

## Issue #02: Gont, Nest of Spies



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Issue #02: "Gont, Nest of Spies" by Gabor Lux (various), Laszlo Feher (pp. 2–5)

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**Gont!** Two times have my players dared the treacherous coastal town, and two times have they left it in disgrace, robbed of their belongings, and in dire peril. What lurks beneath the veneer of quaint respectability? It will be revealed in this issue's centrepiece, an article on the town's politics, establishments, and its underworld. This material is accompanied by players' and GM's maps, included in the archive included with this electronic edition.

The issue also introduces the reader to the Isle of Erillion, a mini-campaign setting caught between rival powers, and the uneasy balance between pockets of civilisation and untamed wilderness. Erillion is a classical, low-to-mid level sandbox where you can place adventures at your leisure, and let your players figure out where to go and what to do. The first article on Erillion proper is a brief setting guide, with a players' hex map showing the main features of the isle's terrain. In the next two issues, this will be followed by the two halves of an extensive hex key, and the GM's cartography.

All this is rounded out by two shorter scenarios, one set in Lovecraft's Dreamlands (written by Laszlo Feher, an excellent GM and good friend), and another involving a loan gone bad, a road leading to nowhere and elsewhere, and man-eating mush-rooms. By pure coincidence, there were almost two shoggoths in this issue, but due to space considerations, one of them was moved to Issue #03 (and since the print edition's release, Issue #04). Let one be enough for now. Onwards!

Gabor Lux Pécs, 3 september 2018

## THE FOUR WIVES OF

## XANTUN

#### by Laszlo Feher Dreamlands adventure outline for levels 2-4

**Playtesters:** Gabor Acs, Gabor Bognar, Zoltan Demeter, Kalman Farago, Janos Hursan, Gabor Izapy, Gabor Megellai, Anna Nagy Nikoletta, Gabor Seress, Laszlo Simonics, Marton Tokes, Zsolt Varga

### Background



**Xantun**, the ill-fated mariner (Fighter 4, CG) lost the love of his life, **Zoe** on the barren island of **Otros**, just beyond the horizon from the port city of **Hlanith**. They sailed out as newlyweds, unheeding the dire warnings, and crashed on the rocks near the isle. In granite-walled Hlanith, Xantun's folly is still remembered, along with his sacrifice of a black ram on the plaza by the empty Temple - no one and nothing touched the slaughtered ram ever since, not even a stray dog.

Wallowing on the desolate isle, Xantun stumbled on a long-forgotten vault with a **shoggoth** in it. His feverish mind tried to recreate what he lost forever out of the protoplasmic mass, with little success – the being born thereon resembled his beloved Zoe at times, but only served to reinforce his suffering. Even the ghost of his wife haunted him for a while, until a rogue (**Kladassus**, Fighter 5, LN) arriving at the isle slew the spirit. This soldier of fortune took a few jars' worth of the shoggoth mass with him (he carries a rod of protoplasm

control with 3 charges at the story's beginning) to Hlanith before moving on.

By that time, however, a few **Insects from Shaggai** developed a fondness for the exquisite suffering stemming from Xantun's loss. These alien insects feed on others' pain, and with Zoe's ghost truly and well gone, they lost their favourite new brand of anguish. One of them flies to Hlanith to make amends for this unfortunate turn of events.

### Places and personages

**Rare Obscurities:** Kladassus sold the rod of protoplasm control in this out-of the-way pawnshop, after being frightened by the Insects. He even tried to pass off the shoggoth mass in the jars, but the shopkeeper, **Klomond** (normal man), turned him down.

**Phobus and Batmos** (Thief 4, LE, Strength 17): These hulking brutes seek women resembling Zoe (long black hair, silver eyes), after getting threatened and frightened out of their dim wits by the Insects as well. Their aim is to bring a captive to Otros and execute her, thus creating a new ghost. Aside from scaring them, the Insects also offered them riches beyond their limited imagination – the latter, of course, is not very likely to happen.

**Didek:** A street urchin, he found the sewer where Kladassus dumped the shoggoth mass, and from where the proliferation of ever-growing protoplasmic flowers will engulf the city. He sells the first buds for a copper each, advertising his wares as "everflowers, here come the everflowers". The flowers move and grow indeed, seemingly out of their own volition.



## The four wives

Zoe: She has now been lost to space and time, even her spirit laid to rest.

Lalia: A young shepherd girl, attacked by a torn-off piece of shoggoth gone rogue. The monstrosity burned Lalia's face off, replacing it with the semblance of Zoe. The girl went mad, now wears a sack on her head and thrashes around a shady corner of the marketplace, foaming at the mouth and rambling about a bottomless ocean of flowers. A couple of benevolent old women look after her, but even they start to get tired of her screams.

**Psyche:** Another child from a poor family from the fields outside Hlanith. Her mother got raped by another shoggoth piece, and Lalia was born three days later, literally gnawing herself out the womb. She fled, and still has only a vague understanding of the circumstances of her birth. The black hair and silver eyes are all right, but her shape keeps changing in the most unnatural way and her mind is that of a precocious three-year old, though she learned to talk already. She is pursued by her vengeful "father", **Ompar** the ploughman (normal man, LN, scythe).

**The Nameless One:** Born straight from the shoggoth, this barely sentient being is the most bestial of the three. Sometimes she takes the form of a whirlpool, at other times the shape of Xantun.



## Dreams and portents

For the opening scene, the fateful bride Zoe may appear in a character's dream, beguiling the hero to come and find her. A daily save vs. spell is needed to shake off this obsession. Alternatively, various lowlifes may offer Zoe's description and drop hints about hideous things in the night, willing to pay generously for any woman who looks like her. Step by step, Zoe starts to manifest in the minds of others in the city as well, and as the primordial sludge contaminated by Xantun's desires keeps festering in the sewers, Hlanith is bound to be overrun by endless grey growth and legions of twisted Zoes. At the last stage, only **King Kuranes** and the reclusive priests of the Temple have any chance to avert the city's doom.

**Kladassus** hides in the **Tavern of Quiet Discussion**, intent on fleeing the city on the first boat that comes along. The **Insect from Shaggai** haunting Hlanith is active only at night, but then it does its best to bring a new ghostly bride to the long-suffering Xantun, preferably by sacrificing a Zoe-lookalike on Otros. So far it has roped in Phobus and Batmos, but may move on to others. The wild-eyed **Ompar** roams the streets with his rusty scythe like a psychotic country bumpkin, hell-bent on taking revenge on the monstrous child (or anyone who looks like her) for the death of her mother.

## **Creatures and NPCs**

**Shoggoth pieces:** HD 10; AC 2; Atk disrupt 2d8; Spec amorphous, mindless, regenerates 1d12/round; MR 30%; ML 12; AL CE.

Hp 35 47 48

Idiotic primordial mass, its ever-changing bulk suggesting all forms of life and their nauseating endless shifts between. Passes through cracks of any size, immune to blunt weapons, regenerates 1d12 hp per round. Vanquishing or reigning it is difficult to say the least, save Kladassus' **rod of protoplasm control** or divine intervention (save negates, otherwise the rod's wielder has control over it).

**Insects from Shaggai:** HD 3; AC 3; Atk touch; Spec possession, torment, otherworldly; MR 20%; ML 10; AL CE.

Hp 10 8 16 9 11 These pigeon-sized, three-lobed (three legs, three wings, three "faces") insects hail from the distant planet of Shaggai. They live only to torment lower life forms. Their movement actually isn't flight, but a series of short, irregular hops in space, so they are able to pass through walls. Their otherworldly bodies can be harmed only by magic or magic weapons. With a successful touch attack they can possess their victims, nesting in the brain and causing terrifying pain at whim (save vs. petrifaction or writhe helplessly on the ground). They can be exorcised by magic (*remove curse*), divine intervention, or perhaps turned as high-level undead at the GM's discretion.

Kladassus: Fighter 5; AC 4 (chain, shield); Atk *lions' blade* +3 1d8+3; ML 6; AL LN; *lion's blade* (long-sword +3, rusts if wielder runs from battle, heroic deeds restore its powers). Hp 20

 Phobus and Batmos:
 Thief 4; AC 6 (studded, Dex); Atk club 1d6+1; Spec backstab, PP 50%, OL 47%, FT 40%, MS 40%, HS 31%, HN 20%, CW 90%, RL 25%, Str 17; ML 7; AL NE.

 Hp
 12
 15

**Xantur:** Fighter 4; AC 6 (leather, shield +1); Atk sword of Pharesm +1 2d4+2; ML 5; Str 16, Int 15, Wis 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Cha 14; AL CG; potion of strength, sword of Pharesm (held aloft, it defelcts spells as *dispel magic*, but if the spell goes through, save is at -2). Hp 22



# A Guide to Exillion

**History** For long considered a barbarian-infested piece of land between the great Kassadian Empire and the quarrelling northern kingdoms, the Isle of Erillion would only become populated in the times when the surrounding empires were already in a process of steady decline. The emerging realm had reached its heyday some 350 years ago under the reign of Queen Arxenia. The queen, who had controlled her tiny empire with an iron hand and firm determination, had subjugated or razed multiple neighbouring fiefs, until she was undone by her own cruelty. To lengthen her allotted time, she reached for the gift of un-life, sustaining her power through ever bloodier means. In the end, the Wraith Queen and her hosts would only be stopped at the end of an all-consuming civil war. Defeated at the gates of Tol Grashmak, and laid to rest in the Valley of Barzak Bragoth, Arxenia left behind a disintegrating kingdom, razed and plundered by her former vassals, as well as the foreign hosts who came to profit from the conflict. The capital, the port city of Silhanosh, was sacked and left to its fate.

With peace's return, power eventually became concentrated in the hands of the merchant families of Gont and Baklin. Initially purchasing their peace from the landed lords with money, they would soon stand on their own feet, and through wealth and intermarriage, become more than enough to defend themselves. In these centuries, the main centres of the isle were resettled, although Silhanosh remained a forlorn ruin due to strange magics and Confederacy incursions, and the northern coasts proved inhospitable to stable habitation.

The rule of the merchants was ended by a period of turmoil 70 years ago. With the looming threat of another civil war between the most powerful families, the rival magnates of Erillion settled their differences by inviting a lesser Kassadian noble family to serve as their sovereign. With the arrival of the Princes of Baklin, Erillion has experienced a long period of peace, only occasionally punctuated by barbarian attacks and the odd uprising. Today, the throne is occupied by the third generation under the aging Prince Lodovic and his consort, Princess Arkella – although without a direct successor.

**Nearby Lands** East of Erillion lies the Confederacy, a loose alliance of petty kingdoms. The Northmen clans, whose people are sometimes fishermen and sometimes plunderers, have been involved in constant strife, made more complicated by the fact that the number of their kingdoms is in a constant state of flux: now one or two sovereigns might grab power over many warring tribes, then their death might scatter the isles into the mutual antagonism of a dozen warlords and thanes. Today, with the failing health of the old and distant King Jarkon, two leaders appear to be on the rise close to Erillion: Sogmund the Red, an infamous reaver who has gained wealth and followers in the civil war devastating the Twelve Kingdoms; and the treacherous Skarlog Thane, who now favours Kassadia, then Prince Lodovic.

