use by others also is wise enough to hardly ever do so. He or she knows that the magical item created for a friend today may fall into enemy hands and be used against him or her tomorrow.
- If the PCs conquer a magic user's tower, don't feel compelled to put his or her magical secrets or treasures into whatever stash they find. Most such magic users will have hidden their really valuable magic in places and manners that make it extremely difficult to find. It's okay for your conquering PCs to leave such a tower feeling relatively empty-handed.
- When designing a treasure, put only those magical items into it that you are sure will be a positive service to your campaign. Create magical treasures through careful consideration, not by random means.
- When designing a treasure with magical items, ask yourself if it's positive to make one-use or limited used versions of those items. If the answer is yes, do it. That way these items will not linger to haunt you for the rest of your campaign.
- When designing a treasure, analyze carefully how much spendable money and values your PCs will need until they find the next treasure. Never put more than twice that amount into the treasure. Don't deprive your PCs of the ability to build appropriate financial reserves for their station. But also don't encourage lavish spending.
- Use your treasures as a tool. If you want to lead your PCs to the next step in your adventure, have the treasure include maps and/or documents that make the way clear to them. If necessary, have these items include alluring information that will make the PCs want to go your way.
- When it comes to treasures of beasts, there's nothing at all wrong with leaving your PCs with a big stash that has absolutely nothing of value. After all, it's a beast's stash!

## **2.8 Other Planets, Planes, etc.**

*Dungeons Daring* defines the Dimensions of Life and Death and the Middle Dimension. It also defines one sun, one moon and constellations of stars that once were elves. There are no official planets or planes of existence. However, you should by no means interpret this to mean that there are none at all in an official sense. There simply are none that are defined. We also have done our best to make sure that *Dungeons Daring* contains no official material that would be in conflict with the concepts of planets and planes.

If you want either or both to be a part of your *Dungeons Daring* universe, we strongly encourage you to add them as you wish. You can invent your own, or you can use those defined in another game system or campaign setting. You also will note that no planar magic has been defined officially for *Dungeons Daring*. However, if you introduce planes into your campaign, we would suggest you also incorporate planar magic, either of your own invention or adopted from another system.





## **V. The Last Mill**

An introductory adventure  
for Dungeons Daring™



# 1. Foreword for the Game Master

This last chapter is intended for game masters with little or no experience in fantasy role-playing. If you've been a GM with other game settings, this chapter well may be a bit too simplified to fulfill your expectations.

However, if you count yourself among the inexperienced, what you'll find in this chapter is a bit like a so-called *module*. What's that? A module is a complete adventure, usually written by someone else, that you perhaps buy or download free from the Internet.

*The Last Mill* is a bit different from what you'll usually find in a module. It's customary for modules to give you the details of an adventure but to list only quick summaries of information over things that are defined in the rulebooks. For example, if your adventurer runs into a band of orcs, the module usually will give you only a quick summary block of the orcs' gaming statistics. The authors will assume that you have the game book that defines creatures – the *Creature Guide* in the case of *Dungeons Daring* – and that you'll seek the detailed information there. The only exception is when the module defines a new creature.

In this introductory adventure, we'll give you more detailed information than you usually will find in a module. We're assuming that you're new to the game, and that you should run your first adventure with as little back-and-forth paging through books as possible. But please don't grow accustomed to our system. You'll seldom find it elsewhere.

- To run *The Last Mill*, you, as the game master, need to do a few things in advance:
- Get a group of Player Characters ready to play. Until you have a PC group, there's not much point in doing anything else.
- Print up in advance the information that the PCs will get in the course of the adventure.
- Familiarize yourself thoroughly with the rest of this adventure. You need a good idea of what happens in this adventure before you run it. Your game goes best when you don't need to interrupt it to do a lot of paging in order to figure out what will happen next.

Finally ... remember that here too the content consists of guidelines. Modify whatever you need to make your campaign run well. There is only one rule, Rule No. 1: *The game master always is right.*

## 1.1 The Player Characters

*The Last Mill* will run best with a PC party of three to five players. It will run poorly with one or two PCs and get bogged down a bit with six. More than that will be a burden. As usual, your players should decide for themselves how they wish to design their PCs. But as game master, you also need to set some conditions. The most important of these is that the party must include the following:

- **One Fighter:** The following Character Classes will fill that bill: Warrior, Born Knight, Dubbed Knight and Ranger.
- **One Magic-User:** The following Character Classes qualify: Sorcerer or Wizard.
- **One Specialist:** Thief and Scout are the preferable Character Classes. A Spy will do in a pinch.

If you have more than three players, the rest should have a free hand in choosing other Character Classes for the remaining PCs. There are, of course, some classes that will offer better service in this adventure than others. The best choices would be another Fighter and a Thief or Scout, whichever wasn't already chosen. However, it's best not to give your players this advice unless they ask for it.

In fact, it's usually best not to give your players any unrequited advice. It tends to make your players feel as though you're trying to manipulate their PCs.

Inform your players that their PCs are out of employment at the moment and running short on resources. They need to deal with this problem in relatively short order if they want to eat and sleep well.

When creating your characters, give them the adventure introduction *In Slovan City* that begins on Page 223 and continues through Page 233. It will give them some idea of what they might need. Give them an allowance that allows them to pay their bills for a few more days. That way, they're under pressure to earn more money.

The advance payment from the Margrave of Slovan City should enable them to buy most of what they need once they're on the path to their adventure. They may want to do some role-playing in Slovan City before they go shopping. If so, go ahead and let them do it.

Finally, to put a good foundation under the role-playing element of your adventure, have your players give sound answers to the following:

- Why did they pick their chosen Character Class? What goals do they have that made them want to follow this career path as an adventurer?
- How did each of them get to a place like Slovan City? Were they born there or did they travel there? If they are not natives, why did they go there?
- How did they get together?

Always be ready at this point to help your players out, but at the same time, don't give any unrequited advice unless it's absolutely necessary.

## 1.2 The Non-Player Characters

This adventure contains friendly, neutral and hostile creatures. For most of the friendly and neutral creatures, we'll include minimal statistical blocks. The only exceptions are the prisoners whom your PCs are likely to free in Dark Valley.

You may have to run the freed prisoners as additions to the PC party, so we'll include detailed statistics for them. However, it's unlikely that your PCs will come into conflict or combat with the other friendly and neutral NPCs. More extensive statistics will be offered for the hostile creatures that your PCs are likely to encounter. The necessary detailed statistics will appear within the adventure at the point you're likely to need them.

Here's a list of the NPCs that your PCs are most likely to encounter in the sequence in which they'll be encountered:

- **Margrave Hermacek**, ruler of the March of Slovan with its seat in Slovan City, Born Knight Lvl 12, friendly.
- **Adjutant Sir Radu**, adjutant of Margrave Hermacek, Dubbed Knight Lvl 8, friendly.
- **Wladislav**, visiting royal Diviner in the service of King Lladoslav, Diviner Lvl 9.
- **Gunnar**, refugee Harriki sorcerer who serves as the margrave's court mage, Sorcerer Lvl 8, friendly.
- **Ivan**, commander of the march militia, Dubbed Knight Lvl 9, friendly.
- **Taras**, royal district counsel, Merchant Lvl 5, friendly.
- **Bedrich**, common thief, Thief Lvl 2, hostile.
- **Jaroslav**, Innkeeper, Southguard Inn in Slovan City, Commoner Lvl 1, neutral.
- **Vaclav**, innkeeper, Golden Scythe Inn in Goldfields, Commoner Lvl 1, neutral.
- **5 Brigands**, in the hills north of Goldfields, Fighters Lvl 1, hostile.
- **3 Draug Warriors**, in the road south of Lastmill, Intermediate Draug Warrior Lvl 1, and two Intermediate Draug Commoners, Lvl 1, hostile.
- **Miroslav**, innkeeper, Border House Inn in Lastmill, Commoner Lvl 1, friendly.
- **3 Draug Warriors**, on a raid in Lastmill, two Intermediate Draug Fighters Lvl 1, and one Intermediate Draug Commoner, Lvl 1, hostile.
- **Iveta**, Lastmill, Herbal Witch Lvl 9, friendly.
- **Targa**, Lastmill, Herbal Witch Lvl 5, friendly.
- **4 Skeletons**, in Dark Valley (formerly Ting's Mill), Skeleton Draugs, Commoner Lvl 1, hostile.
- **24 Intermediate Draugs**, in Dark Valley, 8 Warriors Lvl 1, 16 Commoners Lvl 1, hostile.

- **3 Intermediate Draugs**, guards of the prisoners in Dark Valley, one Warrior Lvl 2 and two Warriors Lvl 1, all hostile.
- **Antonin**, miller from Lastmill, Artisan Lvl 2, friendly.
- **Katja**, miller's wife from Lastmill, Commoner Lvl 1, friendly.
- **Karel**, farmer from Lastmill, Commoner Lvl 1, friendly.
- **Tomas**, farmer from Lastmill, Commoner Lvl 1, friendly.
- **Thund**, Intermediate Draug, troop commander of Baron Nundlung, Warrior Lvl 2, hostile.
- **Baron Nundlung**, Intermediate Draug, ruler of Dark Valley, Intermediate Draug Wizard Lvl 2, hostile.

## 1.3 Background Information

The information and maps that follow on Pages 223 through 233 should be printed and given separately to your players. Their PCs have been in Slovan City for some time. Therefore, this information should be known to them. Be prepared to be asked for more information, and give your PCs everything they request, *as long as it's something they'd be likely to know or have earned*. However, be careful *not to give them* any information that they would have no reason to know and that they would be unlikely to learn in Slovan City.

You'll notice that the information here is in two parts. The first part tells your PCs where they are and what they know about their surroundings and the history of the area. The second tells them what happens when they have their audience with Margrave Hermacek. Sooner or later, they will have to visit the margrave. Their money is running out. The adventure offers them no other reasonable means to earn any money.

However, don't push your PCs into meeting with the margrave. Let them become aware of what he's seeking and then make their own decision on what they want to do. It well could be that the margrave's announcement doesn't interest them at all. They might think that anyone who goes into the Ruined Lands is nuts. Let them keep thinking that until they modify their opinion to thinking that anyone who goes into the Ruined Lands is nuts *or hungry*.

Some PC groups still might say no thanks and tell you that they want to seek their fortunes in the East, West or South instead. If you have an alternate adventure that you want to run there instead, let them go and move to that adventure. If not, simply tell the players that it's all right for their PCs to ride in whatever direction they wish, but you have no adventures in that direction. If they want to go that way, they need to have a game master who can offer them something there.

This advice, however, applies only to a new adventure with new players. If you have an established campaign and your PCs decide to go in a different direction than the one you've chosen, you have no good option other than to let them go where they wish. You may have to do some improvising, but once they're on the wrong trail, start putting some things along that trail that will make them change their minds rather than refusing to take the campaign in their chosen direction.

## 1.4 Working with the Maps and Floor Plans

The maps and dungeon plans for this introductory adventure are Open Game Content. They also are available in a separate download in their original *Fractal Mapper 8* format. We've kept these maps relatively simple so that inexperienced *FM8* cartographers can work with them. You may wish to modify some of these maps for your campaign. If so, you need the *FM8* mapping program.

*Fractal Mapper 8* is the official mapping program for *Dungeons Daring*. You can get more information on *FM8* at the manufacturer's Internet address. If you are uncertain whether *FM8* is a program you might want to use, you also can download the free trial version and the handbook. With it, you can learn thoroughly how to use *FM8* before making your decision on whether to buy the program. The trial version does everything that the full version does except printing, saving maps and exporting maps to other formats.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.nbos.com>

If you aren't using *Fractal Mapper 8*, skip ahead to *Section 2, Slovan City*.

There are many game masters and players who have vowed to defend their RPG gaming tables against computers with their lives. We have no argument with people who feel that way. However, we've found in our own campaigns that the intelligent use of computers at the gaming table not only can speed up those activities that tend to bog down a campaign, but they also can draw players deeper into the adventure and increase the excitement of encounters or dungeon exploration.

*Fractal Mapper 8* is an excellent program for making on-screen depictions for yourselves and your players. Most modern PCs have video cards that support two-monitor operations. That means – simply put – that you can have your own game master version of a map, one that shows everything, visible on your screen, and another version that shows only what your players should see visible on a second screen.

If you have *FM8* and you've downloaded the free PDF manual from <http://www.nbos.com>, you'll find detailed instructions on how this works beginning on Page 109 of the manual.

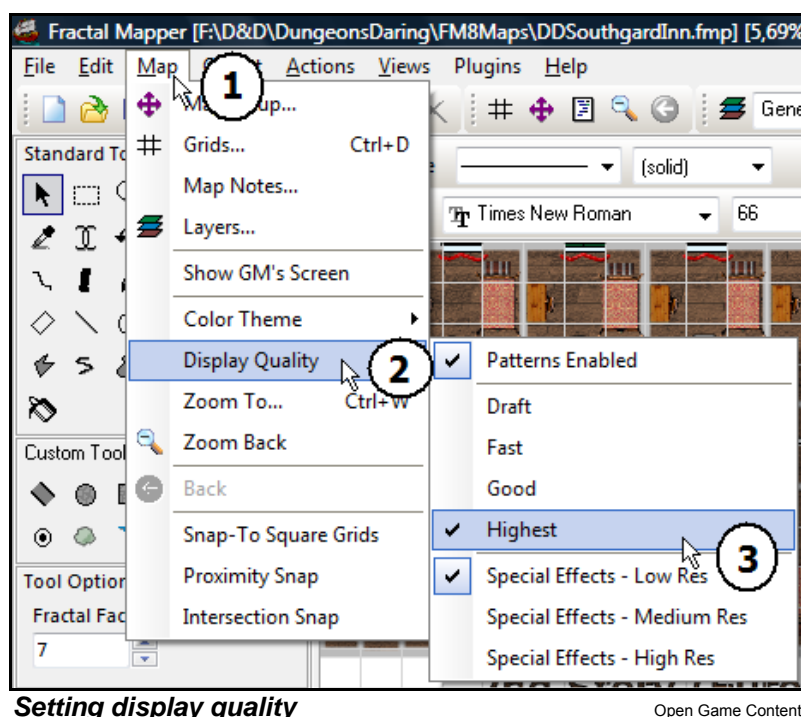
There are two basic ways to bring your game to greater life using this dual-screen method:

- Our preference is with a projection screen and a digital projector. The game master uses a laptop PC with dual monitor support, showing the game master's version of the map or dungeon floor plan on the laptop's screen and, with the digital projector, the player's version on a 6ft/180cm-wide projection screen. Both the players and the game master use laser pens to indicate locations on the screen. We found that this has brought a degree of excitement and involvement into our games that we had not achieved with scenario boards and miniature figures.
- Other campaign groups in which the game master and all or most players have laptops prefer a network approach. All of the PCs at the gaming table are connected in a peer-to-peer network, and all have an installation of *FM8*. The game master and the PCs both have access to the PCs' map, but only the game master has access to his or her own version.

We'll give you some more tips on how to apply these features later when we're using the description of Bedrich's lair.

There are two important points for those of you who wish to use or modify the adventure maps with *FM8*:

- You need to make the appropriate display quality settings in *FM8* to see all of the map detail on your screen.

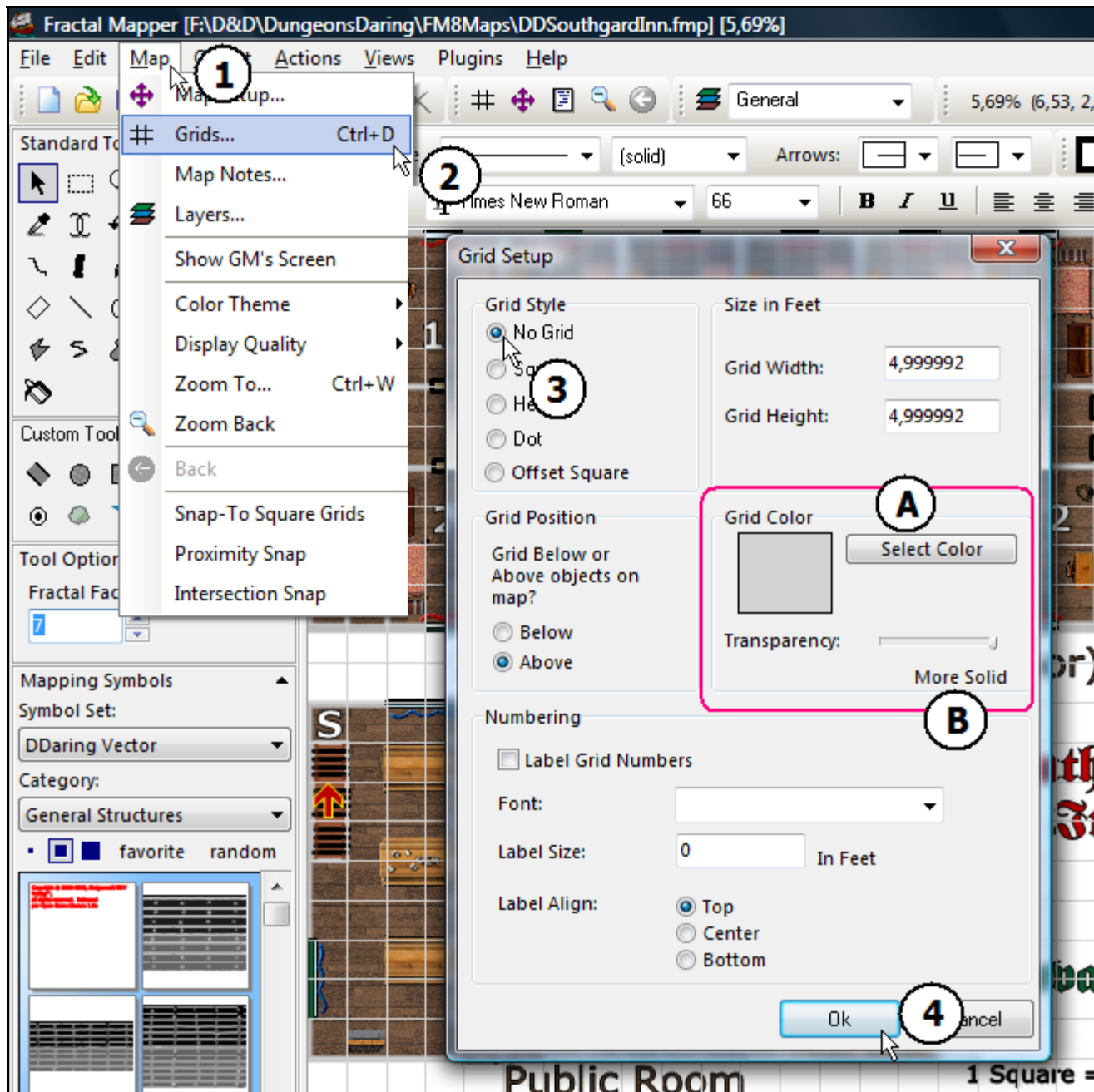




With the illustration on the previous page as a guideline, use the following *FM8* menu options:

- 1. In the main menu, click the option *Map*.
- 2. In the dropdown menu, click *Display Quality*.
- 3. In the next menu, click *Highest* and also make sure that the other settings match those in the illustration on the previous page.

All of the *Dungeons Daring* maps have grids upon them to help you measure distances. In some cases, you might want to hide these grids. In others, you might want to change their color or degree of transparency to make the map more legible. Here's how to do that:



Changing the grid settings of a *Dungeons Daring* map or floor plan

Open Game Content

Use the illustration above as a guideline.

- 1. In the main menu, click the option *Map*.
- 2. In the dropdown menu pick the option *Grids*.

- 3. In the dialog box *Grid Setup* click the radio button *No Grid* under *Grid Style*.
- 4. If that's all that you want to do, click the command button *OK*.

However, if you want to change the degree of transparency or color of the grid rather than making it invisible, stay with the illustration on the previous page and:

- 1. In the main menu, click the option *Map*.
- 2. In the dropdown menu pick the option *Grids*.
- A. In the dialog box *Grid Setup* click the command button *Select Color* to change the grid color.
- B: And/or use the slider *More Solid* to set the degree of transparency.
- 4. Click the command button *OK*.

Here is how to find the original, editable versions of the maps for this adventure:

- The map of the March of Slovan on Page 224 is in the file *DDLastMillOverland.fmp*.
- The map of the City of Slovan's Old City on Page 226 is in the file *DDSlovanCity.fmp*.
- The floor plan of the Southguard Inn on Page 232 is in the file *DDSouthguardInn.fmp*.
- The dungeon plan of Bedrich's lair on Page 252 is in the file *DDBedrichsLair.fmp*.
- The dungeon plan of Bedrich's hideout on Page 255 is in the file *DDBedrichsHideout.fmp*.
- The old hand-drawn, parchment map of Dark Valley (Tingl's Mill) on Page 258 is in the file *DDDDarkValleyParchment.fmp*.
- The map of Goldfields on Page 262 is in the file *DDGoldfields.fmp*.
- The dungeon plan of the Golden Scythe Inn on Page 263 is in the file *DDGoldenScythe.fmp*.
- The encounter map for the North Hills brigand encounter on Pages 265 and 266 is in the file *DDNorthHills.fmp*.
- The encounter scene in the North Hills on Page 221 is in the file *DDNorthHillsEncounter.fmp*.
- The encounter map for the draug encounter near Lastmill on Page 271 is in the file *DDDraugs.fmp*.
- The maps of Lastmill on Pages 276 and 277 are in the file *DDLlastmill.fmp*.
- The floor plan of the Border House Inn on Page 280 is in the file *DDBorderInn.fmp*.
- The map of the Lastmill draug encounter on Page 286 is in the file *DDDraugEncounter1.fmp*.
- The map of Dark Valley on Page 291 is in the file *DDDDarkValley.fmp*.
- The floor plans of Tingl's Mill on Pages 295-298 and 305 are in the file *DDTinglsMill.fmp*.
- The dungeon plan of Dark Valley's tunnels on Page 306 is in the file *DDDDarkValleyTunnels.fmp*.
- The dungeon plans of Dark Valley's tunnels on Page 307-308 are in the files *DDDDarkValleyTunnelsArea1.fmp*, *DDDDarkValleyTunnelsArea21.fmp* and *DDDDarkValleyTunnelsAreas3\_4.fmp*.
- The dungeon plans of Baron Nundlung's tower on Pages 314-315 are in the file *DDNundlungsTower.fmp*.

## 1.5 Advance Checks

There are many situations where your PCs are entitled to make a check to see whether they succeed at a certain task or in defending themselves against a certain threat. Unfortunately, checks must be made at times for things of which the PCs may not be aware. Indeed, such checks often determine whether the PC becomes aware of something. If you ask the player to make a check at such critical times, you – the game master – and not the circumstances of the PC's situation might tip off the player and the PC that something secretive is going on.

Some game masters make secret checks for their PCs in such situations. There may be times when you have to do that too, but it's best to avoid them as much as possible. Most players prefer to roll their own checks rather than having the game master make secret checks for their character. Therefore, we suggest that you have each player roll a series of advance checks for such situations.

We recommend two or three check rolls in advance for each of the following. You need to take a piece of paper and write these down. You then can use these checks whenever such a situation occurs, applying the player's own dice roll to the check without tipping the player or the PC off to the fact that something is happening. These are the advance check rolls that we recommend:

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| • Strength            | • Knowledge         |
| • Dexterity           | • Endurance Defense |
| • Stamina             | • Reflex Defense    |
| • Magical Aptitude    | • Will Defense      |
| • Mechanical Aptitude |                     |

Once you've used up these advance checks, take a short break in play and have your players roll up a new set of advance checks.

## 2. Slovan City

**Municipal Level:** Town

**Ruler:** Margrave Hermacek

**Enforcement:** March Militia

**Population:** 1,900

**Alignment inclination:** Neutral good

**Wealth:** 800,000 GP. Top sales price: 42,000 GP. The average person in Slovan City earns 8 GP monthly. Sir Radu, the adjutant, earns 300 GP a year. Farmers earn about 5 GP a month. Poor laborers may earn as little as 2 GP a month.

**Political System:** Benevolent (march)

**Taxation:** Inn Tax 5%, Crop Tax 5% tithe, Product Tax 5%

**Extraordinary laws:** None

**Key locations and map numbers:** See following pages

**Key NPCs:** Margrave Hermacek, ruler, 56-year-old male Born Knight lvl 12, AL: NG, Sir Radu, march adjutant, 38-year-old male Dubbed Knight lvl 8, AL: RG; Sir Ivan, militia commander, 68-year-old Dubbed Knight lvl 9, AL: NG; Gunnar, court mage, 46-year-old male Sorcerer of 8<sup>th</sup> lvl; Wladislav, royal Diviner in the service of the king, 52-year-old male Diviner lvl 9. Watch: 78 officers and soldiers of the march militia (see description of map location No. 5).

As your adventure starts, give your players the description of Slovan City that begins on Page 223 and ends on Page 233.



*The south gate of Slovan City*

Product Identity

## In Slovan City

This part of the world was torn by serious wars that ended some 30 years ago. You find yourselves in the town of Slovan City in the Kingdom of Wenzel. The great Harriki Empire once had its borders about 100 miles/160km north of Slovan City, but it fell in the Great Wars.

Slovan City is the ruling seat of the March of Slovan. A march is a border county that is ruled by a margrave, the title given to a count who rules along and protects a land's borders.

During the wars, forces of the Darkness coming from the icy lands of the north and overran the Harriki Empire with an army that included not only orcs but also many draugs, the name given to undead humans, in other words, changed humans who are not alive but who are not really dead either. Their souls and bodies continue on in pseudo-life, powered by black necromantic magic.

In the final months of the Great Wars, the remnants of the Harriki host did manage to defeat what was left of the draug army, sending its remaining undead in flight to the northwest, but the empire itself was in a state of ruin. The poison of the draugs had made wasteland of its once fertile fields. Within a few years, the Harriki that had survived migrated southward and eastward, assimilating themselves into the population of the Wenzel Kingdom or the distant Middle Empire.

The draug invaders then moved again into the Harriki wastelands, but there no longer were many of them, and few humans saw them as a continuing threat. Many parts of the lands of the fallen empire long lay barren of life. Only in the recent past have the lands begun healing themselves, with patches of prairie and forest beginning to grow again in places. The draugs in the north appear to be too weak and too few in number to stop this recovery of nature. However, there are some hardy humans left in the lands of the old empire who make use of this change.

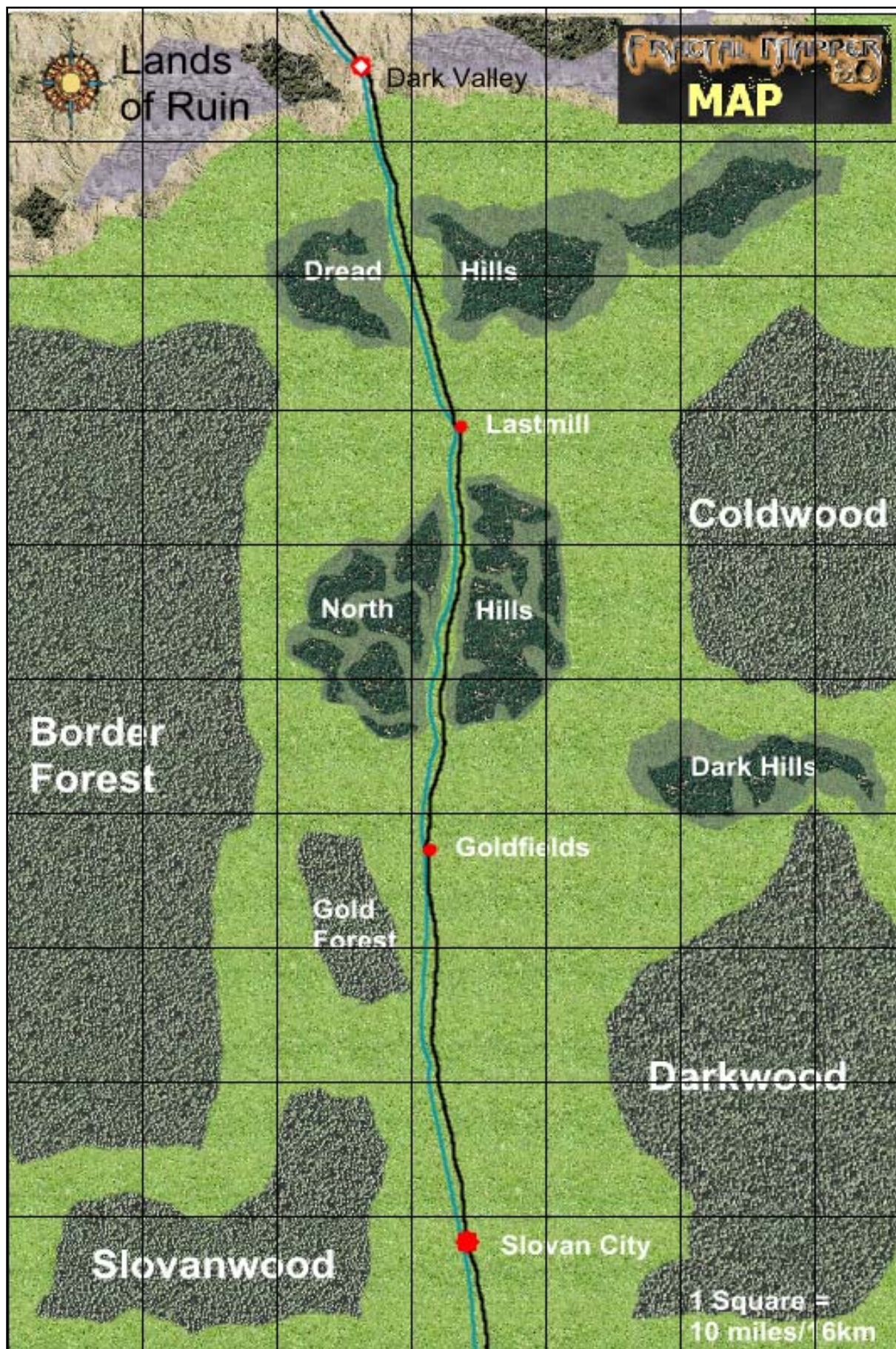
The March of Slovan also suffered severely during the wars, although it was neither conquered nor destroyed. However, most of its population is gone. The North Road along the south-flowing Jihvode River that led to the Harriki Empire and to the baronial town of Tingle's Mill inside the fallen empire's border once was straddled with farming and foresting villages for miles/kilometers on either side. Slovan City also was a thriving border city of 40,000.

Only the settlements of Goldfields and Lastmill remain on the North Road today. The other villages have crumbled into ruin and are overgrown with grass or forest, as are the roads that once led to them. Slovan City has been reduced to a border town, although the kingdom wants it to continue to stand as a northern defense post.

However, what survives of the old march still is doing fairly well. Margrave Hermacek's soldiers have done a good job of keeping the North Road and both Goldfields and Lastmill relatively free of the brigands who have taken up residence in the Coldwood and the Border Forest in the distance on both sides of the road.

That notwithstanding, Slovan City remains only a shadow of its former self, albeit it one that prospers respectively in its reduced dimensions. In its early days, when it housed hardly 1,000 people, its founders built a strong wall around the settlement to defend it from whatever might come.





*The March of Slovan – the adventure area*



However, the town grew beyond its founders' wildest imaginings. Within a short time, the majority of its residents lived outside of the wall, leading the city fathers to build a second and much larger wall encircling the so-called *New City*.

Then came the Great Wars, when all of the March of Slovan suffered badly. Draugs and large hordes of orcs that served them poured several times over the northern border, bringing ruin and destruction. In the wars' worst moments for the march, almost every settlement and village north of Slovan City had been destroyed, including most of the northern part of Slovan City's New City. Only the small *Old City* inside the older city wall and the southern half of the New City survived.

Fortunately, most settlers of the devastated areas of the rural march and of the fallen sections of Slovan City's New City were able to escape into the heart of the kingdom in the south, safe from harm. Orcs and draugs leveled the outer wall in the north and destroyed the New City north of the inner wall. There's never been any reason to rebuild it; most of those who fled remained in the south.

Of the entire northern part of the march, only the remnants of Slovan City and the villages of Goldfields and Lastmill survived the wars with minimal damage. Goldfields and Lastmill were protected by large units of royal soldiers sent by old King Leos, who was determined that the North Road remain closed to the hordes from the north.

Being forced to raid across the land deprived the draugs that led the attack of the ability to shield themselves properly from sunlight, leading to the destruction of many of the evil tide's war captains. Without draugs to control them, the leaderless orcs quickly fell victim to their own chaos and were relatively easy to defeat.

Thus, the March of Slovan just barely missed vanishing from the map books of the Kingdom of Wenzel. Instead, it faded into what it is today, a northern watchpost that keeps an eye on whatever might be brewing in the north. Most of the subjects of the King of Wenzel seldom ever even think about the distant northern march.

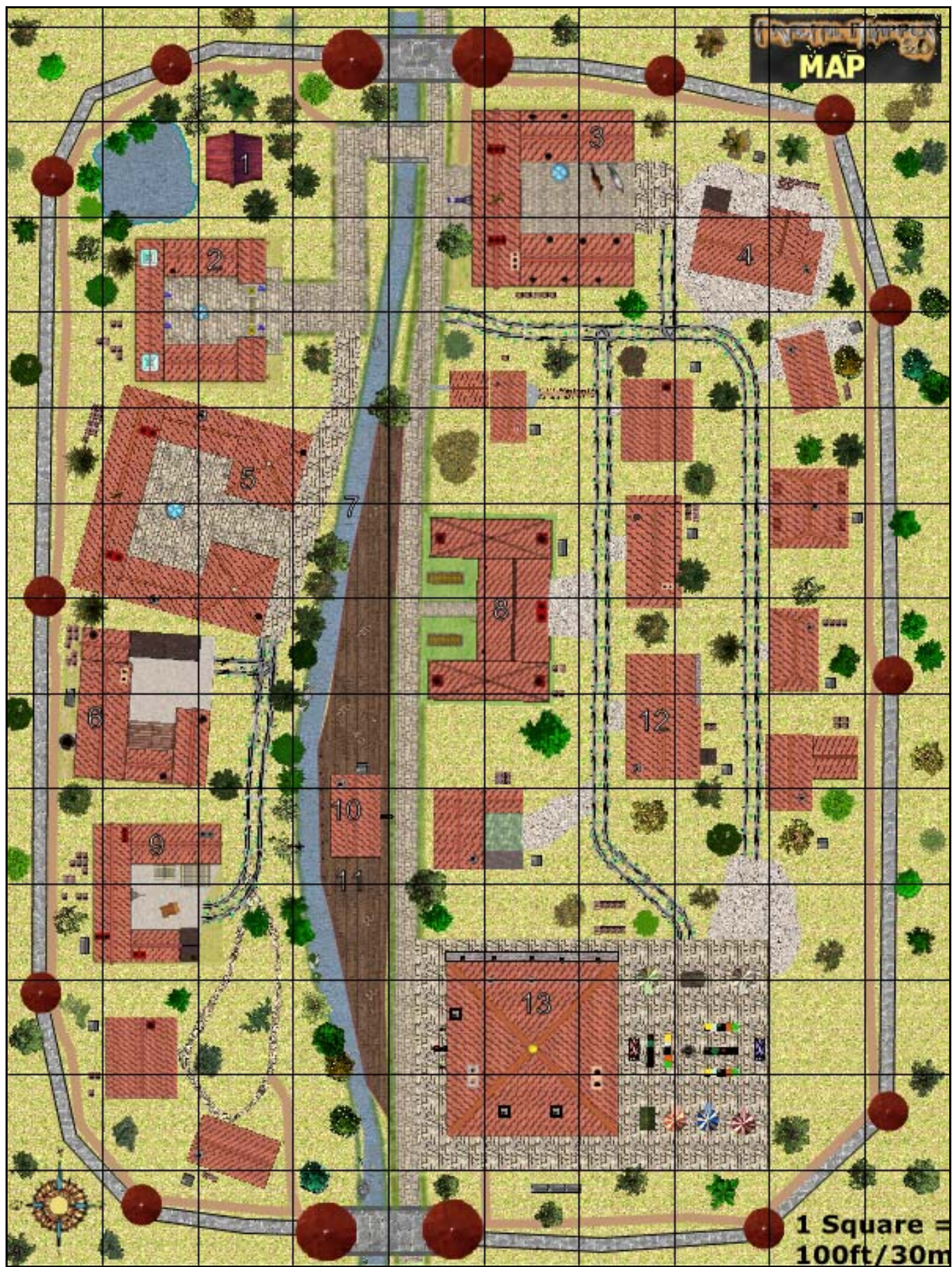
The only human population north of Slovan City that is outside of its bounds and Goldfields and Lastmill are a few roving Rangers and Nature Druids and a band of 15 or 20 brigands that came from places unknown into the Border Forest recently. When High Summer comes, Margrave Hermacek plans to send several specialized units of soldiers out to encircle the forest and then hunt down and hang the criminals.

Unfortunately, the margrave has been faced with a new problem lately. There have been instances where draugs from the north have made night raids in Lastmill and abducted villagers. He has said he intends to put a stop to this.

It seems now that his ill fortune could be your good fortune. While most of the folks in Slovan City enjoy simple prosperity in a remote but now tranquil part of the world, all of you are unemployed, nor does a suitable job opening appear to be waiting around the next corner.

Fortunately ... maybe ... is the fact that Margrave Hermacek is seeking mercenaries who will perform a special mission for him. He's offering an incredible payment of 1,000 gold pieces to anyone who can succeed, with an advance payment of 100 GP. At that level of gold, his demands may be beyond your modest abilities. But one could check the situation out.