The Empire of Kassadia is a mere shadow of its former self, and with the decline of its mighty legions and slow decay of the aqueducts and roads crisscrossing its territory, even its mighty cities have been in a long period of material and spiritual decline. Conquered lands in all directions have cast off their yoke to establish their own place under the Sun. Torn by the treachery of nobles and generals, the unravelling empire still possesses vast reserves of power, but finds increasingly hard to lift its arms to strike down its enemies – and when it does, these hands increasingly have a habit of turning upon itself.

As for the Twelve Kingdoms, this land, divided into large isles and peninsulas connected by a complicated system of straights, lakes, rivers, and other waterways, its small realms are neither twelve nor - for the most part - real kingdoms. Some of the petty estates have fallen to Northman raids or sunk into vassalage, and some have been entirely depopulated by the dark hosts of a snow-covered arctic empire. Others defy outside influences and backstabbing neighbours, guarding their independence with force or guile. However, much of the Arxine nobility which had ruled here have become impoverished in the wars, and many try to find new fortunes as pirates, merchants and mercenaries abandoning their old adage that work is for the cottager and the fisherman.

Fortune seekers from all three of the aforementioned lands – and more beyond them – have visited the land of Erillion (or at least the city of Baklin, where newcomers are a constant presence), but most only visit briefly: the isle is neither sufficiently rich, nor sufficiently populous to keep too many troublemakers in one spot.



**Regions** The isle's centre is the port city of Baklin. The old city surrounding the bay is home to fishermen, traders and various scoundrels, while the villas on the hills belong to the old merchant dynasties and the nobility. The narrow and steep streets hide drinking holes, small stores, and rambling house complexes. Beneath Baklin are numerous secret passages, cellars and cisterns, and those who know them can walk around town without being detected. Baklin is home to many of the isle's thieves, both gangs and freelancers. While decapitation is the accepted punishment among the nobility, the commons have preserved the customs of the merchant families: the guilty are sewn into large sacks, and beaten to death with long staves before the crowd.

East of Baklin, the old road soon arrives at a fork. The eastern branch leads across the dense Forest of Death, ruled by the keep of Sir Hugo the Heartless, then through a barren heath to the town of Gont. Gont is a nest of fishermen and sailors, as well as multiple noble families, whose estates along the coast date to the time after the fall of Queen Arxenia. The fortunes of the town have dwindled over time, and it is considered a backwater when compared with Baklin. However, the seemingly calm seas are also home to smugglers and pirates who operate out of multiple well-defended strongholds, drawn by safety from Kassadia's retribution, and the relative proximity of the busy northern shipping lanes. Sleepy Haven is similar to Gont, a peaceful place where ships may land for water and provisions – but excitement is scarce. Such things are easy to find east of Gont, in the deeper forests and across the wooded islands, which are said to harbour sinister forces.

The northern branch of the Baklin road passes through the Kordwas Mountains, the range occupying the middle of the isle. This road was built by the Kassadians of old, and remains in good condition even today. Travelling along the road is unsafe, for patrols are no longer as common as they used to be. Most join a larger company of pilgrims or travellers to venture among the peaks. The Valley of Brazak Bragoth is the ancient burial ground of Erillion, where, custom dictates, all dead must be buried in the family crypts of a great underground tomb-complex. These passages are guarded by the knights of Yolanthus Kar, whose order is dedicated to the catacombs' safekeeping, and who also range across Erillion to uncover, clean out and condemn illicit burial places. The knights maintain a keep in the centre of the valley, ruled by the knight commander, Lady Yolce-linda. The knights must be ever vigilant, for deep in the catacombs reposes the Wraith Queen Arxenia and her court, imprisoned in the deeps forevermore, her cries still echoing over the surface of mist-shrouded Lake Shimron.

Granite Bastion is a lone fortress-town built over the churning sea, and surrounded by a desolate and untamed wilderness. Those who live within the walls are a surly and remote lot, tracing their lineage to the Northmen, but rejecting their worship of the ancients and the brotherhood of the high seas. There are some strangers here, too: the town lies halfway between the Confederacy and the Twelve Kingdoms, and serves well as a place of commerce and other sorts of exchange. The law is absolute, concentrated in the hands of the tyrnnical Lord Jönnörl, but few rebel, for the laws of the northern sea are harsh, and the alternatives not any more pleasant.

West of Baklin, the road passes multiple coastal villages before it disappears in the Forest of Woe. This perilous route is often harassed by orcs, who emerge from the mountain fortress of **Tol Grannek** to rob and enslave men. A growing hoard is accumulated in the vaults of the great fortress, while the captives toil in the mines far underground – until they are ransomed back to those who would pay for their freedom. Indeed, many would rather travel from Baklin by ship, passing the straights and the grandiose ruined bridge between Erillion and the mountainous Isle of Trials, and stopping to rest and resupply at the island of Tol Tazeloth. Lord Vimgard the Besieger holds a merry court in his great hall above sea-foam and treacherous wind, remembering his adventures and fair companions, now all gone. The wilderlands in this area are uninhabited, and possess a sorcerous reputation that keeps away the more careful explorers.

At the end of the road lies the town of Tirwas, ruling over multiple poor villages on the barren plateaus. This region is traditionally counted as one of the Twelve Kingdoms, and enjoys close relations with it – so much so that there are many who would welcome the capricious but familiar rule of the Arxine nobility over that of the more kind but distant Prince Lodovic. Some have become very wealthy from the plunder of the ongoing wars, and are sufficiently emboldened to openly speak of secession. However, these landholders are themselves divided, not unlike the town of Tirwas: there is no central administration, only the arbitrary rule and personal protection of mutually antagonistic powermongers.

## Legends

- 1. On Erillion's northern coasts, ancient burial mounds are found among the hills. These are the resting places of the Northmen, who have buried some of their kings here.
- 2. The Wandering Glade is a living forest, always appearing at a different location on Erillion. It is said that time passes in an odd way inside the forest.
- 3. Lake Shimron hides an ancient secret, but those who have seen it never told the tale.
- 4. Among the isle's mountains lives a pegasus rider who helps the downtrodden and shows the way to the lost. You must only learn the magic word to call him...
- 5. Somewhere in the eastern Kordwas mountains rises the accursed citadel of Tol Brandur. Home to the knights of Yuun, its prisoners never see the light of the Sun.
- 6. Many of the noble estates near Gont are now abandoned, and one of them is the lair of the vampire lord Karweros, the last of an old noble lineage.
- 7. The ruined port city of Silhanosh is haunted by faerie phantasms and strange visions. They are always dangerous, but sometimes lead to the city's mysteries.
- 8. Among the mountains of Erillion, two wizards play a long chess game conducted with human figures. Woe to the unwary, for they are always in need of new pieces!



## **Campaign Specifics**

Bards. Use a standalone bard class (Trent Foster's AD&D Companion provides a good one, which also comes with a dedicated spell list). To cast spells, bards must first "name" their spells after a song – e.g. pass without trace could become The Travelling Tune, detect magic could be named What Shines Bright in Yonder Starlight, etc. They can expand their repertoire through the study of rare musical manuscripts, or learn from one of their peers.

Burial. Owing to old fears about the return of the Wraith Queen Arxenia, custom on Erillion dictates that the dead should be brought to the Valley of Barzak Bragoth in the centre of Erillion, and buried within an ancient catacomb system. Where immediate burial is not practical, buildings – called 'the houses of the dead' – are erected as a temporary measure. The houses are administered by the knights of Yolanthus Kar, who also expend considerable effort to seek out and destroy new and old burial grounds. Their task is made harder by slowly dwindling numbers and the increasing obscurity of remaining sites, but the memory of their deeds is found far and wide: the symbol of a wheel



pierced by a sword marks where they have wrecked some old burial place.

Coinage. Only the Prince of Baklin can rightfully mint new coins, although many currencies remain in common circulation. Of particular interest to adventurers is the electrum coin, no longer minted, but widely used in the olden days before the times of Queen Arxenia. Since electrum is most often found in plundered treasure hoards, using them for payment quickly identifies the character as a reaver or tomb-robber.

The Combination. An agreement among Erillion's large crime syndicates – of which there are said to be three – governs the division of criminal activities and operative territories on the island. Members of the syndicates can expect to operate freely on their own turf, and in a limited capacity elsewhere. Outsiders, if discovered, will be asked to respect the Combination and coordinate with appointed attachés while visiting Erillion, or they are driven out with extreme prejudice.

Druids. Although the ancient druids were once highly influential on Erillion – perhaps even more so than the fickle and short-lived kings who had ruled the barbarian inhabitants – their era came to an end with the rise of Queen Arxenia. Chronicles are silent about the exact reasons, but their order did not survive the queen's reign, and their traditions are completely extinct. Characters belonging to the class are newcomers on the isle. Magic. Low magic includes spells from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> level. They can be learned and used without any limitations. High magic, the study of spells from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> level, must first be learned. Clerics must undertake a holy quest for their god, while magic-users and illusionists must visit the hidden Mage Tower and undergo a trial. Druids would once complete a test whose mysteries have been long lost. Those who cannot complete their test may continue to gain class levels, but will either have to be satisfied with 1<sup>st</sup>-level spells in place of higher-level ones, or they will need to cast these spells as lengthy and hazardous rituals. There is no spellcasting ability beyond the 5<sup>th</sup> level.

Religion. The people of Erillion are not a particularly god-fearing lot, and attempts to establish organised religion on the isle have always failed. Accordingly, most settlements do not have large temples open to the public (although they may have smaller private shrines), and many would view attempts to establish such with suspicion or even outright hostility. Some ascribe this aspect of life to Northman influence, and some to Erillion's underdevelopment, but for most, it is just the way things are. This has also made Erillion attractive for a handful of marginal mystical sects who would otherwise face persecution in their native lands.



## Gods

Agak, orc god, Lawful Evil Symbol: clawed hand grasping a satanic star Weapons: standard

Agak's main element is war and the destruction of human civilisation. Where the great orc hosts appear, mounds of stones and burnt villages show their progress; where the orcs are outnumbered, Agak's servants are already there to prepare the ground for his coming with deceit. Unlike other deities, Agak is an envious and jealous god. Although the orcs may pretend to worship other gods, they must strictly do Agak's bidding only, and work for the downfall of all other gods. Those orcs and half-orcs who would serve other causes out of more than simple pretense are shunned as renegades and hunted. Agak has a few human servants, but most orcs hold them in disdain.

- His followers must serve the orcish cause, and spread his doctrines by all means.
- Followers are resistant to poison and disease (+2 to saving throws).

#### The Ancestors, various (usually Lawful Evil)

Symbol: runes and knots

Weapons: any

The faith of the Ancestors is common among the Northmen, who hold the gods in contempt and follow the example of their clans' ancient founders. The Ancestors have no clerics, nor a formal religion: their worship takes the form of respect for bygone heroes, an endless opportunity for singing heroic songs, fighting and drinking.

- The followers of the Ancestors disdain clerics, and while there is no special rule against seeking their aid, the antagonism is deep-rooted and strong.
- The spirits of the Ancestors grant a measure of help to their dedicated followers if they are remembered with the appropriate respect: through prophetic dreams, mysterious messages, and sometimes by other means as well.

Edoran, god of the triune moon, Neutral Symbol: three interlocked circles

Weapons: curved daggers and swords

In the few abandoned, empty shrines he has, Edoran's statue appears as a man with a mysterious facial expression. He does not maintain direct contact with his followers, and lets their intuition decide how to serve his faith. According to Edoran's principles, every effect has its countereffect, and where the cosmic balance is upset, it shall be followed by its eventual restoration. There is considerable disagreement among his disciples whether to interpret this principle as non-alignment, or continuous and careful intervention.

- They must maintain the Balance.
- They possess the power of divination, which they can use once every adventure. Finding Edoran's hidden shrines grants them other advantages of enlightment.

Filongar, god of wanderers, Neutral Good

#### Symbol: oak leaf

Weapons: staves

Filongar, patron of woodsmen and those on the road, appears in the guise of a wise, bearded old man in worn clothes. His followers are always on the move, and when possible, spend the night under the open skies. Although they are not fanatical in asceticism, they deny the allure of both wealth and comfort.

- His followers must not have possessions above 250 gp (excluding a few magic items), and must give away the rest.
- They know the secrets of herbs and magical potions.

#### Gladuor, god of the aqueducts, Lawful Neutral

Symbol: dual stone arches

Weapons: only light, one-handed weapons are permitted

Gladuor's doctrine advocates the spread of urban civilisation and laws. He considers himself no god, but the bearer of an idea, teaching that the orderly and affluent life of cities grants everyone the chance to reach their full potential. Gladuor rejects wanton violence, but teaches that any means are permitted in self-defence and the spread of civilisation.

- His followers must prove themselves again and again by helping the growth of cities, the establishment of new garrisons, and the taming of the unruly wilderness.
- Gladuor brings good luck in trade, and his followers frequently find very advantageous business opportunities.

Haldor, god of heroism, Chaotic Good

Symbol: encircled longsword

Weapons: straight swords

Striving and personal deeds of valour are the element of mighty Haldor. His followers respect physical strength and beauty, shunning those who would stoop to crooked stratagems. Those who commit the greatest acts in his name will see him in person, and be taught some of his personal moves.

- His followers must demonstrate their faith with regular acts of heroism.
- They receive +2 to damage when wielding straight swords.

Irlan of the shining lamp, Lawful Good

Symbol: oil lamp

Weapons: may not use edged weapons

Little is known of Irlan, for he or she never appears in person (even the shrines are empty, where the divinity is represented by an empty stone niche), and teaches that it does not matter who acts, but rather how. Irlan's followers show the way to the lost and shelter the pursued. The faith expects no compensation, but encourages those who have received help to pass on the good deeds to those who might require it.

- Irlan's followers must aid the weak and the troubled with guidance, protection and active assistance.
- For their good deeds, they may also expect good things to come.

Keora the stone woman, Lawful Neutral

Symbol: stone head of a woman

Weapons: maces and hammers

Keora is indifferent to the fate of the world, and as long as she receives her due, she is not concerned how her followers use her powers. She demands much and gives little, except the ability to withstand life's ordeals. Her faith is native to Kassadia, but not widespread; however, she has some followers on Erillion among Northmen who have forsaken the Ancients.

- Keora expects regular sacrifices. Her clerics always receive one spell less from every level (minimum of one).
- Her followers receive +1 Hp per level, divine champions +2 Hp per level, and clerics use 1d10 for their Hit Dice.

Kurlakum of the seven misfortunes, Chaotic Evil

Symbol: seven-pointed star with barbed points

Weapons: any, but the trident is his ritual instrument

Kurlakum's terrible idol is depicted with seven arms, each bearing a murderous weapon. His faith is unwelcome wherever it goes, and banned where the locals can get away with it. Thus, his disciples are outcasts and lawbreakers, who must commit murder, human sacrifice and other terrible deeds at the bidding of their harsh master.

- By their master's orders or on their own volition, they must inflict tragedy and misfortune upon their targets, the more high-ranking the better.
- For these deeds, they will benefit from Kurlakum's bountiful grace.



Roxana, goddess of death, Lawful Evil Symbol: silver eye Weapons: any

She is depicted as a striking, black-haired beauty in plate armour. Roxana's devotees are dedicated to helping the assigned ones (and often those just in their way) pass into the Lands of the Shadow. Her followers must be particularly strict against those who have cheated death, including the undead, but also those who have benefitted from *raise dead* and similar spells. Her followers are often on good terms with the knights of Yolanthus Kar. Roxana delights in poetry and the arts, and her shrines have a sombre beauty.

- Her followers must bring death to those selected by their goddess, and to others according to their own judgement.
- They receive the *death touch* ability, used 1/week (2/week for clerics). Roll 1d8 for every experience level; if the target has fewer Hp, he dies instantaneously.

#### Rualgar, god of the keys (Neutral)

Symbol: iron key

Weapons: those that can be hidden easily

Rualgar is "he who conceals and reveals". His exact identity is a secret, as are his shrines, which are always found in well-hidden locations. His followers are distant, silent people, who are constantly working in the background to spread the veil of ignorance and forget-fulness over important secrets. Rualgar's faith opposes the dissemination of knowledge.

- His followers must keep and preserve secrets, seal the ways leading to them, and they must participate in the creation of new mysteries.
- They can sometimes see what others cannot (and which may even lie beyond the GM's knowledge! use a 1:6 roll)

The Twins (Nexeria and Zenia), twin goddesses, Chaotic Good

Symbol: Gemini sign

Weapons: any

The twins are the youngest of the gods, and not yet fully used to the powers and responsibilities of their status. They are largely benevolent, but more so by temperament than firm doctrine. They are more concerned with themselves and worldly adventures than others' fates. Capricious and superficial, they often judge by appearance rather than insight.

- Nexera and Zenia are not always paying attention to their followers, 1:6 probability to forget granting spells. Tend to be forgetful and impulsive in other cases.
- Their boons, when granted, are usually more generous than for other gods.

Zeltar, god of adventurers, Chaotic Neutral

#### Symbol: windrose

#### Weapons: any

Zeltar's followers tend to be happy to get involved in the next uncertain venture, and he holds in the highest esteem those who return home with the most fantastic tales... or those who rest in the ground of distant lands. Zeltar does not shun great wealth and success, but is not overly concerned with them either – easy come, easy go.

- His followers must get involved with all kinds of dubious adventures, and risk every possession they have at least once.
- Nothing ventured, nothing gained much ventured, much gained. When they take risks and win, they tend to win big.

#### 

## Eldritch Experiments

#### 

In a well-stocked laboratory, it is only natural that inquisitive characters are going to try their hands at alchemy, even if they lack the necessary knowledge. The following guidelines are provided to find out what happens.

- Roll on the Substance Characteristics Table below to determine substance parameters. Trained alchemists have 5:6 to determine its general effects; learned characters (M-Us, Clerics, etc.) have 1:6.
- Mixing two or more substances requires a roll on the Miscibility Table. A successful roll (as above) before making an attempt gives the character a good idea about the results.
- Although the mixtures created this way may be potent, 1:2 of them are also rather unstable and become ineffective in 1d6 turns.

1d10	Contained in	State	Colour	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Effect
1	vial	liquid	chromatic	inert	harmless
2	tube	powdered	pastel	inert	harmless
3	globe	crystalline	compound	inert	foul taste/sml.
4	jar	solid	white	bubbling	irritant
5	bowl	paste	black	fizzy	poison <sup>2</sup>
6	pan	(semi)gaseous	metallic	sparkling	disease
7	alembic	granular	transparent	flowing	pigment <sup>3</sup>
8	box	oily	hazy	churning	corrosive <sup>4</sup>
9	beaker	hardened	radiant	evaporating	beneficial <sup>5</sup>
10	flask	gelatinous	1d3 colours	melting	magical <sup>6</sup>

#### Oxxx Substance Characteristics xxx0

<sup>1</sup> If appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> Usually snake equivalent.

<sup>3</sup> Strong colourative effect on items/members in contact.

4 1-3 mild acid (1d4), 4-5 normal acid (1d6), 6 potent acid (3d6), 1d4 doses.

<sup>5</sup> This could be anything, e.g. minor curative effect (1d4 hp), smoke generation when burnt, neutralising mild poisons, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Roll on potion table. Application is typically ingested, inhaled or topical. 1:6 of completely new effect, e.g. growing the character's ears to double size or making a metal item rustproof. Since these aren't true magical mixtures, 1:3 of side effect and 1:6 of reduced effectiveness.

#### 

#### Oxxxxxx Miscibility Lable xxxxxx0

Roll	Result	Remains Effective	Catastrophe <sup>3</sup>
1	inert mixture	one remains	fire
2	inert mixture	both/all remains	explosion (3d6)
3	inert mixture	new effects (1d3)	explosion (6d6)
4	remains effective	increased duration	poison gas
5	remains effective	increased potency	sleep gas <sup>4</sup>
6	ruins equipment	reduced potency	stinking cloud
7	ruins materials	side-effect	acid fog
8	catastrophe	changes state	cloudkill
9	magical, unstable <sup>1</sup>	changes colour	rust gas <sup>5</sup>
10	magical, stable <sup>2</sup>	changes activity	demon summoned

<sup>1</sup> Turns inert in 1d6 turns unless used.

<sup>2</sup> Permanent and entirely new item.

<sup>3</sup> Spell effects are at 6<sup>th</sup> level.

4 1d6 turns.

<sup>5</sup> All iron items in 20' area must save or rust to uselessness.

## RERAM ORDE ORRE ORRE REAR Does Energy Drain Suck?

These rules may help if you think it does.

- » Wights, wraiths and other lesser undead drain 1d6 Constitution.
- » Spectres, vampires and other greater undead drain 2d4 Constitution.
- » Shadows drain 1d6 Strength.
- » Scores recover at a rate of 1 per day.
- » A character drained to 0 in a score is lost, and becomes an undead of the given type.

With these changes in effect, undead represent a greater immediate threat, but do not damage long-term character viability.XXX

#### 索史案未用菜 春未未举无 春米常况 双本英数

# Gont, Nest of Spies

**Playtesters:** Gabor Acs (Harmand the Reckless, half-orc Cleric 3 of Zeltar; Phil the Terror of Turkeys, halfling Archer/Thief 3/3); Istvan Boldog-Bernad (Einar Sigurdsson, Northman Sailor 3; Armand the Scumbag, human Assassin 5); Kalman Farago (Jonlar Zilv, human Bard 3; Drolhaf Haffnarskørung, northman Barbarian/Thief 3/3); Laszlo Feher (Sufulgor del'Akkad, Cleric 3 of Kurlakum of the Seven Misfortunes; Lafadriel Hundertwasser, elf Fighter 5); Gabor Izapy (Gadur Yir, half-orc Fighter 3, champion of Haldor; Drusus the Historian, human Magic-User 5)



#### Background

Proud port town on the east coast of Erillion, Gont's mighty walls and the bulk of Keldor's Tower grant it a solid respectability. The staid, slightly old-fashioned buildings and the genteel pace of street traffic outside the harbour reinforce these airs, and the town's conservatory, the Hall of Gontheim, does just as much to hint at old money. And old money is definitely present in Gont.

Commissioned in the times when now-ruined Silhanosh had dominated the isle, work on the fortified harbour had already started during the dark reign of the **Wraith Queen Arxenia**, and it served as the stronghold of her most powerful lieutenant, **Uthargon the Demented**. Yet it was also Gont where the foreign knights had first landed in their war against the queen; and with their work done, they had settled in well-guarded manor houses along the coast. In those days, Gont had vied with Baklin for the whole of Erillion, but despite the construction of Keldor's Tower and the prosperity of the town's mighty fleets, it was eventually left behind as first commerce, then men moved west to the more central city.