*The Old City – the inner part of Slovan City*



Regardless of whatever solution you find for your financial problems, Slovan City is where you are at the moment, and it's a town that you know relatively well. The heart of town is the walled Old City, the town center where Margrave Hermacek has his modest country castle and where his militia has its last remaining garrison.

One must be careful with the militia. It serves as both the army and the police of the march. Its job is to keep peace in the march and to deal with those who would breach it, regardless of whether these persons are draugs from the north, brigands in the forests or common thieves and other criminals in the settlements. The commander of the militia at the garrison in Slovan City is Sir Ivan, a 68-year-old Dubbed Knight who was knighted by King Lladoslav.

Many of the key businesses in Slovan City as well as governmental facilities are in the former Old City, surrounded by the Inner Wall. The parts of the New City that were north of the inner wall as well as due east and west of it remain in a state of crumbling ruin. The people who once lived there fled south into other parts of the kingdom or into the east. Since the wars, there has been no one for whom the northern part of the former city might be rebuilt.

The main part of surviving Slovan City lives south of the inner wall, where one also finds additional taverns, small inns and secondary businesses. The outer wall, in deteriorating condition, still makes an arc around the southern part of the former New City, but it no longer is maintained, nor are its towers manned by the militia. The parts of the wall east, west and north of the inner city were destroyed in the wars, and they have not been rebuilt.

There are no hidden dangers (except for possible cave-ins) in the northern, ruined part of the Old City. It is not inhabited by any creature, living or dead, except for small natural animals. Militia units patrol the ruins to see to it that things stay that way.

The map on the previous page shows the Old City inside of the inner wall, where most of the march's main facilities are:

1. **Gunnar's Tower.** Gunnar, a refugee Harriki sorcerer, serves as Margrave Hermacek's court mage. He is based in the tower, which always has served the march's court magi. Gunnar, a 46-year-old male, is a Sorcerer. The tower also is used by Wladislav, a royal Diviner in the service of King Lladoslav. Wladislav is a 52-year-old male. His main mission is to keep a magical eye upon doings in Dark Valley, over the northern border in the fallen empire. It is commonly known that one can gain access to Gunnar and Wladislav only through Margrave Hermacek. Otherwise, they are unavailable to the general public.
2. **Margrave Hermacek's Castle.** This is a small country castle that also is the center of government for the march. The main characters in the castle are the Margrave Hermacek, a 56-year-old Born Knight who was one of the kingdom's heroes of the Great Wars. The margrave also is the march's sole judge. The head of Hermacek's staff is Sir Radu, his adjutant. Radu, a native of Slovan City, is a 38-year-old Dubbed Knight. Radu knows Dark Valley and the surrounding area in the fallen empire well. Ten years ago, while serving as a royal army officer, he led several expeditions into the Dark Valley area to destroy then larger bands of draugs from the North. King Lladoslav knighted him for this service. Anyone who wishes to see the margrave must go through Sir Radu.

3. **Southguard Inn.** The Southguard is Slovan City's only quality inn, also the town's only inn that has rooms available for long-term guests staying indefinitely in the town. It is owned and operated by Jaroslav, a town native, who is a 44-year-old Commoner. The inn's waitress is Olga, an attractive 26-year-old native of Slovan City who also is a Commoner. Jaroslav brews his own house lager in the March's Communal Brewery. Unless your group has decided otherwise, this is where you all live in Slovan City. The weekly cost for a room is 1 GP. It includes breakfast. Noon and evening meals run between 6 BP and 1 SP. A quart/liter tankard of house beer costs 3 CP. A pint/half-liter of wine costs 7 CP.
4. **Court Apothecary.** This operation belongs to Margrave Hermacek. It produces herbal medicines that are made available to healers in his service and also to healers, herbal witches and rangers who provide services elsewhere in the march. The managing apothecary is Antonin, a 59-year-old male Healer. He also is the margrave's personal Healer. Antonin is assisted by Nadja, a 29-year-old female Healer, and Tanja, a 24-year-old Healer. They can brew many of the herbal medicines described in the *Players Guide*.
5. **March Garrison.** The commander of the march's militia is Sir Ivan, a 68-year-old Dubbed Knight. Under his command in Slovan City are 6 officers, 12 non-commissioned officers, and 60 soldiers, all of them Warriors. Sir Ivan also commands the detachment in Goldfields. The militia provides both military and police services. The march's jail is in the cellar dungeon of the garrison. When there is a hanging, the gallows are erected on the garrison's courtyard. The soldiers in Slovan City are responsible both for the town and for all of the rural parts of the march except the immediate surroundings of Goldfields.
6. **Court Communal Brewery.** The brewery belongs to Margrave Hermacek and is used by his court brewmaster to brew the beer used by the castle and the garrison. However, it is a communal brewery and as such also is used by the landlords at the town's inns and taverns to make their own house brews. A regular brewing schedule determines who is entitled to use the brewery on which days. The brewery is run by Frantisek, a 58-year-old male Artisan who is both a master plumber and mason. He is employed by the margrave.
7. **Jihvode River.** The stream, which flows down into the march from Dark Valley and the ruined lands, now is an unnavigable, fast-moving rapids upstream from Lastmill. Dams that once existed in the Dread Hills made it possible to run small boats between old Tingl's Mill and Lastmill, but these were destroyed in the wars. Small boats still can transport people and supplies between Lastmill, Goldfields and Slovan City. Larger boats can sail south of Slovan City, to and from the other counties of the kingdom.
8. **Royal Counsel.** Counsel Taras, a 37-year-old Merchant, is the representative of King Lladoslav in the march. He is in charge of conveying regular news between the king and the margrave's court. The royal Diviner Wladislav, in Gunnar's Tower, serves under Taras. The counsel building in Slovan City also rents out office space to companies in other parts of the kingdom that do business in the march.
9. **Josef's Wagon Works.** Josef is a 51-year-old male master wainwright, an Artisan. He employs two journeyman Artisans and two Commoners who are apprentices. His company makes and repairs wagons and horse-drawn sleighs.

10. Waterside House. The tavern draws mostly laborers. The tavernkeeper is Miroslav, a 55-year-old male Merchant. The only food offered is a selection of cold cuts or cold fish specialties on a board with bread and condiments at 2 BP per serving. A quart/liter tankard of house beer, brewed by Miroslav in the communal brewery, costs 5 CP.
11. Docks. River boats dock here and load and unload passengers and cargo. Passage per person: Jihlovice (next settlement outside of the march to the south) 1 SP, Goldfields 4 BP, Lastmill, 8 BP.
12. Elena the Healer. Elena, a 62-year-old female Herbal Witch, sells her medicines and provides services to the general public.
13. March Market. The nine-story building and its grounds are owned by Margrave Hermacek. The market is the tallest building in the entire Kingdom of Wenzel. Much of its floor space and places on the outdoor market square are rented to merchants, peddlers, farmers, etc. The March Market was built to help Slovan City stand against sieges and heavy attacks, should war break out again. Community hay lofts are in the upper stories of the market building. Flour and grain are stored on the middle floors. Conserves including salted meat and wines are in the cellars. The ground floor houses a large general store that has most items that locals need. The store owner is Katrina, a 48-year-old female Merchant. She employs six workers who take care of customers and inventory. All are 1 male and female Commoners. In the rear of the first floor is Pavel's Butcher Shop. Pavel, a 39-year-old male Artisan, is a master butcher who owns his own private slaughterhouse and second butcher shop south of the inner wall in what remains of the New City. On the second story (European 1<sup>st</sup> floor) is Miklas' Leather Shop, which sells a wide variety of leather goods, most intended for riding. He has, among other things, a good selection of saddles, saddlebags, reins, etc. Miklas, a 40-year-old male Artisan, has a leather works in the southern remains of the New City. His shop manager is Libuse, a 22-year-old female Merchant. The second story also has the small Cartography Shop of Milos, a 33-year-old male Scholar. On commission Milos makes maps of those territories he knows, which include all of the march and much of the Kingdom of Wenzel. He is unable to make maps of the fallen Harriki Empire.

## Beyond the Map

All of the following locations are south of the inner wall in what remains of the New City. None are shown on the map. The mills are on a small rapids on the Jihvode River. Primitive locks were built to facilitate boat travel through the rapids area. The canal and the mill stream flow through gates in the dam made for the locks. The dam holds back sufficient water to create a mill pond large enough to assure a flow through the mill runs, even in times of drought.

Jihvode Mill: A large grain and vegetable oil mill. The master miller is Shamel, a 45-year-old male Artisan. He employs two journeymen, both human male Artisans, and two apprentices, both human male Commoners.



**Slovan Timber:** Emil, a 50-year-old male Artisan, is the owner and master sawyer. His sawmill cuts timber from the march's forests and sells the resulting lumber. He employs two journeyman sawyers, both male Artisans, an apprentice and a laborer, both male Commoners. The main saws are driven by belts powered by a waterwheel.

**Rapids Smithy:** The large hammersmith operation is run by the twins Gustav and Jiri. Both are 44-year-old male Artisans. Gustav is a master weaponsmith and armor maker, and Jiri is a master blacksmith. They not only supply customer services but also are the official court smiths. They employ three journeyman weaponsmiths and armor makers, all male Artisans; two journeyman blacksmiths, both male Artisans, and three apprentices and a laborer, all Commoners. The smithy has two large hammers powered by a waterwheel.

**Jakub's Shafts.** Master fletcher Jakub and his apprentice make excellent bows and arrows. Jakub is a 52-year-old male Artisan. His apprentice is Kamila, a 23-year-old female Artisan who was elevated to journeyman level at the last guild festival.

**Julius' Steeds.** Julius, a 38-year-old male Merchant, sells riding and draught horses, ponies and donkeys.

## Other Information

Most prices tend to correspond to those in the *Players Guide*. Adventurers are affected by an inn tax of 5%, which is included in the room price, and a product tax, which is included in the price of all products purchased. Slovan City has a population of about 1,900, all human.



**Slovan City – the Ruins of the northern part of the New City**

## Southguard Inn

The Southguard, where most PC groups in this adventure will have their lodgings, once was a true luxury inn. Today, it's still the finest inn in the March of Slovan, but one can see that it has had better days. The Southguard is the only inn in Slovan City that has rooms available for long-term guests who are staying indefinitely in the town.

The ancestors of the current innkeeper, Jaroslav, grew wealthy housing well-heeled merchants who traveled between the fallen Harriki Empire in the north and the heart of the Kingdom of Wenzel to the south. Those days have passed. Slovan City is only a shadow of itself, and most of the merchants who come to town today are little more than peddlers.

Still, the Southguard is where most prefer to stay. It isn't difficult. The prices are only a fraction of what they once were. The weekly cost for a room is 1 GP or 7 SP per person in a double room. The price includes breakfast.

Jaroslav and his late father, the previous innkeeper, have invested as much as they could and can into maintaining the fine old hostelry, but that isn't enough. The place is becoming worn and a bit threadbare.

Jaroslav is a 44-year-old Commoner. The inn's waitress, Olga, an attractive 26-year-old native of Slovan City who also is a Commoner, is the only other fulltime employee. Jaroslav's wife, Milna, a 42-year-old Artisan, is a master cook. The maids and maintenance people work part-time.

Jaroslav brews his own house lager in the Court Communal Brewery. Noon and evening meals run between 6 BP and 1 SP. Milna cooks simple country food, but it's excellent. A quart/liter tankard of house beer costs 3 CP.

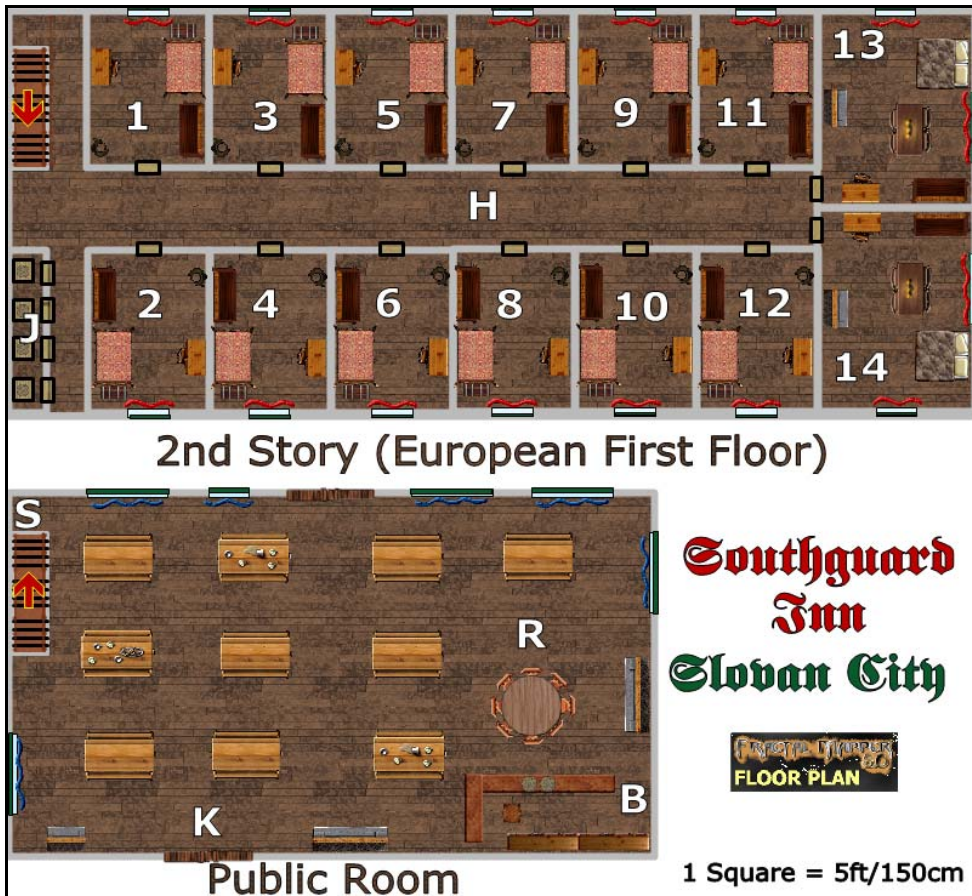
Use the floor plans on the following page as a guideline to the Southguard. The public room has the only public entrance to the inn. The public room and kitchen are on the ground floor of the main building. The guest rooms are on the second story (European first floor). The side buildings contain a guest stable, a storage area, a small slaughter and butcher house and the apartment of Jaroslav and Milna. The side buildings also have the jakes for public room guests.

One enters the inn and the public room through double, massive oak doors. All of the tables are sturdy but time-worn. At times, one has to be careful not to get slivers in one's hand. The six windows can be closed with green wooden shutters on the outside and covered with thick blue draperies on the inside. The draperies are worn and have sun-faded spots. Three fireplaces heat the public room. One is on the wall to the right on the floor plan. The others are on the wall to the kitchen on the bottom side of the floor plan.

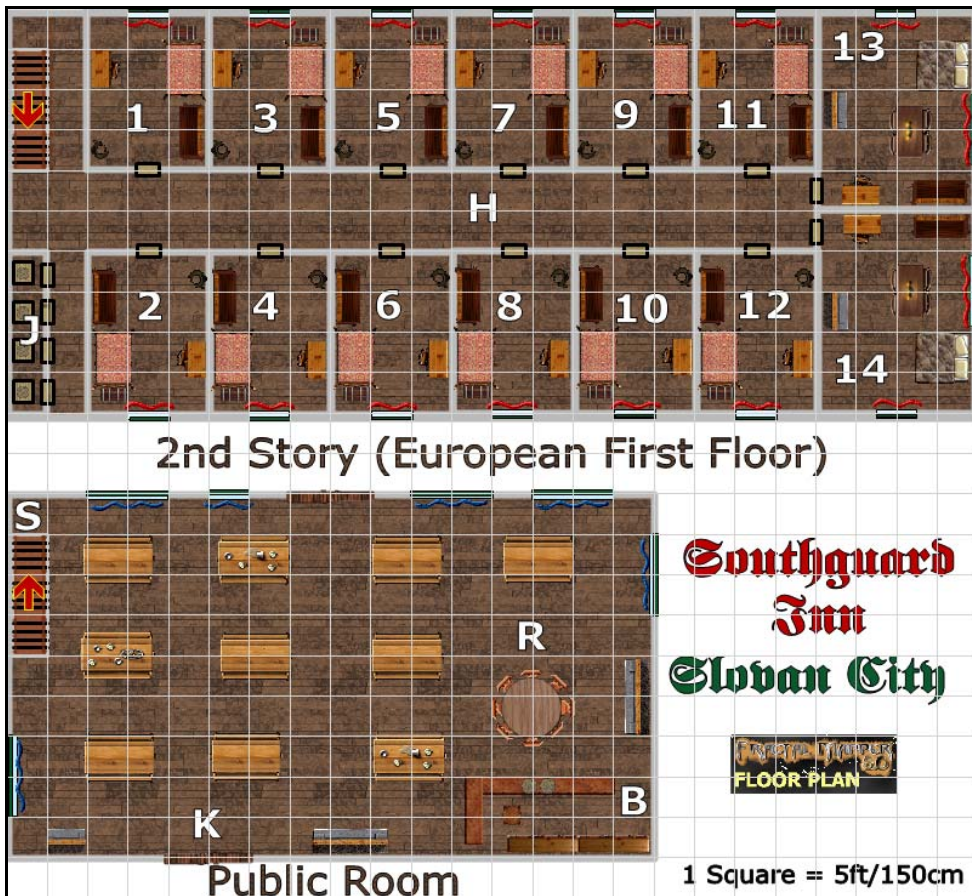
R – This table is reserved for local regulars who've patronized the public room for years. Unless you fall in that category, this table is not open to you.

B – This is the tap, where Jaroslav pours drinks and conducts business with house guests. There usually are two hand-pulled barrels on the bar. One contains Jaroslav's house brew, the other a low quality white wine from the heart of the kingdom to the south. A pint/half-liter tankard of wine costs 7 CP.





*The Southguard Inn with distance grid (below) and without (above)* Open Game Content



K – Door to the kitchen. Milna cooks within. Olga goes regularly between the kitchen and the public room to deliver orders, serve food and take payments. Jaroslav serves drinks from behind the bar.

S – The stairway to the guestrooms. The stairs are covered with a once luxurious brown-red carpet that is threadworm but not dangerous. Jaroslav always keeps an eye on the stairway to see to it that public room guests who are not house guests do not ascend the stairs.

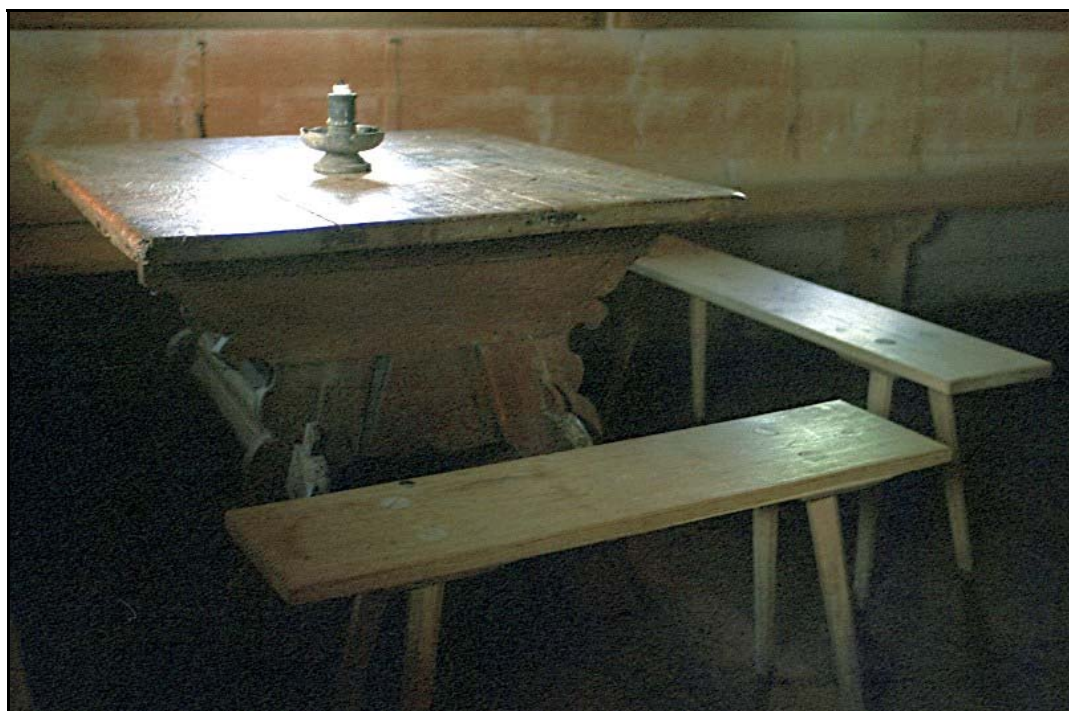
### **The Second Story** (European 1<sup>st</sup> Floor)

J – Directly at the top of the stairs are four jakes, reserved only for those who are staying in the inn. These jakes are not available to public room guests.

H – The 10-foot/3m wide hallway leads to the 12 guest rooms.

1-10 – These are singles. They cost 1 GP a week. Each room has a single four-poster bed, a chest, a wardrobe, a desk and a wood-burning stove. An adequate wood supply always is on hand. The rooms all have double windows, each 30 inches/75cm wide, with green shutters that can be barred on the outside and worn, sun-faded red draperies on the inside. Simple key locks secure the doors.

11-12 – These are doubles. They cost 7 SP per person per week. Each room has a double bed, a chest, a wardrobe, a desk, a table with four chairs and a wood-burning fireplace. An adequate wood supply always is on hand. The rooms have a set of double windows, each 30 inches/75cm wide, and a set of quadruple windows, each 30 inches/75cm wide. All have green shutters on the outside that can be locked or barred and worn, sun-faded red draperies on the inside. The quadruple windows have sliding shutters rather than door-type shutters. Simple key locks secure the doors.



*In the public room*



## 2.1 Information for the Game Master

Once you've given the last 11 pages to your players, the adventure goes into their hands. You need to give them some time to decide what they want to do. Most groups will bite rather quickly at the mission that the margrave is offering to finance, at the very least going to the castle to make an appointment with Sir Radu, in order that they can learn what it's about.

That will take you to the next section. However, some groups might want to nose around and get some information on their own before they see the margrave. Others might ignore the margrave's offer completely and decide to ride off in another direction. Even though you have no material to deal with that option, let them do it. Have them ride the first day until sunset before they come upon another village.

Borrow the brigand encounters later in this adventure and give them one or two similar encounters with similar brigands along the way. See to it that any brigands they might slay have empty pockets. When they arrive at the next settlement, make it a small thorp. It should have a small tavern, one that probably has two uncomfortable guest rooms that already are taken by peddlers.

Make your PCs sleep in a farmer's barn with their bedrolls, if they have any. See to it that the farmer charges them two or three copper pieces for the use of his barn. If they decide to camp under the open skies, let them, but have a thunderstorm with a rain deluge break out around midnight.

Don't do anything to force your PCs back to Slovan City, but keep them uncomfortable, under attack and without the ability to earn a single copper piece anywhere until they decide that the wisest thing to do is to see the margrave. If a PC thief decides to steal to finance the group, let him or her use his or her skills. But if he or she fails, see to it that militiamen encounter the group to arrest him or her and throw the thief in the hoosegow for a few months.

If the PCs try to find work, have the locals tell them that there's nothing available, but they've heard that the margrave in Slovan City is paying handsomely for a group of adventurers willing to take on a mission he has for them.

Whatever happens, it's your job to manage events at present rather than pushing things forward. That probably will continue until the PCs decide to go to the margrave's castle. When they get there, they need to see Sir Radu first. They will not get a chance to see the margrave immediately. Instead, Sir Radu will make an appointment for them in the next day or two. He will send a runner to their lodgings to inform them when they should appear at the castle.

## 2.2 Meeting the Margrave

Once the PCs have an appointment, give them pages 235 to 240. These give them details they can look back at when they visit Dark Valley.

Handing out this kind of paper usually isn't the best of ideas. It interrupts role-playing. But in this case, we're assuming that your players are inexperienced and haven't learned yet to take note of those things that will help them best succeed in their adventure. For this initial outing, the text will give them a chance to refresh their memories. However, if you are against this approach, you also can use the text as a script for role-playing the parts of the various NPCs.

As a game master, you should note that the text ends with the PCs being asked if they have any questions. You should ponder in advance what your PCs might ask and how the margrave and the magi might answer such questions. This is their and your bridge back into role-playing. It's important that the PCs have a chance on role-playing level to interact personally with the margrave and the magi.



## By the Margrave

The guards take you to Sir Radu, who advises you on what proper manners are in the presence of the margrave. He says you will have an audience with the margrave, his court Sorcerer Gunnar and the visiting royal Diviner Wladislav. The adjutant assures you that the margrave will answer any and all questions that you may have, but it is proper court etiquette to wait until he asks for your questions.

Sir Radu then leads you into a luxurious chamber, albeit much more modest than you had expected. Four chairs are on a dais that is about a foot/30cm higher than the main floor. The adjutant motions for you to take seats on chairs upon the lower main level. Still standing, he then introduces you to the margrave, the man in the middle of the seated group of three.

Hermacek is a greying man who is beginning to show his 56 years, but he still has the figure of a powerful warrior. The men at his sides appear to be more scholarly types.

*I am grateful you have come*, the margrave says. Gesturing toward the man to his right (your left), he says, *This is Wladislav. He is a visiting Diviner in the service of the king.* Wladislav appears to be slightly younger than the margrave but also is greying.

Hermacek gestures toward the other man. *This is my court Sorcerer, Gunnar*, he says. Gunnar is a bit younger than the margrave or Wladislav, but he has reached his mid-40s. Both men give you a friendly nod, but they say nothing.

*We are beginning to have a problem with draugs in the march*, Hermacek says. *However, these problems are part of an older and greater problem.* The margrave turns toward the royal Diviner. *I think Wladislav can explain it best of all*, Hermacek says.

The royal Diviner nods his agreement and says, *The problem north of here comes from the Great Wars that once brought the march to the verge of ruin. The wars ended, as such, but neither the Harriki Empire nor the Draugs of the Darkness truly won or lost it. Rather, both sides had exhausted themselves and their resources. As a result, the wars petered out rather than being decided or having truly been ended.*

*The flames of the Great Wars flicker still, although weakly. However, there are signs that they are rekindling, slowly, quietly, almost unnoticed.*

*Let us look back for a few moments to the making of the Great Wars. They took place in the vast lands north of here that were the Harriki Empire. The Harriki were the first humans to settle these lands, warring with the fire giants to reach them. They were immigrants from a more distant land in the east that our scholars call the Middle Empire. Most Harriki who survived the wars returned there and remain there still.*

*Although the Harriki had to fight bitter battles with the fire giants to reach their new homeland, they found peace when they at last arrived there. The light elves who had settled and shaped the lands of their empire-to-be had left before their arrival. To their surprise, the Harriki found a rich, empty land that appeared to be awaiting them.*

*In it, they built the greatest empire ever known to mankind. But despite that, although the Harriki had gained more than men anywhere ever had achieved before their time, they were dissatisfied. They hated their mortality. They strove to learn the secret of immortality that they thought the elves knew but would not share with them*

*Thus began the corruption of the Harriki. A draug spirit of great evil whom we do not name came to some of the Harriki kings and offered them immortality as undead, as draugs, through the magic of black necromancy.*

*Our folk too are of the Harriki, but in those darkening times, we left the empire and formed our own realm, which we kept clean of draugs and undeath. From what we have learned of these times, it appears that this great draug spirit arranged for one of the Harriki kings to be slain in secret. The high draug then took this king's form and identity, ruling in the dead king's place and leading much of the empire into Darkness and evil.*

*We know not whether such things be true, but Harriki Rangers who still guard parts of the fallen empire claim that the high draug was a fallen member of the creator race. Further, they say, it is forbidden for such to intervene directly in the affairs of men, much less to slay one of us. In slaying the Harriki king, the high draug brought the curse of the Earth Mother down upon him, which made him vulnerable, leading to its destruction. Or so the Harriki Rangers claim. No one in the Kingdom of Wenzel knows the truth of such matters.*

*However, these surviving men of the North say that there was another second-in-power to the High Draug who pretended to be the king. This was a Harriki duke who followed the High Draug as a powerful dark draug Black Necromancer. The duke, they say, survived the Great Wars and, from somewhere in a mountain castle far to the northwest, he commands the undead who still roam the ruins of the Harriki Empire.*

*Furthermore, the Rangers claim, there is another evil power even farther to the northwest, in the wasted tundra lands. The Witch Queen, they call her, and they say that she is a great living Black Necromancer of the dark elves. They say that the Witch Queen used her powers in the most critical moment of the Great Wars, when the high draug whom we do not name attempted to use his powers to destroy the entire Harriki army.*

*These things were forbidden to the high draug. In attempting to do these deeds, his vulnerability opened, and the Witch Queen stole the power he intended to unleash, making it her own. Thus was the high draug destroyed, or at least he has been driven from our world since that time.*

*The Harriki Rangers say that the Witch Queen hates the powers of the Darkness, although she is no less evil than the high draug was. What her designs are no man knows. We know only that she has not made her power felt again since the Great Wars.*

*Lest you begin to worry, the margrave has no intention of sending you against the great draug duke or the dark elven Witch Queen. These are tasks far beyond the ability of any of us in this room today. However, before you decide whether you will accept his mission, you should know what is driving the margrave's enemy.*

*During the Great Wars, the southernmost county of the Harriki Empire was the March of Jihvode, a land that now lies almost totally in ruin. It was named after our river, which has its source in the Harriki march. The March of Jihvode was divided into several baronies. That which touched on our borders was the Barony of Tingl's Mill, which was named after the barony's largest settlement.*

*Baron Nundlung was a low level Black Necromancer who served the powers of Darkness and as such became a draug who was totally subservient to the Dark Draug Duke in the northwest and the chain of command in the Dark Host under the duke. Nundlung and some of his followers were among the draug survivors of the wars. He and his undead still rule over what little is left of Tingl's Mill, although we in the south now call the ruined settlement Dark Valley.*

*Now, the margrave asked me to be here today to tell you these bits of history and to tell you more than you perhaps know about draugs. These creatures are undead. They are neither quite living nor quite dead.*

*Draugs are former humans who for one reason or another have consented to yield their lives to become undead. Their souls remain alive, but their bodies, which the souls inhabit, are dead. Their bodies do not rot or decay. They simply remain lifeless, as they were at the moment of death, animated by black necromantic magic rather than life.*

*Many of the Harriki sought undeath in the belief that it would make them immortal. Others were coerced or threatened into doing so. But each draug, in the end, consented to his or her transfiguration.*

*Now, there are many kinds of draugs, and I am not going to discuss all of them, because you will encounter only the lower levels of them if you accept the margrave's mission. There is no point in my discussing the greater draugs with you, because there are none where you may be going, and you would be absolutely helpless against them if you were to encounter any.*

*The minor draugs that you are likely to encounter if you accept the margrave's mission are like they were in life. If they were warriors, they still are warriors. If they were magi, they still are magi.*

*However, there also are some important differences. Draugs have no free will. They yielded their wills to their undead masters. In matters where their masters have left no instructions, they are free to do as they wish. But if they have orders to do certain things, they have no choice but to do them, even if the task threatens to destroy them. The only leeway left to them is to carry out their orders without enthusiasm or commitment, which sometimes can be an advantage for us.*

*In some respects, ordinary draugs are weaker than we are. In others, they are stronger. When encountering draugs, one must plan to take both those weaknesses and those strengths into account. Sunlight and iron are two great weaknesses of draugs. A single ray of direct sunlight will destroy a minor draug forever. Being in daylight without direct sunlight severely weakens a draug. One almost never sees a lesser draug in the light of day.*

*Iron weapons too are powerful against draugs. A wound from an iron weapon will slay a draug's body. However, we have no iron weapons that we can give you, and you doubtless have none of your own.*



*Draugs also are unable to cross running water of their own power. Contact with running water will damage their bodies. However, they can be transported over running water, and they can cross bridges.*

*Some things that can have a terrible effect upon the living have little or no effect upon draugs. Heat and cold have no effect upon a draug as long they do not cause it to burn or to dehydrate or become frozen to an extent that movement becomes clumsy to impossible. Cold may freeze a draug in its position, but it does no lasting damage. Heat can cause damage only if it causes the draug to catch fire.*

*Because a draug's eyes are dead, it does not see in the same manner that we do. But a draug can see in a magical manner, and even when it is dark, a draug can see over a span of 60 feet/18m. Because a draug's body is dead, most poisons have no effect upon it. Only those like acids that actually destroy tissue can damage a draug.*

*Because their bodies are dead, draugs react differently to wounds than the living do. They do not react to pain. They feel none, because they have no living nervous system. This can be a disadvantage for us, in that pain cannot affect a draug's performance. But it also can be an advantage, because draugs often withdraw from battle too late to save themselves. Their inability to feel pain makes them unable to properly assess the damage that they have taken.*

*Finally, destroyed draugs can be particularly annoying, because a draug you have destroyed has the irritating knack of meeting you again on another battlefield and on another day. This can occur only if you have failed to destroy the draug properly.*

*Black Necromancer Draugs can repair the damaged bodies of their slain followers magically and restore their souls to their dead bodies, if they haven't been properly destroyed. If one slays a draug, it's always best to sever its head and totally destroy it by burning it, smashing it beyond repair or the like. Once the head has been destroyed, the body is beyond repair.*

*Finally, there's another kind of so-called draug that one may encounter upon this mission. These aren't real draugs, although people name them that. I'm referring to zombie and skeleton draugs. They're really animations rather than draugs. Nothing about them is alive. They have neither souls nor spirits.*

*They're simply dead bodies or bones that have been animated by magic and that are steered through the complete concentration of the Black Necromancer who created them. They fight on until the Necromancer gives up control of them or until they've been so badly damaged that the magic can't move them anywhere.*

*Zombies and skeletons are relatively easy to handle if there aren't too many of them. If you face a number of them, try to get yourself into a tight area where you only have to face one or two at a time. They then should be relatively easy to take out.*

*That's my summary.*

Margrave Hermacek speaks again.

*If you accept and fulfill my mission, I'm willing to pay you a total of 1,000 GP, with 10% of that available as an advance.*

*Let me tell you what the problem is. The Harriki rangers of whom Wladislav spoke believe that the great draug duke in the northwest is trying to rebuild his draug army. That is a slow and tedious problem for him, because most of his undead host was forever destroyed in the Great Wars. To restore his army, he needs to make new draugs. He has begun to do so.*

*The Draug Baron Nundlung in Dark Valley is only a small pawn in the duke's operations, but his will is enslaved to the duke and whatever other draugs are between the duke and Nundlung in the chain of command. Nundlung is not powerful enough to make draugs, but he's apparently under orders to abduct humans.*

*This operation has started just recently, and I want it put to an end as quickly as possible. If I send my militia northward, Nundlung just will withdraw deeper into the fallen empire, where it will get more dangerous for my soldiers, the farther they go.*

*However, we think that if we send a small group of adventurers northward, like yourselves, Nundlung may believe that he will be able to capture you and turn you over to his superiors for transformation into draugs.*

*His draug warriors already have made a few incursions into the march, raiding our northernmost settlement, Lastmill, and abducting villagers there. They've been taken to Dark Valley, where Nundlung holds them prisoner in a dungeon until a higher level Black Necromancer in the duke's service comes down from the north to perform the transfiguration magic.*

*The visiting Necromancer draug comes once a month. He's not due again for another fortnight, so now still is a good time to make a raid.*

*What I hope you will do for me is make a raid into Dark Valley, free whatever of our people from Lastmill are being held there and destroy Baron Nundlung and whatever other draugs you can. The draug duke's resources still are spread so thin that we think if Nundlung is destroyed, he will order the other draugs in Dark Valley to retreat farther north, abandoning Dark Valley. That will make our march more secure.*

*Gunnar, my court sorcerer, can give you a bit of information about Dark Valley and your route there.*

*Gunnar nods acknowledgement to you.*

*There are only two settlements between here and Dark Valley, he says, Goldfields and Lastmill. Some draugs have been spotted in the area north of Goldfields recently, but they've made no trouble in the village yet. However, if you're on the road between Goldfields and Lastmill at night, you may run into them.*

*We've also had problems recently with living human brigands trying to rob travelers in the North Hills between Goldfields and Lastmill. They're untrained, and they have poor weapons, so they shouldn't pose a big problem for you. But you might run into some of them.*

*Once you leave Lastmill, you can make it to the ruins of Dark Valley before nightfall, but you'll have to spend the night there. Harriki Rangers who have done it tell us that the main building of the mill still stands and that there's something about it that the draugs don't like. They consider it to be the safest place in Dark Valley, even if it isn't totally safe.*

*A vestige of ancient good lingers about the old mill building, they say. They do not enter the mill building because they do not wish to disturb the source of the good that they sense. They camp before the mill building under the stars.*

*The Rangers do not fear the Draugs of Dark Valley. They are ancient Harriki of great power. Nundlung and his draugs would have no chance to withstand their wrath. However, the Rangers consider the baron and his draugs to be a trivial problem, one not worthy of their attention. Nundlung doubtless makes a detour around the Rangers out of fear. He knows how powerful they are.*

*Unfortunately, we have a problem gathering information about Dark Valley. In the days of the wars, higher powers of the Darkness placed a magical screen over the village. It still is partly effective. Neither Wladislav nor any other Diviner in the kingdom has been able to break through it completely yet.*

Wladislav begins speaking again:

*We can sense who and what is there, but we haven't been able to visualize what is there. We know from the Harriki Rangers that almost everything in Dark Valley is in a state of ruin except the baron's tower and the old mill building. They still stand, although the mill is in pretty ramshackle condition. The Rangers say that Dark Valley is safe during the daylight hours, because the baron remains in his tower and the draugs remain in their underground dungeons. Unfortunately, we'd like to give you a map of Dark Valley, but we don't have one.*

The margrave speaks again.