Gont is now ruled by Lord Gramantik, the Grey Fox, a crafty and ruthless young man who had sought his fortunes on the high seas, and returned with a generous bounty at Prince Lodovic's behest. While nominally beholden to Baklin, Lord Gramantik rules autonomously, in cooperation with the **Captain's Council** (whose rival counterpart is also found in Baklin itself). Having sent the old councillors to the Chaining Stone (L) for high treason, he has hand-picked their successors from the ranks of loyal and hard-working men.

It is less known even in town that it was the original council who had been the loyalists, and Gramantik's faction the rotten apples: accordingly, the respectable town is now ruled by a coterie of former scalliwags and freebooters. Money ennobles and trade flourishes in their hands, for where the city's diligent guards, the **harpoonsmen** (known for their distinctive sailor's jackets and harpoon-styled polearms) catch the small fish, the big fish swim freely, and illicit wares of all kinds flow into port, mysteriously turning into legal merchandise transported to Baklin and beyond via land and sea routes. Likewise, Gont has become a fertile ground for spies of all stripes, from Kassadian to Northman and Arxine, all seeking to ingratiate themselves at Lord Gramantik's court – who maintains his independence by staying aloof of deeper entanglements.

Gont's power structures rest on a compact between its merchants – of whom the most influential is the magnate **Hadik Hurzol** – and the triangular alliance of Lord Gramantik, the Captain's Council, and the criminal underworld. The latter are divided into multiple small, independent groups based in the harbour, and informally ruled by one **Grave-Wight**, a shadowy figure who rules from a lair in the middle of subterrene tunnel system beneath the water-front. Much more than a king of smugglers and a dealer in expensive rarities, Grave-Wight is the guildmaster of assassins, one of the three major criminal organisations forming Erillion's agreement of criminals, the Combination. Their mark, the two-tailed mermaid, is seen on tattoos and graffiti across and beyond town.



With respect to the **landed families**, their influence has greatly diminished, and most of their descendants have moved to Baklin's palaces, leaving behind their crusaders' nests to care-takers or the elements. Nevertheless, their legacies live on. The noble families, their family heads, and their holdings are as follows:

- Istaforas: Kerlik Istaforas, retired knight of Yolanthus Kar, maintains a villa at S.
- Kortnar: an elderly and reclusive couple, Elendir Kortnar and wife Ymlissa, have a small fortress on an escarpment south of town (U).

- **Feranolt:** the most influential and most populous of the coastal noble families, they had built their mansion on a rocky island defending Gont from sea attacks (**2011**), but they have long moved on to seek their fortunes in Baklin, where their wyvern banner still flies proud under the guidance of **Mondrag Feranolt**.
- Elendir: they were of half-elven stock, and the last of their line, the childless Hoiger Elendir and Frederica, live in their coastal hold on the highlands east of Gont (1910).
- **Perladon:** Further east still, only ruins remain of their manor house (**2110**), and their lineage is extinct.
- **Belendor:** they have dispersed or returned to Kassadia, and their manor, Catscliffe (**1811**), is little more than a pile of rocks.
- Bonifaces: a family with a mysterious fate, their manor is hidden in the wilderness (1812, Echoes #01).

These families had had their heyday long before our time. Hence, they lived before Erillion's customs of burial had become established, and most of them are interred in family crypts instead of the Valley of Barzak Bragoth. This custom has not endeared them to the knights of Yolanthus Kar, but their status as Erillion's liberators has given them leeway in their own affairs.

**A. Gates and walls:** Thick and well-garrissoned, these fortifications are administered by the harpoonsmen. Passage is 1 sp per person, steed and beast of burden, 5 sp per cart and 2 gp per carriage or wagon. Newcomers are warned of Gont's strictly upheld laws and Lord Gramantik's stern nature, with special attention given to the role and significance of the Chaining Stone (L).

**B. New graveyard:** The existence of this walled graveyard is a point of contention within Gont, as it flies directly in the face of Erillion's burial customs. Wrecked on one occasion by an enraged mob afraid of an undead uprising, and ever protested by the knights of Yolanthus Kar, it has at last been designated a "temporary repose" before the buried would be respectfully unearthed, and transported to the Valley of Barzak Bragoth. The knights also operate a house of the dead here. **Sir Vivar the Vigilant** (Fighter 6) and **5 knights**.

• Sir Vivar has sent a group of knights to the Highlands of Sibirk, but they have failed to return.

**Sir Vivar the Vigilant:** Fighter 6; AC 3 (plate); Atk *2-handed sword* +1 1d10+1; Str 14, Int 13, Wis 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Cha 14; ML 10; AL LN. Hp 32

**Knights (5):** Fighter 3; AC 4 (chain, shield); Atk longsword 1d8 or mace 1d6+1; ML 9; AL LN. Hp 7 18 13 18 10

**C. The Wastrel:** Overlooking the New Graveyard, this place is the favourite of knaves and riffraff. Adobe floor and good music; even the rats and the cat dance at night. **Gorostan the Bountiful Measure** (Cleric 3 of Kurlakum), lends gladly to the needy, and exacts repayment in evil deeds. Talks to rats he uses as spies. Grave-Wight's "nephews" often found in attendance.

- The ugly root: sought for a brew by **Vonilla the Mixer** (Thief 1).
- The cat's shakes: fever spreading in town, reputedly caught by Morok Gard the smuggler (**Q**), and even Lord Gramantik!
- **Hellodon** (Fighter 2) has sworn he has seen people digging up graves at night. Are they grave-robbers, body-snatchers, or are the knights up to their old tricks?
- The seer: someone has been trying their hardest to steal the dead body of **Garrodik the Seer** from the house of the dead.

Gorostan the Bountiful Measure: Cleric 3; AC 10; Atk mace 1d6+1; ML 7; AL CE.

Spells: 2/1; 1: command, cause fear; 2: speak with animals. Hp 14 **D. The Hall of Gontheim:** More museum than music hall, the hall had once rung with the songs of bards, but they are now scarce on the island, and the great competitions are no more. Airy colonnades under a central dome, rose gardens with statues of fairies and slimecone shells. The instruments of the legendary bard **Cyllon Nyr** are exhibited under a crystal pane which only the most beautiful music will split. The display is guarded by a **mynxlmynx**, ensorcelled to appear if the case is broken into through ulterior methods. Gontheim's caretaker, the minstrel **Gallmond** (Bard 2, Hp 9), has laid down his instruments after the fall of his comrades.

- Gallmond knows a secret entrance to the smugglers' tunnels (34).
- The great song, the Lament of Departures, has been rumoured lost ever since most of the elves left for the distant West... yet it is rumoured one bard on Erillion knows it still...

**MynxImynx:** HD 10; AC -2; Atk 2\*paws 2d4 and petrify or tail 1d6 + deadly poison (-3 to save); Spec petrifaction, poison, *prismatic missile* 1/3 rounds (as spray, one target), MR 60%, immune to poison, petrifaction and mind-affecting; ML 12; AL CN. Hp 62

**E. Gamesman's Court:** Surrounded on all sides by tenements, this is a neutral meeting place for smugglers and conspirators, where none may draw weapons. Storm drain leads underground to area **3**.

**F. Hadik Hurzol:** Gont's richest factor and Grave-Wight's second-in-command, the main intermediary between Gont's smuggling rings and Baklin's merchant princes. Paternal and patronising, he lives in a gaudy palace, and holds illicit manticore fights in his underground arena (**31**). His three daughters married off and his wife dead, he enjoys the company of loose women from Kassadia. Collection of stuffed songbirds 570 gp.

- His well-known fondness for horses recently exploited by scoundrels, he wants someone to teach them a lesson that'll make them regret crossing him.
- Hadik Hurzol is convinced the Northman warlord Skarlog Thane is trying to ruin him for a deal gone bad, and he suspects the trail leads to the town of Knifetooth (**1814**).

Hadik Hurzol: Thief 8; AC 8 (leather); Atk scimitar 1d8+2; Spec backstab\*3, -1 vs. spells; PP 65%, OL 57%, FT 55%, MS 62%, HS 49%, HN 25%, CW 96%, RL 40%; Str 18, Int 15, Wis 5, Dex 10, Con 10, Cha 16; ML 7; AL LE; signet ring 550 gp, vial of liquor. Hp 25

**G. Grallwon's tower:** A recluse with a mysterious reputation, **Grallwon** (Fighter 5) lives alone in this dusty and cobwebbed structure decorated with crumbling gargoyles. His assumed wisdom draws the occasional visitor, whom he tries to shake off, if necessary with empty platitudes and mysterious-sounding balderdash. However, he has seen much from his roost. Stuffed pelican's belly is filled with 700 electrum. Rooftop aviary locked for fear of spirits.

• Grallwon's great regret is missing out on a magical sword buried in a magical pavilion on a bewitched island (**2013**).

**Grallwon:** Fighter 5; AC 10; Atk club 1d6+1; Spec Str 16; ML 9; AL N; robes, horn. Hp 27

**H. Captain Arnbreg:** Retired commander of Gont's marine forces, who has retreated into a dark mood of reminiscence and regret, having lost most of his friends in sea battles. Young, headstrong Northwoman wife **Grita Haskell** (Thief 2) runs the household and instructs the honorary guard of **10 elite harpoonsmen** (Fighter 4). Stairs down to **2** behind securely locked and bolted iron door. Arnbreg's study has his collection on display: *plate mail -3, longsword +2* (always within reach), longbow, *silver cross* (allows turning at character level, 3 charges), cabinet of potions (*extra-healing\*2, gaseous form, invisibility*).

- Arnbreg's half-completed memoirs are an indictment of Erillion's maritime strategy, exposing its hidden vulnerabilities and naming the names.
- Grita resents Hadik Hurzol's boorish advances, and would give much to see him humiliated.

**Captain Arnbreg:** Fighter 7; AC 2 (*chain shirt* +3, Dex); Atk *longsword* +2 1d8+2 or 2\*longbow 1d6; Str 10, Int 13, Wis 16, Dex 15, Con 18, Cha 16; ML 10; AL N; *the nails of Yulan*\*3 (arrows, +3 vs. supernatural), rosestone amulet 20 gp. Hp 70

**Grita Haskell:** Thief 2; AC 7; Atk 2\*dagger 1d4; Spec backstab\*2, PP 40%, OL 39%, FT 25%, MS 26%, HS 20%, HN 10%, CW 86%; Str 8, Int 12, Wis 13, Dex 17, Con 10, Cha 11; ML 9; AL N. Hp 6

**Elite Harpoonsmen (10):** Fighter 4; AC 3 (plate); Atk harpoon 1d8 or 2\*sling 1d4+1; ML 10; AL N. Hp 21 20 22 21 27 16

Нр	21	20	22	21	27	16
	32	26	25	24		

**I. Tenement complex:** Slum lord **Boskell the Brave** (Thief 4), client of Hadik Hurzol (**F**) and incompetent translator of foreign texts, oversees this maze of dingy rooms inhabited by lowlives and fishermen. Ground floor warehouse operates as thieves' den with good connections to Grave-Wight – stairs down to **20**.

- Boskell's pet parrot Rumpo squawks a list of names always the same five.
- Boskell believes Istaforas Manor (S) hides a great prize, unknown even to its current master, but he is too afraid to risk his reputation and life to investigate.
- Thieves' rumours there is some trouble up northwest in the town of Tirwas (**0605**); the local landholders are at each others' throats, and the situation is close to outright civil war.