*So, he says. Now you know what it's about. If you accept this mission, Sir Radu will pay you in advance the sum of 100 GP. If you return with the abducted villagers, you will be paid another 500 GP. If you bring back the head of Baron Nundlung, you will be paid the remaining 500 GP.*

*However, also be warned. If you take the advance payment and then skip off somewhere else and not take on the mission, I'll have to put a price on your heads. The king will honor that, so you'll be sought throughout the Kingdom of Wenzen*

*Any questions?*



## 2.3 After the Meeting

### Information for the Game Master

What happens after the meeting with Margrave Hermacek depends completely on the decisions made by the PCs. If they have accepted the mission and have been paid the advance of 100 GP, go directly to the next encounter, Section 2.4 *Meeting Bedrich*. If the PCs have decided to mull over the margrave's offer, then you'll have to follow their actions and react to them until they decide what to do about the mission.

If the PCs are dawdling more than you wish, you might have a new group of PC adventurers arrive at the inn, bragging that they intend to take up the margrave's offer. A day after they arrive, have Sir Radu send a runner to the PCs with the message that the new group has asked for an appointment with the margrave. Radu will tell the PCs that the margrave wants to give the PCs a chance to accept his offer before he talks with the new adventuring group.

Set a deadline, perhaps on the same evening or by noon of the following day. Have Sir Radu's runner tell the PCs that if they haven't decided to accept the mission by that deadline, the margrave will set an appointment with the other adventurers and begin negotiating with them.

## 2.4 Meeting Bedrich

### Information for the Game Master

When drafting a new adventure, many game masters try to insert things that can be used as threads to lead into the next adventure. With that in mind, we're going to embellish upon our original draft and add a few elements than you might wish to use to build a second adventure rooted in Slovan City – if and when your PCs return from Dark Valley.

In our outline, the Thief Bedrich picks the pocket of the PC carrying the 100 GP advance from the margrave and escapes back to his lair. The PCs track him down, recoup their money and also find an ancient map in Bedrich's lair of Tingl's Mill, in other words, the ghost town of Dark Valley, as it was before the war.

The only purpose this encounter serves in this adventure is to put that map in the PCs' hands. However, one element of this encounter is strange. It may raise a question that even new players will pose. Why in the world is Bedrich waiting for them in the belief that will have the 100 GP advance? He should have no way to know that.

Bedrich is an outer element in a plot idea we have for a follow-up adventure, one you can develop later for yourself or ignore, as you please.

Slovan City has a small bit tightly organized thieves' ring known only as the Brotherhood. Word is that the ring is headed by a master thief named Tabor. Tabor does, indeed, exist. His lair is in the cellar of a ruin in the northern remnants of the New City, a lair that is concealed in part by magic.

The first Harriki immigrants to settle the Slovan City site mined lignite coal beneath the surface of the city until the veins petered out. Most of the old mining shafts were filled or collapsed long ago. Some that still exist run only for short stretches, as is the case under Bedrich's lair. One still leads from Tabor's lair in the northern ruins under the inner city to a secret door in the castle cellar, and another goes to the cellar of a building in the southern New City.

None of Tabor's subordinates knows where he lairs, and only a few have contact with him at all. When he comes to the southern New City, he seems to just appear there and vanish again. However, Tabor really is only No. 2 in the Brotherhood. The real leader is Blahnik, the secretary of Sir Radu in the castle.

In his position, Blahnik learns of almost all movements of cash and valuables in Slovan City. When he decides that his thieves are up to dealing with those making or guarding a worthwhile movement of cash or valuables, he gives Tabor instructions to do it and tells how him the operation should be conducted.

Blahnik knows that the PCs are coming to discuss the margrave's mission. He's sized them up and thinks they'll be easy marks.



The one thing Blahnik pondered was whether to hit now and settle for the PCs' advance or wait until they return and try to nab the larger rest payment of 900 GP. He decided quickly to settle for 100 GP, using the philosophy that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. He doubts that the PCs will survive the journey to Dark Valley much less bring back the abducted villagers or the draug baron's head. Therefore, he's decided to go for the 100 GP.

Keep in mind that 100 GP is a lot of money in Slovan City. It's a bit more than the average person there earns in a year, and as much as Sir Radu, among the wealthiest men in town, earns in four months.

Blahnik has given Tabor all of the details, including when the PCs will see the margrave. Other members of the Brotherhood have been assigned to keep a casual eye on the PCs, to assess any particular strengths and weaknesses that they might have.

Tabor told one of his direct subordinates to set up the hit on the PCs. That subordinate passed the orders on to one of his subordinates, and the latter chose Bedrich for the job, most of all because he thought that Bedrich's trained Doberman would make the encounter absolutely credible to the PCs.

Bedrich has no idea who Blahnik is. He too has heard rumors that Tabor is the mysterious and elusive head of the Brotherhood, but he does not know him. His own boss in the Brotherhood has told Bedrich exactly how to pull off the snatch. Another thief has pointed the PCs out to Bedrich from the distance and told him of any peculiarities he may have observed.

Bedrich knows when the PCs will see the margrave. He is to take a seat on the docks across the Jihvode River from the castle and wait for them to emerge. He has been told that a man will appear at a front window of the castle, look out the window and then carefully hold up his right hand, extending the number of fingers that define the position from Bedrich's viewpoint of the PC carrying the 100 GP. He then will close his hand and touch the corresponding spot on his own body that shows where the PC is carrying the money.

Now ... a few PC groups will be super clever and divide the money among themselves before leaving the castle. Blahnik will be chagrined and know he has to settle for less, but he'll keep his plot in motion. In this case, he'll pick the PC he thinks will be easiest to hit and give signals for that PC.

Bedrich has been told that his commission for the hit will be 2%, but at a minimum of 1 GP. He has no idea how much money he will be stealing, but he also has no doubt that his bosses do, so he has no thoughts of cheating them. His orders are to pick the chosen pocket, swapping a pouch with 100 CP for the pouch with 100 GP, and then to depart from the PCs as rapidly as possible after the encounter and to return to his lair, which has a secret hiding place.

That's how things stand when the encounter begins. This background plot is much more detailed and complex than is necessary for *The Last Mill* as a standalone adventure, but it does give you a detailed plug-in for a follow-up adventure, if you want one.

The meeting with Bedrich is a special encounter. It's one of those situations where you may have to use a secret check. It also is a situation where you might have to do some fudging, a nice word for cheating. This encounter isn't a test of the PCs' abilities so much as an integral part of the adventure in which the PCs can find an old hand-drawn map of Dark Valley, made before the wars when it still was called Tingl's Mill.

In this encounter, Bedrich will collide with the PCs and with his pickpocketing skills steal the advance payment of 100 GP. The guidelines call for his victim to make a *Notice Objects and Movement* check against the Thief's *Sleight of Hand* check. A *Notice Objects and Movement* check normally is 1d20 + the ability bonus for *Knowledge* + the PC's bonus for the talent skill *Notice Objects and Movement*, if he or she has the talent skill.

To make this encounter work, you have to make a seeming hidden *Sleight of Hand* check for Bedrich and then rule secretly that he has succeeded in picking the target PC's pocket, regardless of what was rolled. That's balanced out by the fact that the PCs will be available to follow Bedrich to his lair under all circumstances. You should give Bedrich no chance to elude them. But your players should not be aware that the fix is in.

The Brotherhood has given expensive clothing, in fact an old suit of Blahnik's, and a gold piece to make Bedrich convincing to the PCs. Remember that a gold piece is half a week's pay for the average person in Slovan City. It's not peanuts.

## NPC Statistics

### Bedrich

**Thief, level 3**

**Size:** Medium, 5'10"/178cm, 124lbs/62kg. Brown hair.

**Age:** 37 years

**Initiative modifier:** +12 melee (+4 Dexterity, +8 Interactive Speed)

**Injury Points:** 19

**Life Points:** 4

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10; Endurance 11; Reflex 17; Will 13.

**Attacks:** Short sword, attack bonus +2, Damage 1d6. Billy club (no proficiency), attack bonus -2, Damage 1 injury point.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 30ft/9m

**Resistances:** None

**Abilities:** Strength 10, Dexterity 18, Stamina 14, Magical aptitude 1, Mechanical aptitude 16, Knowledge 14

**Special abilities:** Sneak attack +1d6; Trapfinding; Evasion.

**Talent Points:** 56

**Primary Talents:** Perception 12, Religion 1, Skullduggery 12

**Secondary Talents:** Applied Knowledge 4, Athletics 4, Melee Combat 4, Naturalism 3

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency +4, Concentration +14, Craft Toxins +16, Create Herbal Medicine +5, Enable/Disable Device +16, Escape Bindings +16, Forgery +16, Handle Animals +5, Heal +5, Interactive Reaction +16, Interactive Speed +16, Knowledge Dungeons +16, Knowledge Local +16, Make Diagnoses +8, Notice Objects and Movement +14, Open Locks +16, Perform (acting) +6, Ride Mount ±0, Search +14, Sense Traps +16, Sleight of Hand +16, Sneak +16, Swim +2, Use Magical Device +6, Use Rope +16, Weapon Proficiency (melee) +4, Wilderness Survival +5.

**Alignment:** Neutral evil

Injury Point Threshold	Remaining Injury Points	Attack, Damage, Skill and Defense Penalty
Fully capable	14 or more	None
Injured	10-13	-1
Seriously injured	5-9	-2
Critically injured	1-4	-3
In mortal danger	0	-4

### Fala

**Dog, Doberman Pinscher**

**Fighter, level 3**

**Size:** Medium 30 inches/75cm at shoulder, 42 inches/108cm long, 50lbs/25kg

**Age:** 7 years

**Initiative modifier:** +9 (Dex +5, Int. Reaction +4)

**Injury Points:** 27

**Life Points:** 4

**Base Defenses:** Armor 12, Endurance 18, Reflex 20, Will 14.

**Attacks:** Bite, Attack Bonus +5; Damage 2d4 + 1.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 50ft/15m

**Resistances:** None

**Abilities:** Strength 13, Dexterity 19, Stamina 14, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 10 and Knowledge 10.

**Special qualities:** Pounce and Pin, Sense Traps, Swim, Track and Wilderness Survival

**Talent points:** 18

**Primary Talents:** Athletics 9, Melee Combat 9

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Concentration +5, Interactive reaction +10, Notice Objects & Movement +7, Search +7, Sense Traps +5, Sneak +10, Swim +10, Weapon proficiency (bite) +10, Wilderness Survival +7.

**Alignment inclination:** Neutral, in accordance with Bedrich's alignment, neutral evil.

**Pounce and Pin:** As a full one-round action, Fala can use a melee attack to spring upon a target creature. If the target is attacked from behind, it has a -4 penalty on its check. If the target fails its check, the dog succeeds in knocking down and landing upon the target. The dog also succeeds in pinning one of the target's arms (game master's choice). In any round, as a full one-round action, the victim can try to free itself with Strength check against the Fala's Strength check (1d20+1). Because the dog has the character pinned, its check does not qualify as an action. As long as the target is pinned, it loses its Dexterity bonus, if any, and it cannot use the pinned arm. While the target is pinned, its Reflex bonus, if any, is lost for any parts of the body that are not covered by the body. In other words, if the target is wearing only a chainmail shirt, its face and hands are not protected by its armor.

Injury Point Threshold	Remaining Injury Points	Attack, Damage, Skill and Defense Penalty
Fully capable	20-27	None
Injured	13-19	-1
Seriously injured	6-12	-2
Critically injured	1-5	-3
In mortal danger	0	-4

## The Action

The following scenario takes place just after the PCs have left the margrave's castle grounds. You can read the boxed parts to your PCs, or you can rephrase the content in your own words.

A hundred gold pieces to the better and facing a dangerous mission, you find yourself standing in the castle courtyard before the fountain.

It's up to the PCs now to decide what they'll do next. Bedrich and Fala are standing, mostly hidden by the beech tree in front of the inn, waiting for them. If for some reason the PCs stay for awhile on the west bank of the Jihvode, the two will simply wait. After all, there is only one bridge.

When the PCs do head toward the bridge, Bedrich (without Fala) will approach them, attempting to intercept them just before they leave the bridge on the east bank. During the following narrative, stop and let the PCs speak at anytime they wish to do so. If a PC attempts to use Sense Motive or some similar ability upon Bedrich, have him or her check against Bedrich's Perform (acting) score at DL 18.

A well-dressed man, possibly a court squire or merchant, to judge from his dress, is approaching you from the inn side of the river. He appears to be in his late 30s. It appears that he intends to cross the bridge, and it also appears that he wants to gain your attention.

*Good sirs, he shouts to you. A boon I would ask of you, and I am prepared to pay you fair reward! Please hear me out!*

He apparently doesn't intend to wait and to hear whether you're willing to listen. He continues talking. As he does so, his left hand draws a gold piece from a pocket.

*I have noticed that you were in the castle, therefore, I am assuming it is open to you. I have been done a great injustice, but I am convinced that Sir Radu will see that things are set aright. However, before that can be, one must gain his attention.*

*A fine man and fair, Sir Radu is. Alas, were I to try to see him, I am afraid I would see the inside of the dungeon beneath the garrison instead. Alas and Alack!*

*Bedrich is my name. In my day, I was proud indeed to serve the margrave as his court secretary.*

*But I shall be brief. Several years ago, dear sirs, my departed wife was having an affair with Sir Ivan, the commander of the garrison. And then, as I learned of this disgrace and was about to act upon it, she was found murdered in the northern ruins, and evidence was left there to indicate that I was the murderer. Unwitting, I was arrested, tried and sentenced to be hanged. To my dubiously good fortune, I was jailed with another condemned man who was an expert at such things, and he contrived for our escape.*

*All these many years, instead of fleeing to safety, I have remained here in the march, disguised and gathering evidence, bit by bit, that will prove my innocence, and I say, dear sirs! I have it now, by jove!*

As Bedrich speaks, a black Doberman pinscher saunters up toward you, looking as nasty as it can at Bedrich, snarling slightly and baring its fangs. It keeps a distance from the group of you and Bedrich of about 10ft/3m. Bedrich looks frightened.

*Oh, I say now, he continues. Oh, no! Not that cur! This despicable hound belonged to my departed wife! It never did like me, and since she died, the creature hunts me. Oh, I do say, sirs! I prithee! Protect me from the beast!*

Barely does the last word come from Bedrich's mouth when the dog suddenly springs upon Bedrich, knocking him against (name of the PC with the money), before he falls to the ground.

Everything that Fala does he is trained to do. Have the PC whom Bedrich bumped check for Dexterity. The check is a phony diversion to keep anyone from thinking about picked pockets. Inform the PC that he or she manages to remain standing. If the PCs start to act, tell them that Bedrich appears to be rolling free. Roll a phony 1d20 for Bedrich, so that it looks like you're making a check of some sort.

Bedrich seems to be more agile than one would have suspected. Just as the Doberman appears to be snapping for his throat, Bedrich succeeds in rolling out from under it. He has a short wooden club in his hand that he shoves into the dog's throat. The dog chokes slightly, frees itself from the club and makes a few more choking noises and looks at all of you as if it's appraising the opposition. It runs for about 15ft/450cm, stops, snarls at all of you and then runs off quickly, behind the inn.

Bedrich gets up and brushes off his clothing, looking somewhat aghast at (the PC whom he bumped).

*Oh, I do say! Oh, I'm very sorry. Oh, I do hope none of your clothing is damaged. If it is, I do insist on paying for the repairs. You need only give me the tailor's bill. Oh, this is awful.*

Give the PCs a chance to reply, then have Bedrich continue.

*Fortunately, I have learned to deal with that awful cur. It seldom succeeds in biting me anymore. But let me conclude my proposition. I shall be brief.*

*I have the evidence that I am sure will clear me and convict Sir Ivan, and if I can only get it into Sir Radu's hands, I believe I shall have succeeded. Unfortunately, if I attempt to enter yon castle, I barely would get within the doors. My disguise has protected me among the public, but there are those within who would see through it quickly. The guards would be called and I would be taken off to the garrison, where Sir Ivan would be only too happy to see me.*



*He would confiscate and destroy my evidence and throw me back into a death cell. He then would ask the margrave to set a new date for my hanging, and the number of my remaining days would be short indeed. Thus, the boon I beg of you.*

He hands the gold piece toward you.

*I wish to hire your brief services at this rather handsome payment of a gold piece. I ask only that you return briefly to the castle, ask for a short audience with Sir Radu and then tell him that you were encountered by the murderer Bedrich, who asked you to give something of great importance to him. That is both my proposal and the boon I would ask of you. What say you, dear sirs?*

Bedrich waits for your answer.

Bedrich already has the 100 GP, so it's of no real concern to him whether the PCs take up his offer or not. If they say they will do so but want no payment, after a polite refusal, he will be more than happy to take back the gold piece. After all, his bosses in the Brotherhood won't know that, so he should be able to keep the money for himself.

If the PCs refuses to do his bidding, he will look sadly at them, assure them that he understands their position and say that he will seek another then, departing from the PCs and heading back southward through the town. He will tell them that it's time to leave the Old City again. In that case, let the PCs do whatever they wish to do until they discover that the 100 GP is missing. At that point, go to Section 2.5 *Chasing Bedrich*.

If the PCs agree to do Bedrich's bidding, continue on here.

Bedrich takes a thick parchment envelope with a wax seal from his inner pocket and hands it to you.

*There be the fruits of seven long years of evidence gathering. I thank you, good sirs. I do believe you are about to save my life! But alas, I have been in the inner town too long for my own good already. With your pardon, I shall depart now and head back to my accommodations south of the gate. I cannot thank you enough, dear sirs, but be assured that if I am cleared and restored to my position in the castle, you shall be rewarded more richly still for your kindness! I bid you adieu and wish you well!*

With those words, Bedrich heads south down the main road toward the south gate.

It's time again to wait and see what the PCs do. Let them discover for themselves in their own time that their money has been stolen. At whatever point they discover their loss and then tell someone else, including Sir Radu, have the NPCs give them the advice that they should give the pickpocket's description to the guards at the Southgate and see if they can say where the PCs should look.

Sir Radu also will tell the PCs that they can go to the garrison and file a complaint. The militia then will try to hunt down the thief for them, but that might cost valuable time that they thief can use to disappear. However, if they think they're up to dealing with the thief themselves, the law in the Margrave of Slovan gives them the right to track down a thief in immediate pursuit and bring him or her to the garrison, where they can file charges.

If the PCs go to the castle before discovering the swindle and they mention to the guards that they met with Bedrich the murderer, the guards will look puzzled. If they meet with Sir Radu and tell him that they have a message for him from Bedrich the murderer, use the following:

Sir Radu has a puzzled look on his face. *From whom?* he asks. *I never heard of a murder named Bedrich.*

If the PCs give Radu the envelope:

Still looking puzzled, Sir Radu opens the envelope and pulls out a thick stack of blank parchment.

You'll need to ad lib the rest of this encounter. At this point, at the latest, the PCs probably will discover that their advance is gone and that they now have an identical sack with 100 CP. If not, Sir Radu probably could ask if they maybe had been swindled by a pickpocket.

Whatever occurs, the PCs either will try to get their money back, or they'll decide to go on without it. If they do the latter, skip ahead to Section 2.6 *Heading North*. If they decide to seek their money, continue on with Section 2.5 *Chasing Bedrich*.

## 2.5 Chasing Bedrich

### Information for the Game Master

If the PCs do anything but talk with the guards at the Southgate, they will make no progress whatsoever in tracking down Bedrich. This was his first operation in the Old City. No one there knows him. No one can give them any tips. The next planned action occurs when the PCs talk to the guards at the Southgate, after they have described Bedrich. If they forget to mention the dog, have them ask if Bedrich goes around with a Doberman.

One of the guards says, *We know who that is ... well, not his name ... but you know ... who he is. He's new here, or at least his dog is. We've been watching him because of that dog. Might be that we've seen him and not paid any attention to him before. But that dog ... well ... we know where he and the dog hole up.*

Let the PCs react. If the PCs ask the gate guards to accompany them, the guards will say that they are not allowed to leave their post but that they can get help by going back into the inner city and filing a complaint at the garrison. However, if they think they're up to dealing with the thief themselves, the law in the Margrave of Slovan gives them the right to track down a thief in immediate pursuit and bring him or her to the garrison, where they can file charges.

When the time comes for the guards to tell them how to find Bedrich, one of them says:

*You have to go straight down the road here, about 200ft/60m or so. You'll come to an intersection. On the right side is a small general store. Turn right there and go another 100ft/30m or so. Most of the buildings there are in pretty good condition, but then you'll come to three in a row that are abandoned ... or at least appear to be ... and that are in pretty dilapidated condition.*

*The one in the middle is small, not much more than a cottage. The old tinker used to live there, but when he died, his son boarded the place up. He said he'd be back and get the place back into good repair, but he never returned.*

*That's the one. This character you're seeking probably picked the lock, entered and started holing up there. It's not his place. It isn't really anyone's anymore. But that's his address, as much as he has one. When he came through the gate before, that's the direction that he headed.*

Assuming the PCs go that direction, they will have no trouble finding the house. It fits the guard's description precisely. However, the PCs do face a problem or two.

*You find the house that the guard described. It fits his description perfectly. But you do have a problem or two with it. The windows are indeed boarded up, and there appears to be only a single door. Before it, in a tight pattern about 6ft/2m wide, the black Doberman is marching back und forth, snarling at you and baring its fangs. However, it's not attacking you. It appears to be guarding the door instead.*

Bedrich has ordered Fala to guard the house at all costs, and the dog will fight the PCs until it or they are dead. In adjudicating this encounter, remember Fala's high Reflex score of 20 and his speed of 50ft/15m, which is 67% faster than the PCs' speed of 30ft/9m. He should not be an easy opponent. With his initiative modifier of 9, he probably also will have the first attack in most rounds. However, you can't move to the next section until the PCs eliminate Fala or find a way around him.

## 2.6 Bedrich's Lair

### Information for the Game Master

Fala's barking serves as an alarm for Bedrich. The house has only one door, and the windows are boarded up, so there's no chance for him to flee. Instead, he uses a trapdoor in the floor of the kitchen and hides in a former supply room in the ruins of an old mining shaft beneath the house.

The cover to the trapdoor was cut cleverly, making it difficult to see. Unfortunately, the door is square and Bedrich, in his hurry, did not put it on properly. As a result, the grain runs in the wrong direction, making it easier to spot if enough light is shed upon it. Bedrich inadvertently took care of that problem for the PCs too. He has two lanterns, and he left one of them, still burning, on a decrepit table in the kitchen, just above the trapdoor.

When Fala started barking, Bedrich was just about to leave his lair and bring the money and the fancy clothing to his own boss in the Brotherhood. The fancy boots he was wearing are on the floor of the old living room, by his sleeping mat. The expensive clothing he used, which also belongs to the Brotherhood, are in his backpack, which is on the floor by his sleeping mat. A fire is burning in a rickety old pot belly stove in the living room. Bedrich had no time to put it out before fleeing into the mine shaft.

Bedrich is savvy about operations in the Brotherhood. Although such things seldom ever are said openly within the Brotherhood, Bedrich knows that if he is captured, his boss in the Brotherhood, Radek, will see to it that Bedrich is assassinated before he can give evidence against Radek. Facing a choice between possible and certain death, in his own mind, Bedrich, if cornered, will fight the PCs to the death rather waiting for a Brotherhood assassin in Radek's service to slay him.

### Working with the Floor and Dungeon Plans

Different game masters use different methods to create an interface between the players who act out the PCs' roles and the dungeons and floor plans that describe and define what the PCs see. The most frequent and simple method is paper. In other words, the players get to see a printed version of the dungeon or floor plan (or also a close-up of an outdoor encounter scene) that is printed on paper.

That will work too with the floor plans of Bedrich's lair and the dungeon lair beneath that are on the following pages. Unfortunately, a letter-sized printed page from this PDF file won't give you the right scale that you need if you use miniatures, but it will give you varying options.

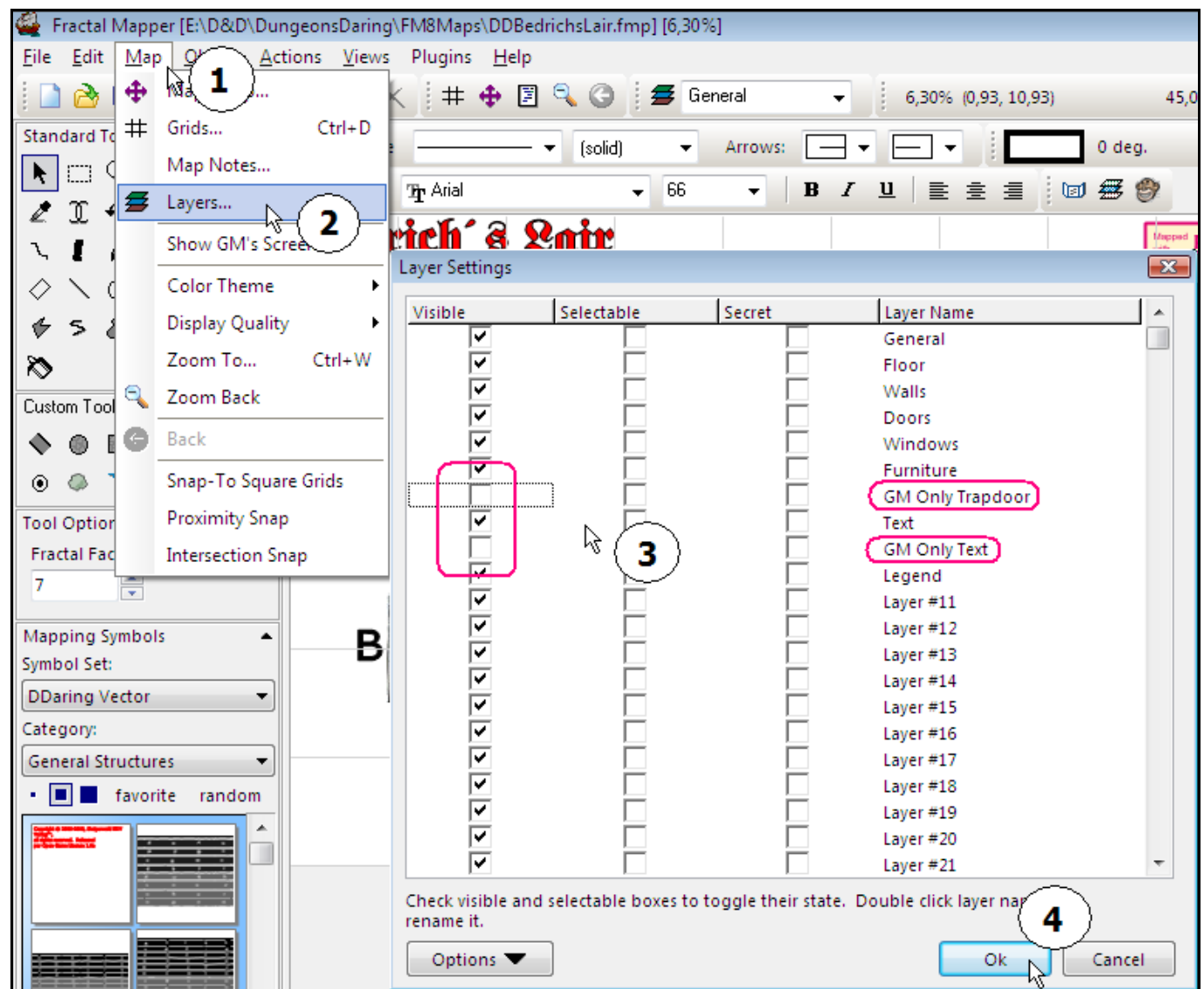
You can, for instance, print several copies of these floor and dungeon plans, using versions that hide things that the PCs can't regularly see. After that, you can use a scissors to cut out each of the rooms separately and show it to the PCs as they enter the rooms. You can do the same with the game master's version that shows things that the PCs might not see immediately, such as the trapdoor in Bedrich's house. Once the PCs discover such things, you can give them the room cutout that shows where it is.

The reason we make our maps available not only on the pages of the books but also as downloads in the original *Fractal Mapper 8* format is that they substantially expand your options as a game master and your players' ability to visualize their situation. Let's look at some of the possibilities.

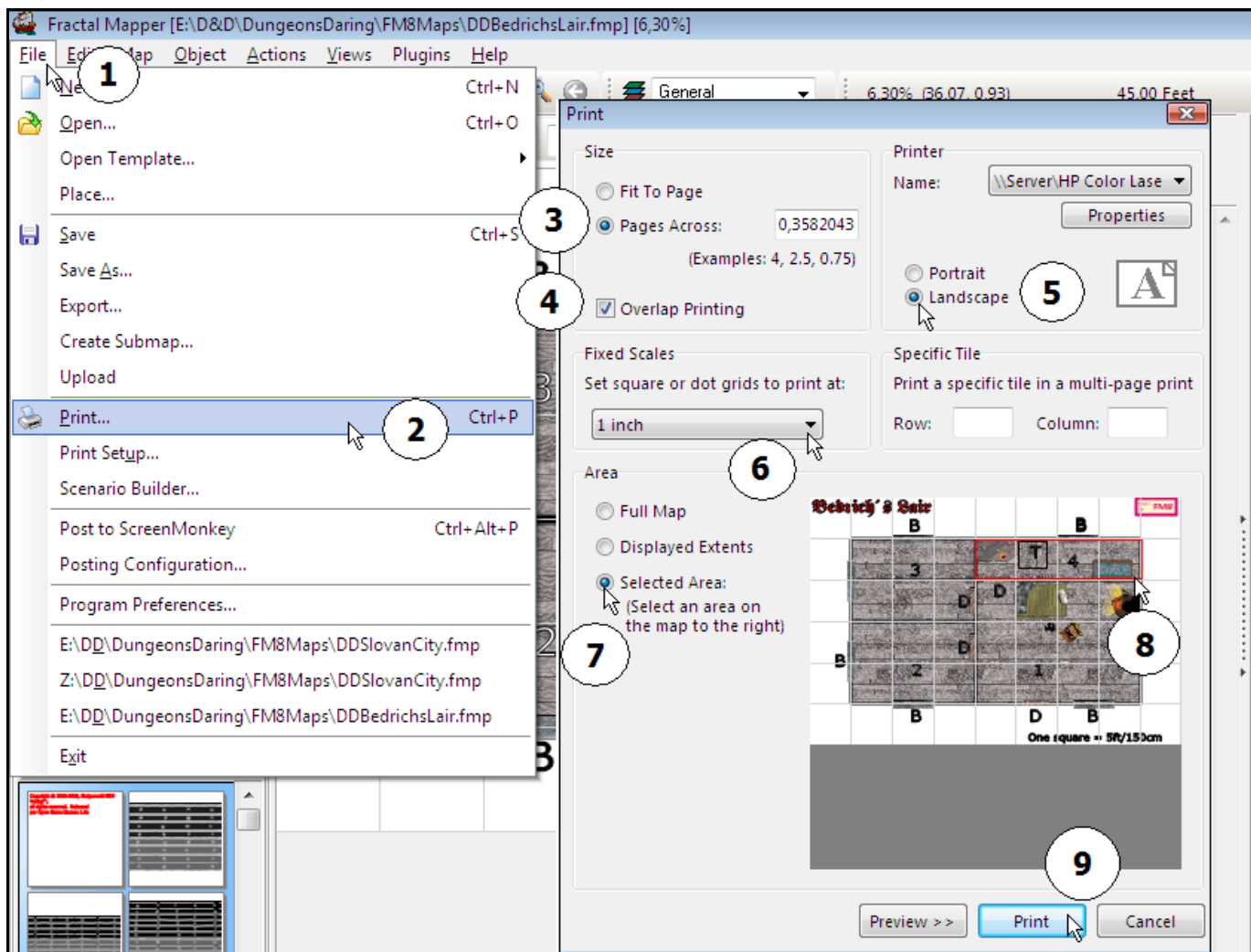
If you use the original floor plan of Bedrich's house together with *Fractal Mapper 8*, you can show or hide the trapdoor at will. As downloaded, the trapdoor and the key letter *T* are visible. You can make them invisible with the following steps (also see the screen shot below). These operations are valid for printing, for use with a digital projector or in a laptop network where the game master and the players see different map versions.

- 1. Click the menu option *Map*.
- 2. In the dropdown menu, pick the option *Layers*. That opens the dialog box named *Layer Settings*.
- 3. In the column *Visible* of the dialog box, click off the control boxes *GM Only Trapdoor* and *GM Only Text*.
- 4. Then click the command button *Ok*.

**NOTE:** To make the trapdoor and the letter *T* visible again, repeat these steps but this time click control boxes *GM Only Trapdoor* and *GM Only Text* back on again.



Hiding the game master's secret layers for the trapdoor with Fractal Mapper 8



**Setting the various print options with Fractal Mapper 8**

If you're using miniatures, you have extensive options available that will allow you to print the *Dungeons Daring* floor and dungeon plans complete and at the proper scale for your miniatures. Most tin and plastic figures available today use the scale system established by Wizards of the Coast® Inc. for the *Dungeons & Dragons*® game and the *d20*® system. That scale comes to 5 x 5 feet or 2.54 x 2.54 cm per map square.

The floor plan for Bedrich's house and the mining shaft dungeon are small enough that they will fit on a single letter-sized or European A4 sheet of paper. But that's not always the case. *Fractal Mapper* gives you the ability to print floor and dungeon plans so that they continue over several pages, all at the proper scale, and with an overlap that allows you to paste or tape the pages together, producing a large paper map at correct scale that fits together perfectly. Using the screen shot above, let's take a look at these possibilities.

- 1. We start by clicking the menu option *File*.
- 2. In the dropdown menu click the option *Print*. That opens the dialog box named *Print* (seen to the right in the screen shot).
- 3. In the dialog box, we can click the radio button *Pages Across* to establish that *Fractal Mapper* should print the map on more than one sheet of paper, if there's too little space on a single page.
- 4. After that, we activate the control box *Overlap Printing*. These assures that each new page has a small part of the previous page repeated at the margins. This makes it easy to accurately paste the map pages together.



- 5. If we have a vertical floor plan, we click the radio button *Portrait*. For horizontal floor plans, we click the radio button *Landscape*.
- 6. Next, we use the combo box *Set square or dot grids to print at* to set the desired printing scale. We want the map to be at a scale where one 5-foot grid is an inch square. If you prefer metric settings, then your 150cm grid should be set at 25mm.
- 7. This option applies only if you wish to print just a part of your map. In that case, click the radio button *Selected Area*.
- 8. This option also applies only if you wish to print just a part of your map. In that case, you use the mouse to outline the part of the map you wish to print.
- 9. After you've made all of your settings, click the command button *Print*. However, if you want to make a screen check of your settings, you also can click the *Preview* command button first. Then, only after you're satisfied, should you click the *Print* command button.

With some printers, you might find that the 5-foot/150cm grid lines on your map are almost invisible on paper. When that occurs, the best solution often is to change the lines' color. To do that, call up the dialog box *Grid Setup*. See Page 220.

## On with the Adventure

The following information can be given to the PCs once they get past Fala and reach the house door. If you wish, you also can give the PCs a copy of the lower floor plan on the following page, or, if you've printed and cut it in advance, you can give them the rooms one at a time, as an alternative.

The dilapidated house is small – 35 feet wide and 20 feet deep/10.5x6m. All the windows have been boarded tightly shut. A mouse barely could squeak through. However, the old wooden door at the front of the house appears to be in bad condition. If it's locked, it probably can be bashed in with pure strength,

The door has no working lock. The PCs also simply can open it. Once they enter, use the floor plans on the following page and the following key descriptions. The PCs will be able to see little if they have no lantern or other light source.

**B** – These are boarded-up windows.

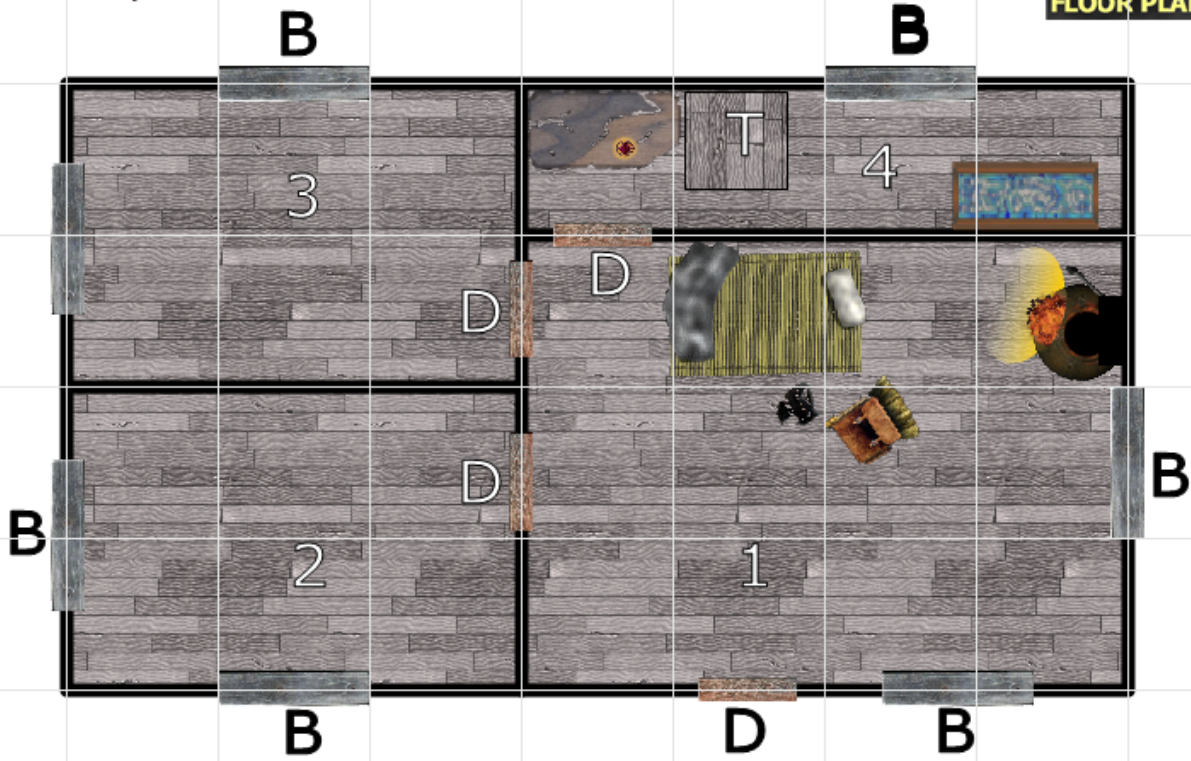
**D** – These are wooden doors, none strong or in good condition, and none of them locked.