**Boskell the Brave:** Thief 4; AC 7 (stud); Atk *footman's mace* +2 1d6+3; PP 45%, OL 37%, FT 35%, MS 33%, HS 25%, HN 15%, CW 88%, RL 20%; ML 5; AL NE; stack of rent contracts. Hp 17

**J. Horse trader: Mersin the Lame (Fighter 2**, bow), maintains a stable in this dead end alley. He makes a big show about respecting brands and ownership, but buys and sells horses as they come. Spiral stairs to underground lair (7).

**K. Keldor's Tower:** Haughty residence of **Lord Gramantik** and his retinue, Keldor's Tower is an oversized sea fortress and lighthouse whose own secret passages have remained mostly unknown to its inhabitants – there is a whole wing's worth of dusty quarters and passages hidden from prying eyes. The known portions are decorated, but cold and impersonal. The stores and dungeons under Keldor's Tower have an exit to the smugglers' tunnels (**39**).

- Bannith, jocular jester, has vanished after bragging of a great discovery next to battlements.
- Stone doves in throne room have been rumoured to sing a sad ballad about Florimonde, Uthargon the Demented's doomed bride buried within these walls.
- Lord Gramantik is looking for the Mighty Magnate, a sunken ship out in the bay carrying precious cargo, and would pay handsomely for water breathing potions.
- Hugo, humpback whale, has returned to eat the fishermen who have wounded him.
- Sergeant Jobric of the harpoonsmen has sold his stuff, last seen fleeing on horseback.

Lord Gramantik the Grey Fox: Fighter 4/Thief 3; AC 3 (chain shirt, shield, Dex); Atk *scimitar* +2 1d8+2 or 2\*longbow 1d6; Spec backstab\*2, PP 40%, OL 33%, FT 30%, MS 27%, HS 20%, HN 15%, CW 87%; Str 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Dex 15, Con 11, Cha 16; 300 gp diadem, 250 gp, *rust dust* (save or metals rust), *potion of polymorph*, *potion of speed*. Hp 38



Harpoonsman Officers (10): Fighter 4; AC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or crossbow 1d6; ML 10; AL N.

Hp	27	16	38	24	19	33
•	20	20	14	17		
Harp	oonsmen	: Fighter 2; AC	6 (ring, shield);	Atk harpoon	1d8 or 2*sling	1d4+1; ML 8; AL N.
Hp .	11	8	5	5	14	9
•	11	14	8	14	7	16
	12	14	5	10	14	14
	15	19	15	3	15	9
	8	12	4	9	12	13

**L. The Chaining Stone:** This grim stone block, outfitted with chains and manacles, serves as Gont's place of execution. The condemned are chained to the stone at low tide, and left to drown (it is a spectator sport!).

• When the platform is submerged at high tide, a miracle happens: a section of the water *lowers* to reveal a **cave mouth** in the base of Keldor's Tower, allowing a quick swimmer to discover a shrine dedicated to Edoran, and gain access to the tower dungeons. There is, also, a **secret door** leading to the tunnels (**40**).

**M. The Sink:** Garish upscale tavern rising above harbour, with panorama overlooking both the Chaining Stone and the harbour market. Clientele of officers and travellers; proprietors **Arkandor the Enchanter** (Illusionist 4) and **Drunken Peggy** (Fighter 7) can turn a crank to rotate bar-room floor and dump everyone into the sea or on slide to fighting ring (**24**) if things get rowdy.

- Arkandor feels robbed by Kerlik Istaforas (**S**), who was supposed to bring him the *ser*pentyle chalix, fabled relic kept in Castle Sullogh in eastern forests (**2109**).
- Peggy has fallen for Leonardo (Fighter 1), a younger smuggler Arkandor wants to teach Leonardo manners, Leonardo wants Arkandor humiliated; Peggy just wants to stay out of it.

**Arkandor the Enchanter:** Illusionist 4; AC 10; Atk 2\*dagger; ML 6; AL NG; lab key (**35**). Spells: 3/2; 1: <u>change self</u>, dancing lights, gaze reflection, <u>hypnotism</u>, <u>phantasmal force</u>; 2: <u>blindness</u>, <u>magic mouth</u>.

Hp 13

**Drunken Peggy:** Fighter 7; AC 10/6 (chain shirt); Atk #3/2 mace 1d6+1; ML 8; AL CG; ring 160 gp.

Hp 44

**N. Thieves' den:** Ramshackle warehouse with peaked gables, inhabited by **Felton the Wooze** (Thief 5) and **7 apprentices** (Thief 2). These fellows are independent operators, and have contacts in the Baklin underworld. They secretly detest Grave-Wight's rising influence, and may discreetly tip off his suspected enemies. They have a safe room hidden in the attic, only accessible by climbing out on the roof, then back through a locked hatch: 400 gp, 50 gp bracers, 250 gp ivory statuette of a crowned triton, 400 gp crystal box holding scented balm.

• Harbus, third apprentice, is looking for companions to seek lost valley in Kordwas Mountains.

**Felton the Wooze:** Thief 5; AC 6 (leather, Dex); Atk shortsword 1d6 or hand axe 1d6 or 2\*sling 1d4; Spec backstab\*3, PP 50%, OL 47%, FT 40%, MS 40%, HS 31%, HN 20%, CW 90%, RL 25%; Str 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Dex 16, Con 9, Cha 11; ML 6; AL CN; catspaw amulet, brass bracers with hidden picks.

Hp 16

 Apprentices (7): Thief 2; AC 8 (leather); Atk club 1d6 or 2\*dagger 1d4; ML 6; AL N.

 Hp
 5
 2
 6
 10
 9

 9
 9
 9
 9
 9
 9
 9

**O. Captains' Council:** Thought to be a clubhouse for senile oldtimers, these sly old snakes still run most of the port between themselves. No guests ever invited. In unused **back room**, five dark shapes are slumped in a row of richly carved old chairs with garrotes around their necks. The remains of Gont's old Captain's Council, they are kept here as both memento and warning.

**Captain Skort Sharkface:** Fighter 6; AC 8 (leather); Atk cutlass 1d8 or dagger in boots 1d4 + poison; ML 9; AL N; chewing tobacco, flask of cherry wine, shrunken head 2\*80 gp eyes, *scroll of prot. lycanthropes, bag of holding. He lives in Hooksville* (**1811**) *in a large, rambling house, feigning to be salty but wise old sea-dog with sage advice, tries to sniff out party's intentions.* Hp 24

**Captain Garrold Gnetep:** Fighter 3; AC 8 (leather); Atk hand axe 1d6; ML 7; AL N; *scarab of protection. An expert mummy-cleaner, haunted by pharaoh's curse. Jovial but devious.* Hp 10

**Captain Whisky Wilkes:** Thief 5; AC 6 (studded leather, Dex); Atk shortsword 1d6; Spec backstab\*3, PP 50%, OL 47%, FT 40%, MS 40%, HS 31%, HN 20%, CW 90%, RL 25%; ML 8; AL LE; whisky bottle, *potion of climbing, ring of swimming. Insomniac, often seen prowling at night. A follower of the secretive Rualgar, he knows every secret door in town, but keeps them secret.* Hp 24

**Captain Merto the Mummified:** Fighter 3; AC 5 (breastplate); Atk military pick 1d6+1 or 2\*sling 1d4; ML 9; AL CN. *Extremely reckless, still overestimating self after drained by wight.* Hp 20

**Captain Rolbur the Mourner:** Assassin 5; AC (studded leather, shield); Atk *cutlass* +1 1d8+1 or garrote 1d4; Spec surprise, backstab \*3, assassination 0-1 70%, 2-3 65%, 4-5 55%, 6-7 45%, 8-9 30%, PP 40%, OL 33%, FT 30%, MS 27%, HS 20%, HN 15%, CW 87%; ML 10; AL LE; pet crow, box of candy, poisoned handkerchief. *Friendly demeanour disguises callous executioner. Tattoo of a two-tailed mermaid.* Hp 18

**P. Harbour:** Busy seafront teeming with fishing boats and merchants of all kinds. The market comes alive in the afternoon when the catch of the day is in; good bargains are to be had and exotic wares sold to the discerning. Games of chance on upturned barrels, dancing, jugglers and wrestling till after midnight, frequent random encounters. The **harpoonsmen** are about, to keep things flowing and to make sure business goes on undisturbed (they will detain but quietly release local thieves).

- Friendly porter, guide, gossip and ladies' man **Jacopo the Intense** (Assassin 5, Str 17, tattoo of a two-tailed mermaid) tries to ingratiate himself; he is Grave-Wight's spy and lieutenant on the waterfront.
- Rumour: Fifteen large crates hiding goblins were loaded on the Furious Falcon.
- Rumour: Elven knight Berthril of Cant was looking for swift passage to Tol Tazeloth... offering magic shield as payment, afraid of pursuers closing in.
- Two dry passages to access the tunnels at **23** and **15**; only the first is known to all but the oldest smugglers.

**Q. The Torn-off Hand:** Low-ceilinged drinking hole for sailors and porters, a place for spies. Stairs down to cellars at **13**. **Hagguk the Meaty** (Fighter 6), half-orc innkeeper, always looking for dishonest types in need of work.

- **Morok Gard** (Thief 2), old smuggler suffering from cat's shakes, reveals secret entrance to Kortnar Manor (**U**) from the Smuggler's Walk (**8**) if cured.
- **Serpek the Unblessed** (Cleric 4) is looking for a curse to place on his "rival", Hadik Hurzol. Has been sent by evil monastic order on secret errand. Pays with polished amber.
- The thief **Issag** has gone off to seek Cave of Secrets, last seen in skiff drifting on high seas.

**Hagguk the Meaty:** Fighter 6; AC 8 (leather); Atk butcher's knife 1d6+3; Str 18/12; ML 7; AL LE. Hp 31

**R. Abandoned building:** Burned-out and boarded-up husk, once a chapel dedicated to Irlan. In cellar, the earth has been disturbed before the painting of a wyvern: therein are 12 brass batons with the sign of a snake.

**S. Istaforas manor:** Prosperous walled manor house surrounded by ploughlands and orchards. **Kerlik Istaforas** (Fighter 4) is a retired knight of Yolanthus Kar, and has made a brisk trade as a factor, with a peculiar interest in curiosities and enchanted objects. Paranoid about his wily archenemy Kelbar the Trader, who has fooled him with false wares under many disguises.

- Fuldon the Manticore: An especially clever specimen of his kind, knows resting place of *threefold blade*, longsword +3 that can divide into three +1 weapons.
- The collection: a secret wing in Castle Sullogh, dreaded monster hive in the eastern forests (**2109**), houses a spectacular assembly of curiosities... for those who can find them.
- The Regal Orb: it is rumoured Lord Jönnörl, master of Granite Bastion, has come into possession of an orb in the shape of the radiant sun, with the crystallised egg of a dragon inside.

**Kerlik Istaforas:** Fighter 4; AC 2 (plate, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4 or *flail* +1 1d6+2; ML 9; AL LN; *medicine bag* (+2 Hp/rest), knight's symbol, gem-studded girdle 870 gp. Hp 31

**T. Shanty-town:** Poor fishermen who cannot afford living within the walls have erected cabins on the cliffside. Dirty, barely dressed urchins, slatternly women, and desperate, if untrustworthy bravos for hire. Many here know of the smugglers' tunnel below the bastion (**14**).

- Gundor the Seagull has seen an abandoned but loaded boat drifting from the tunnel.
- The Kortnars have a rich collection... but they never share with the poor.