1. The front door opens onto a room 20ft/6m wide and 15ft/450cm across. Everything in the room is rundown. The wooden floor is old. Its boards no longer have a finish. They have turned grey. There is a decrepit wooden door in the opposite wall on the left side and two more doors in the same condition in the left wall. There's a sleeping mat on the opposite wall and an iron pot belly stove with a freshly fueled fire on the fire side of the right wall. Before the sleeping mat, on the floor, are a pair of boots and a backpack. The boots look quite similar to those worn by the murderer imposter Bedrich. No one is in the room. The house is absolutely quiet.

**Game Master:** The PCs may check out some of the things in this room:

- **Sleeping Mat:** The only things to be found are a dirty pillow and a dirty, worn, grey blanket.
- **Boots:** They are indeed the boots Bedrich wore as a part of his disguise. As soon as he reached his hideout, Bedrich changed out of the expensive clothing, which he is expected to give back to the Brotherhood.

# Bedrich's Lair

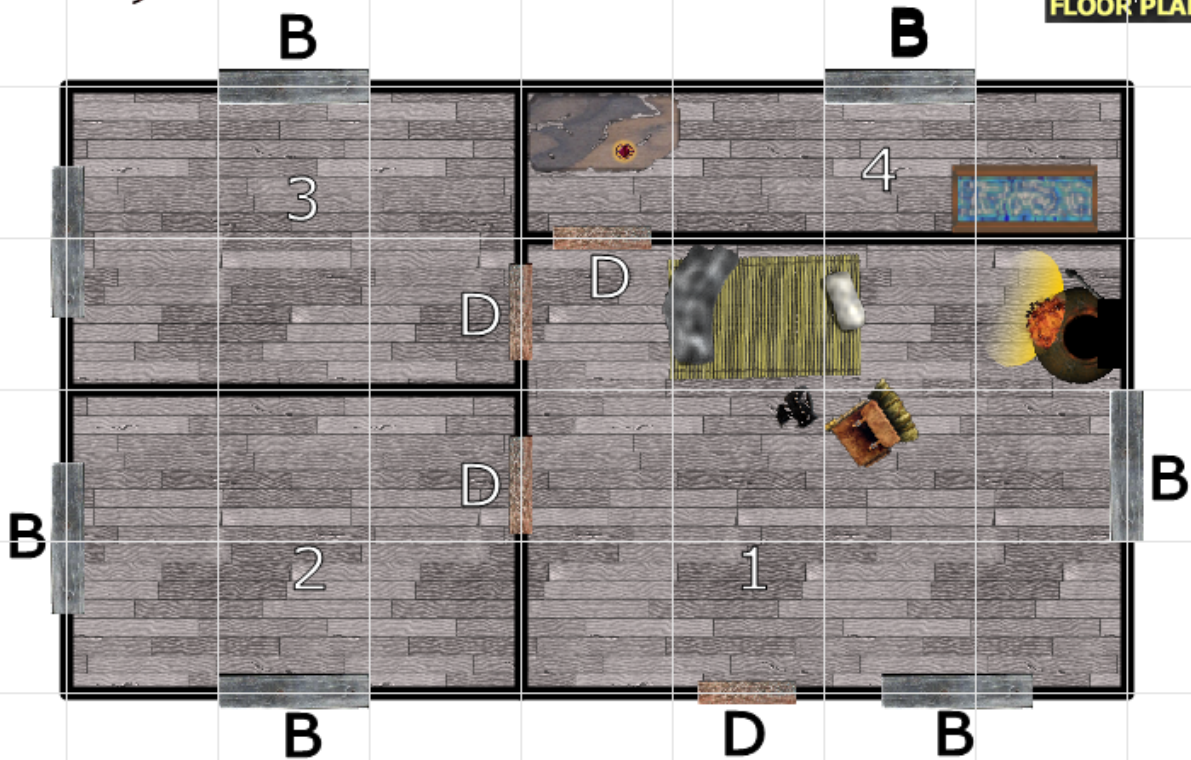


One square = 5ft/150cm

Bedrich's Lair, with trapdoor shown, above, and trapdoor concealed, below

Open Game Content

# Bedrich's Lair



One square = 5ft/150cm

- **Backpack:** This also belongs to the Brotherhood. It contains only the clothing that Bedrich wore when encountering the PCs.
- **Pot Belly Stove:** This is a very dangerous item. Bedrich took a considerable risk in lighting a fire in it. The stove is badly rusted in many places. It would be quite easy to knock it over, which would cause parts of it to crumble and to spill burning coal onto the floor. That in turn would set the whole house ablaze quickly. The wooden floor is timber dry.

In the unlikely event that it comes to combat in this room, you should check to see what happens to the stove in every round in which one of the combatants is in a square adjacent to that where the stove stands. There is a non-cumulative 25% chance per round (1-5 on 1d20) that a combatant will knock the stove over, setting a fire as described above. If a fire starts, the PCs have 1d4+1 minutes (a minute is 12 five-second rounds long) to leave the house before they become trapped hopelessly in the fire.

**Rooms 2 and 3:** The two rooms are identical and have the same description.

**2.-3.** The room is 10ft/3m wide and 15ft/450cm across. It appears to be completely empty.

It is empty.

**4.** This narrow room is 20ft/3m wide but only 5ft/150cm deep. It looks as though it may have been a laundry room at one time. Directly inside the door is a crumbling wooden table, 5ft/150cm wide and 2½ft/75cm deep. It looks like it could fall apart at any minute. There are holes at several places on the table's surface. Despite that, someone has left a lantern burning atop the table, regardless of the danger. The only other object, on the opposite side and on the inner wall, is a tub filled with dirty water, about 5ft/150cm wide and 2ft/60cm deep. Other than that, the room appears to be empty.

The tub is what it seems to be, a tub of dirty water and nothing more.

The table and lantern combination is very dangerous. If there is combat in this area, and one or more combatants are in the same square as the table or the square adjacent to the table, you should check to see what happens to the lantern once each round. There is a non-cumulative 75% chance per round (1-15 on 1d20) that a combatant will bump the table strongly enough to cause it to collapse, which will dump the lantern and its oil on the floor.

Anyone to the right of the table must flee the room within one round after this occurs or take 1d4 injury points of fire damage fleeing later through the fire. In addition, once the fire starts, the PCs have 1d4+1 minutes (a minute is 12 five-second rounds long) to leave the house before they become trapped hopelessly in a blaze that will consume the entire house (but not Bedrich's dungeon below).

As shown on the game master's floor plan at the top of the previous page, there is a trapdoor direct to the right of the table. The trapdoor was well cut to conceal it, but Bedrich panicked when Fala started barking and was careless. The cover is on the wrong way. The wood grain runs in the wrong direction. As a result, a PC can notice the trapdoor with sufficient light and a successful Search check against DL 11. The trapdoor is not locked. However, it is trapped. The trap will not go off until a PC descends the ladder below the trapdoor. It is described in the next section, *2.7 Bedrich's Dungeon*.

## 2.7 Bedrich's Dungeon

Once the PCs open the trapdoor inform them of the following. The ladder goes down 40ft/12m, so it's unlikely that they will see the floor of the mineshaft below.

The trapdoor opens into the darkness, at least as far as your illumination reveals anything. All that's visible inside of it is a wide wooden ladder leading down into the darkness. The ladder appears to be sturdy, at least here at the top. It's 3ft/90cm wide.

### The Trap

In the outer wall between the first and second rungs of the ladder is a small wooden door. This is the top part of the trap. The fourth rung from the top sets off the trap. A thin, weak wire is fastened to an eye ring on one side of the ladder just half an inch/12.5mm above the rung. The wire runs through another eye ring on the other side without being attached. From there it runs out of view up behind the left support of the ladder and through a hole next to the door that hides the trap. The wire is very taut.

Bedrich sets this trap after descending the first 4ft/120cm of the ladder by looping the wire through one eye, pulling it taut and then fastening it to the second eye. When he ascends the ladder, he disarms it by loosening the wire, or, if he wishes, he leaves it armed. His is nimble enough to climb the ladder by skipping over the trapped rung. Anyone else wishing to attempt this must make a Dexterity check against DL 13.

The trap wire is set to be just sufficiently taut. If it is drawn any tighter, it opens the latch of the door to the trap above. A spring powered knife with a 12-inch/30cm blade attached to a lubricated shaft then springs 18 inches/45cm out of the trap's door, striking anyone on the ladder at a point 40 inches/1m above the ladder's fourth rung. One might understand this trap as functioning something like a jack-in-the-box resting on its side.

Any PC saying that he or she is carefully checking the ladder and the wall behind it can find the trap with a successful Search check against DL 12. This is a trap of the 3<sup>rd</sup> encounter level, although it does less damage than most traps of that level. The trap's knife can do only 2d4 injury points of damage. It can be disabled with an Enable/Disable Device check against DL 13. Breaking the wire will disarm it, but one could apply too much pressure to the wire, causing the trap to spring.

If someone trying to disarm the trap accidentally triggers it, the knife will spring out to the left of the character's hands, but it will strike nothing and do no damage.

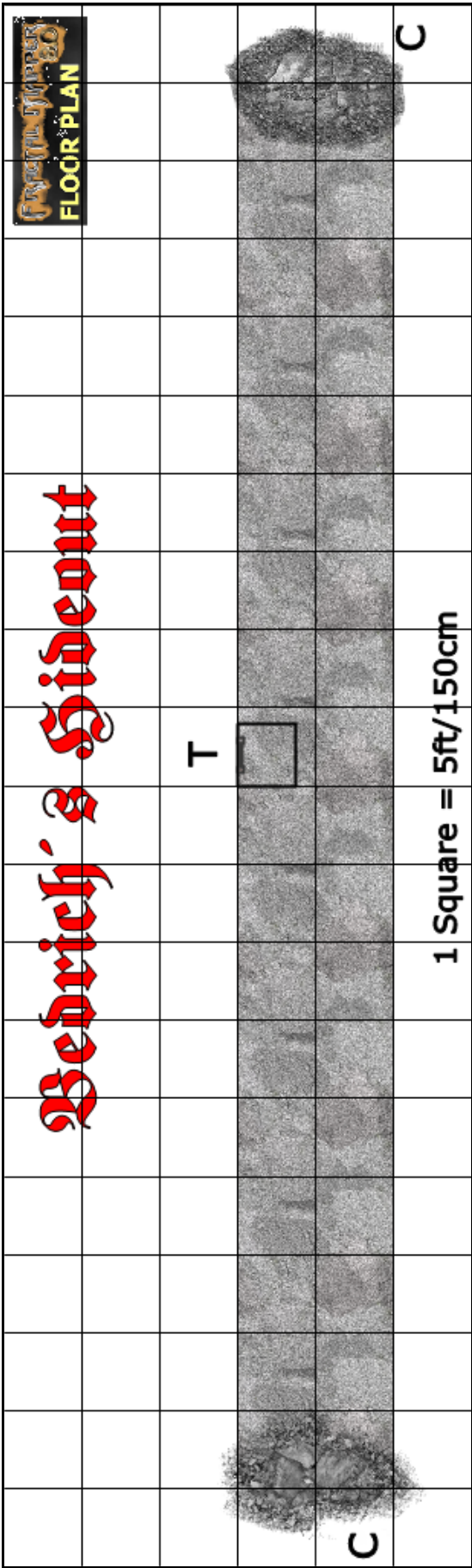
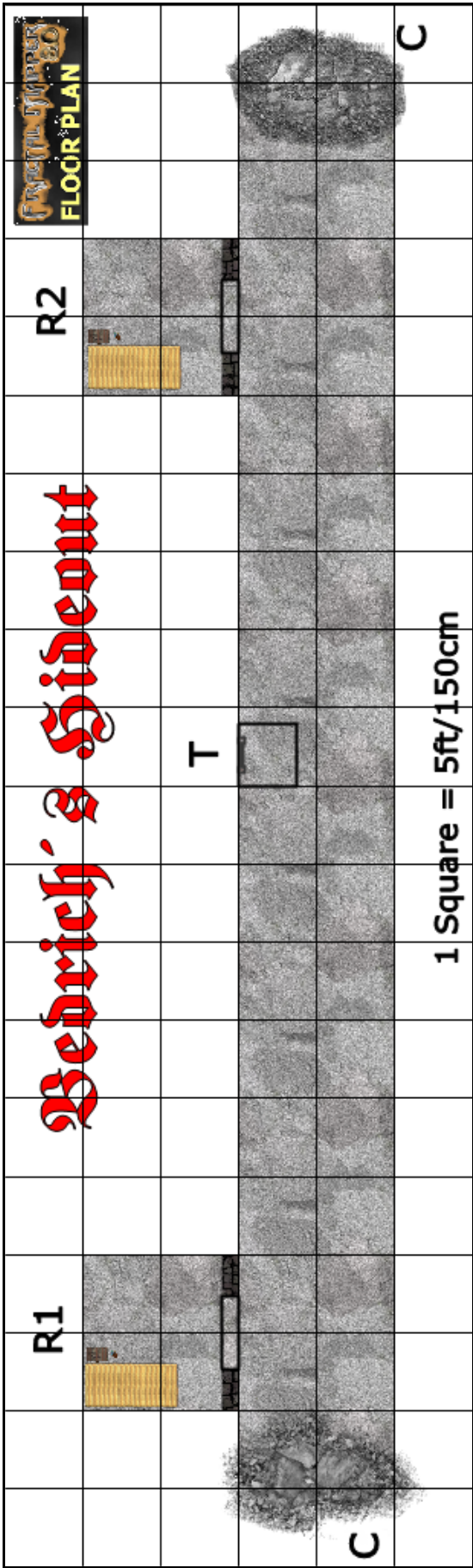
If the trap is sprung, it hits its victim automatically without a Reflex check. However, if the part of the victim's body that would be pierced by the knife's blade is wearing armor, an attack roll against the Armor Defense with an attack bonus of +2 is necessary to determine whether the knife penetrates the armor. The knife's spring does not have enough power to cause the customary 1 injury point of damage if the armor is not pierced. Regardless of the attack roll, the trap also is unable to penetrate any armor equal to a chain shirt or higher in hardness.

Once the trap is triggered, it cannot be sprung again until it is reset.

### The Dungeon Plans

There are game master's and PC versions of the dungeon plan on the following page. The game master's version requires some explanation. It includes two former supply rooms that branch off of what's left of the old mining shaft. The game master's dungeon plan shows the same objects in both of these supply rooms, however, they really will be in only one of the two rooms.

When your PCs descend the latter, they probably will go either left or right at first. The first of the two supply rooms that they discover should be the empty one. The second will be the one with the objects. At the time the PCs descend, Bedrich will be hiding there. He has a hooded lantern, but the hood is closed.



Bedrich's Hideout – game master's view, left, with supply rooms, and players' view, right, without



If you're using the maps in *Fractal Mapper 2*, you'll find layers named *GM Objects Room 1* and *GM Objects Room 2*. The Room labeled *R1* is Room 1 and the room labeled *R2* is Room 2. Remember to hide the objects layer at the start for whichever is the first of these two rooms explored by the PCs.

When the PCs descend the ladder, they will be able to see only what's in the players' view on the previous page. Both of the supply rooms have closed stone doors. These can be found by adequate illumination with a successful Search check against DL 11. They are not secret doors, simply stone doors built by whomever made the mining shafts. They open on strong iron hinges.

At the foot of the ladder, it is doubtful that the PCs will be able to see either of the ends of the shaft where there are cave-ins. The cave-ins usually will be beyond the range of their lanterns, taverns, etc. The two doors also can not be seen until one is at their location in the shaft.

## Key to the Dungeon Plans

- **C** – Cave-in areas. It is impossible to proceed beyond these points.
- **T** – Location of the trapdoor (40ft/12m above) and foot of the ladder.

## Game Master's Version Only

- **R1, R2:** Supply rooms 1 and 2. Bedrich is in the opposite room from the one to which the PCs go first.

## The Action

When the PCs reach the bottom of the ladder:

The descent with the ladder was deep. You probably are about 35 to 40 feet/10,5 to 12m below the surface. You find yourselves in a shaft 10ft/3m wide and just as high, cut out of bedrock in a square shape. From appearances, this probably is an ancient mining shaft. It runs on in both directions beyond the reach of your illumination.

No one is visible in either direction, and everything is silent. Your lantern light reveals several sets of footprints in the dust on the floor of the shaft, all made by feet of about the same size, but the footprints go in both directions from the base of the ladder.

Bedrich made all of the footprints. Dust settles slowly here. If any of your PCs have abilities to determine which footprints are newer, they will be unable at their levels to draw any conclusions. Dust accumulates slowly here. They should, however, be able to determine that the footprints probably were made by the same person.

The PCs will find the first secret door only if they search for it. The DL to find it is 11. The door to the room that Bedrich is not using has hinges badly in need of lubrication. It takes a Strength check against DL 13 to open it. It will squeak very loudly when opened. The door to the room Bedrich uses has well-oiled hinges.

Bedrich will use the sound of the other door squeaking as a signal to begin making his exit from the dungeon. If one of the PCs in the other room explicitly says that he or she is keeping a keen ear open for noises while investigating the first room, he or she can make a *Notice Objects and Movement* check against Bedrich's *Sneak* check to hear Bedrich slipping down the shaft back to the ladder. The DL is 26. If any PC is watching the shaft while the others are in the first room, he or she will notice a small amount of light from Bedrich's hooded lantern when Bedrich slips toward the ladder.

The PCs should be given the following information when they enter the first room.

This is a square chamber 10 by 10ft/3 x 3m in size with walls, ceiling and floor of stone and stone brick. The chamber appears to be empty, but some of the stones in the wall are slightly ajar, and the dust upon them was disturbed at some time.

Bedrich searched the room at an earlier time, thus the disturbances in the dust.

Unless the PCs spend an eternity searching this room, they should be able to encounter Bedrich just as he's beginning to ascend the ladder. At the time they reach the ladder, Bedrich will be on the third rung above the floor, with his feet 3ft/90cm above the floor. He is talented at making a springing jump. From the ladder, he will jump to a position behind the PCs, ready to fight.

Although he's not aware of it, Bedrich does not have the pouch that he stole from the PCs. Instead, he has his own pouch, which he took accidentally, leaving the pouch with the 100 GP behind in the other room. If the PCs capture or slay him, they will find that he has the following:

- His short sword.
- His clothing.
- A leather pouch very similar to that which the PCs were given in the castle. It contains 2 GP, 3 SP, 2 BP and 6 CP as well as 70 counterfeit coins made to look like GP.

When they reach the ladder:

The person at the ladder is indeed Bedrich, although the clothing he's wearing now are much poorer than those he had when he tricked you.

*So, ye think yer my match,* Bedrich says, still about a yard/less than a meter up the ladder. *I warn ye, I have a bit of experience with this blade!*

Give the PCs a chance to react.

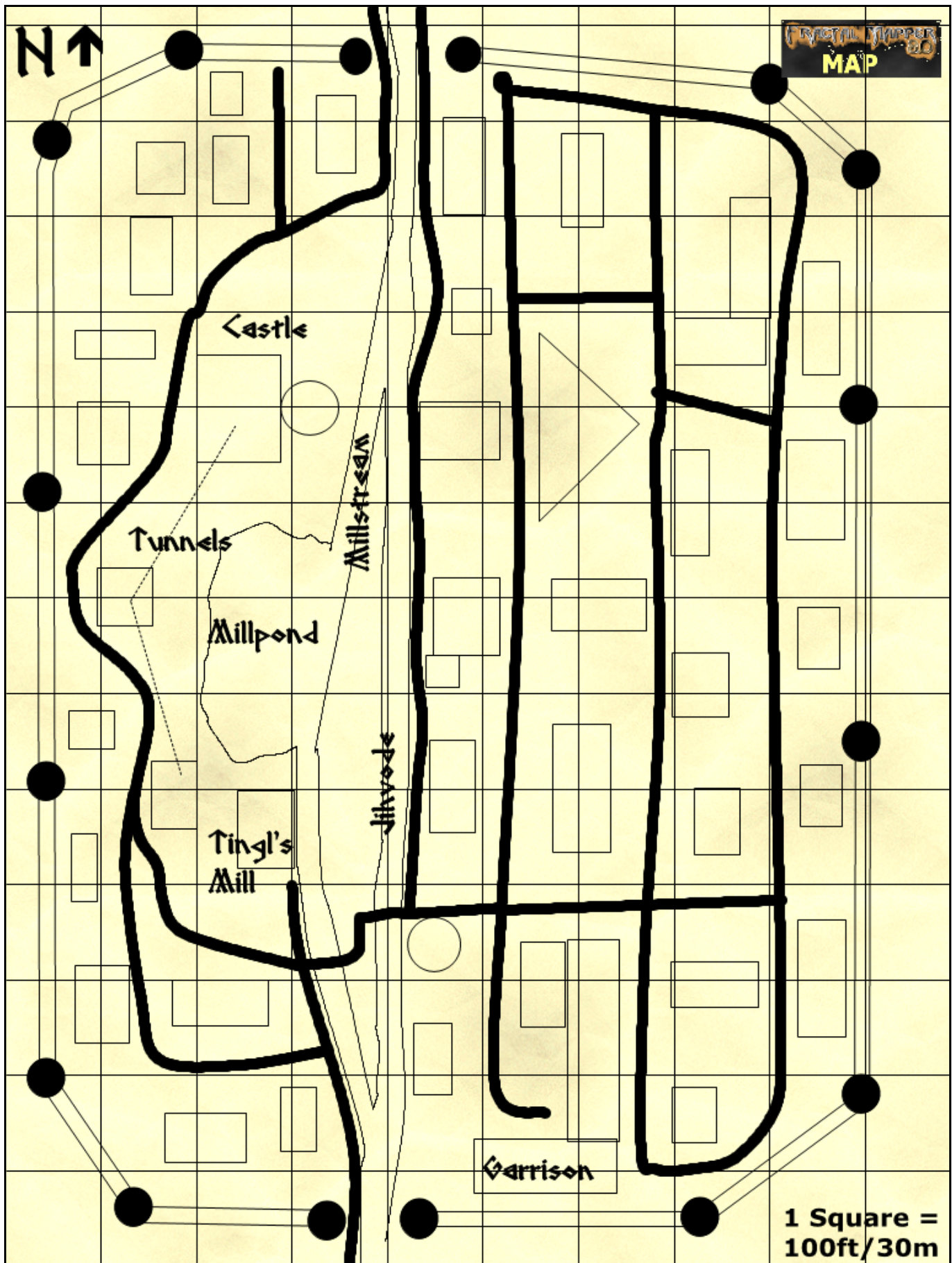
Bedrich surprises you with a magnificent jump from the ladder over your heads, landing on his feet behind (describe his position).

*My blade always is thirsty,* he says. *How kind of you to come and offer it drink!*

At this point you need to have everyone roll for initiative, and you need to roll for Bedrich. Only two of the PCs can engage him in melee combat at one time because of the width of the mining shaft. One of the two always will be at an advantage, because Bedrich can defend himself against only one opponent at a time. He will fight to the death. The two PCs who cannot join in melee combat can try to make ranged or spell attacks.

If the PCs search Bedrich or his body after defeating him, they find the items listed above. Their 100 GP still are missing. If Bedrich still is alive, he will claim that he gave the money to an organization for which he works, in the hopes that he can escape and return to retrieve the missing money.

If the PCs search the room where Bedrich was holed up, they'll find a sleeping mat, their pouch with the 100 GP and a small chest that contains an extra set of thieves' tools and the old, hand-drawn map on the following page.



Hand drawn map of pre-war Dark Valley when it still was known as Tingl's Mill

### 3. Goldfields

**Municipal Level:** Village

**Ruler:** Margrave Hermacek (in Slovan City)

**Enforcement:** March Militia, commander Sgt. Damek

**Population:** 200

**Alignment inclination:** Neutral good

**Wealth:** 6,000 GP. Top sales price: 600 GP. The average person in Goldfields earns 7 GP monthly. Poor laborers may earn as little as 2 GP a month.

**Political System:** Benevolent (march)

**Taxation:** Inn Tax 5%, Crop Tax 5% tithe, Product Tax 5%

**Extraordinary laws:** None

**Key locations and map numbers:** See following pages

**Key NPCs:** Sgt. Damek, commander of the militia detachment, human male Warrior level 3, age 30; Vaclav, innkeeper at the Golden Scythe, human male Commoner level 1, age 44.

Once the PCs are finished with Bedrich in Slovan City, the next step of their adventure is their ride northward over Goldfields and Lastmill to Dark Valley. Whenever they decide to depart Slovan City, make sure you and they know what equipment they're carrying and where and how they're carrying it. After the PCs have begun their journey to Goldfields, give them the following information. You may wish to reference the map of the march on Page 224.

The first day out takes you on the North Road along the Jihvode through prairie land and slightly rolling hills. Less than 500ft/150m north of Slovan City, the cobblestone of the North Road comes to an abrupt end, and the way northward becomes a broad dirt road but still one that's easy to ride.

In the distance to the north are somewhat larger hills, with forests nearby to the west and farther distant to the east. Occasionally, riders or a wagon coming from Goldfields in the north pass you. The travelers all assure you that the road ahead is clear and without threats.

The landscape is pastoral but unpopulated, although that was not always so. Frequently, you see rings of foundation stones rising over the grasses, a reminder that this once was a thriving area where horses, cattle and sheep were raised, in a peaceful time when farms dotted the countryside.

However, the Great Wars did break out, and a horde of draugs, orcs and some evil men crossed the countryside here, destroying everything in their path. Many farm families fell to this bloody tide. More managed to flee ahead of it, escaping into the heart of the Kingdom of Wenzen south of the march. None ever returned to claim the lands that they had abandoned.

Towards evening you began passing the Gold Forest, about a mile east of the road and the river, and go up and then down a low hill that rises above the river, which cuts a narrow gorge through the higher ground. As you descend again, the Village of Goldfields lies directly before you.

Like the northern ruins of Slovan City's old New City, foundation stones and remnants of stone walls rise through the grasses outside of the town wall. Goldfields also was once much larger than it is today, but that was before the wars.

To both sides of the village are large grain fields. Goldfields never has been a center for grazing cattle or sheep, although most farmers do have a milk cow or two and some pigs to serve their own needs. Rather, the area between Goldfields and Lastmill traditionally was the grain belt of the march.

The significance faded into the pages of history with the wars. The large Golden Mill still stands in Goldfields, but only one of its two waterwheels still turns, grinding out grain for the village, for Slovan City and some of the northern areas of the remainder of the Kingdom of Wenzen. Most of the great grain fields that once stretched to the east and west of town as far as one could see are overgrown now. Only the fields directly on the edge of Goldfields still are planted in wheat, spelt, oats and barley. There is only one destination for travelers in Goldfields, the Golden Scythe Inn.



## 3.1 Arriving in Town

### Information for the Game Master

The information on the following page, along with the village maps and the floor plans of the Golden Scythe Inn, can be given to the players.

## 3.2 A Night in the Inn

### Information for the Game Master

There is no action as such planned for the PCs' stay in Goldfields, but if they go down to the public room at night, they'll find the house about two-thirds full. All the customers appear to be local.

If the PCs keep a close ear on what the locals are saying or if they begin conversing with them, they can pick up a lot of scuttlebutt. If they tell what kind of mission they're on for the margrave, the locals will approve, saying it's about time that the margrave takes on the draugs who have been raiding Lastmill. They also want him to do more to capture the brigands who trouble travelers north of town.

These are the things the PCs can learn:

- Brigands from somewhere – no one is quite sure where – came into the Border Forest northwest of Goldfields several months ago and started raiding travelers on the North Road between Goldfields and Lastmill. Most folks think that the brigands are former Harriki who fled the little that's left of the old empire. They're poorly trained and poorly armed. It's estimated that there are 15 to 20 of them. They attack only small bands traveling north, robbing them of all of their valuables and their horses. Usually they ambush travelers near the ford on the Jihvode River in the North Hills. The militia has difficulty tracking them down. There apparently is a good Ranger in the group who knows how to hide tracks. The villagers speculate that he or she may be the brigands' leader.
- In the last three or four months, small groups of draug warriors have been coming down from the ruins of the Harriki empire in the north and in the dark hours of the deep night, they've abducted people from Lastmill. It's believed that they take their captives back to the draug Black Necromancer Baron Nundlung in Dark Valley, the ruins of a Harriki village that once was known as Tingl's Mill.
- A week ago, two peddlers headed out from Goldfields for Lastmill, but they never arrived there. It's doubtful that this was the work of the brigands. They appear to be interested only in robbing their victims, not in slaying or abducting them. Everyone in Goldfields suspects that the draugs have begun circling Lastmill and may now be raiding between Lastmill and Goldfields abducting travelers trying in the late evening to reach Lastmill.
- The people of Goldfields are afraid that the draugs may become more daring and begin raiding their village too.



Product Identity



## In Goldfields

Goldfields and Lastmill, farther to the north, survived the wars only because the King of Wenzen stationed large troop contingents and powerful magi in the two villages to help brake the tide of undead and orcs that swept down from the fallen Harriki Empire. Although they paid a great toll, the royal troops and magi succeeded. The wall of Goldfields fell. The moat of Lastmill held. Neither was conquered. Instead, the invaders were so weakened in the battles for the two villages that they could be defeated in the final battle, in the northern part of Slovan City.

That being as it may, Goldfields and Lastmill dwindled after the wars. As with the folk in most of the march, many of the farmers and others who dwelt in Goldfields and Lastmill fled into the southern reaches of the kingdom and other lands beyond. As a result, most of the farms outside the town wall have crumbled into ruin, and all but the nearest grain fields long have been fallow.

The wall itself is mostly a memory. Some, low, moss-covered segments of it still stand between the stone rings that were the foundation stones of the wall's battle towers. Only the two towers at the points where the North Road entered the town were refurbished and still are in use.

## The Map

1 – Guard towers at the two entrances to the village. Each is manned by two members of the militia, both Warriors.

2 – Militia outpost. The commander is Sgt. Damek, a 30-year-old male Warrior. His detachment includes two 2<sup>nd</sup> level Warriors who, along with Damek, are on duty during the daytime at the outpost, and 12 Warriors who work in shifts at the two towers.

3 – Mill pond.

4 – Dana's Wagon Works. Master wainwright Dana, a 42-year-old male Artisan, his journeyman Evzen, a 26-year-old male Artisan, and his apprentice Kamil, a 17-year-old male Commoner, build wagons and sleighs.

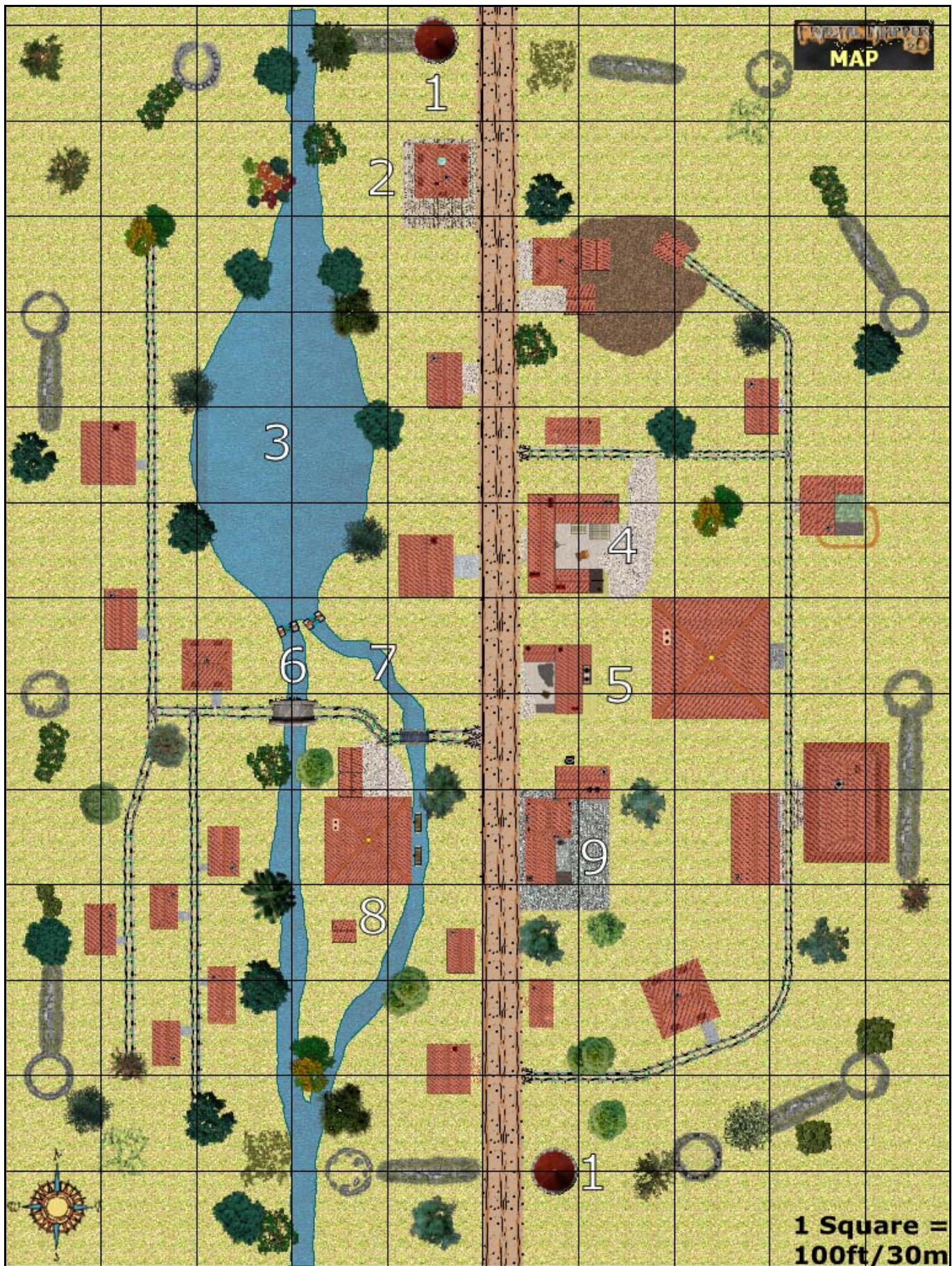
5 – Blacksmith Kazimir, a 35-year-old male Artisan and master blacksmith, runs his small smithy without the help of journeymen or apprentices. He makes and repairs farm equipment and he shoes horses, but Kazimir is ill trained for work with weapons or armor.

6- Jihvode River.

7 – Millstream.

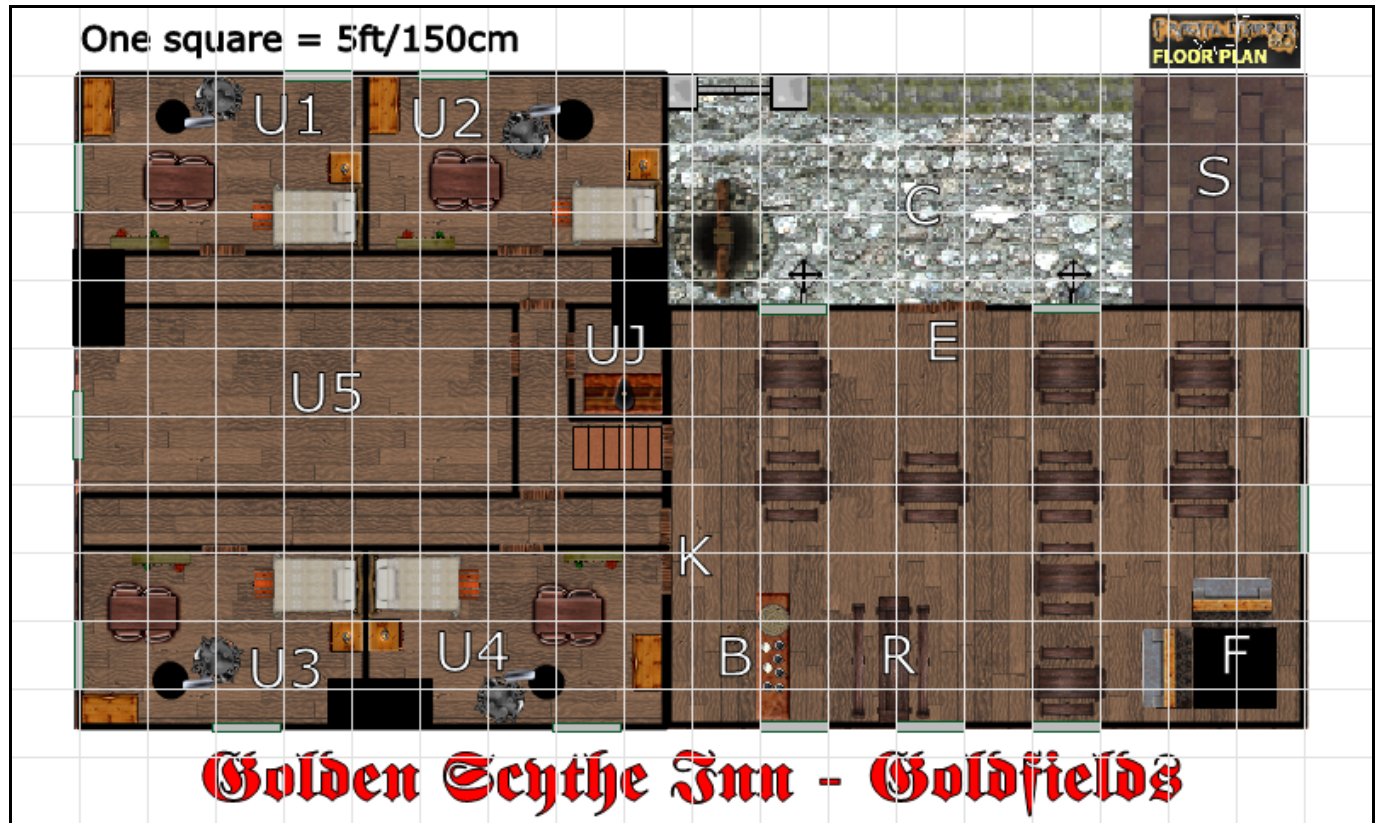
8 – The Golden Mill. Once the biggest industrial operation north of Slovan City, the mill now grinds flour and presses vegetable oil only for the march and a few other areas of the kingdom just beyond the march's borders. The master miller, Milan, a 58-year-old Artisan, his wife Lida, a 56-year-old female Artisan, and their son, master miller Kornel, a 31-year-old male Artisan, run the mill.