**U. Kortnar manor:** A charming old eagle's nest on top of the cliffs. Interior garden overgrown with ivy and blooming flowers over ancient statues, rooms are gloomy but cozy, with the *bric-à-brac* of many generations. The elderly **Elendir Kortnar** (Fighter 3) and wife **Ymlissa** (Fighter 2) are a sweet, slightly "off" couple living in their memories, awaiting the return of a son who has gone off to sea adventures. They have a daughter as well, **Sidisha the Priestess,** who lives in the distant town of Tirwas (0605), but they disowned her in an argument they now all regret. Gossip decades out of date. Grizzled old servant and bodyguard **Skerrold** is in fact disguised vampire lord **Karweros**, who keeps a lair in the cellars, and uses the Kortnars as a disguise. Secret passage to **8**.

**Karweros:** HD 8+3; AC 1; Atk claws 1d4+6 + 2 LVL; Spec energy drain, regenerate 3/r, immune to sleep, etc., ½ from cold and electricity, +1 or better to hit, *gaseous form, charm gaze*, summon rats or bats, vampire weaknesses; ML 8; AL CE; *potion of water breathing, elven boots*. Hp 36



# Down the Smugglers' Walk

Built over the last 400 years, this chaotic network of cellars, escape tunnels and oubliettes has expanded to incorporate the foundations of major buildings (some no longer standing), as well as locations Gont's inhabitants preferred to keep away from prying eyes. Most of the connecting tunnels are of more recent make, built by smugglers who have gradually forced the town's remaining honest men to stick their noses elsewhere, and leave this domain to their activities. Currently, the north-western section is controlled by **Grave-Wight** (**33–37.**), and even the smugglers give his boys a wide berth. All are distrustful of strangers, but Grave-Wight's enforcers and assassins especially so. Roll random encounters every 20 minutes the characters are exploring the tunnels. Encounters occur on a 1:6 probability.

1 – 2. Rat swarms (1d4): HD 4; AC 5; Atk swarm 2d4; ML 6; N.

Hp	8	13	9	11	15	17
•						18
	19		21	20	13	
	16	15	13	7	16	18
A	1	<b>f </b>		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	the all a first start of the	

A crazed mass of rats, given courage by their numbers, easily distracted by food.

3. Ra	its, giant	(1d4*5): HD 1/2; A	C 7; Atk bite	e 1d4; Spec disease	e 5% per wou	nd; ML 5; N.
Hp	1	2	3	3	4	1
	1	4	4	4	4	3
	1	1	4	4	2	3
	3	4	4	3	3	2
	4	3	3	3	2	4
<b>T</b> 1						,

These are more opportunistic, watching and following from beyond the boundaries of lanternlight until scared off or until they can join a battle to drag down someone.

**4. Slimecones (1d6+6):** HD 1; AC 4; Atk bite 1d4 (+1/round); Spec sticky slime (-2 to hit, saves, +2 AC, 1:2 spell failure); ML 6; AL N.

Hp	8	5	7	8	3	4
-	5	2	5	1	6	4
	1	8	7	6	6	6
	6	7	6	1	7	8
	6	7	6	4	3	1

More embarrassing than dangerous, these snails are known for their conical shells and viscous slime. They are drawn to decaying food stores, where they quickly multiply unless cleaned out.

**5.** Smugglers (2d8): Fighter 2; AC 7 (leather, buckler); Atk scimitar 1d8 or axe 1d6 or 2\*dagger 1d4; ML 7; AL N.

	335 , .					
Hp	12	12	14	9	12	13
	11	19	21	7	13	8
	12	13	17	16	19	16
	10	16	17	16	3	12
	11	9	5	12	13	13

They know the tunnels, but fear them as well. 1:3 to be Grave-Wight's men.

**6. Assassins (1d3):** Assassin 5; AC (studded leather, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 + poison or 2\*dagger 1d4; Spec surprise, backstab \*3, assassination 0-1 70%, 2-3 65%, 4-5 55%, 6-7 45%, 8-9 30%, PP 40%, OL 33%, FT 30%, MS 27%, HS 20%, HN 15%, CW 87%; ML 10; AL LE. Hp 22 17 12 17 24 Grave-Wight's men to the last, they are probably already hidden in the shadows when you meet them. They often let the company pass without revealing themselves, only emerging to issue a warning to stay away from their haunts. All wear the tattoo of a two-tailed mermaid.

**1. Cellar:** Boarded up entrance from the street. Abandoned crates and barrels fill the storage space. 1:3 of **smuggler** lookout, 1:6 of smuggled goods (1d3 types).

**2. Cellar:** Musty storage space, **stairs** climb up to iron door (locked and bolted, leads to the house of Captain Arnbreg at **H**).

**3. Empty reservoir:** Usually a damp pit with scattered bones. Passage to the west emerges at Gamesman's Court (**E**). 1:6 of a **smuggler** lookout, 1:6 of tripwire bringing down crates for a hell of a racket.

**4. Abandoned cellar:** Spiral stairs, chalk mark of an "X". Down below is an unmapped wine cellar inhabited by **The Chortling Death**, a lightning-quick skeleton who has devoured multiple unlucky thieves. Purse with 150 gp pearl, 15 sp, 100 gp and scrap of paper – "*Arnbreg's Cut*".

**The Chortling Death:** HD 4; AC 3; Atk 4\*claws 1d6+1; Spec starts first, electricity just adds 2 more attacks, laughter causes *fear* 1/day, turned as 6 HD; ML 9; AL CE. Hp 24

**5. Mimic room:** Strong wooden door with multiple cuts (killer mimic) waits until company is inside room and disturbs **chest** on a pedestal (also a **mimic**). Gall stones are gems 100 gp, 350 gp, 60 gp. Chewed up bones, bracers engraved "SYSTILL THE FINE, LOVER OF WINE".

Mimic: HD 5; AC 7; Atk bite 3d4; Spec adhesive, camouflage; ML 7; AL N. Hp 24

**Killer mimic:** HD 7; AC 7; Atk bite 3d4; Spec adhesive, camouflage; ML 9; AL N. Hp 32



**6.** Storage: Sacks, rotting sails and ropes. Secret door hides trap, hail of heavy quarrels (3/PC in front row, HD 4, 1d4+1, armour-piercing).

**7. Mersin's cellar:** Complex owned by Mersin the Lame (**J**) the horse-trader. Western **storage** is filled with horse hides and garbage, concealing footlocker (200 gp, *scroll of monster summoning II, massmorph, telekinesis* – also has a dedication: "*To my student, as a parting gift: if the need calls, Mage Tower shall welcome you back* – *Archmage Poroxius Vern*").

In southern **prison**, **carnivorous ape** and **halfling Biddle Bloomkin** (non-paying customer) are both chained to opposite walls, ingenious winch mechanism allows pit fights at Mersin's delight. Drinking jug, scraps of food on silver platter (12 gp).

**Carnivorous ape:** HD 5; AC 6; Atk 2\*hands 1d4; Spec rending on double hits 1d8; ML 7; AL N. Hp 31 [22]

**Biddle Bloomkin:** halfling Fighter 4; AC 8 (leather); Atk club 1d6; Spec +3 vs. wands, spells, +2 vs. poison; ML 5; AL NG.

Hp 27 [10]

**8.** Shrine of Keora: Faded frescoes in this ancient shrine to Keora the Stone Woman. Giant carved head of a woman with indifferent expression, stone mallets on the walls. The altar shows a battle against the forces of untamed Nature, armies of wolves and beasts in wild forests. Only gaps in the wall remain of the **wooden stairs** leading up to a walled-up exit (the building originally above having long ago been replaced by new construction).

Someone touching the **altar** experiences a short vision of endless woodlands and snowcovered peaks, and a bearded form in white robes towering above it all: the apparition whispers "*My name is Nynniaw…*" before fading to nothingness. The altar can be pushed aside to reveal a winding, long-lost **secret passage** to Kortnar Manor (**U**), but this goes straight to the nest of the vampire lord Karweros!

**Desecrating** the temple invites a curse: save vs. petrifaction at -4, or pulsing gemstones sink into characters' forehead, compelling them on a *quest* to raze Gont's docks.

**9. Cage room:** Door opening from stair landing. The room is occupied by a giant **cage**, which can be raised and lowered into a 70' shaft with winch mechanisms. The cage is filled with the decaying bodies of sailors; the lowermost of the pile are being consumed by **green slime**.

**10. Dock:** 5:6 moored boat, 1:2 smuggled goods (1d3 types), 1:6 of **2d8 smugglers** on the lookout (and lanterns are lit). **Water** is shallow enough to wade (mostly 5' deep).

**11. Ladder:** Metal rungs leading up to disposal chute in warehouse serving as thieves' den (N).

**12. Storage:** Natural cavern under the Torn-off Hand (**Q**), shored up and expanded for storage space. Piles of sacks with basic foodstuffs, salt, sails and ropes, two grounded rowboats, 2:3 of a larger fishing boat. 1:3 of smuggled goods (1d2 types), 1:6 of **1d6 smugglers** on the lookout with lanterns and a table they have carried down here.

In the **northern passage**, slippery den of **11 slimecones**, who have found a stack of old barrels filled with musty beer, and laid strings of their pearly eggs.

**Slimecones (11):** HD 1; AC 4; Atk bite 1d4 (+1/round); Spec sticky slime -2 to hit, saves, +2 AC, 1:2 spell failure; ML 6; AL N.

Hp	8	3	6	8	5	3
				8		

**13. Cellar:** The cellar of The Torn-off Hand ( $\mathbf{Q}$ ). Some of the walls still bear the remains of crumbling old **frescoes** behind massive beer barrels. A **hidden compartment** is marked with the chalk sign of an "F", large box holds 8 brass ingots, and a brass baton with a serpent's sign.



**14. Sea exit:** This cavern passage twists and turns until it emerges south of Gont's walls, under the cliffs of the shanty-town (**T**). It is known to the guards, and can be blocked with a portcullis in times of war. The water is full of seaweed, and roots and vines hang from the ceiling along with swaying, leathery tubes... **3 hanging snagworts**. Sunken boat with cargo of wine.



Hanging snagworts (3): HD 3; AC 6 (2

vs missiles); Atk adhere; Spec bash victim against the wall 1d6+2 Hp/round, adhesive lasts 1d6 hours, snagwort weighs 40 pds; ML 10; AL N. Hp 10 16 12

**15. Reservoir:** Thick with seaweed and algae, the water deepens in the middle. **Two strangleweed** patches in the deep water, **4 hanging snagworts** on perimeter. Flooded **tunnel** leading to port is rarely used and not well known.

Strangleweed (2): HD 4; AC 6; Atk fronds entangle; Spec strangle 3d4/round; ML 10; N.Hp1016

**Hanging snagworts (4):** Hp 12 17 13 16

**16. Flooded cellar:** Ankle-deep brackish water under the dark vaults, scurrying rats. **Planks** have been laid down to allow passage. One of the sconces on the wall operates the **secret panel**, which pivots 90° clockwise to block off western chambers and open staircase down. Stairs in the side chamber have been **walled off**, and lead to the tenements (I) at the rented apartment of shield maiden **Radegond** (Amazon 4), who will be none too happy in case of intrusion.

**Radegond:** Amazon 4; AC 3 (amazon, chain shirt, shield); Atk battleaxe 1d8; ML 10; AL LG; treasure map leading to horn of fallen hero, *locket of hearts* (TPT to safety instead of killing blow). Hp 27



**17. Storage and crypt:** Looted storeroom with woodworking tools. There is a **secret trap door** under a crate of nails, leading to the crypt of "GREMEK THE ABUNDANT". **Gilded throne** with the sign of a merchant's balance. **Gremek** has been eaten inside out by worms, but he still rests his velvet slippers on his treasure chest (450 electrum, 250 gp, four brass batons with the signs of a spider).