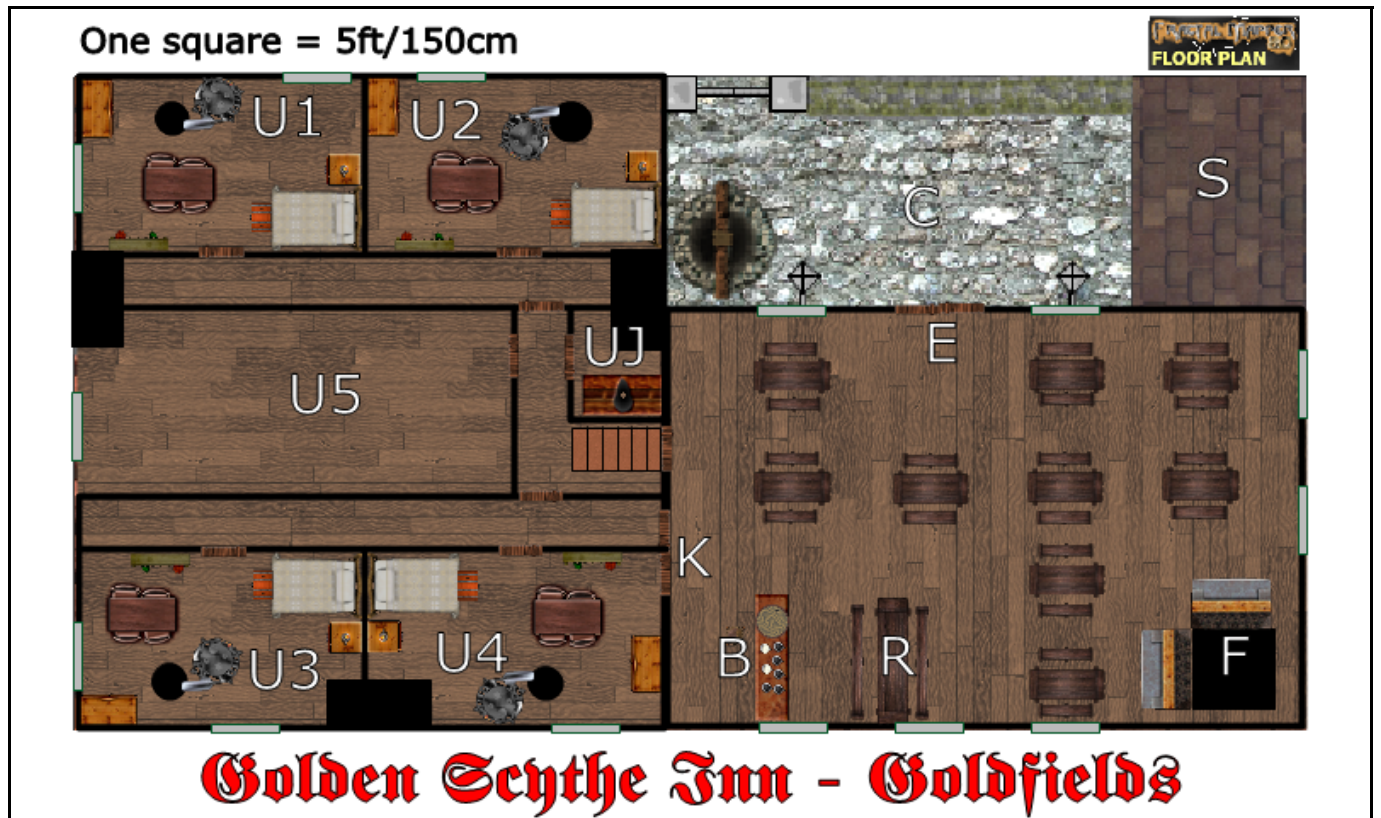
The village of Goldfields





*The Golden Scythe Inn*

With tavern graphics by GreyTale  
Open Game Content



9 –Golden Scythe Inn. Innkeeper Vaclav, a 44-year-old male Commoner, his wife, Anezka, a 43-year-old female Commoner, and their serving wench Eliska, a 22-year-old Commoner, run the small inn, the only hostelry left in Goldfields. The public room does a brisk business evenings with locals who enjoy the house lager that Vaclav brews. The upper floor has four guest rooms, all singles, that go per person for 5 SP a week or 1 SP a night. Anezka will make bread boards with home-made bread, cold cuts and condiments for house guests during the noon hour at 2 BP per serving. Simple warm meals can be ordered at night at 8 BP per serving. The house lager costs 3 CP per quart/liter tankard.

Other Buildings – All other buildings are farms or private houses.

## The Golden Scythe Inn

### Ground Floor

The ground floor of the building to the left is not shown. It holds the kitchen and the quarters of Vaclav and Anezka. The letters on the floor plans correspond to the building on the right and the courtyard.

B – Bar.

C – Courtyard with 5ft/150cm high stone wall and gate.

E – Entrance to the Inn and Public Room.

F – Double-face fireplace and chimney.

K – Kitchen Doors.

R – Reserved table for local regulars only.

S – Stable for guests' horses.

### Upper Floor (all rooms designated with U)

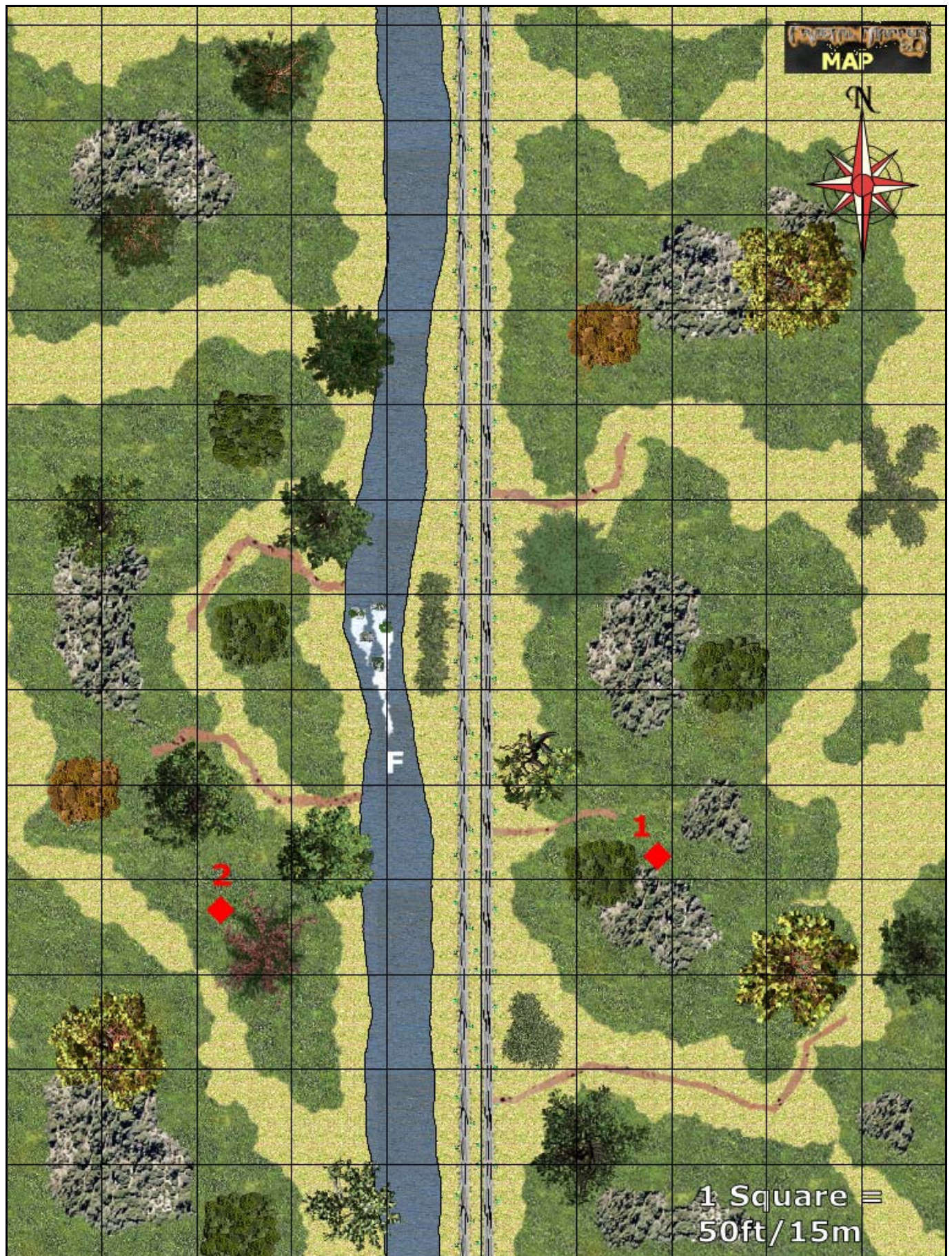
The building to the right with the public room has no upper floor. It is a single story building. The entry to the stairway to the upper floor is the door just to the right of (or above) the kitchen doors on the floor plans.

UJ – Single-seater jakes for overnight guests.

U1 – U4 – Guest rooms. Each has a pot-bellied stove, a wardrobe, a footlocker, a table with four chairs, a shelf and coat rack and a single, four-poster bed.

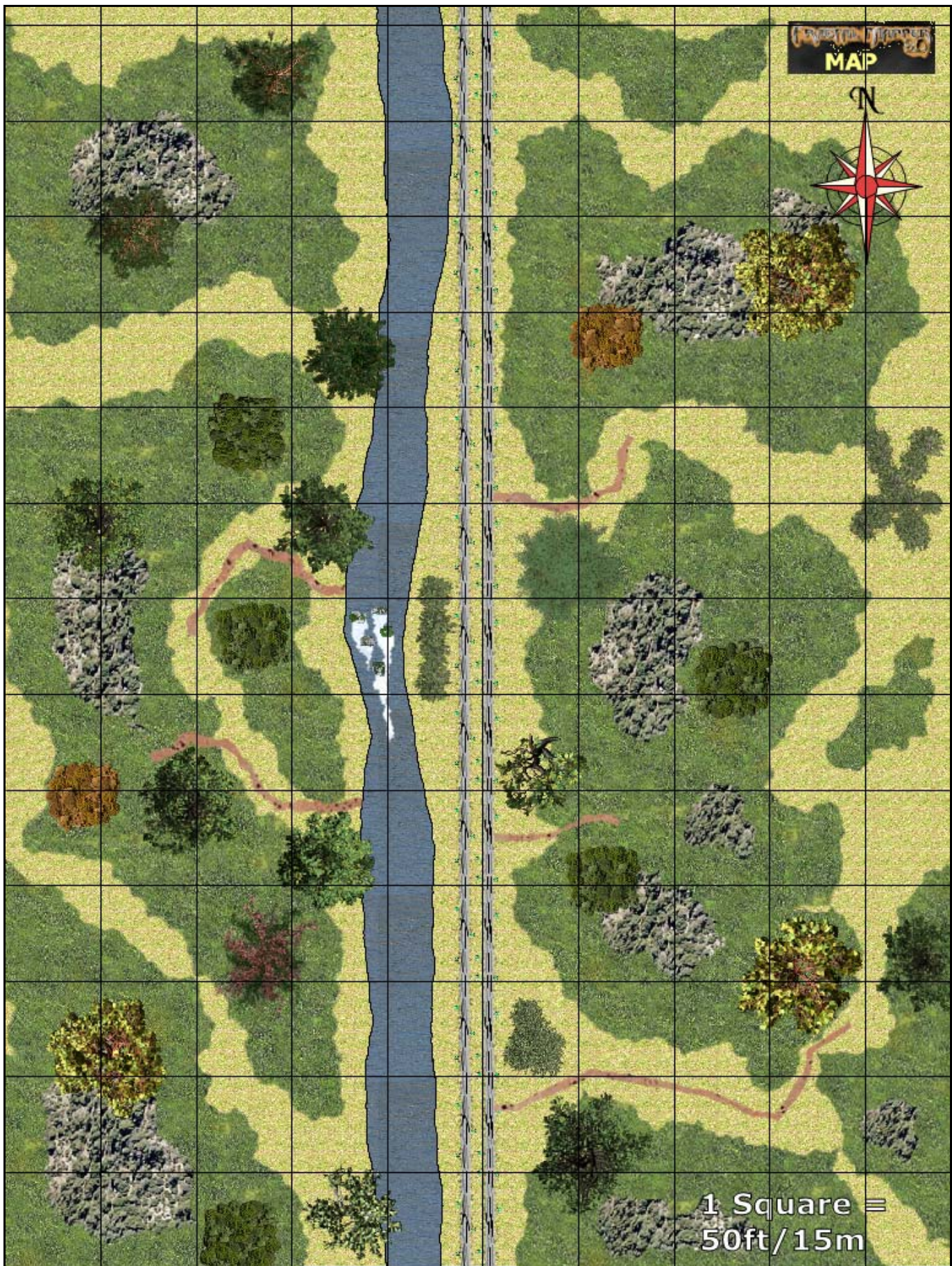
U5 – Eliska's room. The serving wench lives here. (Interior not shown)





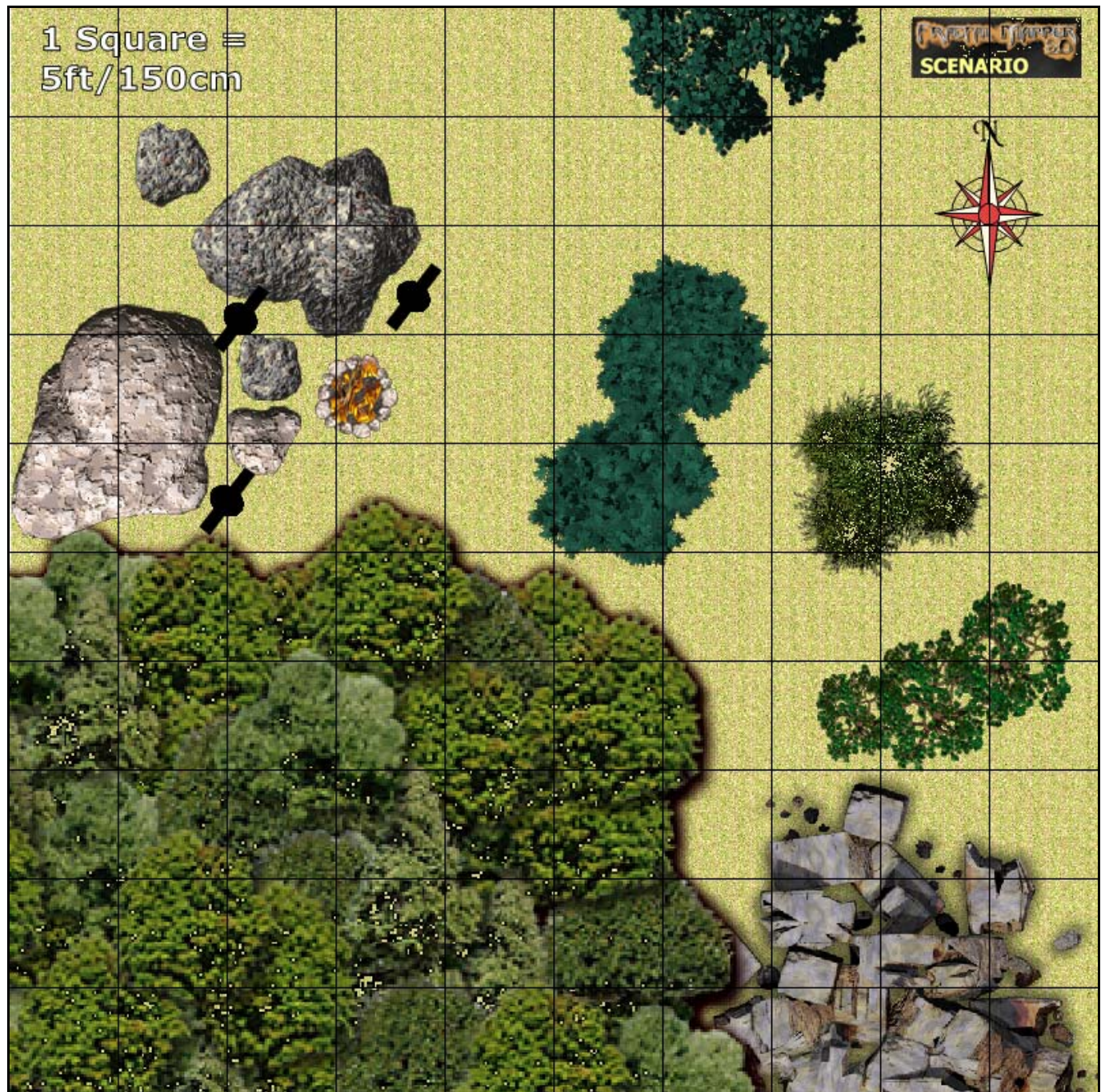
**North Hills encounter – Game Master's version**





*North Hills encounter – Players' version*





**North Hills encounter scene**

Open Game Content

## 4. On the Road Again

The following information should be given to the PCs after they leave Goldfields.

Just north of Goldfields, the North Road turns from a wide dirt road into a wagon track that is in good condition. The first part of your day is uneventful, but you've reached the point now where the road follows the Jihvode River through the North Hills, a narrow valley that runs some 15 miles/23km northward.

At this time, you should show your players the PC version of the map *North Hills encounter*.



As you enter the valley, you can see the first of many hills straddling the North Road. The river and road follow a relatively straight courses at this point. There is a narrows in the river about 300ft/90m ahead of you where rocks 6 to 8 feet/180 to 240cm high jut out of the water. The hills are covered with coarse grasses, rock outcroppings, brush and trees. You can see two thin trails on the hillside across the river from the point where it narrows and three more thin trails on your side of the Jihvode, also heading up into the hills.

## Information for the Game Master

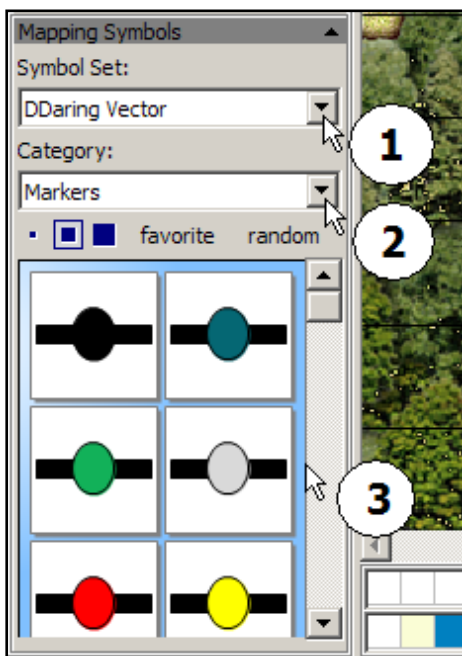
The game master's version of the overland encounter map shows you the following:

- F – The ford in the river.
- 1 – The place where three brigands are waiting to ambush the PCs on the road side. Arrow range is 80ft/24m.
- 2 – The place where two more brigands are waiting and may attack with arrows. The range is 150ft/45m.

The second map - *North Hills encounter scene* – is a close-up of the point where the three brigands are waiting to attack the PCs. It well may be that the PCs track the brigands and encounter them there rather than waiting to be ambushed. If such an encounter occurs, you can give your players a copy of this map too, so that they can visualize the scene accurately.

## For FM8 Users

The encounter scene map was designed specifically for use with electronic visualizations or miniatures. It is in the map file *DDNorthHillsEncounter.fmp*.



Open Game Content

- If you're using miniatures, print this map with 1-inch grids. It then will be at exactly the right scale for your miniatures.
- If you're using a digital projector or a laptop network, follow these steps. First make all layers except *Markers* unselectable. Then make *Markers* your active layer. This will make it possible for you to move the three black markers for the brigands as you please.
- If you've installed the *Dungeons Daring* symbols (downloadable from <http://www.dungeons-daring.org>) proceed as follows, using the graphic to the right as a guideline:
- Pick the symbol set *DDaring Vector*.
- Pick the category *Markers*.
- Load a different colored marker for each of your PCs. This will make it possible for you also to move the colored markers for each of your PCs as you please.

## NPC Statistics

Because the brigands all are 1<sup>st</sup> level Warriors, there is little room for variation in their statistics including injury points.

### Five Brigands

**All Warrior Level 1**

**Size:** Medium

**Ages:** 20-30 years

**Initiative modifier:** +0 (+0 Dex)

**Injury Points:** 19

**Life Points:** 4

**Base Defenses:** Armor 12; Endurance 11; Reflex 10; Will 11.

**Attacks:** Long sword (poor quality), attack bonus +2 for Reflex defense, +0 for Armor defense, Damage 1d8-1.

Long bow: Attack 100ft/30m +2, 200ft/60m +0, 300ft/90m -3, Damage 1d8.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** Fireball arrows (1 each)

**Armor:** Leather

**Speed:** 30ft/9m

**Resistances:** None

**Abilities:** Strength 13, Dexterity 11, Stamina 13, Magical aptitude 1, Mechanical aptitude 12, Knowledge 13

**Special abilities:** Sneak attack +1d6; Trapfinding; Evasion.

**Talent Points:** 12

**Primary Talents:** Melee Combat 6, Ranged Combat 6. Religion 0.

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency +7, Concentration +1, Heal +1, Notice Objects and Movement +1, Religious Knowledge +1, Ride Mount +1, Search +1, Sneak 0, Swim +1, Weapon Proficiency (melee) +7, Weapon Proficiency (ranged) +6.

**Alignment:** Neutral evil

Injury Point Threshold	Remaining Injury Points	Attack, Damage, Skill and Defense Penalty
Fully capable	10 or more	None
Injured	6-9	-1
Seriously injured	3-5	-2
Critically injured	1-2	-3
In mortal danger	0	-4

**Balls of Fire arrows:** These magical arrows cause a Ball of Fire to explode, causing 2d6 points of damage to all within 30ft/9m of the point of impact. The brigand band managed to find a hidden stash of 20 such magical arrows in the fallen empire. They use them to intimidate victims. Except in desperation, they will not waste a second of these arrows upon the PCs.

**Other supplies:** The brigands all have long swords that are in bad condition. They make a normal attack roll that checks as usual against the Reflex defense to determine the hit. However, if there is a hit and the target is wearing any kind of armor, there is a penalty of -2 against the target's Armor defense. Regardless of whether the target is wearing armor, the penalty always counts for sword damage, thus damage roll is 1d8-1 instead of the normal 1d8+1. Each NPC also has in his or her possession 2d4 CP, a long bow and 30 arrows. All five have horses.

## NPC Strategy

If the PCs don't track down and surprise the three brigands, they will wait until the PCs reach a point directly below them. They then will fire a Ball of Fire arrow at a point of impact exactly 40ft/12m in front of the foremost PC. This will do no damage, but the PCs will feel the ball of fire's intense heat. If the PCs are riding horses, they will need 1d4 rounds for them calm to calm their mounts.

You see an arrow fly down from the hills above you to the left. Suddenly a huge ball of fire explodes in the road about 40ft/12m in front of you. You can feel the intense heat, but you don't appear to be damaged. But then a voice echoes from the hills above you to the right:

*That was just a warning! We have more of those arrows, and we're prepared to fire them upon you if you leave us no other choice. Stand down now, put your arms above your heads and then both hands, palms down, upon your heads!*

If the PCs don't do as they say, the brigands each (all five) will begin firing one arrow per round on the PCs. The brigands on the river side will not cross the ford. If the PCs slay or capture the brigands on the road side, the two brigands on the river side will flee and ride off into the Border Forest in the West. If the PCs try to pursue them, when they come within 200ft/60m of the forest's edge, they will be attacked with 15 arrows per round, fired by archers concealed in the trees. All of the brigands in this group are 1<sup>st</sup> level warriors. Use the statistics above. If the PCs come within less than 100ft/30m of the forest, the brigands will try, in two successive rounds, to hit them directly with Balls of Fire arrows.

The encounter will delay the PCs long enough that they no longer will be able to reach Lastmill before sunset. You can show them the picture below, which describes the scene.

Much of the rest of the day goes by uneventfully. The road is empty; no one else appears to be traveling between Goldfields and Lastmill today. Unfortunately, it appears that your tangle with the brigands will make it impossible to reach Lastmill before the sun sets. The last gentle hill before Lastmill is ahead of you. A stand of pine trees marks its crest. But last rays of gold and orange in the western sky are yielding to the black of night.

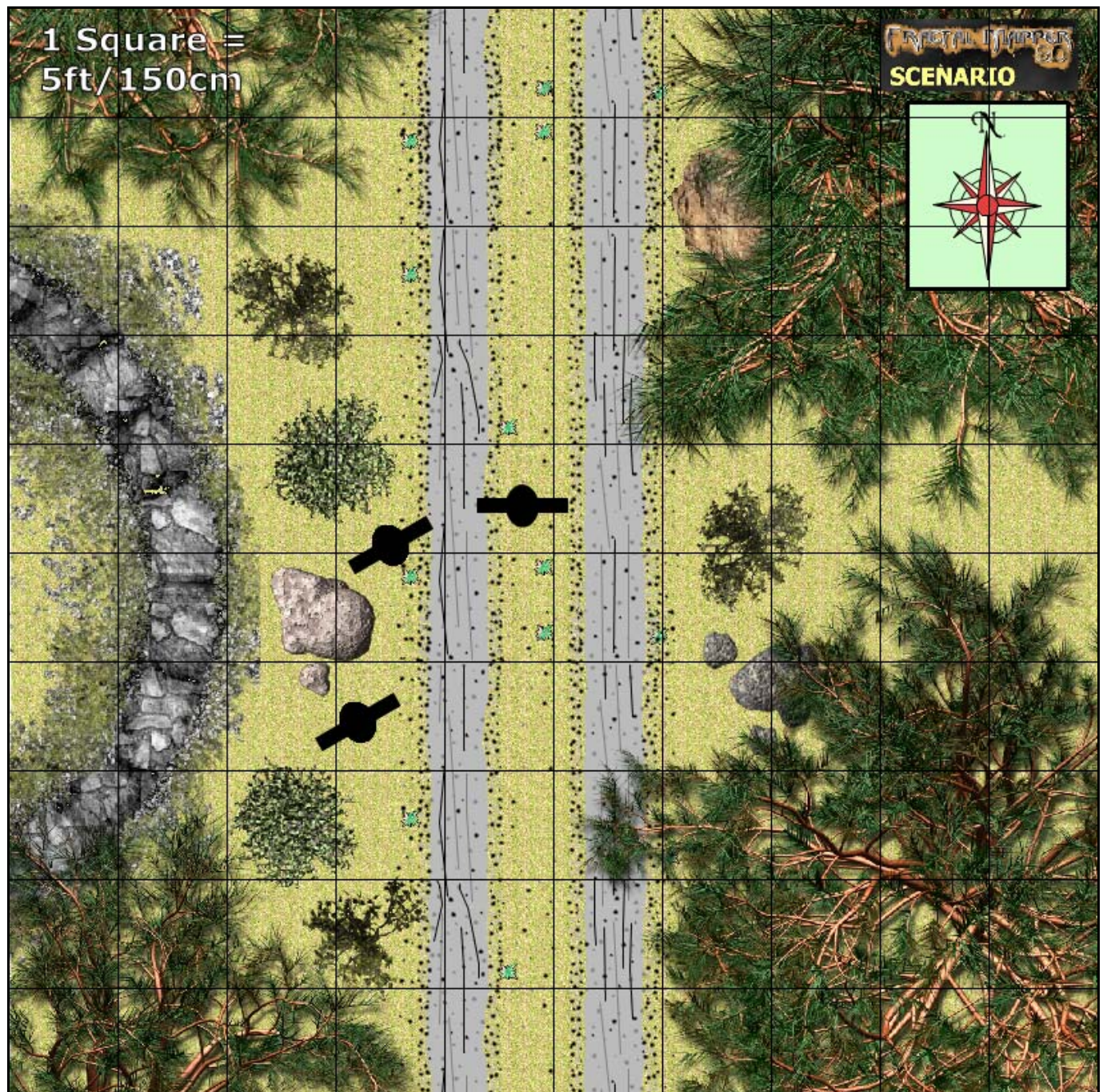


**Sunset over the last hill before Lastmill ... with draugs on the way**



The North Road veers toward the hill. The Jihvode flows about 1,000ft/300m to the west of the hill, through a somewhat swampy stretch of flat land. The North Road crosses the hill, which is low but broad. Its crest is only about 100ft/30m higher than the surrounding flat lands. But the hill spreads out north to south and east to west over a stretch of some 3,000ft/1,000m.

Before you continue with your description, you should give the PCs a chance to react. For the description and encounter that follow, use the encounter map below. *Fractal Mapper 8* users also can print this map at a scale of 1 inch per grid for use with miniatures or use it with a digital projector or laptop network and markers. The map file is *DDDraugEncounter1.fmp*.



*Draug encounter south of Lastmill*

The last traces of daylight vanish as you ascend the hill, but the full moon is up early tonight and it is bright. Although the light is weaker than it would be by daylight, you still can say relatively well, even making out weak differences in color.

Before you continue with your description, give the PCs a chance to react again.

As you approach the crest of the pine-covered hill, you see the ruin of a large watch tower some 100ft/3m to the right of the road. Only the lower 20ft/6m of the tower's wall still stand. The top ring of stones is broken off in a jagged fashion.

As you look at the ruin, three dark figures step out from the forest just in front of the ruin. As well as you can see, they appear to be human, but there is a red glow in the eyes of all three of them. Each holds a drawn long sword. One of them speaks in a strangely emotionless voice:

*Be greeted, travelers! We are the servants of Baron Nundlung. The baron invites ye to visit him in his court in Tingl's Mill. He offers ye the gift of deathless eternity. We offer ye the choice between eternal deathlessness or death now. Yield and come with us, or we shall slay ye!*

The servants of the baron are a draug warrior and two draug commoners. They will not allow the PCs to pass and will fight them until they are destroyed or the PCs are dead.

## NPC Statistics

### Draug Warrior

**Warrior, level 1**

**Size:** Medium 6ft/183 cm, 170lbs/85kg

**Age expectancy:** Draugs survive until they are permanently destroyed

**Initiative modifier:** 0

**Injury Points:** 24

**Life Points:** None.

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10; Endurance 12; Reflex 10; Will 17

**Attacks:** Long sword, attack bonus +3, damage 1d8+1.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 12, Dexterity 11, Stamina 20, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 12, Knowledge 13.

**Special qualities:** Perceive in the dark, magical touch, undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, vulnerability to daylight, vulnerability to direct sunlight, vulnerability to iron, vulnerability to running water, herbal vulnerability, ley ban, emergence (See definitions under *Draug Commoners* below).

**Talent Points:** 8

**Primary Talents:** Melee Combat 8

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency +9, Notice Objects and Movement +1, Ride Mount +1, Search +1, Sneak 0, Weapon Proficiency +9

**Alignment inclination:** Any evil

**Treasure:** None



## Draug Commoners (2)

**Commoner, level 1**

**Size:** Medium. 1) 5'10"/178cm, 134lbs/67kg and 2) 5'8"/173cm, 128lbs/64kg

**Age expectancy:** Draugs survive until they are permanently destroyed

**Initiative modifier:** +2 (Dex +2)

**Injury Points:** 5

**Life Points:** None.

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10; Endurance 10; Reflex 11; Will 15

**Attacks:** Long sword, attack bonus +1, damage 1d8

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 11, Dexterity 13, Stamina 20, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 14, Knowledge 11.

**Special qualities:** Perceive in the dark, magical touch, undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, vulnerability to daylight, vulnerability to direct sunlight, vulnerability to iron, vulnerability to running water, herbal vulnerability, ley ban, emergence.

**Talent Points:** 8

**Primary Talents:** Applied Knowledge 3, Athletics 3

**Secondary Talents:** Melee Combat 1

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency +1, Concentration +4, Herbalistic Knowledge +4, Notice Objects and Movement 0, Ride Mount 0, Search 0, Sneak +1, Weapon Proficiency +1

**Alignment inclination:** Any evil

**Treasure:** None

## Special Qualities of the Draug Warrior and Draug Commoners

**Resistance to Heat and Cold:** Heat and cold have no effect upon a draug as long they do not cause it to burn or to dehydrate or become frozen to an extent that movement becomes clumsy to impossible. Cold may freeze a draug in its position, but it does no lasting damage. Heat can cause damage only if it causes the draug to catch fire. At that point it takes the standard damage that the fire causes.

**Perceive in the Dark:** The eyes of draugs emit a signal something like that of a bat. The less light there is, the stronger the signal becomes. When the signal is reflected back to the draug's eyes, it forms a colorless image in black, white and grey tones of what normally could be seen in light. This image does not magically detect invisible creatures and objects. Invisibility magic allows such signals to pass in both directions through invisible objects. This virtual sight has a range of 60ft/18m.

**Magical Touch:** Draugs have no living nervous system but they do have a magical ability to sense objects when they are touched. This sense is limited to the perception that an object is being touched. A draug also can, for example, move his or her hand around an object and perceive its form. It can squeeze an object and detect whether it yields, giving the draug an impression of its degree of hardness. However, a draug cannot *feel* such things as small points or sharpness although it well may see them.

**Undead Injury Effects:** Draugs have no life points. If an injury dismembers a draug, as might be the case with a targeted hit, it loses the use of the dismembered body part. Otherwise, a draug is at full capacity despite the loss of injury points until it reaches 0 points, when it automatically is slain. Even after reaching 0 injury points, a draug's body can be repaired and bound again to a soul. Only if the draug is decapitated and the head is destroyed is it impossible to restore its own body and return its soul to it.

**Immune to Pain:** Draugs have no living nervous system and therefore feel no pain.

**Immune to Poison:** Draugs have no life system that can be damaged by poison, however destructive poisons (like some acids) that will destroy physical body tissue have the same effect upon a draug's undead body.

**Vulnerability to Daylight:** One small, single ray of sunlight touching a draug will destroy its physical essence forever, and it also will destroy permanently the soul of any draug below dark draug level. Being in daylight without exposure to direct sun does not destroy a draug, but it gives it a penalty of -2 on every decision that requires a dice roll.

**Vulnerability to Iron:** Any wound from iron automatically slays a draug. However, a draug body slain by iron can be restored and have its soul returned to it.

**Vulnerability to Running Water:** Draugs are unable to cross running water of their own power. They cannot will themselves to do so. If draug flesh comes into contact with running water, the surface of skin that touched the water will be dissolved as though it had been in a dangerous acid.

**Herbal Vulnerability:** Certain plants are particularly strong in the forces of Light and Life, which causes difficulty for draugs that encounter them. Ransom or wild garlic and sloe bushes repel draugs. A draug must make a Stamina check against DL 35 to touch or cross ramson or to touch or pass by or through sloe. However, if it is commanded to do so by its master draug, the master draug makes the check instead.

**Ley ban:** Draugs will come only reluctantly within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone. Within that range, they lose all of their magical powers and all use of magic. Even their magical items become temporarily non-magical.

**Emergence:** Draugs cannot be forever trapped inside physical bounds unless they are made of lead or iron or they are encircled by running water. They can move through any other type of matter at a rate of  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch/3cm per round. That's equivalent to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches/38mm a minute or  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet/230cm an hour.



***The outskirts of Lastmill***



## 5. Lastmill

**Municipal Level:** Village

**Ruler:** Margrave Hermacek (in Slovan City)

**Enforcement:** March Militia

**Population:** 120

**Alignment inclination:** Neutral good

**Wealth:** 5,000 GP. Top sales price: 550 GP. The average person in Goldfields earns 5 GP monthly. Poor laborers may earn as little as 15 SP a month.