**Gremek the Abundant:** HD 4; AC 8; Atk claws 1d8 + 1:3 disease (leprosy, negates cure spells); Spec fear 30', worms (HD 4, penetrates brain in 1d4 rounds to animate victim); ML 12; AL CE. Hp 15

**18. Fresco room:** Green mould has ruined the frescoes into a mess. **Grates** on the floors over churning, scummy black water. **Oil lamps** on the wall are in the shape of bloated frogs; if lit, the greasy fumes cause nausea and bad dreams (no rest).

**19. Depot:** 300 gp **refined oils**, 500 gp dried and pressed **Arxine butterflies** (candied, in brass box), 600 gp **idol of Kurlakum** with seven poisoned daggers, 100 gp **silica crystal sheets**.

**20. Well room:** well goes down to river level. Walls are damp black stone, with small **arrow slits** overseeing cavern. **Uqbar, blind beggar** (Hp 1, Hear Noise 30%) chained to the wall, sits on stool next to small alarm bell. All he knows is "*They come and go... sometimes, they bring!*" 1:3 of **2d6 smugglers** from **upstairs** – thieves' den in tenement complex (I).

**21. Bridge:** Metal structure, **slippery** when wet (it is!). Bottom has been recently scraped of hanging snagworts, and a pile of clobbered slimecones sits next to a bucket o' slime.

**22.** Control room: Portholes allowing observation to SE, winches to flood or drain cistern. Wooden table, sometimes used for card games by the smugglers (23).

**23. Smugglers' den:** Cots, tables, tapped kegs, and 1:3 of **whores**, all in the company of **Porter Jim and the porters** (13 armed goons). They operate close to the surface, and stay the hell away from Grave-Wight's business (*"Uqbar has seen it, and what good it did him?"*). 1d3 types of smuggled goods stored in crates. Pouch of gemstones (2\*200 gp, 100 gp, 50 gp), *wand of polymorphisation* (7 charges, purple metal helix, this one is Grave-Wight's property!)

Porte	r Jim and the	e porters (13):	Fighter 2; AC	7 (studded lea	ther); Atk scim	itar 1d8; ML 7;
AL N;	* Porter Jim h	as a heart-sha	ped medallion	(girl named Es	rella) and a silv	/er key (???).
Hp	16*	4	13	19	13	12
	6	13	15	16	10	9
	14					

**24. Fighting ring:** Former storeroom turned into illicit arena two levels below The Sink (**M**), used for wrestling, cockfighting and hound baiting (1:2 each night, all night). Trap mechanism for upper pub floor. Makeshift plank walls for fighting area, old benches. **NE corridor** has crossed-out "X" sign. **Secret door** is locked, opens to Arkandor's key.

**25. Secret room:** Study used by Arkandor. **Illusory eye** implants *suggestion* to leave and forget room. Colourful **dressing screen**, **hat rack** with three extravagant specimens. **Chalk signs** on wall are *illusory script* with *suggestion* to "*Leave, forget this place and surrender to the south.*" **Giant lizard skeleton** is preserved in a block of pine resin, along with crab pincers. **Metal needles and pincers** sunk into the block cause a nauseating feeling if touched, as if the brain skipped a moment to delete some unpleasant experience with a spasm of the nerves. Scattered **wax drops** on ceiling.

**26.** Upper cellar: Well-stocked stores right below The Sink (**M**). Old benches and nailed-down crates in abundance. Locked door to east is marked with a chalk cross and sign: "*Warning! Cave mould!*" Illicit guest room now used by **Thalloran** (Bard 4), who has fled here from the city of Baklin, where he has felt his life in peril. He knows a special song, "*Our Old Ways*".

**Thalloran:** Bard 4; AC 8 (leather); Atk longsword 1d8; Spec poetic ability, charm 26%, PP 45%, OL 37%, FT 35%, MS 33%, HS 25%, HN 15%, CW 88%, RL 20%; ML 6; AL NG; lockpicks, lute, feather cap, 45 gp, 3\*gems (20 gp, 60 gp, 150 gp), love letters (to Bella, Avila and Aimee). Spells: 1: amplification aria (deafness in range, 4 r), avies warble (call and command birds), camaraderie chorus (*friends* equiv.); 2: our old ways. Hp 22

#### Our Old Ways (Bard)

Level: 2; Range: general area; Duration: while sung; Area of effect: special; Components: V, S, M; Casting time: 1 round; Saving throw: – .

Explanation/description: While singing the song, the bard can follow in the footsteps of a man who had been here once, retracing the ways he has taken. Requires the man's boots, and the spell must be sung reasonably close to the actual location.

**27. Endless corridor:** There is no end to this passage. Those who spend too much time here, or give it too much thought, must save vs. spell or become obsessed to walk it forever.

**28. Deep cellars:** Dull, mouldy grey walls, skittering rats and **12 ghouls** lurking in the passages (they avoid Grave-Wight's couriers in exchange for morsels, and like to attack when party is distracted by pit trap). **20' pit** on middle of corridor. The **secret door** is opened with a brick in a recess (see **33**).

Ghouls (12): HD 2; AC 6; Atk 2*claws 1d3 and bite 1d6; Spec paralysis; ML 7; AL CE.									
Hp	11	10	10	11	12	10			
	10	7	16	11	7	11			

**29. Bottomless pit:** A charnel smell wafts upwards. All falling within are lost.

**30. Font:** Circular recess hides a font, water flows from a bird's beak. Three daggers in basin (a thieves' superstition).

**31. Hadik Hurzol's arena:** A frescoed hall designed for a now unknown purpose, the gilded scenes have crumbled away into foulness. Hadik Hurzol (**F**) enjoys arena fights between intruders and **two manticores** with selected friends from upper gallery. New champions are trapped by reinforced **dual doors** which shut and lock behind them to channel them into arena. Winners are thrown a wreath of laurels, a 120 gp bag, and told to get out the way they came.

Manticores (2): HD 6+3; AC 4; Atk 2\*claws 1d3 and bite 1d8; Spec 3\*volleys of 6 tail spikes (1d6 Hp each); ML 9; AL LE. Hp 26 26

**32. The Amber Way:** A chalk arrow has been crossed off in this direction. An amber glow illuminates the fogbound cobblestone road. It leads through a realm of spirits into a pre-historic era of Gont where barbarians had inhabited the land. Few have trod the way, and fewer have returned.

**33.** Secret corridor: Dual secret doors guard Grave-Wight's lair. By default, the northern one is in the N-S position, and the southern is in the W-E position. On opening, the northern one pivots 90° counter-clockwise to block off the corridor, and the southern one pivots 90° clockwise to open the way to **28** (thus, there is no instantaneous way into Grave-Wight's, since the northern door can only be operated from the inside).

**34. Maze of wandering:** Two of these corridors are linked through a spatial distortion. A northern tunnel leads to the Hall of Gontheim (**D**).


**35. GRAVE-WIGHT'S LAIR:** Censers emit sweet-smelling vapours in plush reception hall with marble columns, carpets and sofas. If an attack is expected, all available **assassins** lie in wait behind columns and furniture, as well as behind secret doors, and **2d6 toughs** will burst in any minute from room **a**. Invited guests who have been brought here on business are told to wait before being escorted into **b**.

**a.** Lounge for Grave-Wight's men. Tables and couches, practice dummies, barrels of wine. Stairs up to derelict building (not keyed on map).

**b.** Curtained reception room. **Grave-Wight** will deal with invited guests from behind a set of bars and a thick curtain. Secret side room has concealed arrow slits allowing to rain terror on intruders if deal goes wrong (most likely a pouch of sleeping poison – save at -2 or fall asleep). On sale:

- mechanical owl (1600 gp): oracular, vague. Wind up 1/week, spring breaks 1:6 if used more frequently;
- druid scrolls (1200 gp): a repository of cryptic secrets, if deciphered;
- 1d3 potions and 1d2 scrolls, 1 miscellaneous item

**Toughs (2d6):** Fighter 2; AC 17 (studded leather); Atk clubs 1d6+1 or maces 1d6+2; Spec Str 16; ML 8; AL N; two have pouches of sleeping poison (inhaled, save -2).

Hp		20	· - · ·		11	11
•	6	10	11	10	10	10

**36. Grave-Wight's quarters:** Comfortably appointed living quarters assigned for Grave-Wight's sole use. Stolen artwork and comfortable cushions, keg of arxine gin with berries (170 gp). Two tapestries are priceless antiques from the time of Silhanosh (2\*500 gp), dagger collection 300 gp.

**Grave-Wight:** Assassin 8; AC 2 (leather, *ring* +2, Dex); Atk *sword of owls* [+2 at night, nonmagical by day] 1d8+2 or 2\*dagger 1d4 + poison; Spec surprise, backstab\*3, assassination 0-1 85%, 2-3 80%, 4-5 70%, 6-7 60%, 8-9 45%; PP 75%, OL 72%, FT 60%, MS 72%, HS 59%, HN 25%, CW 96%, RL 40%, save vs. magic -1; Str 12, Int 15, Wis 7, Dex 18, Con 16, Cha 12; ML 10; AL LE; *dust of disappearance\*2*, *dust of Mung\*5*, *potion of levitation, oil of ESP*, *ring of three wishes*, pearl ring 400 gp, signet ring with two-tailed mermaid, pouch of pearls (100 gp, 500 gp, 50 gp), 450 gp.

Hp 48

**37. Font: Inky blackness** shrouds this room, and all lights are dimmed to a faint glow. Three **stone heads** depicting crowned queens or princesses spit streams of water into a large circular **font** glowing with an eerie inner light. All of the heads have had their gemstone eyes gouged out, leaving eerie, oversized black holes and cracks in the beautiful faces. A **winged helmet** rests on the font's rim, and glittering **gemstones** rest on the bottom of the basin.

The **stone heads** are defaced but their **reflections** look intact. Reaching into the water to pluck out their eyes yields six cut gemstones (6\*100 gp): the heads above are restored, and the reflections are defaced. The **helmet** is a small **mimic** looking for its first prey, while the **gemstones** on the bottom of the font are jagged glass shards which cut hands (2d4 Hp).

**Small mimic:** HD 3; AC 5; Atk bite 3d4; Spec adhesive, camouflage; ML 7; AL N. Hp 12

**38. Storerooms:** Rotted junk, long abandoned is piled up in wet, clammy storerooms. 1:3 of smuggled goods (1d3 types) under old sackcloth or tarp – Grave-Wight's property! Only he knows of the secret door leading into his quarters.

**39. Tower entrance:** Underground entrance to Keldor's Tower (**K**) flanked by magically lit **braziers** which soon relight if extinguished. Approached from the south, the flames form an intricate, deadly grille to block the door (illusion, 4d4 Hp if believed). A detachment of **10 harpoonsmen** are quartered on the other side to keep away the rabble – the wrong kind, anyway.

**Harpoonsmen (10):** Fighter 2; AC 6 (ring, shield); Atk harpoon 1d8 or 2\*sling 1d4+1; ML 8; AL N; one has an alarm horn\*, two have flaming oil (+).