**Political System:** Benevolent (march)

**Taxation:** Inn Tax 5%, Crop Tax 5% tithe, Product Tax 5%

**Extraordinary laws:** None

**Key locations and map numbers:** See following pages

**Key NPCs:** Miroslav, innkeeper at the Border House Inn, human male Commoner level 1, age 56; Iveta, human female Herbal Witch level 9, age 62; Targa, human female Herbal Witch level 5, age 37; Corporal Oldrich, commander of the militia detachment, human male Warrior level 2, age 26; two militia soldiers, human male or female, Warrior level 1.

As you approach Lastmill, you notice that the town is on something of an island. The North Road bypasses the town to the east. A wooden bridge crosses the river at the village's south end. It appears to be the way into town.

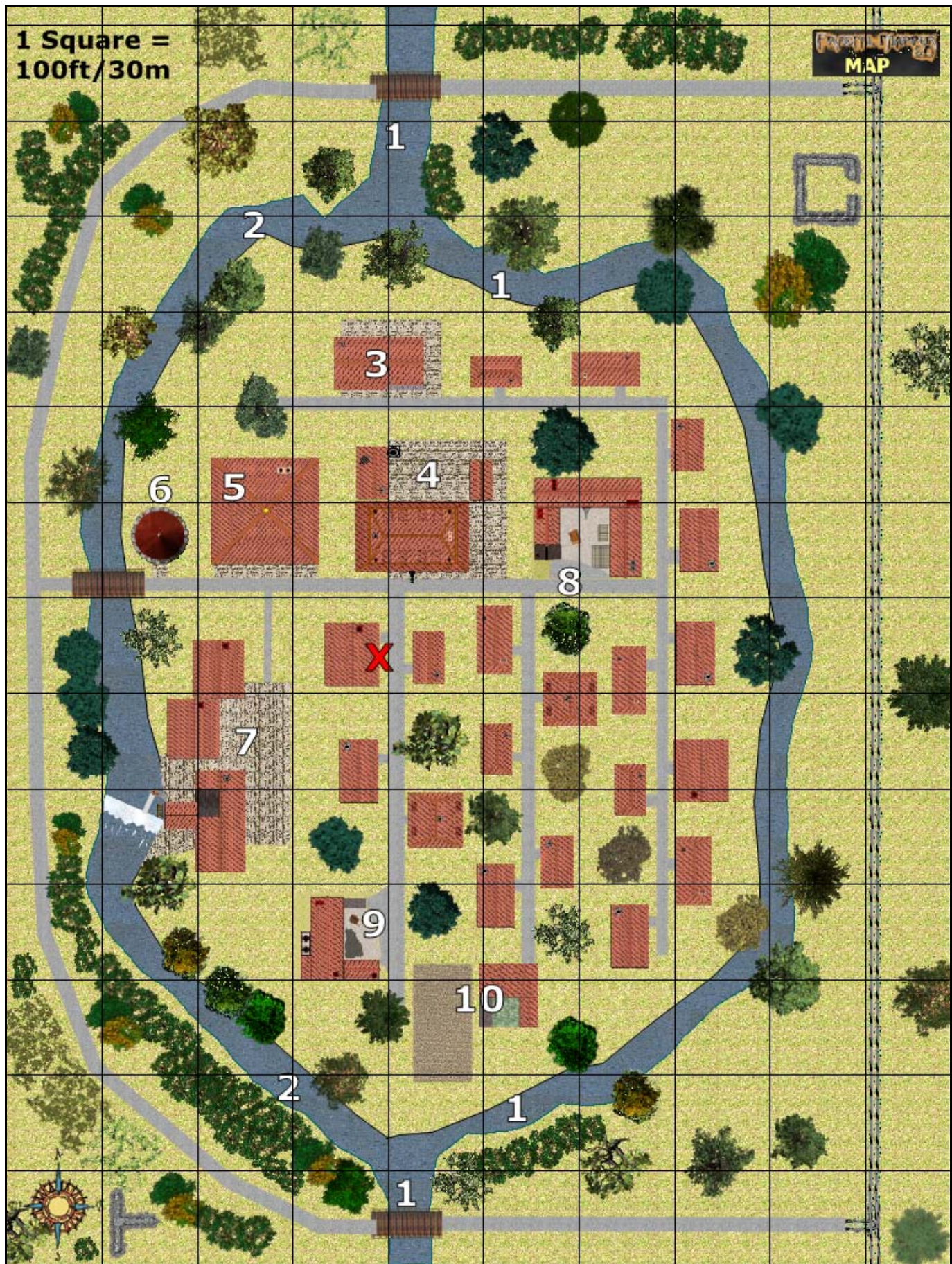
### Game Master's Notes

Lastmill never had a town wall. Instead, as a defensive measure, a moat was dug around the west side of the village and a system of three, removable wooden bridges was used to make access to the town difficult. The North Road, which has degenerated into a riding track north of town, bypasses the village proper. Give your players the information on Pages 277-282.



*The Last Mill in Lastmill – damaged but still intact*





The Village of Lastmill – Game Master's Version





*The Village of Lastmill – Players' Version*



## In Lastmill

Lastmill, like Goldfields, survived the wars only because the King of Wenzon stationed large troop contingents and powerful magi in the two villages to help brake the tide of undead and orcs that swept down from the fallen Harriki Empire.

Lastmill is on an artificial island. To enter the village from the North Road, one must cross the Jihvode on a wooden bridge south of town and then cross the wide millstream on a second wooden bridge west of the village. One can see that the bridges were made in a manner that makes their removal easy, forcing invaders to cross the running water of the Jihvode or the millstream. The orcs from the north could do that, but the undead of the host could not cross running water.

Although they paid a great toll, the royal troops and magi succeeded in defending Lastmill in the wars. Neither Lastmill nor Goldfields was conquered. Instead, the invaders were so weakened in the battles for the two villages that they could be defeated in the final battle, in the northern part of Slovan City.

The population of Lastmill is concentrated upon the island, for security's sake. However, most farmers have barns and sheds by their fields outside of town. Like Goldfields, Lastmill historically was part of the March of Slovan's grain belt. Wheat, oats, barley and spelt are Lastmill's main crops. However, timber operations in the eastern part of the Border Forest also are of economic importance. Like Goldfields, Lastmill also diminished substantially after the wars, leaving a large number of ruins outside of town.

Lastmill today is protected by a small detachment of militia in the so-called War Tower and the village Siege House. The War Tower is a multi-story tower 70ft/21m high. In its base is the militia detachment, which houses the commander, Corporal Oldrich, and his two soldiers. The upper stories are empty but have space enough to accommodate all of the villagers, should the town come under attack.

The top level of the tower makes an excellent watchpost, with a view during clear weather that reaches to the Dread Hills in the north, the North Hills in the south, Coldwood Forest in the east and the Border Forest in the west. The top level of the tower also has secured in a chest a magical scepter with which one can communicate in times of emergency with Wladislav, the royal diviner in Gunnar's Tower in Slovan City.

## The Village Map

1 – Jihvode River.

2 – Millstream.

3 – Acedia's General Store. This shop is vital to the village's well-being. Farmers in Lastmill raise few food crops and have few animals. They concentrate upon the harvest of grain for the Last Mill. As a result, they rely heavily upon Acedia, a 48-year-old human female Merchant, who runs the village's only shop. She sells a wide variety of supplies as well as food at prices averaging about 5% above those in the *Players Guide*.

4 – Border House Inn. The Border House once was an exclusive hostelry, the last in the kingdom before the border with the Harriki Empire. Since the wars, it has fallen on harder times. Relatively few travelers come to Lastmill these days, and none travel on to the Lands of Ruin in the north. The owner and landlord, Miroslav, nonetheless tries to maintain the inn as well as he can in the tradition of his ancestors. However, the main source of his modest income comes from the locals who frequent the public room in small numbers in the noon hour and in larger numbers after the day's work is done. The inn is sound. The walls and windows are tight against winds, and there are no leaks in the roof. However, some things are a bit threadbare, and there are places where new paint would be helpful. The complex includes a stable for visitors' horses to the rear right of the main building and the small brewhouse where Miroslav brews his house beer to the rear left. Miroslav is a 56-year-old human male Commoner. The cook is his wife, Dusana, a 54-year-old human female Commoner. The serving wench is their daughter 36-year-old daughter, Eliska, a Commoner. When he has time, her husband, the lumberjack Evzen, a 38-year-old human male Merchant, also helps out at the inn.

5 – Siege House. This structure belongs to the March of Slovan. It once was a second inn, with more guest rooms than the neighboring Border House, but it went out of business during the wars. Margrave Hermacek bought it and had it remodeled, to help sustain his northern border outpost in times of trouble. It has large grain cellars, storage areas that are available to Acedia's General Store where Acedia can keep non-perishable foods, wine and the like and storage areas that are available to local farmers. The building is not manned. It is under the control of Corporal Oldrich in the War Tower.

6 – War Tower. The building, also property of the March of Slovan, is the main defensive structure in the village. It has room for the entire village population to seek shelter within its yard/meter thick limestone walls during times of war. There also is an underground tunnel connecting the tower to the neighboring Siege House. The ground floor is the station of the small military detachment of militia from Slovan City. Corporal Oldrich, the station commander, a 26-year-old human male Warrior, has his quarters on the second story (European first floor). The two soldiers who do temporary duty under his command, always human male or female Warriors from Slovan City, have quarters in the third story (European second floor).

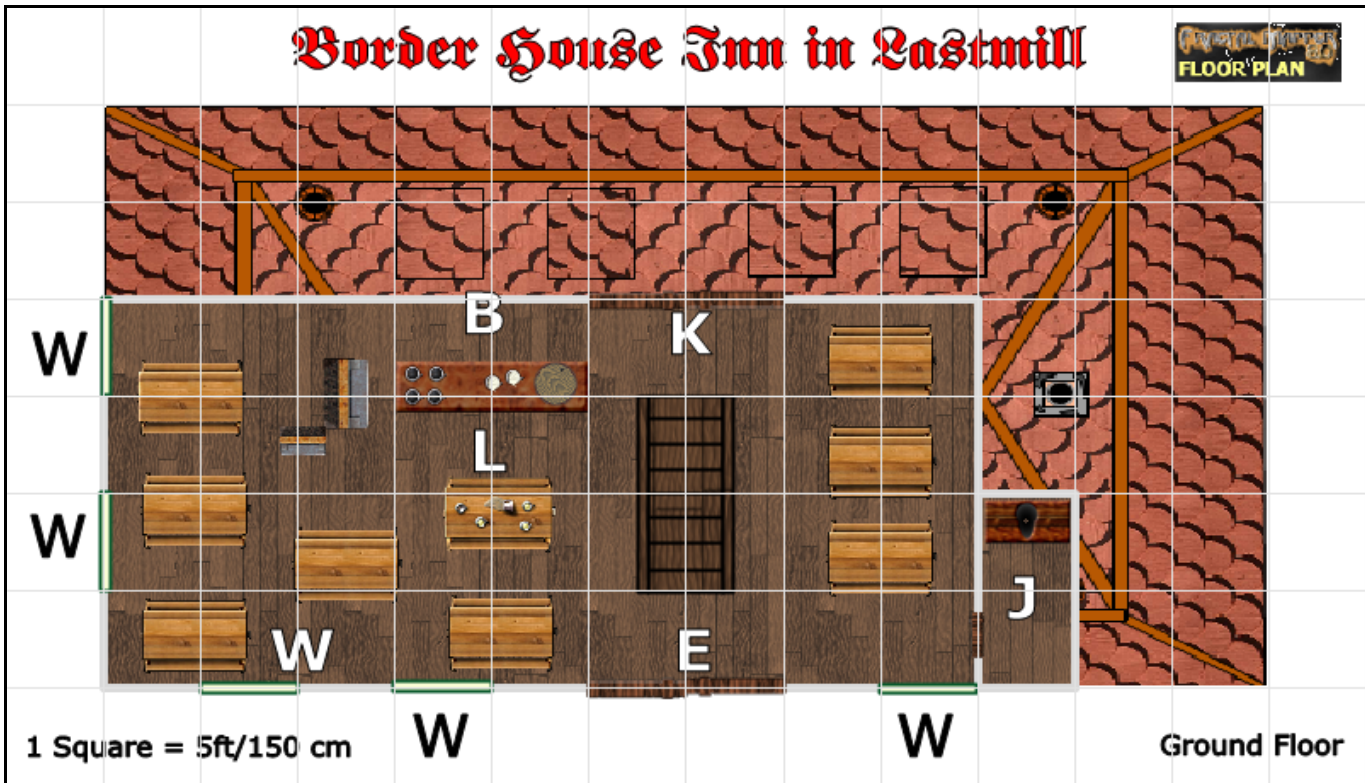
7 – The Last Mill. The mill is run by Strom, a 49-year-old human male master miller and Artisan of Level 6. He and his wife, Kamila, a 44-year-old human female Commoner of 1<sup>st</sup> level, live on the upper floor of the mill. They employ a journeyman miller, Vavrin, a 32-year-old Artisan of 2<sup>nd</sup> level, and at all times, they have two apprentices, human male or female Commoners of 1<sup>st</sup> level. The mill grinds all of the local grain into flour and commercial feed and it also presses seeds into vegetable oil.

8 – Zdenek's Wagonworks. Zdenek, a 41-year-old human male master wainwright and Artisan, builds and repairs the wagons and sleighs used by local farmers. His sole employee is the journeyman wainwright Vilem, a 29-year-old human male Artisan.

9 – Marek's Smithy. The village master blacksmith is Marek, a 36-year-old human male Artisan. He works alone. Marek does not make or repair armor or weapons.

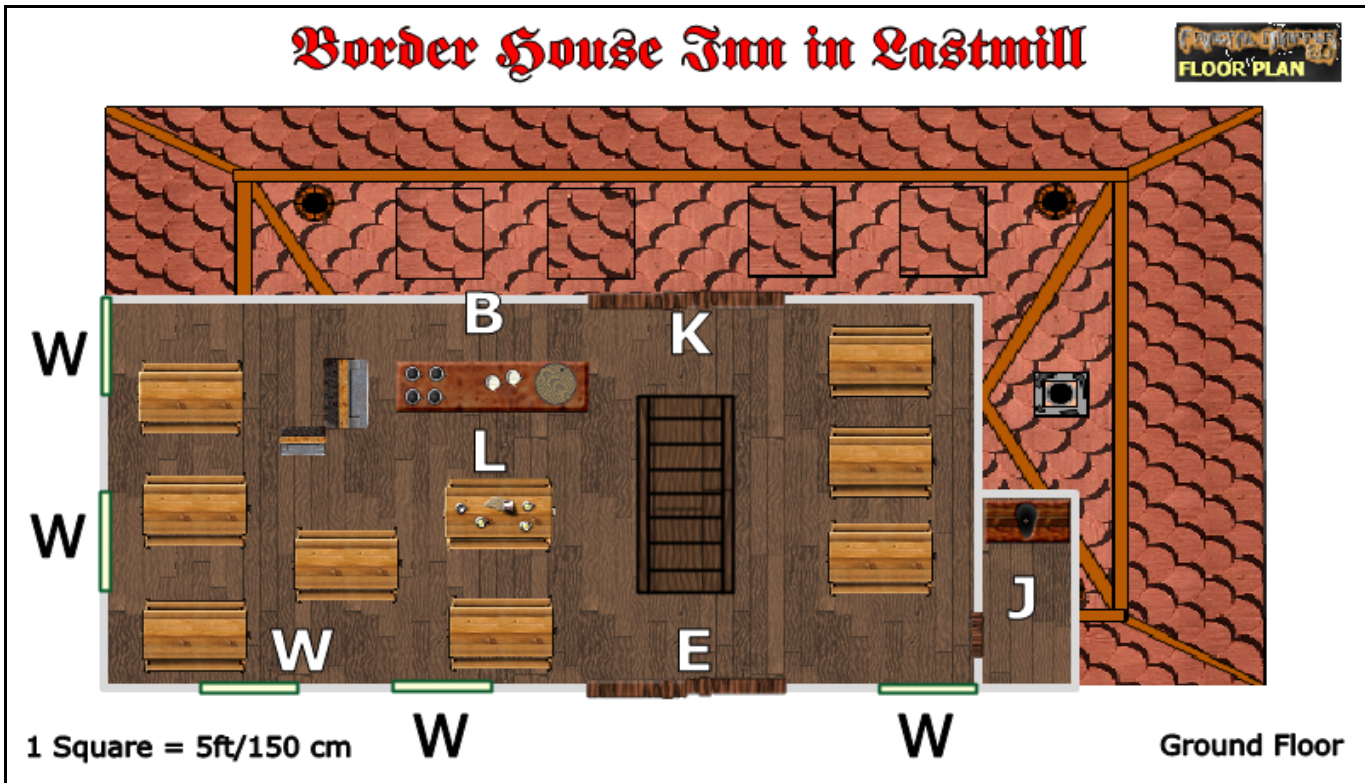
10 – House of Healing. This is the home of Iveta, a 62-year-old human female Herbal Witch, and her daughter, Targa, a 37-year-old human female Herbal Witch. They have a large herbal garden on the west side of their house.





*Border House Inn, ground floor with grid.*

With tavern graphics by GreyTale  
Open Game Content



*Border House Inn, ground floor without grid.*

With tavern graphics by GreyTale  
Open Game Content



*Border House Inn, upper floor with grid.*

Open Game Content



*Border House Inn, upper floor without grid.*

Open Game Content



## The Border House Inn

When entering the inn, a stairway to the upper level is just past the doorway, about 5ft/150cm inside. The rest of the ground floor that's visible is the public room. Miroslav has four guest rooms at 3 SP a week or 8 BP nightly. The house beer costs 3 CP for a quart/liter tankard. The Border House has no regular food menu, but Dusana will make food for overnight guests at 3 BP per meal.

### The Ground Floor

B – Bar. Miroslav usually works here, pouring tankards of his house brew from the barrel.

E – Entrance. Two wide, wooden doors, each 5ft/150cm wide.

F – Double-faced, wood-burning fireplace.

J – Jakes.

K – Kitchen Entrance. Two wide, wooden doors, each 5ft/150cm wide.

L – Table reserved for local regulars.

W – Windows with green wooden shutters.

### The Upper Floor

J – Jakes.

1-4 – The four guest rooms. These rooms are a bit more cramped than the accommodations in Slovan City and Goldfields. The ceiling, following the roof contours, slants downward on the outside wall. Two dormers are in these walls with windows. Each room is furnished with a four-poster bed, a wardrobe, a foot locker, two chairs and a wood-burning pot belly stove.



*The golden grain fields of Lastmill*

## 5.1 Arriving in Lastmill

The following information should be given to the PCs as they enter Lastmill.

The North Road continues on as a wagon track, but a wooden, hand-carved road sign advises a left turn to enter Lastmill. This road too is a double-rut wagon track until it reaches a wooden bridge that crosses the Jihvode River. On the other side, a gravel road continues on along a second stream, turning northward. The first structure you see is a mill complex across the stream.

Show the players the picture on Page 274.

As you ride directly by the mill, across the stream, you notice that the cupola of its elevator has been badly damaged. It doesn't appear to be damaged from a fire or a natural disaster and certainly not from the ravages of time. It looks convincingly like a battle took place there. There's no sign of activity at the mill.

Show the players the picture on Page 275.

Just past the mill, you can continue on northward over the gravel road or turn right on another, which will take you across the bridge and into Lastmill. On the other side of the bridge, to the left, is a large limestone tower, about 70ft/21m tall.

The next events are decided by the PCs' actions.

### Game Master's Notes

The PCs are arriving in Lastmill on the evening after catastrophic events. In the previous night, while the PCs were in Goldfields, a disastrous draug raid took place at about 3 a.m. It came to a battle with the draugs that left two draugs destroyed, three villagers and a soldier dead and another soldier wounded to the point where he is fighting for his life. Three of the draugs managed to escape Lastmill, taking the miller, Strom, and his wife, Kamila, with them as prisoners. Everyone assumes that they are being taken to Dark Valley.

Here is how events unfolded:

- Corporal Oldrich, the commander of the small militia detachment, was out with a land patrol of the militia, showing its members where someone has been digging underground shelters for draugs, to protect them from daylight. Indications are that the Brotherhood of Slovan City is receiving payment from the draug Baron Nundlung in Dark Valley to dig the shelters. The events that occurred were related by the seriously wounded and injured soldier Viktor, who rests in mortal danger at present in the House of Healing.
- The War Tower was manned by the two remaining soldiers of the detachment, Viktor and Boris. In the hours after midnight, Boris had the watch and Viktor was sleeping. At about 3 a.m. Boris awoke Viktor, telling him that five draugs were slipping over the west bridge into the village and heading south toward the mill. Boris said he would pursue the draugs and told Viktor to follow him and join the battle as soon as he was dressed and armed.
- Viktor reached the mill a few minutes after Boris. When he reached the mill, the bodies of the mill's two apprentices and of one draug lay dead at the mill's doorway. Viktor could hear fighting going on within. When he entered the mill building, he could hear that the action was taking place above, in the wooden elevator cupola. He climbed the stairs to join in the fray.



- When he reached the cupola, Viktor found both Boris and the mill's journeymen, Vavrin, battling three draugs. The dead body of a fourth draug was on the floor. The draugs were between Boris and Vavrin, on one side, and the miller and his wife on the other. The hands and ankles of Strom and Kamila had been bound with rope. They were unable to take part in the combat. Boris and Vavrin were badly wounded and two of the three draugs had been damaged.
- Viktor joined in the fray, which ended suddenly when the undamaged draug in the group threw something in the direction of Viktor, Boris and Vavrin. All that Viktor can recall is an explosion and then awakening badly hurt and wounded in the House of Healing.
- The explosion awakened some other villagers, who rushed to the mill. When they arrived there, they saw the three draugs and their prisoners, Strom and Kamila, already across the millstream riding furiously northward, doubtless back to the North Road with Dark Valley as their goal.
- Viktor had landed unconscious in the millstream. Fortunately, his body washed up against the closed dam gate above the waterwheel rather than being washed over the main dam. Boris and Vavrin were less fortunate. They apparently landed in the main flow of the stream and were washed over the larger dam. Their dead bodies were found later, washed up on the bank of the millstream just north of the point where the stream flows back into the Jihvode.
- Corporal Oldrich returned from the patrol at mid-morning. He has used the magical scepter in the War Tower to report to Gunnar's Tower in Slovan City, to ask for reinforcements as well as replacements for Boris and Viktor. However, Lastmill will have to defend itself against any new draug attacks for the next three days. It will take that long for the new soldiers from Slovan City to reach Lastmill.
- Corporal Oldrich has drafted four locals with some combat training into service as watches, until reinforcements arrive. He also has told the blacksmith, Marek, to take the bell that was saved from the fallen watch tower south of town and to mount it in the War Tower. As of now, whenever draugs approach Lastmill, Oldrich will see to it that the bell is rung. When it tolls, he expects every able-bodied villager to come armed with something, even if only a scythe, a wood axe or a pitchfork, to the village's defense.
- Oldrich also warns the villagers that the situation with the draugs is becoming more serious. He says that the patrol confirmed that cave shelters are being excavated in the North Hills. He has no doubt that the draug Baron Nundlung in Dark Valley will try to make draugs of everyone in Lastmill and then begin to move against Goldfields. Angry over the latest turn of events, Oldrich says the time is long overdue for the king and Margrave Hermacek to crack down firmly, both upon Nundlung and the Brotherhood in Slovan City, which he believes is digging the draug shelters in the North Hills in return for payment.

When Oldrich learns that the PCs are on a mission to Dark Valley in the service of the margrave, he will be skeptical about their chances for success. Some things may come out in discussion with the PCs:

If they ask why the royal army hasn't dealt with the draugs, Oldrich will reply that the militia has attempted without success to destroy them. There is a large network of mine shafts under Dark Valley, he will explain. Nundlung knows that his draug contingent wouldn't survive in combat against a large militia patrol, so, whenever a patrol has ridden into Dark Valley, the baron and all of his draugs vanish into the depths of the mine shafts. When the soldiers, who know nothing of the shafts' layout, enter them to hunt draugs, they seldom find more than two or three of the undead.

Oldrich believes that the key to eliminating the threat of Dark Valley is to eliminate Nundlung. The dark duke of the far north is too distant from Dark Valley to be able to keep it in his grip. Without Nundlung, the draugs of Dark Valley would be slaves without a master. Oldrich believes that if Nundlung can be slain, the duke's minions will draw Dark Valley's draugs into the interior of the fallen empire, ending their threat to Lastmill.

Oldrich already has been with patrols in Dark Valley. He knows that a large, perhaps chaotically released blast of magic at the wars' end destroyed the ecology of much of the Lands of Ruin. Rock formations bolted up from the ground in some areas, while others sank, becoming swamp. Fertile plains turned into dust plains or prairie. Forests drained and died.

Nonetheless, the northern lands are recovering, albeit slowly. In some areas, soils are growing fertile again. New trees are beginning to grow in some areas where old forests died. Dark Valley is a strange patchwork of catastrophe and recovery. For no particular reason, some patches are growing healthy again, and others, directly next to them, remain as devastated as they were at the wars' end.

The only two buildings that still stand are Nundlung's Tower, which has neither windows nor apparent entrances, and the old Tingl's Mill building. He is unaware of the tunnels shown on Bedrich's map. However, he does know of the Harriki Rangers' claims that the mill building is a haven that is somewhat safe against draugs.

*At this time of year, he says, the lawn around the building is dotted with dandelions, English daisies and ramson. My opinion is that it may be the ramson rather than the house itself that causes this. I've never been in the house, so I'm only guessing. But draugs have problems with ramson. They cross it or come into contact with it only unwillingly, and it muddles their brains when they do cross it.*

*They only way they can reach the house is by crossing the ramson, the Jihvode or the old millstream. Draugs never enter running water: it destroys them. And even if they find a way onto the mill island, it has another patch of dandelions and ramson across the stream on the island, behind the mill. Of course, if I'm right, then the old mill is a haven only at springtime, when the ramson is up. My choice for sanctuary would be the mill island itself – provided that the draugs have no archers among them.*

Oldrich will tell the PCs that the entryway to the draug tunnels in the old mine shafts is through the cellar entrances that remain in the ruins of old buildings. He will add:

*My advice is, fight them by day, even in the tunnels. At night, go to your sanctuary. When it's dark, you won't have a chance against them. Whatever sanctuary you can find is your only hope. During the day, you always can try to retreat if you encounter too many of them in one of the old mine shafts. Maybe you can find a way to the draug baron. Our patrols never succeeded at that.*

If the PCs have shown Oldrich Bedrich's map of old Tingl's Mill, he'll note the tunnels indicated on the map and say, *These could be the ones. We never were in any tunnels there.*

## 5.2 Draugs in the Night

One assumes the PCs, in preparation for the difficult new day that faces them in Dark Valley, will try to get a good night's sleep in the Border House Inn. However, at 3 a.m., the following happens:

Your sleep is rather rudely interrupted somewhere in the middle of the night by what sounds like the tolling of a temple bell. It occurs to you that there are no temples in Lastmill. It must be the warning bell that Oldrich had raised in the War Tower.

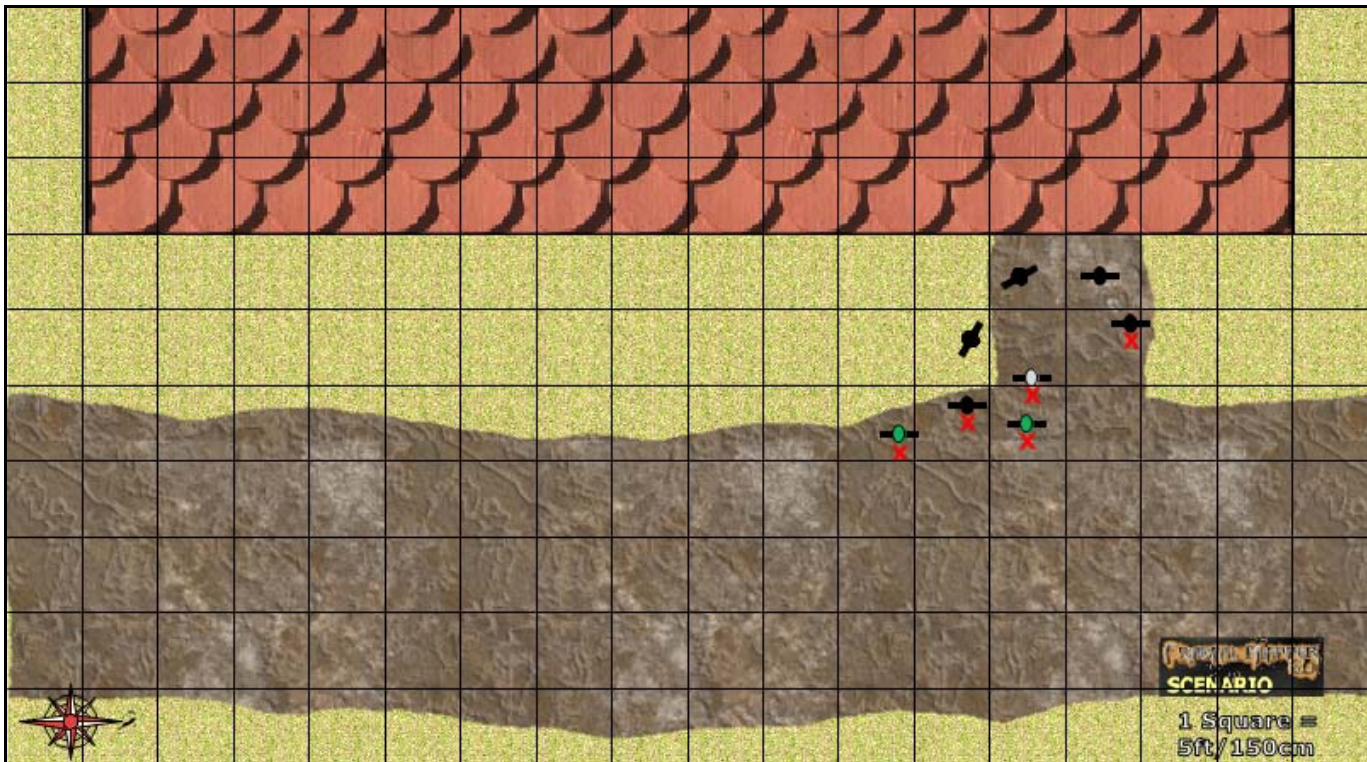
As soon as this thought enters your consciousness, you become aware of a commotion outside, perhaps in front of the inn. You discover that there's sword fighting going on in the road in front of the house across the street. It appears that three villagers are fighting with five men dressed in black.

The battle is going on at the point where the red X is on the game master's version of the Lastmill map. If the PCs run to the scene, use the encounter plan on the following page and continue here:

When you reach the scene, you can see that two of the villagers and two of the men in black are down. The faint red glow in the eyes of the three remaining men in black tells you that the foes are draugs. Just as you reach the scene, Corporal Oldrich also falls motionless to the ground.

At just that moment, two women come running up the street from the south. The older of the two shouts, *Keep them at bay! Keep them away from the wounded. We'll take them safely away.*

An unarmed man, perhaps 60 years old or so, opens the door of the house across the road from the fray, looking at first sleepy, perplexed and irritated and then shocked.



**Draug encounter in Lastmill – Black, draug; grey, Corporal Oldrich, green, villagers, and X, fallen.**

Open Game Content

## NPC Statistics

### 3 Draug Warriors

#### Warrior, level 1

**Size:** Medium, 1) 5'7"/170cm, 140lbs/70kg; 2) 6ft/183 cm, 170lbs/85kg; 3) 5'9"/175cm, 155lbs/78kg

**Age expectancy:** Draugs survive until they are permanently destroyed

**Initiative modifier:** 0

**Injury Points (full):** 24

**Injury Points (remaining):** 1) 9, 2) 7, 3) 10

**Life Points:** None.

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10; Endurance 12; Reflex 10; Will 17

**Attacks:** Long sword, attack bonus +3, damage 1d8+1.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 12, Dexterity 11, Stamina 20, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 12, Knowledge 13.

**Special qualities:** Perceive in the dark, magical touch, undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, vulnerability to daylight, vulnerability to direct sunlight, vulnerability to iron, vulnerability to running water, herbal vulnerability, ley ban, emergence (See definitions under *Draug Commoners* below).

**Talent Points:** 8

**Primary Talents:** Melee Combat (8 points)

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency +9, Notice Objects and Movement +1, Ride Mount +1, Search +1, Sneak 0, Weapon Proficiency +9

**Alignment inclination:** Any evil

**Treasure:** None

*Jarek!, the older of the two women shouts, Take the smaller one. Bring him to the House of Healing! We'll take the other two.*

And so it is now. The group of you faces the three draugs. One of the three says to you, in an emotionless voice, *Begone from here. Go about your business and save your lives. We have not come for you. We have come for the people in this house.*

The three draugs look well prepared to take you on, if you insist. On the other hand, they also look rather damaged themselves.

## Game Master's Notes

In most campaigns, your PCs will jump right in and take on the draugs. If your group does the same, you have two books full of guidelines that will tell you how to run the following events. The draugs will fight until they are destroyed. They have no choice. That's what draug Baron Nundlung has ordered them to do, and their wills are enslaved to his.

If your PCs take this course, run the battle and jump ahead to Section 5.3 *After the Battle*. However, if you have one of those rare parties that just stand there and do nothing, describe how a married couple in their mid-30s are dragged out of the house by the draugs, followed by their two screaming children, 6 to 8 years old. The draugs don't want the children. They slam them to the ground, injuring both.

The two Herbal Witches, Iveta and Targa, will have watched this from down the street, along with Jarek, the older man who aided them in carrying off the bodies. All three of them begin shouting that the PCs are a band of abhorrent cowards. The PCs will note the sounds of other villagers awakening and see candle light burning behind closed shutters.

If the PCs finally battle the draugs at that time, the villagers will be cool to them afterwards, but they will acknowledge that they finally mustered the courage to do what they should have done earlier. However, they will have little understanding for the PCs' doing nothing until the children were battered. Above all, they will think the PCs are a band of cowardly fools heading off to certain death ... a group of nithlings who probably will be made into draugs in Dark Valley and who will make problems later as undead for Lastmill.

If the PCs do nothing at all, the draugs will flee the village on foot by the same route they entered, forcing the married couple they have abducted to go with them. As the draugs ride away with their captives on horses that were hidden across the millstream, more and more lanterns will begin burning in Lastmill. When the villagers learn how cowardly the PCs behaved, Miroslav will throw them out of the inn, refusing payment and saying he doesn't want people of their ilk in his house. Other villagers will approach the PCs armed with scythes, pitchforks and a blacksmith's hammer, telling the PCs to get out of town immediately and not to return. If the PCs refuse, they will use their makeshift weapons to drive them out or slay them in the process.

## 5.3 After the Battle

### Game Master's Notes

If the PCs have earned the gratitude of the villagers, you should assess the damage that the PCs have taken and see that they are cured properly. Iveta and Targa will use whatever potions and preparations they need to bring the PCs back up to their full quota of injury points. Iveta then will inform the PCs of the state of events:

*Viktor and Vavrin still healing slowly, but we lost the other three. Corporal Oldrich and the two villagers who aided him tonight were beyond our talents. All three have died.*



*Marek knows how to use the instrument in the War Tower. He will inform Slovan City that we are in dire need of replacements. But that will take at least three days. Until then, our men will have to form a watch and ward off any further attacks.*

*Now you've had a taste of the grave danger you'll be facing in Dark Valley. Remember always to choose the ground where you have the greatest advantage! I have heard a bit about Dark Valley from the Rangers who have passed through. They visit me when they are in Lastmill.*

*Seek haven in the old mill at night. It won't give you complete protection, but the draugs will have a much more difficult time against you there. Fight them during the day in their tunnels. They are narrow. Then only a few can oppose you at one time.*

*Remember that most of the draugs there are simple Commoners, not Warriors, like many of those who are sent out on these raids. Draug Commoners are just as limited in their fighting talents as living Commoners. And I think many of them would gladly escape the existence they have now. They did not become draugs because they hungered for eternal existence. They became draugs because they succumbed to the baron's threats and coercion.*

*When they became draugs, they yielded their wills to him. When he orders them to do something, they must do it. They have no choice. But he only can order them. He cannot inspire them. I believe that many of these draugs will fight you reluctantly and they will not be opposed to their own destruction. That will be to your advantage.*

*Also, do not be surprised if the baron calls up the bones of the long dead people of Tingl's Mill. He is a Black Necromancer. No doubt he can summon some skeletons to his service. You need show them no compassion. These skeletons simply are animated bones that fight poorly at the baron's direction. He must concentrate fully to steer their actions, and the baron is no fighter. No souls or spirits are bound to these skeletons.*

*Take a good supply of clean water and food. Be very careful of what you eat and drink in the Fallen Lands. Take only that which you have brought with you. There are poisons in the waterways including the Jihvode, and in patches that have not yet recovered, strange thorny bushes grow that are not natural plants. They are mutations, perhaps of roses, perhaps of brambles, perhaps of something else.*

*Whatever they are, they form red berries in late summer that hang on the bush through the seasons, falling only when new berries form. They are deadly poisonous. They will slay you within minutes after you eat them.*

*You also must be careful about something even more insidious. With the curse that destroyed much of the life and vegetation in the fallen Harriki Empire there also came a pervasive, life-destroying mould. The Rangers of the north say that its spores are in the air, and within little time they begin to damage one's lungs, eventually destroying them. The only means to prevent this mould infection, the Rangers say, is with the help of ramson.*

*Fortunately, if one knows where to seek it, one can find huge patches of ramson in parts of the Border Forest. In its short season in spring, Targa and I go into the forest and harvest it. We use some of it to make an herbal powder that can be used just like a spice upon one's food. We prepare a supply of it for the Rangers, and they use it in the other seasons or when they are in areas in spring where no ramson grows. We shall give you enough to last through your journey in the Fallen Lands.*

*Targa and I would gladly give you more than, but we must keep some of our potions and poultices for Viktor, Vavrin and other villagers who may need healing before this situation is ended. However, we can give you these.*

Iveta and Targa will give the PCs the following. You may wish to print this excerpt and give a copy to each of the players.

- Two magical healing potions apiece that, after being consumed, will immediately heal 2d4 injury points of damage.
- For each, an elderberry-mistletoe berry-yew berry poultice. This will stop external bleeding in one minute, which will prevent any cumulative damage from a wound. In addition, it will heal 1 injury point of damage immediately and another point every 150 minutes, for a total of 10 points in 24 hours time.
- A potion of hazelwood oil each. The potion will heal cuts and wounds at the rate of 1 injury point each 10 minutes beginning immediately upon application. It will heal a total of 2d8 injury points at that rate.
- A portion of juniper berry salve oil each. The salve will heal cuts and wounds at the rate of 1 injury point each 10 minutes beginning immediately upon application. It will heal a total of 2d8 injury points at that rate. It will work cumulatively with hazelwood oil salve.
- A pouch of dried sloe berries. The berries will cover half a cubic yard/meter of space. All draugs are unable to cross such an area.
- A pouch each of wormwood powder. Each pouch contains enough powder for 10 applications. The powder will not heal wounds, but it will keep infections from setting in within a wound including one that is otherwise being healed.
- A pouch each of ramson powder as a preventative of mould poisoning. Each pouch holds a four-day supply.

## **5.4 The Way to the Lands of Ruin**

### **Game Master's Notes**

Anything that might attack the PCs avoids the lands between Lastmill and Dark Valley. There are no encounters. The PCs will reach Dark Valley by mid- to late afternoon, about 4 p.m. (16 hours) by a modern clock. You can use the following text as a narrative.

Less than a mile/2km north of Lastmill, the North Road deteriorates from a wagon track to a sometimes overgrown dirt trail. Although ruined foundations of buildings, probably farms, can be seen in places, the area north of Lastmill clearly is uninhabited. It strikes you that there also are fewer birds to be heard or seen than south of Lastmill. Even the insect population seems to have diminished.

These lands were broad grain fields before the wars, but the vegetation they now support is unusual for what should be fertile but fallow farmland. Tough grasses and wiry survivor bushes such as Manzanita dot much of the landscape.

The only sign that there has been any non-plant life in this area – or at least an imitation of it – is in the hoof prints that clearly are visible in the trail. Those doubtless are from the horses that bear the draugs on their raids from the north. Are their horses undead too?

Pause and give the PCs a chance to discuss things among themselves. Ask them what they wish to do, if anything, en route to Dark Valley, and give them a chance to do it. Find out what they want to do when it's time to stop for their mid-day break and lunch. The following information applies when the PCs cross into the Lands of Ruin.

## 6. Dark Valley

The grasslands of the March of Slovan come to an abrupt end, succeeded by a patchwork of rock, prairie, swamp and a number of other landscape types. The path of the Jihvode into Dark Valley is clearly visible, but the North Road has all but vanished. Across the river apparently is the right direction, because you can make out parts of the trail a bit ahead of you on that side, but immediately before you are only tall, tough grasses.

To your left, stone pillars rise from the Jihvode, doubtless the remnants of a vanished bridge. About 100ft/30m farther upstream, you see a short stretch of the river that is wider and shallower. If you wish to cross to the Jihvode's west bank, you probably can ford the river there with little difficulty. However, immediately past the shallows you can see that the river runs deeper and swifter again.

Dark Valley has a long, narrow island in its middle area. It appears that an old millstream flows to the west with the main branch of the Jihvode on the right. The ruined bases of towers, a town wall and buildings are visible here and there. Some of the ruins still seem to have openings to cellars. Only two buildings still stand: The tower in the ruins of Baron Nundlung's castle and a stone building with decrepit clay tile roof, apparently the Tingl's Mill building.

However, the structural remnants are the least interesting features. What is astounding is the landscape. Most areas along the Jihvode are either recovering grasslands or swamp with thick vegetation, but above them to the east and west are patches of mostly infertile prairie and desert interrupted by strange mini-mountains.

These are mostly bare rock outcroppings, some of natural mountain stone and others of red stone usually associated with desert mountains. However, none of these outcroppings rises more than 50ft/15m above the surrounding landscape. Never before in your lives have you seen anything like this.

In any case, you're here. You have a bit more than three hours before night falls. Of living or undead, you see no trace at the moment. Nor birds wing over or chirp, and there seems to be little of no animal life.

### Game Master's Notes

This is a good time to hand out Pages 291-293 to your players. They'll give them a better idea how Dark Valley looks and how the important sites appear. Give them as much time as they need to examine this material and to decide how they wish to proceed.

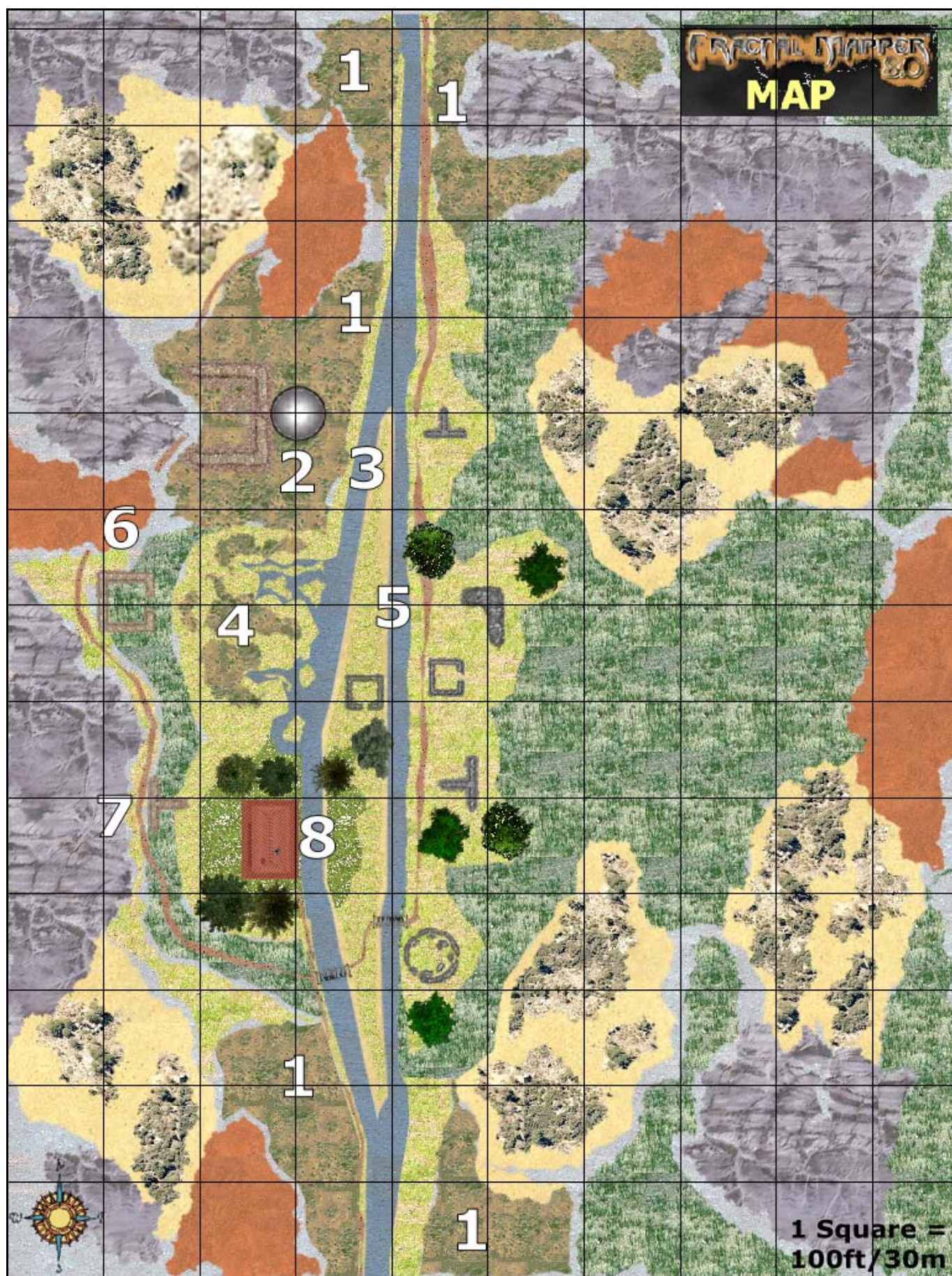
Please note that there's a bit more to the swampy areas (Map No. 1) than is explained in the text for the players. In the swampy areas, there are many quicksand pits hidden by shallow water or organic debris. If a PC falls into a quicksand pit, it will suck him or her down slowly. Each PC in quicksand must make a successful DL 15 Dexterity check or sink down into the mud and quicksand. After 3d4+3 minutes, the victim's mouth and nose will sink below the quicksand, causing him or her to suffocate and die within 1d4+2 additional minutes. To pull a victim from quicksand, a successful Strength check against DL 15 is necessary.

The map also shows the ruins of two bridges. Both are 90% in a state of ruin. No PC can cross these ruins.

Buildings 6 and 7 have cellar openings that lead into the tunnel shown on the map the PCs found in Bedrich's lair in Slovan City.

Once the PCs have decided what they want to do, the action can continue. We assume that most groups will want to check out Tingl's Mill, but you'll have to react to the PCs' decisions with the material that begins on Page 294.





*Dark Valley - formerly Tingl's Mill – as it appears today*



## Dark Valley

### Map Key

1. These areas appear to be mostly swampy.
2. Baron Nundlung's tower. The tower is 90ft/27m high and 30ft/9m in diameter at the base. It appears to be in completely sound condition. However, it has no windows. There also are no colors waving atop the flagpole on the tower's roof. The low remnants of the castle walls stand mostly in swampland around the baron's tower. The land surrounding the tower seems to be on higher, dry ground. Trees already have taken root there. But most of the rest of the castle ruins are in land that appears to range from mucky to swampy. There appears to be no way to reach the tower without going through swamp. (Also see the picture below.)
- 3 – Millstream.
- 4 – Partly swampy remnants of the mill pond.
- 5 – The Jihvode River.
- 6.-7. Ruins with visible cellar openings. (Also see the picture on the following page.)
8. The Last Mill. (Also see the picture on the following page.)



*The Baron's tower and the ruins of his castle in Dark Valley*





*The remnants of Tingl's Mill in Dark Valley*

Product Identity



*Underground cellar openings in Dark Valley*

Product Identity





*Day is done. The night of the draugs comes to Dark Valley.*

Product Identity

## 6.1 Tingl's Mill

### Game Master's Notes

See the picture of the mill building on the previous page and the floor plans on the following pages. If you haven't done so yet, show your players the photo of the building's exterior.

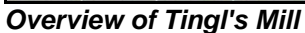
### Exploring the Mill

The old mill building is dilapidated, but its sandstone walls still seem to be structurally solid, although most of the stucco that once covered them has fallen off. The windows are barred, and the massive wooden door still might be solid. The clay tile roof, on the other hand, is another story. It probably offers little protection from rain these days, and it appears as though it could collapse easily.

If the PCs investigate the building, they can determine the following:

- The massive oak door is solid, but the window in it (see photo) is broken. However, the latch of its lock is damaged. One can easily force the door open.
- The bars on all of the ground floor windows (including the shed) all are firm. It would take more than human strength to spring them from their anchors in the stone (a successful Strength check against DL 33).





Open Game Content

- One can judge the quality of the roof only after one reaches the upper floor of the building. The large beams that support the roof are in excellent shape, but the thinner wood of the lattice work is partly rotten. If there was a roof collapse, the tiles would cave in onto the upper floor but without enough force to immediately damage the ground floor.

### Key – Overview of Tingli's Mill (see floor plan above)

- 1. The entire lawn area is a mix of wild ramson, dandelions and English daisies.
- 2. Entrance
- 3. Dormers
- 4. Shed. The shed is empty.





**Tingl's Mill: Ground Floor with 5ft/150cm grid**

Open Game Content

### Narrative Key to Ground Floor (see floor plan above)

As shown on the floor plans, eight large wooden beams, 2x2ft/60x60cm in size, help support the building.

**1 – Shed.** The shed is empty.

**2 – Massive oak door with broken window.** The door is not locked. After the door has been opened, the PCs can determine that it is massive oak 3 inches/75mm thick. A successful Strength check against DL 20 is necessary to break down the door. However, a successful Strength check against DL 11 will force the damaged lock open.

**3 – Old millstone.** The millstone is 5ft/150cm in diameter and 6 inches/15cm thick. *Game master:* The stone weighs 400lbs/200kg. One PC can lift it with a successful Strength check against DL 27. Two can lift it if both make successful Strength Checks against DL 16.

**4 – Business desk.** The desk is empty.

**5 – Empty wooden supply shelves**

**6 – Double-faced fireplace**





**Tingl's Mill: Ground Floor without grid**

Open Game Content

**7 – Grain chutes from upper floor**

**8 – Grain mill and millstone.**

**9 – Waterwheel shaft.** The shaft, 2ft/60cm in diameter, has a worm that turns two sets of wooden gears. There no longer is a waterwheel attached on the outside.

**10 – Oil press hammers**

**11 – Wooden stairs to upper floor**

**12 – Supply room.** The shelves contain old kitchen equipment and utensils, partially rusted.

**13 – Bedroom.** The room contains a wood stove with a stovepipe going through the wall, a double bed, a night stand, a table with four chairs, two wardrobes and a large chest. The chest contains a box with six magical *Candles in the Darkness*. For a description, see Page 73 of this book.

**14 – Kitchen/living room.** The room contains two cupboards, a stove with kitchen cabinet, a work table, a dining table, a corner bench and a stove pipe that runs from the bedroom to the chimney. Two inanimate skeletons sit on the chairs at the dining table. Their bones still wear the tatters of some clothing.





**Tingl's Mill: Upper Floor with 5ft/150cm grid**

Open Game Content

The skeletons are those of the miller and his wife. He was a retired Ranger and she a low level Sorceress. They lived on past their normal years with the help of magical Harriki potions, maintaining a defense against the black necromancy that devastated the lands. They died peacefully and contentedly in the same moment, when the magic of the last of their Harriki potions ran out. The PCs, of course, will not be able to determine all of that, but a close examination will show that their skeletal bones are undamaged and there is no sign of weapon damage upon the chairs or elsewhere within the building.

### **Narrative Key to Upper Floor** (see floor plan above)

As shown on the floor plans, eight large wooden beams, 2x2ft/60x60cm in size, help support the building. There is nothing of value or interest on this level.

**1 – Stairs to ground floor**

**2 – Grain chutes.** These lead to the ground floor.





**Tingl's Mill: Upper Floor without grid**

Open Game Content

- 3 – Beam from hoist.** The door through which the no longer existing hoist once led has been bricked shut.
- 4 – Wood-burning stove.**
- 5 – Vent.** (See the photo.) This is a small roof vent that is open but barred.
- 6 – Window dormers.**

### Users of *Fractal Mapper 8*

If you use *Fractal Mapper 8*, you can find all of the various versions of these floor plans by turning the appropriate layers on and off. These floor plans are in the file *DDTinglsMill.fmp*.

If you use miniatures, you also can print the various floor plan versions at the proper scale of 1 inch/2.54 cm per square. That will give you correctly sized 5ft/150 cm squares, scaled to match your tin figures. You also can zoom in on particular areas of the floor plan.



## 6.2 Encounters in Dark Valley

Baron Nundlung has only limited resources in Dark Valley. During the wars, his village's cemetery was emptied, with all the dead being raised as animated zombie draugs and skeleton draugs. All met their destruction in the battles to which they were summoned.

Since then, the only new bodies that the baron has accumulated are those of four abductees who refused his coercive attempts to have them accept transfiguration into draugs. They were slain. They are dead long enough so that nothing remains of their flesh, preventing their being summoned as animated zombie draugs. The baron has no dead flesh available to animate as zombies. The remains of the four abductees can be animated only as skeleton draugs. If they are destroyed, the baron has no more grave remains that he can animate.

Most of the intermediate draugs in Dark Valley are Harriki Commoners who were coerced into accepting their transfiguration. The nine draug Warriors were soldiers in the Dark Host during the wars. They became draugs of their own free will.

It is important that you keep in mind whether the intermediate draugs in combat are **motivated** or **unmotivated**. When a draug is **unmotivated**, it has a penalty of -2 on its Endurance, Reflex and Will defenses and it *never* has the initiative. Determine the status as follows:

- The nine intermediate draug Warriors in the tunnels *always* are **motivated**.
- The 24 intermediate draug Commoners are **motivated** when they fight away from Tingl's Mill.
- The 24 intermediate draug Commoners are **unmotivated** when they fight at Tingl's Mill. This is an affect of the ramson which grows among the dandelions and English daisies in the lawn.

If the PCs spend the night in Tingl's Mill – the safest place in Dark Valley – they will be attacked by animated skeleton draugs and intermediate draug Commoners in the course of the night. If they spend the night outside of the mill, they will come under more severe attack. Use the following measuring sticks, along with the statistics that follow.

- If the PCs are in the mill, they initially will be attacked by four skeletons and afterward by a series of **unmotivated** intermediate draug Commoners.
- If the PCs spend the night elsewhere in Dark Valley, they will be attacked simultaneously by all 24 **motivated** intermediate draug Commoners.

Also keep the following in mind:

- The four skeleton draugs have no souls or spirits. They cannot act on their own. Their actions are steered by the mind of the baron, who must concentrate to control them.
- The 24 intermediate draug Commoners were coerced into becoming undead, but that does not necessarily mean that they are whiling away their time in Dark Valley waiting for some kind soul to slay them. They will follow the baron's orders to fight and remain **motivated**. Only the effects of ramson will cause them to become **unmotivated**.

The following summarizes the population of Dark Valley:

- **Baron Nundlung**, ruler of Dark Valley, Intermediate Draug Wizard Lvl 2, hostile. He is in his tower.
- **Thund**, troop commander of Baron Nundlung, Intermediate Draug Warrior Lvl 2, hostile. He is in the baron's tower.
- **9 Intermediate Draugs in the tunnels**, in each group one Warrior Lvl 2 and two Warriors Lvl 1, all hostile. They remain in the tunnels.

- **4 Skeletons**, Skeleton Draugs, Commoner Lvl 1, hostile. They are buried but can be raised at anytime by the baron. (The baron will keep the fifth available skeleton in reserve.)
- **24 Intermediate Draugs**, in Dark Valley, 24 Commoners Lvl 1, hostile. They are in cellars other than those marked with the numbers 6 and 7 on the map on Page 291.

The living prisoners are in cages in the tunnel near the base of the baron's tower. If they are freed, they can join the PCs in the fight, using the weapons of slain draugs.

- **Antonin**, miller from Lastmill, Artisan Lvl 2, friendly.
- **Katja**, miller's wife from Lastmill, Commoner Lvl 1, friendly.
- **Karel**, farmer from Lastmill, Commoner Lvl 1, friendly.
- **Tomas**, farmer from Lastmill, Commoner Lvl 1, friendly.

## **NPC Statistics**

### **4 Skeleton Draugs**

Although they often are called *skeleton draugs*, these animations are not true draugs at all. They are nothing more than the bones of a dead human that have been animated through the black necromantic magic of a spellcaster. The mage who activated the skeleton draugs must concentrate fully upon their doings to keep the animations active.

The skeletons have neither life nor unlife. They cannot think and they see nothing. The spellcaster's magic causes their actions to occur. In that sense, there is little difference between the telekinetic lifting of a rock and the black necromantic steering of a skeleton's bones.

A skeleton's actions are quite limited. Basically, it only can deal blows with its leg or arm bones or scratch with its finger bones. The hand bones are not capable of holding weapons.

**Character Classes:** Commoner

**Character Level:** 1

**Size:** Medium 5'9"/175cm; 5'7"/170cm; 5'11"/180cm; 6ft/183cm

**Age expectancy:** Skeletons endure until they are destroyed or until the spellcaster ceases to concentrate upon them.

**Initiative modifier:** -2 (Dex -2)

**Injury Points:** 9, 6, 8, 7

**Life Points:** None

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10, Endurance 15, Reflex 8, Will: That of the controlling necromancer.

**Attacks:** Hand scratch: 1d4; arm blow, 1d4 or leg kick, 1d4.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 20ft/6m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 10, Dexterity 7, Stamina 20, Knowledge 0\*, Magical Aptitude 0\*, Mechanical Aptitude 0\*  
(\* Allowed for this creature.)

**Special qualities:** Undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, ley ban.

**Talent points:** None

**Primary Talents:** None

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** None

**Alignment inclination:** None, steered by neutral evil

**Resistance to Heat and Cold:** Heat and cold have no effect upon a skeleton as long they do not cause it to burn or to become frozen to an extent that movement becomes clumsy to impossible. Cold may freeze a skeleton in its position, but it does no lasting damage. Heat can cause damage only if it causes the bones to catch fire. At that point it takes the standard damage that the fire causes.

**Undead Injury Effects:** Skeletons have no life points. If an injury dismembers a skeleton, as might be the case with a targeted hit, it loses the use of the dismembered bones. Otherwise, a skeleton is at full capacity despite the loss of injury points until it reaches 0 points, when it automatically is destroyed.

**Immune to Pain:** Skeletons have no living nervous system and therefore feel no pain.

**Immune to Poison:** Skeletons have no life system that can be damaged by poison; however destructive poisons (like some acids) that will destroy physical bone have the same effect upon a skeleton.

**Ley ban:** Skeletons cannot come within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone. If they come within that range, they automatically are destroyed.

## 24 Intermediate Draug Commoners

An intermediate draug is a human who has become a draug. Many have taken the step to undeath at the urging or coercion of another draug. But any Necromancer who knows the *Transfiguration* spell can make a draug of him- or herself or of another human who is willing to become a draug.

As a part of the transfiguration, a new draug yields his or her free will and is bound to the service of another draug, usually one of higher rank. A new draug begins as an undead version of the human that he or she was with the same Character Classes, Talents and Skills as it had as a human (except those that are closed to draugs).

**Character Classes:** Commoner

**Character Level:** 1.

**Size:** Medium (Human Bodies)

**Age expectancy:** Draugs survive until they are permanently destroyed

**Initiative modifier:** 0, *Unmotivated: Last in Sequence*

**Injury Points:** 14, 12, 18, 12, 14, 14, 16, 18, 18, 12, 14, 12, 16, 18, 14, 16, 12, 16, 12, 16, 18.

**Life Points:** None.

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10; Endurance 12; Reflex 10; Will 17. *Unmotivated: Endurance, Reflex and Will -2.*

**Attacks:** Long sword, attack bonus +1, damage 1d8.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 10, Dexterity 10, Stamina 20, Knowledge 10, Mechanical Aptitude 10, Magical Aptitude 1.

**Special qualities:** Perceive in the dark, magical touch, undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, vulnerability to daylight, vulnerability to direct sunlight, vulnerability to iron, vulnerability to running water, herbal vulnerability, ley ban, emergence

**Talent Points:** 8

**Primary Talents:** Applied Knowledge 4, Athletics 4

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Concentration +4, Notice Objects and Movement 0, Ride Mount 0, Search 0, Sneak 0.

**Alignment inclination:** Neutral evil

**Resistance to Heat and Cold:** Heat and cold have no effect upon a draug as long they do not cause it to burn or to dehydrate or become frozen to an extent that movement becomes clumsy to impossible. Cold may freeze a draug in its position, but it does no lasting damage. Heat can cause damage only if it causes the draug to catch fire. At that point it takes the standard damage that the fire causes.

**Perceive in the Dark:** The eyes of draugs emit a signal something like that of a bat. The less light there is, the stronger the signal becomes. When the signal is reflected back to the draug's eyes, it forms a colorless image in black, white and grey tones of what normally could be seen in light. This image does not magically detect invisible

creatures and objects. Invisibility magic allows such signals to pass in both directions through invisible objects. This virtual sight has a range of 60ft/18m.

**Magical Touch:** Draugs have no living nervous system but they do have a magical ability to sense objects when they are touched. This sense is limited to the perception that an object is being touched. A draug also can, for example, move his or her hand around an object and perceive its form. It can squeeze an object and detect whether it yields, giving the draug an impression of its degree of hardness. However, a draug cannot *feel* such things as small points or sharpness although it well may see them.

**Undead Injury Effects:** Draugs have no life points. If an injury dismembers a draug, as might be the case with a targeted hit, it loses the use of the dismembered body part. Otherwise, a draug is at full capacity despite the loss of injury points until it reaches 0 points, when it automatically is slain. Even after reaching 0 injury points, a draug's body can be repaired and bound again to a soul. Only if the draug is decapitated and the head is destroyed is it impossible to restore its own body and return its soul to it.

**Immune to Pain:** Draugs have no living nervous system and therefore feel no pain.

**Immune to Poison:** Draugs have no life system that can be damaged by poison, however destructive poisons (like some acids) that will destroy physical body tissue have the same effect upon a draug's undead body.

**Vulnerability to Daylight:** One small, single ray of sunlight touching a draug will destroy its physical essence forever, and it also will destroy permanently the soul of any draug below dark draug level. Being in daylight without exposure to direct sun does not destroy a draug, but it gives it a penalty of -2 on every decision that requires a dice roll.

**Vulnerability to Iron:** Any wound from iron automatically slays a draug. However, a draug body slain by iron can be restored and have its soul returned to it.

**Vulnerability to Running Water:** Draugs are unable to cross running water of their own power. They cannot will themselves to do so. If draug flesh comes into contact with running water, the surface of skin that touched the water will be dissolved as though it had been in a dangerous acid.

**Herbal Vulnerability:** Certain plants are particularly strong in the forces of Light and Life, which causes difficulty for draugs that encounter them. Ransom or wild garlic and sloe bushes repel draugs. A draug must make a Stamina check against DL 35 to touch or cross ramson or to touch or pass by or through sloe. However, if it is commanded to do so by its master draug, the master draug makes the check instead.

**Ley ban:** Draugs will come only reluctantly within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone. Within that range, they lose all of their magical powers and all use of magic. Even their magical items become temporarily non-magical.

**Emergence:** Draugs cannot be forever trapped inside physical bounds unless they are made of lead or iron or they are encircled by running water. They can move through any other type of matter at a rate of  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch/3cm per round. That's equivalent to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches/38mm a minute or  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet/230cm an hour.

## Encounters Outside of Tingl's Mill

Such encounters can occur only outside the hours of daylight and then only if the PCs are too foolish to seek haven in Tingl's Mill. If the PCs are abroad in Dark Valley at night, Baron Nundlung will not raise skeletons against them. Instead, he will send all of his 24 intermediate draug Commoners to march at the same time against the PCs in an attempt to capture them. The draugs will slay them only if they have no alternative.

When the PCs are within parleying range, the draugs will begin demanding that they surrender, assuring them that their reward will be freedom from the burden of death.

The draugs will not approach at a tempo faster than 30ft/9m, which will give the PCs a chance to change their minds and seek shelter in the mill. However, if the PCs flee, the draugs well may split up in an attempt to encircle them.



## Encounters in Tingl's Mill

The first attack will be made by the four skeleton draugs. Any of them or any of the intermediate draugs should be able to force the door open. The broken latch will yield to a DL 11 Strength check. If the PCs are smart, they will leave the door only so wide open that one skeleton or draug at a time can attempt to enter through it. Then they will block it by moving the millstone behind the door, to keep it from opening wider.

Neither the skeletons nor the draugs will attempt to force the door wider open, in that case, because doing so would leave them open to a defenseless attack against them. Remember, there will be room for only one skeleton or draug at a time to attempt to press through the opening. If the PCs use this tactic, the narrow room the skeletons and draugs have in which they can fight will give them a penalty of -2 on their attack rolls.

To move the millstone into this position, one PC must make a successful Strength Check against DL 27. Two PCs can move the millstone into position with two successful strength checks against DL 16 each. If the PCs try in any way to block the door completely closed, two draugs will get a battering ram. With it, they will completely break the door in 1d6+6 rounds.

**Strategy:** If the battle reaches the point where the PCs are on the verge of defeat, rule that the first traces of daylight are appearing in the eastern sky, and that the draugs retreat back into their cellars.

### Floor Plan Key (see next page)

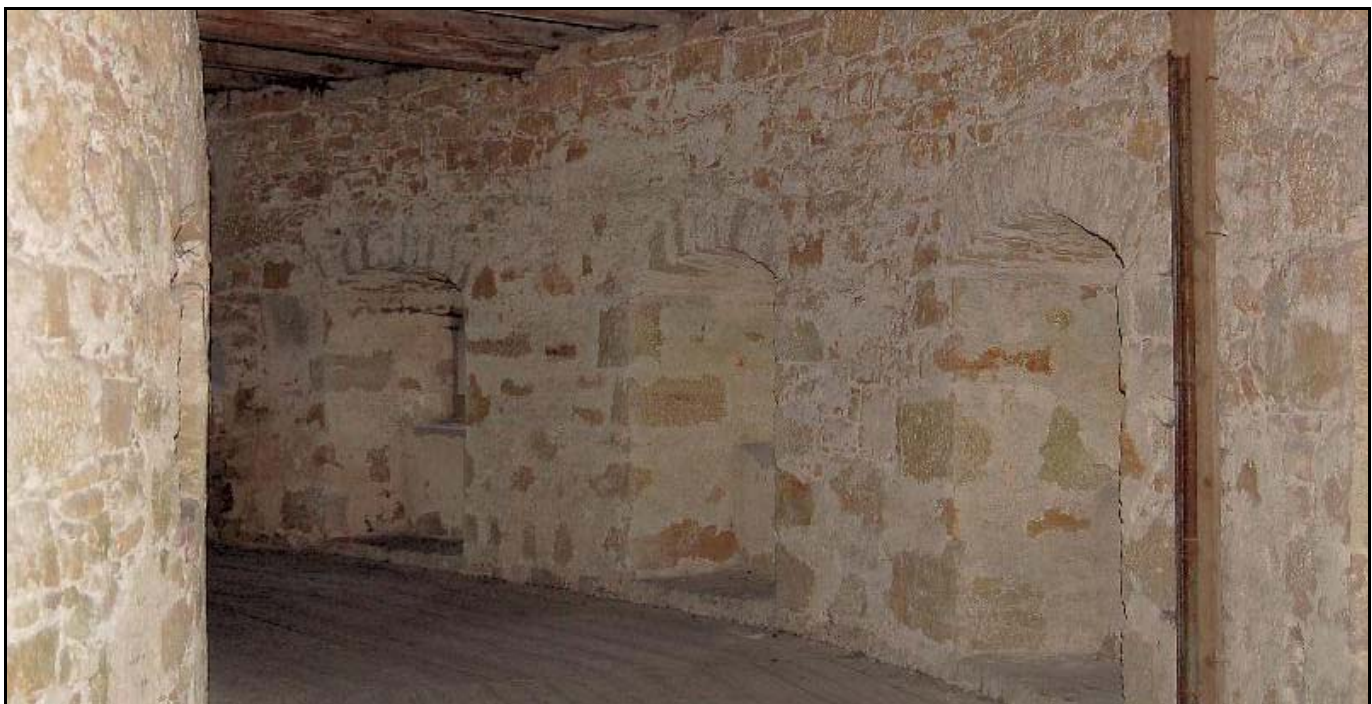
1 – The 4 Skeleton Draugs.

2 – The Wooden Door.

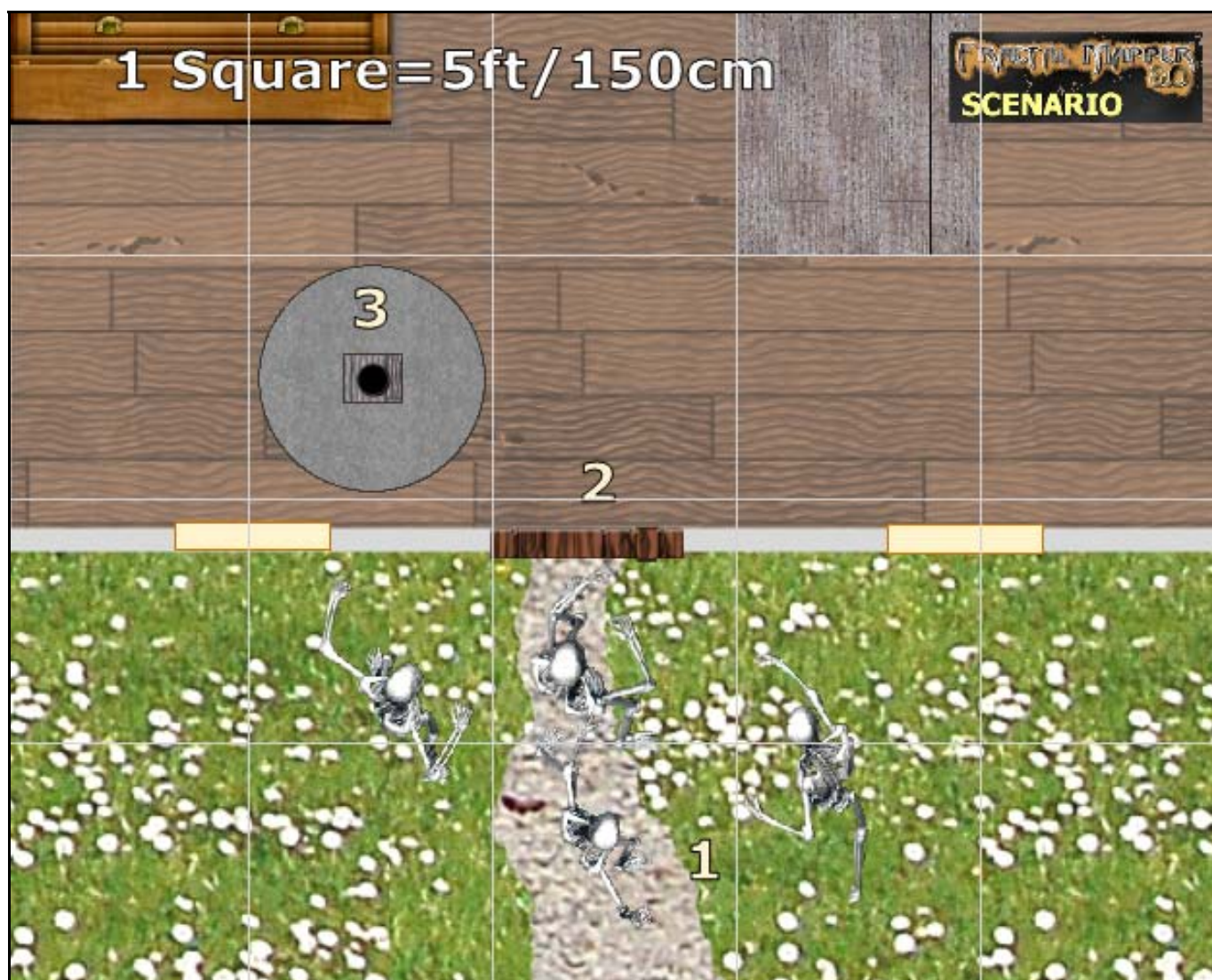
3 – The Millstone.

### Users of *Fractal Mapper 8*

If you use *Fractal Mapper 8*, you can extract the floor plan on the following page from the file *DDTinglsMill.fmp*. You can zoom in on this area of the floor plan. For the skeleton encounter view on the next page, show the layers *Text Encounter Scene*, *Skeletons Encounter Scene* and *Encounter Legend*. At the same time, hide the layer *Legends*.



***Draug tunnels***



*Tingli's Mill: Skeleton encounter*

Open Game Content

## 6.3 Encounters in the Tunnels

We'll begin with floor plans of the encounter areas followed by their descriptions.

### Key to Overview Floor Plan (see next page)

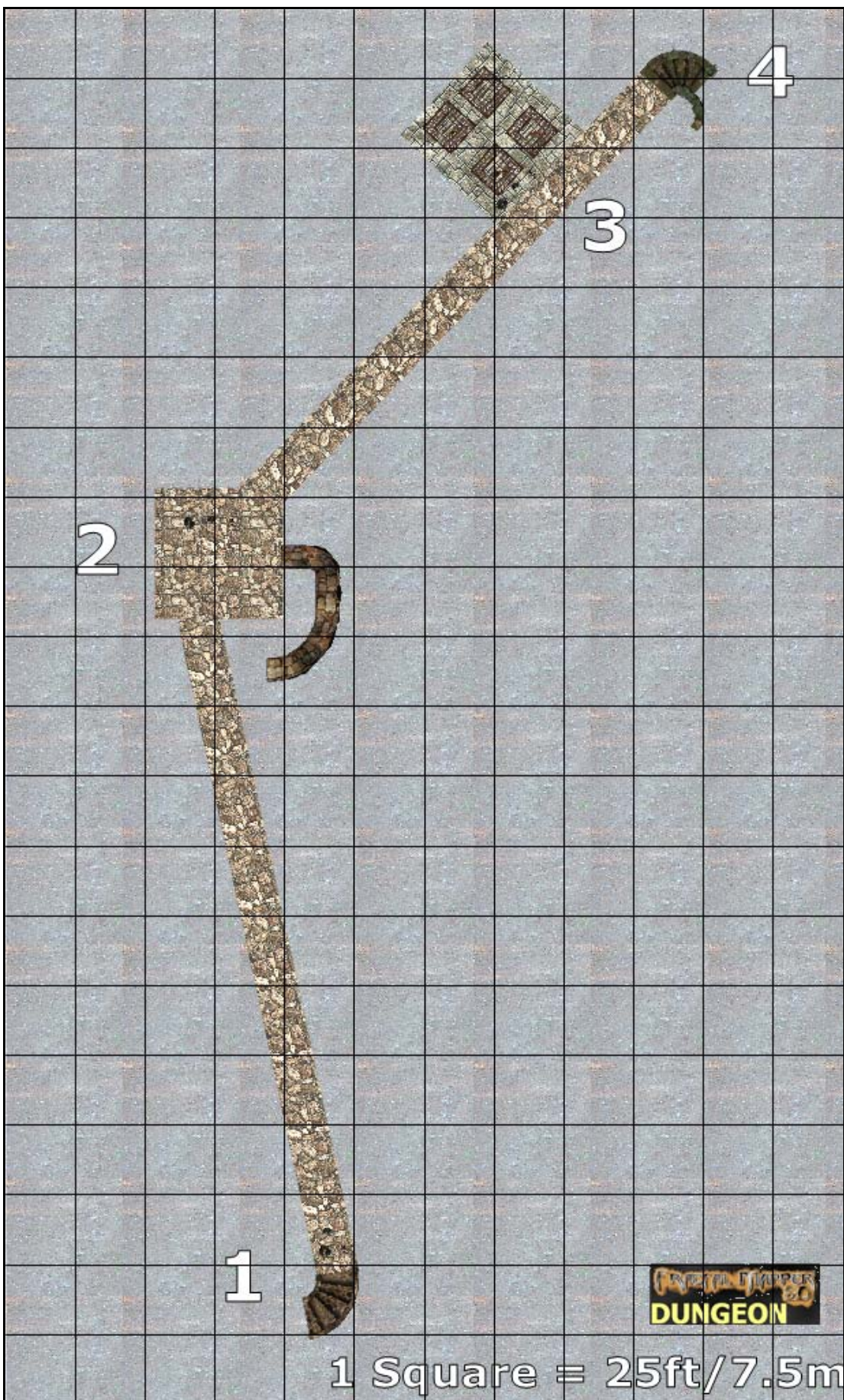
**1 – Entrance from Site No. 7 on Dark Valley map.** This entrance is guarded by one intermediate draug Warrior Lvl 2 and two intermediate draug Warriors Lvl 1.

**2 – Entrance from Site No. 6 on Dark Valley map.** This entrance is guarded by one intermediate draug Warrior Lvl 2 and two intermediate draug Warriors Lvl 1.

**3 – Prisoner Holding Area.** This area is guarded by one intermediate draug Warrior Lvl 2 and two intermediate draug Warriors Lvl 1. It includes four cages, one with Antonin and Katja, one with Karel, one with Thomas and one empty. The lvl 2 Warrior guard has the keys.

**4 – Entry to Baron Nundlung's Tower.** This entry is guarded only by the three draug Warriors at Area 3.





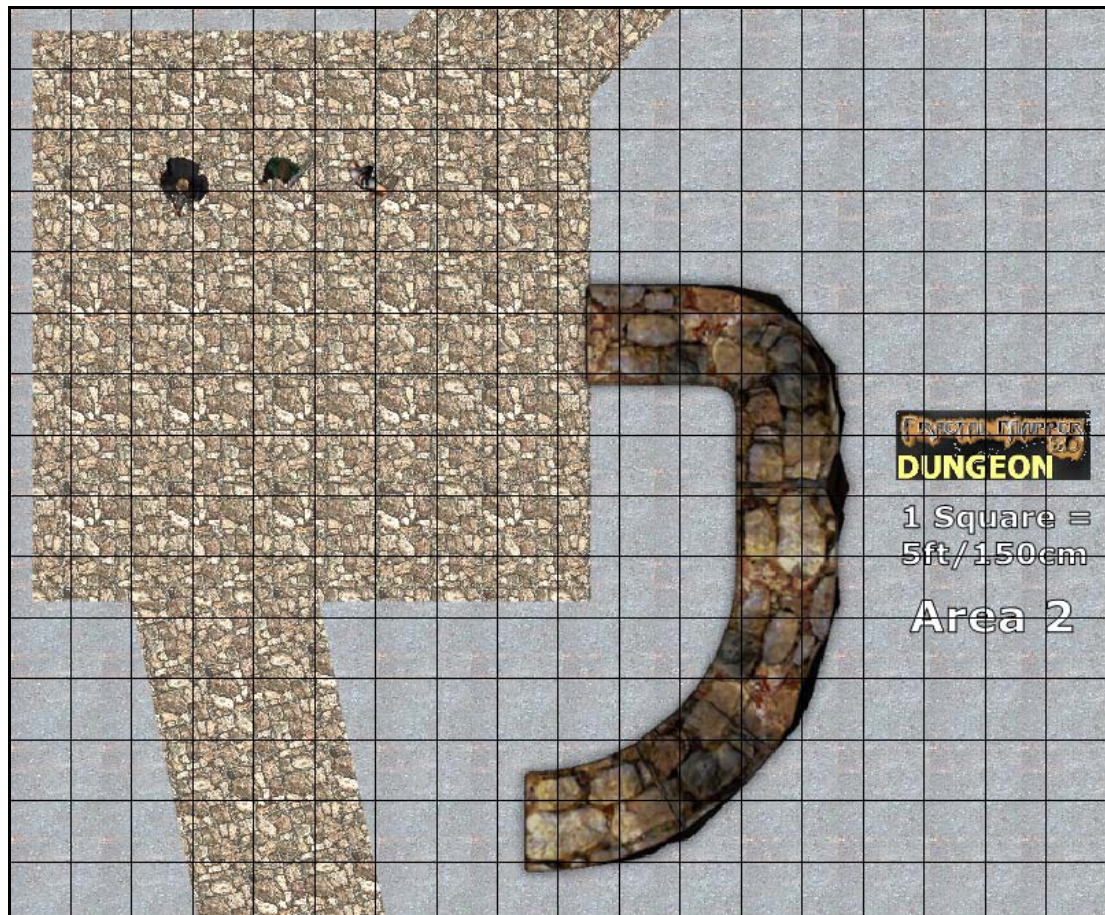
Overview of the Dark Valley tunnels





*Dark Valley tunnel areas 1, above, and 2, below*

Open Game Content







Dark Valley tunnel areas 3 and 4, above, and close-up of cells below

Open Game Content





### Key to Floor Plan Area 1 (see Page 307)

When the PCs descend the stairs here, the three intermediate draug Warriors (one level 2, two level 1) will demand their surrender and fight until one side is destroyed or slain if the PCs refuse.

### Key to Floor Plan Area 2 (see Page 307)

When the PCs enter this area, the three intermediate draug Warriors (one level 2, two level 1) will demand their surrender and fight until one side is destroyed or slain if the PCs refuse.

### Key to Floor Plan Area 3 (see Page 308)

When the PCs enter this area, the three intermediate draug Warriors (one level 2, two level 1) will demand their surrender and fight until one side is destroyed or slain if the PCs refuse. This is the last guarded area before the stairs that lead up into Baron Nundlung's tower. The cages hold the four prisoners.

**1 – Draug guards.** Two intermediate draug Warriors, level 1, and one intermediate draug Warrior, level 2. The level 2 draug has the keys to the cells.

**2 – Miller's Cage.** In the cage are Antonin, the human male miller from Lastmill, Artisan level 2, and his human female wife, Katja, Commoner level 1.

**3 – Karel's Cage.** In this cage, a human male farmer from Lastmill named Karel, Commoner level 1, is imprisoned.

**4 – Tomas' Cage.** In this cage, a human male farmer from Lastmill named Tomas, Commoner level 1, is imprisoned.

**5 – Empty cage.** If one or more PCs are captured, they will be held here.

### Key to Floor Plan Area 4 (see Page 308)

The stairway is unguarded. The four prisoners know that the draug Baron Nundlung descends these stairs when he comes to the cages to attempt to convince the prisoners to yield to transfiguration as draugs.

A spiral stairway of stone, about 15ft/4.5m wide, leads upward at this point. It appears to be unguarded.

## Game Masters Note:

Remember that the Antonin, Katja, Karel and Tomas can help the PCs in their further encounters if they are freed.

## NPC Statistics

### 3 Intermediate Draug Warriors

**Character Class:** Warrior level 2

**Size:** 5'2"/157cm (female), 6'2"/188cm (male), 5'10"/178cm (male)

**Age expectancy:** Draugs survive until they are permanently destroyed

**Initiative modifier:** 0

**Injury Points:** 28, 25, 27

**Life Points:** None.

**Base Defenses:** Armor 15 (chain mail +5), Endurance 12, Reflex 10, Will 15

**Attacks:** Long sword, attack bonus +5, damage 1d8+2

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** Chain mail

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 14, Dexterity 11, Stamina 20, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 13, Knowledge 13.

**Special qualities:** Perceive in the dark, magical touch, undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, vulnerability to daylight, vulnerability to direct sunlight, vulnerability to iron, vulnerability to running water, herbal vulnerability, ley ban, emergence

**Talent Points:** 20

**Primary Talents:** Athletics 10, Melee Combat 9, Religion 1

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency (2), Concentration +1, Notice Objects and Movement +1, Ride Mount +2, Search +1, Sneak 0, Weapon Proficiency (2)

**Alignment inclination:** Any evil

**Special quality descriptions:** See next page.

## 6 Intermediate Draug Warriors

**Character Class:** Warrior level 1

**Size:** 5'2"/157cm (male), 6'2"/188cm (male), 5'10"/178cm (male)

**Age expectancy:** Draugs survive until they are permanently destroyed

**Initiative modifier:** 0

**Injury Points:** 17, 17, 17

**Life Points:** None.

**Base Defenses:** Armor 12 (leather +2), Endurance 12, Reflex 10, Will 15

**Attacks:** Long sword, attack bonus +4, damage 1d8+2

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** Leather

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 14, Dexterity 11, Stamina 20, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 13, Knowledge 13.

**Special qualities:** Perceive in the dark, magical touch, undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, vulnerability to daylight, vulnerability to direct sunlight, vulnerability to iron, vulnerability to running water, herbal vulnerability, ley ban, emergence

**Talent Points:** 8

**Primary Talents:** Athletics 8, Melee Combat 7, Religion 1

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency (2), Concentration +1, Notice Objects and Movement +1, Ride Mount +2, Search +1, Sneak 0, Weapon Proficiency (2)

**Alignment inclination:** Any evil

## Special Qualities (Levels 1 and 2)

**Resistance to Heat and Cold:** Heat and cold have no effect upon a draug as long they do not cause it to burn or to dehydrate or become frozen to an extent that movement becomes clumsy to impossible. Cold may freeze a draug in its position, but it does no lasting damage. Heat can cause damage only if it causes the draug to catch fire. At that point it takes the standard damage that the fire causes.

**Perceive in the Dark:** The eyes of draugs emit a signal something like that of a bat. The less light there is, the stronger the signal becomes. When the signal is reflected back to the draug's eyes, it forms a colorless image in black, white and grey tones of what normally could be seen in light. This image does not magically detect invisible creatures and objects. Invisibility magic allows such signals to pass in both directions through invisible objects. This virtual sight has a range of 60ft/18m.

**Magical Touch:** Draugs have no living nervous system but they do have a magical ability to sense objects when they are touched. This sense is limited to the perception that an object is being touched. A draug also can, for example, move his or her hand around an object and perceive its form. It can squeeze an object and detect whether it yields, giving the draug an impression of its degree of hardness. However, a draug cannot *feel* such things as small points or sharpness although it well may see them.

**Undead Injury Effects:** Draugs have no life points. If an injury dismembers a draug, as might be the case with a targeted hit, it loses the use of the dismembered body part. Otherwise, a draug is at full capacity despite the loss of injury points until it reaches 0 points, when it automatically is slain. Even after reaching 0 injury points, a draug's body can be repaired and bound again to a soul. Only if the draug is decapitated and the head is destroyed is it impossible to restore its own body and return its soul to it.

**Immune to Pain:** Draugs have no living nervous system and therefore feel no pain.

**Immune to Poison:** Draugs have no life system that can be damaged by poison, however destructive poisons (like some acids) that will destroy physical body tissue have the same effect upon a draug's undead body.

**Vulnerability to Daylight:** One small, single ray of sunlight touching a draug will destroy its physical essence forever, and it also will destroy permanently the soul of any draug below dark draug level. Being in daylight without exposure to direct sun does not destroy a draug, but it gives it a penalty of -2 on every decision that requires a dice roll.

**Vulnerability to Iron:** Any wound from iron automatically slays a draug. However, a draug body slain by iron can be restored and have its soul returned to it.

**Vulnerability to Running Water:** Draugs are unable to cross running water of their own power. They cannot will themselves to do so. If draug flesh comes into contact with running water, the surface of skin that touched the water will be dissolved as though it had been in a dangerous acid.

**Herbal Vulnerability:** Certain plants are particularly strong in the forces of Light and Life, which causes difficulty for draugs that encounter them. Ransom or wild garlic and sloe bushes repel draugs. A draug must make a Stamina check against DL 35 to touch or cross ramson or to touch or pass by or through sloe. However, if it is commanded to do so by its master draug, the master draug makes the check instead.

**Ley ban:** Draugs will come only reluctantly within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone. Within that range, they lose all of their magical powers and all use of magic. Even their magical items become temporarily non-magical.

**Emergence:** Draugs cannot be forever trapped inside physical bounds unless they are made of lead or iron or they are encircled by running water. They can move through any other type of matter at a rate of 1/8 inch/3cm per round. That's equivalent to 1½ inches/38mm a minute or 7½ feet/230cm an hour.

## Antonin

**Human Male Artisan (Miller), Level 2**

**Size:** Medium 5'9"/175cm tall, 170lbs/85kg

**Initiative modifier:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 interactive reaction)

**Injury Points:** 14

**Life Points:** 3

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10, Endurance 12, Reflex 12, Will 11.

**Attacks:** Weapon or unarmed, +3. Damage by weapon or attack (+2 Strength). Draug long sword, +3, damaged 1d8+2.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 30cm/9m

**Resistances:** None

**Abilities:** Strength 14, Dexterity 15, Stamina 13, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 16, Knowledge 14



**Key ability:** Mechanical Aptitude

**Special qualities:** None

**Talent points:** 25

**Primary Talents:** Applied Knowledge 10, Perception 10, Religion 1.

**Secondary Talents:** Melee Combat 2

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency +4, Concentration +12, Craft (miller) +12, Heal +2, Interactive Reaction +4, Knowledge (local) +12, Notice Objects and Movements +12, Perform (acting) +12, Religious Knowledge +3, Ride Mount +2, Search +12, Sense Motive +12, Swim +2, Use Magical Device (religious) +3, Weapon Proficiency +4.

**Alignment inclination:** Neutral good

Injury Point Threshold	Remaining Injury Points	Attack, Damage, Skill and Defense Penalty
Fully capable	11-14	None
Injured	7-10	-1
Seriously injured	3-6	-2
Critically injured	1-2	-3
In mortal danger	0	-4

## Katja, Karel and Tomas

**Human Female and Male Commoners, Level 1**

**Size:** Medium

Katja, 5'8"/173cm, 176lbs/88kg

Karel, 5'9"/175cm tall, 170lbs/85kg

Tomas, 5'11"/180cm, 180lbs/90kg

**Initiative modifier:** 0

**Injury Points:** 4

**Life Points:** 1

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10, Endurance 10, Reflex 10, Will 10.

**Attacks:** Weapon or unarmed, -3. Damage by weapon or attack (+1 attack bonus, -4 no proficiency). Draug long sword, -3, damaged 1d8.

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** None

**Speed:** 30cm/9m

**Resistances:** None

**Abilities:** Strength 10, Dexterity 10, Stamina 10, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 10, Knowledge 10

**Special qualities:** None

**Talent points:** 8

**Primary Talents:** Applied Knowledge 3, Athletics 4, Religion 1.

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Heal 0, Notice Objects and Movement 0, Ride Mount 0, Search 0, Sneak 0, Swim 0.

**Alignment inclination:** Neutral good

Injury Point Threshold	Remaining Injury Points	Attack, Damage, Skill and Defense Penalty
Fully capable	4	None
Injured	3	-1
Seriously injured	2	-2
Critically injured	1	-3
In mortal danger	0	-4

## 6.4 Encountering the Baron

After the PCs and their presumably freed prisoners reach area 4 in the previous encounter, they can begin ascending the spiral staircase of draug Baron Nundlung's tower. Area 4 of the upper dungeon plan on Page 308 corresponds to area 1 of the upper dungeon plan on the following page. The descriptions of the tower ascent assume that the PCs have a source of light.

### Users of *Fractal Mapper 8*

You can use and modify the dungeon plans on the following page by opening and editing the file *DDNundlungsTower.fmp*. This map has individual layers for the dungeon, center and top layers of the tower.

### Key to Dungeon Level Floor Plan

**1 – Base of Stairs.** This point is the bottom of the stairway shown for area 4 of the map on Page 308.

**2 – Door.** At the top of the dungeon stairs is a double door of massive oak. Each door is 5ft/150cm wide and 6'7"/2m high. The doors are not locked. The hinges are not oiled, and they squeak loudly, although Baron Nundlung and Thund, in the draug baron's chamber above, will not hear the squeaking.

### Key to Middle Level Floor Plan

The stairway ascends to a height of 70ft/21m before reaching the draug baron's chamber. The windows and arrow slits of the tower all have been bricked shut and all floors between the dungeon level and the baron's chamber have been removed. At 50ft/15m height, there is a large door opening that has a barred massive oak door. If the PCs manage to break this door open, draugs will be unable to ascend and descend during daytime.

### Key to the Floor Plan of Baron Nundlung's Level

**1 – End of Stairway.** This is the point where the spiral stairway ends at draug Baron Nundlung's chamber. There is no doorway, merely an opening in the stone floor.

**2 – Baron Nundlung.**

**3 – Commander Thund.**

**4 – The Baron's Necromantic Workbench and his Desk.** Various spell components and a spell book with the baron's known black necromantic spells are on the workbench along with the baron's *Rod of Animation* (3 charges remain) and a crystal ball with a range of 1 mile/1,500m.. The desk has a document from a Count Narfar, demanding delivery of 25 new draugs at the castle in Hrimgard. It also contains a large pouch with old Harriki coins as follows: 13 GP, 5 SP, 7 BP, 4 CP.

**5 – Bookcases and Table with Chairs.** The bookcases are mostly empty, but they do still hold a few parchment tomes on black necromantic magic as well as ledger books dealing with the collection of taxes and tithes going back to the time of the fallen Harriki Empire. A triple candleholder with three burning candles stands on the table.

**6 – Ladder to Upper Level.** This ladder leads to the top level of the tower, where a wooden stairway leads to a trapdoor that opens onto its roof. The top level originally had been used as a watchpost and guard level, but its openings all have been bricked shut. The trapdoor to the roof is not locked. This level, not shown on the floor plans, is empty.



Open Game Content

**Baron Nundlung's Tower – dungeon level, above, and middle level**







*Baron Nundlung's Tower – the draug baron's level*

Open Game Content

## Game Master's Notes

Neither the draug Baron Nundlung nor his troop commander, the draug Warrior Thund, expects the PCs to try to ascend the tower to the baron's chamber. They are not listening for intruders nor are they being watchful, which gives the PCs certain advantages. If they hear the PCs ascending the stairs and the PCs make no unusual sounds that would betray their identity, Nundlung and Thund will assume that they are draug warriors coming to report information.

As a result, for normal noises, the PCs need make no Sneak checks that you will use under ordinary circumstances. However, if they PCs make any sounds or noises during their ascent that draugs would not make, then Sneak checks are necessary. We suggest that you have them make three Sneak checks apiece before they begin their ascent. If the PCs make unusual noises, compare them with the checks of Baron Nundlung and Thund for *Notice*



*Objects and Movement.* Because the two are not guarded, they make these checks with a penalty of -3. However, if they become alert, this penalty no longer is applied.

## **Narrative**

As the PCs reach the door at the top of the dungeon stairs, as shown in the upper floor plan on Page 315.

At the top of the stairway is a double door of massive oak. Each door panel is 5ft/150cm wide and 6'7"/2m high.

The doors are not locked.

The tower appears to be hollow and dark, but a spiral stairway of stone, about 10ft/3m wide, runs along the interior of the tower wall upward. Here at the lowest level, the stairway seems safe, but one does have to be careful. There is no railing. Were one to slip and fall, the descent would be unbroken back down to the dungeon level.

During the ascent:

It appears that the tower once had floors beginning at the dungeon level and then at 10ft/3m intervals. Every 10ft/3m, you can see stone supports in the walls that doubtless once held floors, but these are gone now. The tower, at these levels, is simply hollow except for the stairway. You also can see many points where there were arrow slits and window openings in the tower wall, but these all have been bricked shut.

**Game Master:** The point at which you give the PCs the following information depends upon the illumination range of their light source. The baron's floor is at a height of 70ft/21m. Once their source of illumination is within range, read the following. However, also note the narrative for the blocked door at 50ft/15m. Depending upon the source of illumination, the PCs may see the blocked door first.

At last your light reveals an end to the tower's emptiness. Xft/m (X is the extent of the PCs' illumination) above you are stone buttresses that support a floor of stone. There is an opening on one side, probably the point where the stairs emerges into the floored area. You also can hear voices coming faintly through the opening, and there is a trace of flickering light from one or more flames. You estimate that the floor is 70ft/21m above the dungeon level below.

**Game Master:** The following description should be read when the PCs reach a point 50ft/15m above the dungeon level. If the PCs manage to break the door open, draugs will not be able to use the stairs during daytime hours.

You've reached the fifth point where an old floor once was removed, as evidenced by stone buttresses in the wall. This time, however, there's an additional feature. There's a large door portal in the wall, a yard/meter wide and 10ft/3m high. In the portal is a wooden door made of massive oak and reinforced with brass bands. Two thick bars have been bolted onto the door and sunk into each side of the wall to prevent the door from being opened.



*Draug Baron Nundlung's Tower in Dark Valley. Oak wood seals the old door opening.*

## Game Master's Notes

The PCs might decide to investigate the door, but there's nothing more to it than what's described two pages back.

As the PCs approach the baron's level, the voices they hear will become easier to understand. Nundlung is in his chamber with his commander, the draug Warrior Thund. If the PCs attempt to listen in, use the following to recreate what they hear:

Baron Nundlung is dissatisfied with his draugs' performance against the PCs so far. He has been watching the PCs' nighttime actions with his crystal ball, and he is convinced that they are adventurers of little skill. He does not use the crystal ball during the daytime because the images of daylight that the crystal ball transmits blur his vision. He does not understand why Thund hasn't been able to rally the draugs to capture or, if necessary, destroy the PCs. The baron would much rather have them alive and in the dungeon cages, where they would be held until a more powerful Black Necromancer draug from the north visits, who could transfigure the PCs into draugs. Tingl's Mill (the draugs do not use the name *Dark Valley*) is in dire need of new draugs, due to the losses of the previous days. If the PCs hole up in the mill building again during the coming night, the baron wants Thund to round up every draug in the settlement, arm it, and send it in a mass charge upon the mill building. The baron wants Thund to work ramson leaves onto arrow tips. If any of the draugs halt or straggle when they have to cross the ramson outside the mill building, Nundlung wants Thund to shoot them with arrows. The intense mental pain a ramson wound would cause would motivate the other draugs to ignore their aversion to the growing ramson, the baron argues.

Once the PCs reach the baron's chamber, issues of detection and surprise come into play. Neither Nundlung nor Thund is expecting the PCs to enter the tower. They have no idea where the PCs are at the moment, if the PCs have made no unusual loud noises to warn them.

Before you run this encounter, look carefully at the dungeon plan on Page 315. Baron Nundlung has his back mostly to the stairs, so he will not immediately see the PCs ascending them. Thund is behind a bookcase and cannot see the PCs on the stairs until he moves out from behind it.

Thus, if the PCs have been quiet enough, they will take Thund and the draug baron completely by surprise. This means that the PCs (and the freed prisoners, if they are along) will have a free round of action without counter reaction in the first round of the encounter. After that, normal initiative rolls decide the sequence of actions.

What happens from this point on depends upon your PCs' actions. Whether they win or lose, the encounter with Nundlung and Thund is the end of this adventure. All that remains afterwards is the return trip to Slovan City.

## NPC Statistics

### Baron Nundlung – Intermediate Draug

**Character Class:** Black Necromancer level 2

**Size:** 5'4"/163cm (male)

**Age expectancy:** Draugs survive until they are permanently destroyed

**Initiative modifier:** 0

**Injury Points:** 19

**Life Points:** None.

**Spell Points:** 9, Maximum per spell: 2

**Base Defenses:** Armor 10, Endurance 10, Reflex 10, Will 15

**Attacks:** Dagger, attack bonus +1, damage 1d4

**Magical Schools:** Black Necromancy, Abjuration, Conjuraton, Transmutation

**Magical Attacks:** Spells +9

**Magical Items:** Rod of Animation (3 charges left), animates 1d4+4 skeletons or zombies per use; Crystal Ball, range 1 mile/1,500m

**Armor:** Chain mail

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 10, Dexterity 11, Stamina 20, Magical Aptitude 18, Mechanical Aptitude 1, Knowledge 16.

**Special qualities:** Perceive in the dark, magical touch, undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, vulnerability to daylight, vulnerability to direct sunlight, vulnerability to iron, vulnerability to running water, herbal vulnerability, ley ban, emergence

**Talent Points:** 30

**Primary Talents:** Arcane Magic 7, Applied Knowledge 7, Perception 7, Religion 2

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Arcane Knowledge +11, Casting in Combat +11, Concentration +11, Detect Magic +11, Gather Information +10, Knowledge Dungeons +10, Knowledge History +10, Notice Objects and Movement +10, Perform (acting) +10, Read and Write Magic +11, Religious Knowledge +10, Ride Mount ±0, Search +10, Sense Magic +11, Sense Mechanics +11, Sense Motive +10, Sense Traps +10, Sneak 0, Spellcraft +11, Swim +3, Use Magical Device +11

**Alignment inclination:** Chaotic evil

## Spells available:

### Alarm

School: Abjuration

Spell/Magic Points: 2

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: 2 Hours/Caster Level

Range: Close

Effect: 20ft/6m radius

Alignment: All

You create a magical alarm that sounds a mental or audible alarm each time a creature enters the warded area or touches it. A creature that speaks the password (determined by you at the time of casting) does not set off the alarm. You decide at the time of casting whether the alarm will be mental or audible.

**Mental Alarm:** A mental alarm alerts you (and only you) so long as you remain within 1 mile/1.5 km of the warded area. You note a single mental *ping* that awakens you from normal sleep but does not otherwise disturb concentration. A silence spell has no effect on a mental alarm.

**Audible Alarm:** An audible alarm produces the sound of a hand bell, and anyone within 60ft/18m of the warded area can hear it clearly. Reduce the distance by 10ft/3m for each interposing closed door and by 20ft/3m for each substantial interposing wall. In quiet conditions, the ringing can be heard faintly as far as 180ft/54m away. The sound lasts for 1 round.

Creatures within a silence spell cannot hear the ringing. *Alarm* can be made permanent with a permanency spell.

### Cloud of Fog

School: Conjuration

Spell/Magic Points: 2

Attack Throw? No

Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes

Material? No

Casting time: 1 Round

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Range: Medium

Effect: Fog, 2ft/6m radius, 20ft/6m high

Alignment: All



You create a bank of fog that billows out from the point you designate. The fog obscures all sight beyond 5ft/150cm. A creature within 5ft/150cm has concealment. Attacks have a 20% miss chance. Creatures farther away have total concealment with a 50% miss chance. The attacker can't use sight to locate the target. A moderate wind disperses the fog in 4 rounds; a strong wind disperses the fog in 1 round. The spell does not function underwater.

### **Doom**

School: Necromancy, Black  
Spell/Magic Points: 2  
Attack Throw? Will  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: 1 minute/caster level  
Range: Medium  
Target: One living creature  
Alignment: Darkness

You fill a single subject with a feeling of horrible dread that causes it to become shaken and unable to do anything for the spell's duration. To succeed, you must make a successful spell attack against the target's Will defense.

### **Mage's Apprentice**

School: Conjuration  
Spell/Magic Points: 1  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: 1 Hour/Caster Level  
Range: Close - from Caster's position  
Effect: One invisible, mindless, shapeless servant  
Alignment: All

You create an invisible, mindless, shapeless force that performs simple tasks at your command. It can run and fetch things, open unstuck doors, and hold chairs, as well as clean and mend. The servant can perform only one activity at a time, but it repeats the same activity over and over again you tell it to do so for as long as you remain within range. It can open only normal doors, drawers, lids and the like. It has an effective Strength score of 2, so it can lift only 10 lbs./5 kg. It can trigger traps and such, but it can exert only 10 lbs/5 kg of force, which is not enough to activate certain pressure plates and other devices. It can't perform any task that requires a skill check with a DL higher than 10 or that requires a check using a skill that can't be used untrained. Its speed is 15ft/7.5m. The servant cannot attack in any way. It cannot be killed or damaged. If you attempt to send it beyond the spell's range, which is measured from your current position, the servant ceases to exist.

### **Magical Web**

School: Conjuration  
Spell/Magic Points: 2  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: 10 Minutes/Caster Level  
Range: Medium  
Area of Effect: 20ft/6m radius from spell's center  
Alignment: All

You create a many-layered mass of strong, sticky strands similar to a large, semi-circular spider web. The strands trap anything caught in them. The strands are far larger and tougher than spider webs. These strands must be anchored to two or more solid and diametrically opposed points or else the web collapses upon itself. Creatures and objects caught within a magical web become entangled among the gluey fibers. However, attacking a creature caught in a web won't cause you to become entangled as long as you do not touch the strands. An entangled creature can't move from its space, but it can break loose from the web by making a DL 20 Strength check or an *Escape Bindings* skill check. These are 1-round actions. The strands of a *Magical Web* are flammable. Fire can slash them away as easily as a hand brushes away cobwebs. Any fire can set the webs alight and burn away an area 5ft/150cm square in 1 round. All creatures within flaming webs take 2d4 points of fire damage from the flames.

### Move Object

School: Transmutation  
Spell/Magic Points: 1  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: Concentration  
Range: Close  
Target: Object to 5lbs/2.5kg weight  
Alignment: All

You can point your wand or finger at an object and lift it and move it at will from a distance. As a move action, you can move the object as far as 15ft/7.5m in any direction. The spell ends if the distance between you and the object ever exceeds the spell's range.

### Protection

School: Abjuration  
Spell/Magic Points: 2  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: 1 Minute/Caster Level  
Range: Touch  
Target: Creature touched  
Area of Effect: Alignment: All

You ward your target against attacks. You create a magical barrier around the target at a distance of 1ft/30cm. The barrier moves with the target and has three major effects. The target gains a +2 deflection bonus to its Armor defense and a +2 agility bonus to its Reflex defense. The barrier blocks any attempt to possess the warded target or to exercise mental control over the creature including enchantment effects. The protection does not prevent such effects from targeting the protected creature, but it suppresses the effect for the duration of the spell. If *Protection* ends before the effect granting enchantment effect does, the enchantment begins to take effect. The barrier keeps out a possessing life force but does not expel one if it is in place before the spell is cast. The spell prevents bodily contact with summoned creatures. This causes the natural weapon attacks of such creatures to fail and the creatures to recoil if such attacks require touching the warded creature. No summoned creatures are immune to this effect. The protection against contact with summoned creatures ends if the warded target attacks or tries to force the barrier against the blocked creature.

### Ray of Weakness

School: Necromancy, Black  
Spell/Magic Points: 1  
Attack Throw? Reflex  
Gestures or Wand? Yes

Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: 1 Minute/Level  
Range: Close  
Target: Creature, living or undead  
Effect: Ray from wand or finger  
Alignment: Darkness

A weakening ray springs from your wand or finger. You must succeed on a spell attack against the target's Reflex defense to strike. If you succeed, the target takes a penalty to Strength equal to 1d6+1 per two caster levels. The spell cannot reduce the target's Strength score below 1.

### **Silence**

School: Abjuration  
Spell/Magic Points: 2  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: 1 Minute/Caster Level  
Range: Long  
Area of Effect: 20ft/6m from spell center  
Alignment: All

You bring complete silence to the affected area. All sound is stopped. Conversation is impossible, spells with verbal components cannot be cast, and no noise whatsoever issues from, enters or passes through the area. The effect can be ended only by using Ban Magic upon the center point.

### **Spider Climb**

School: Transmutation  
Spell/Magic Points: 2  
Attack Throw? No  
Gestures or Wand? Yes  
Words? Yes  
Material? No  
Casting time: 1 Round  
Duration: 10 Minutes/Caster Level  
Range: Touch  
Target: Touched creature  
Alignment: All

The subject can climb and travel on vertical surfaces or even traverse ceilings as well as a spider does. The affected creature must have its hands free to climb in this manner. The subject gains a climb speed of 20ft/6m. Furthermore, it need not make checks to traverse a vertical or horizontal surface, even upside down. A spider climbing creature retains its Dexterity bonus to its Reflex defense, if any, while climbing, and opponents get no special bonus to their attacks against it. It cannot, however, use the run action while climbing.

**Special quality descriptions:** See descriptions for Thund.

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## Thund - Intermediate Draug Warrior

**Character Class:** Warrior level 2

**Size:** 5'7"/170cm (male)

**Age expectancy:** Draugs survive until they are permanently destroyed

**Initiative modifier:** +2 (Dex)

**Injury Points:** 30

**Life Points:** None.

**Base Defenses:** Armor 15 (chain mail +5), Endurance 12, Reflex 10, Will 15

**Attacks:** Long sword, attack bonus +5, damage 1d8+2

**Magical Attacks:** None

**Magical Items:** None

**Armor:** Chain mail

**Speed:** 30ft/9m per round

**Resistances:** Resistance to heat and cold

**Abilities:** Strength 14, Dexterity 14, Stamina 20, Magical Aptitude 1, Mechanical Aptitude 13, Knowledge 13.

**Special qualities:** Perceive in the dark, magical touch, undead injury effects, immune to pain, immune to poison, vulnerability to daylight, vulnerability to direct sunlight, vulnerability to iron, vulnerability to running water, herbal vulnerability, ley ban, emergence

**Talent Points:** 20

**Primary Talents:** Athletics 10, Melee Combat 10

**Secondary Talents:** None

**Skills with Bonus:** Armor Proficiency (2), Concentration +1, Notice Objects and Movement +1, Ride Mount +2, Search +1, Sneak 0, Weapon Proficiency (2)

**Alignment inclination:** Lawful evil

## Special Qualities (Nundlung and Thund)

**Resistance to Heat and Cold:** Heat and cold have no effect upon a draug as long they do not cause it to burn or to dehydrate or become frozen to an extent that movement becomes clumsy to impossible. Cold may freeze a draug in its position, but it does no lasting damage. Heat can cause damage only if it causes the draug to catch fire. At that point it takes the standard damage that the fire causes.

**Perceive in the Dark:** The eyes of draugs emit a signal something like that of a bat. The less light there is, the stronger the signal becomes. When the signal is reflected back to the draug's eyes, it forms a colorless image in black, white and grey tones of what normally could be seen in light. This image does not magically detect invisible creatures and objects. Invisibility magic allows such signals to pass in both directions through invisible objects. This virtual sight has a range of 60ft/18m.

**Magical Touch:** Draugs have no living nervous system but they do have a magical ability to sense objects when they are touched. This sense is limited to the perception that an object is being touched. A draug also can, for example, move his or her hand around an object and perceive its form. It can squeeze an object and detect whether it yields, giving the draug an impression of its degree of hardness. However, a draug cannot *feel* such things as small points or sharpness although it well may see them.

**Undead Injury Effects:** Draugs have no life points. If an injury dismembers a draug, as might be the case with a targeted hit, it loses the use of the dismembered body part. Otherwise, a draug is at full capacity despite the loss of injury points until it reaches 0 points, when it automatically is slain. Even after reaching 0 injury points, a draug's body can be repaired and bound again to a soul. Only if the draug is decapitated and the head is destroyed is it impossible to restore its own body and return its soul to it.

**Immune to Pain:** Draugs have no living nervous system and therefore feel no pain.



**Immune to Poison:** Draugs have no life system that can be damaged by poison. However, destructive poisons (like some acids) that will destroy physical body tissue have the same effect upon a draug's undead body.

**Vulnerability to Daylight:** One small, single ray of sunlight touching a draug will destroy its physical essence forever, and it also will destroy permanently the soul of any draug below dark draug level. Being in daylight without exposure to direct sun does not destroy a draug, but it gives it a penalty of -2 on every decision that requires a dice roll.

**Vulnerability to Iron:** Any wound from iron automatically slays a draug. However, a draug body slain by iron can be restored and have its soul returned to it.

**Vulnerability to Running Water:** Draugs are unable to cross running water of their own power. They cannot will themselves to do so. If draug flesh comes into contact with running water, the surface of skin that touched the water will be dissolved as though it had been in a dangerous acid.

**Herbal Vulnerability:** Certain plants are particularly strong in the forces of Light and Life, which causes difficulty for draugs that encounter them. Ransom or wild garlic and sloe bushes repel draugs. A draug must make a Stamina check against DL 35 to touch or cross ramson or to touch or pass by or through sloe. However, if it is commanded to do so by its master draug, the master draug makes the check instead.

**Ley ban:** Draugs will come only reluctantly within 100ft/30m of a ley line or 500ft/150m of a ley stone. Within that range, they lose all of their magical powers and all use of magic. Even their magical items become temporarily non-magical.

**Emergence:** Draugs cannot be forever trapped inside physical bounds unless they are made of lead or iron or they are encircled by running water. They can move through any other type of matter at a rate of  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch/3cm per round. That's equivalent to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches/38mm a minute or  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet/230cm an hour.



*The end of an adventure is the start of another. Pick a trail!*

Product Identity

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*There's nothing like a quick nip before hitting the trail again!*

Product Identity

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