Hp		6	10		10	13*
-	10+	16+	19	14		

**40. Domed hall:** This ruined hall has been stripped of its former riches, but the precious marbles and the opulent gilded dome, lit through a dozen hexagonal glass "eyes" from above remain. This territory is controlled by Grave-Wight's sentries, who guard the exit to the Chaining Stone (L). They have two pouchfuls of sleeping poison (save at -2 or fall asleep) to dump through hidden grilles in the doors.





## THE SWINE LORD adventure module for levels 4 to 6

**Playtesters:** Gabor Acs (Phil the Terror of Turkeys, halfling Archer/Thief 3/3); **David Barsony** (Silver Olaf Thorwaldson, northman Cleric 3 of Edoran of the Triune Moon); **Istvan Boldog-Bernad** (Armand the Scumbag, human Assassin 5); **Kalman Farago** (Drolhaf Haffnarskørung, northman Barbarian/Thief 3/3); **Laszlo Feher** (Lafadriel Hundertwasser, elf Fighter 5); **Gabor Izapy** (Drusus the Historian, human Magic-User 5)



#### Background

Everyone in the town of Sleepy Haven had thought Gurnald Yex an eccentric drunk, especially when the veteran adventurer purchased an abandoned homestead in the Highlands of Sibirk – in a valley reputed for an ancient, accursed road and bizarre disappearances no less. Yet Gurnald Yex was generous with his money both at home and in town, attracting a growing following of never-do-wells, opportunists, and plain leeches. These drinking companions had left him high and dry, while the farm yielded little, until it was openly being discussed he'd soon be broke.

Instead, Gurnald Yex returned to town as confident as ever, spending his money generously. To the startled townsmen, he boasted of his new-found wealth, although he was very mysterious when questioned about its origins. Thus did the good days return along with the drinking companions, and expensive stuff flowed to the homestead once again. That is, until Gurnald Yex and all his friends stopped coming to Sleepy Haven altogether, leaving behind heavy debts, and a lingering mystery. **Jack Carsius**, a tracker and emissary sent to the Highlands of Sibirk, failed to return. In the end, the townspeople – who now had a serious stake in recovering their money – turned to a group of adventurers with their problem, offering a generous share to recover their dues.

#### What really happened

Gurnald Yex's swift change of fortunes was a result of his greed and foolishness. Down on his luck and squandering the last of his life's gains, he had turned to the orcs for a loan. The orcish masters of faraway Tol Grannek, who ever work for the downfall of Man, were glad to oblige. They had long wanted to establish a presence in the highlands, well away from human har-rassment, but just close enough to strike civilisation when the inevitable war against the humans would come. A contract was struck, and Gurnald Yex received his loan. This had bought him a few more months, but with time, all good things end: the orcs and their lawyer came to collect, and Gurnald Yex was placed under arrest along with his accomplices. While these no longer merry fellows are waiting to be transported to the mines of Tol Grannek to work off their debts, the diligent orcs, now owners of the property thanks to the magic of compound interest, have started to turn the place into a fortified military camp. Meanwhile, Jack Carsius, the emissary from Sleepy Haven, has met a different kind of ill fate: discovering the secrets of the Witching Way by random chance, he activated its transportation powers, and was whisked away to the opposite corner of the Isle of Erillion – contributing to the valley's ill reputation.

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#### The Valley of the Witching Way

Nestled among the taller mountains of the Highlands of Sibirk (hex **1314**), and descending from the high mountains to sea level, the Valley of the Witching Way is covered in thick forests, and bisected by a swift river. Its main feature, however, is an ancient stone road from nowhere to nowhere, forming a spiral pattern converging on a waterfall. While its builders are gone and long forgotten, its powers are still intact: those who walk its length counter-clockwise while performing the correct ritual tasks, shall activate a gate leading to the middle of a forest to the far northwest of the island. There is no way back. Nobody but Jack Carsius knows about this, and he is gone.

The method to follow in his steps is to "link" the different areas along the road in a symbolic way. These links manifest in miraculous transformations. For instance, taking fungal matter from below the trees at **2** and planting it in the meadow at **3** results in the growth of fantastic flowers, which might be laid below the standing stone at **4**, and so on. There are multiple possible ways, at the players' ingenuity and the GM's discretion, but only one possibility is described in the text. It takes approximately one full day to march along the road from beginning to end.

While the company is exploring the valley, check for **random encounters (1:6)** every time they are moving between keyed locations, and three times per night unless a secluded spot is found. Use the **"Faerie and sylvan settings"** table (forest), but treat every encounter with men and demi-humans as an **orc patrol** (10 orcs and 4 bowmen). The orcs are wary of intruders on what they now consider "their land", but not yet confident enough to provoke powerful strangers – they'd rather have them gone without a fight.

**1. Swamp hut:** Reeds and water lilies in brackish ponds, dying trees. The path disappears in a treacherous **mud pit** filled with **9 giant leeches** (characters in first rank who don't check the ground will fall in, second rank may be lucky). Along the way lies a ramshackle **hut** constructed of rotting wood. Smashed leech jars, experimental mixtures of blood and oil (now all spoiled). The back room has a *potion of cure paralysis* and a dose of swamp oil (poison, save at +2).

Giant	Leeches	s (9): HD 2; AC	9; Atk bite 1d6	6; Spec drain blo	od at 1d6/rou	ind; ML 6; AL N.
Hp	6	8	7	13	10	16
	7	10	9			

**2. Clearing of the fungi:** Dense, dark woods; the trees are beset by a thick fungal growth, which form soggy lumps among the branches. Road ends in a copse of **ancient oaks** faintly lit by the glow of red, glittering **berries** (sticky, harmless). Fat mosquitos dance in the air, getting entangled in the sweet sap. Among the roots of the oldest oak, an earthen **burrow** lies open.

The keepers of the **burrow** are **8 fungus-men**. These short, squat freaks tend to their **pit of humus**, where rich earth shot with filaments of fungal matter mingles with old human bones, brass hairpins, bracelets, and other items (20 sp, silver buckle 15 gp). They talk only among themselves in a guttural tongue, but they have 1:3 of accepting a suitable gift in exchange for a helping of their treasured soil. The humus has miraculous growth properties.

 Fungus-men (8): HD 3; AC 7; Atk spear 1d6; Spec spores (1d4): 1 – irritation (-2 to hit), 2 – burns (1d4+1 Hp), 3 – nausea (1:3 of losing meal), 4 – far out (1:2 of missing turn); ML 6; AL LE.

 Hp
 18
 16
 15
 13
 17
 18

 14
 16
 16
 16
 16
 16
 16

**3. Meadow:** Wide open meadow covered in **enchanted flowers**. The flowers always seem to cluster around the characters, and "look" towards them. Unless the interlopers leave quickly enough, or shield their eyes, they must save vs. petrifaction or be transfixed. The **giant bees** arrive shortly afterwards (they have a nest in the woods nearby, with 20 more bees and *healing honey* – 6 lumps, 1d6 Hp each). If the **humus** from **2** is planted in the meadow, a handful of flowers soon grow into a large size, forming a rich bouquet.

**Giant bees (2d6):** HD 2; AC 5; Atk stinger 2d4 + poison (save or die); Spec dies on successful hit; ML 7 (12 in lair); AL N.

Hp		8	11	11	10	8
•	12	3	8	2	7	13

**4.** Stone of the Stag: Moss and vines cover a rough standing stone, forming a layer almost like bark. A dead boar that has half-collapsed into earth and moss lies at its base. Scraping away reveals the carving of a stag as well as a runic inscription, but also revives the boar as an undead horror:  $:: \mathbb{N} \setminus \mathbb{N} : \mathbb{N} \cap \mathbb{N} ::$ 

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::MFF+:L	PF	4	M : :
::NI16PI4)			

("WIND FOLLOW, DOGS BAY, MOON CHASE, WITCHING WAY")

If enchanted flowers from the meadow at **3** are laid around the stone at night, they absorb the moonlight to start glowing with an enchanted inner radiance that will pierce fog, darkness and other obscurement.

**Undead boar:** HD 3+3; AC 7; Atk gore 3d4; Spec exhale mossy *stinking cloud* 1/3 rounds, fight until -7 Hp or 1d4+1 extra rounds; ML 12; NE. Hp 23

**5.** Stone circle: Rearing hunting dogs are carved into the stones of an ancient stone circle; ashes and burned bones lie in a fire pit. Inscriptions in ancient runes:

::+|X|<sup>0</sup> +:+|X|<sup>0</sup> +:+|X|<sup>0</sup> +:+|X|<sup>0</sup> +:+|X|<sup>0</sup> +:+|X|<sup>1</sup> +: ::M|M+|X|<sup>0</sup> +:+|X|<sup>1</sup> +: :::A|M|R|M|X|M|U|1:+|X|<sup>1</sup> +:

("NIGHT, HOUND BARK; MIDNIGHT SING; CYMRYLDD'S LIGHT")

If an **offering** of meat or other morsel is burned in the pit at midnight, glowing letters appear on one of the standing stones:  $:: P \ltimes h \ltimes H :: ("FOLLOW")$ . A beautiful song in honour of **Cymryldd** might bring her and her **dog pack** back from Beyond: she is a Ranger Lord, able to see hidden things via *clairvoyance* and knowledgeable about the Isle of Erillion's ancient mysteries, but not enthusiastic about its current state of affairs – should she learn of them.

**Cymryldd the Hunter:** Ranger 10; AC 0; Atk bastard sword 2d4+2 or 2\*composite bow 1d6+2; Spec +1 to hit, +1 vs. spells, +10 vs giant-class, surprise 1:2, tracking; Str 18, Int 16, Wis 15, Dex 14, Con 18, Cha 14; ML 11; AL CG; *circlet of clairvoyance* (1/day), *belt of rainbows* (rainbow brige, 6 charges), 500 gp torc, hunting horn.

Spells: Druid 2: animal friendship, entangle; M-U 1: ventriloquism. Hp 80

Dog	pack (10)	: HD 2+2; AC 6; A	Atk bite 2d4;	Spec tracking; I	ML 9; AL N.	
Hp	12	12	10	12	9	10
-	8	6	12	9		



Note: Entire valley measures one hex (20 km) across

**6. Bridge of the apparition:** Thin, arched stone **bridge** over a roaring 80' **waterfall**. A film of water covers everything and makes the stones slick; rainbow lights play in the dense mist. Colourful **bubbles** rise from the edge of the fall.

Stepping on the bridge summons its guardian: an **apparition** of old, a terrible old man who breathes the cold of the mountains. Those who approach the spectral form with trepidation will be subject to magical *fear*, and those who are afraid see it for a *phantasmal killer*. Those who go forward without hesitation shall pass the test and find the apparition impotent, and those who bring glowing flowers from **4** shall see the mists part and the form evaporate: the way is clear, while the flower bouquet will now be surrounded by a pearlescent misty halo.

The **bubbles** dancing on the edge look like gemstones, and their sound is the tinkling of bells. This is an evil mirage to draw the unwary into their watery doom (6d6 Hp, open doors roll to resurface).

**7. Mountain lake:** Moraines surround a cold, clear **lake** at the bottom of the great cliff sides. The water is so clean that one can see into the abysmal depths, and there see the blue glimmer of large **ice lenses**. These wonders of nature are deeper than they seem due to refraction; touching them or staying in their vicinity requires a save vs. petrifaction to avoid freezing into a lump. At **night**, the sound of harps can be heard on the surface, and the stars of the sky animate to dance on the water surface. This is a sacred place to bards, who may learn a new song of their choice at this place of beauty.

**8. Altar stone:** The road spirals down among the leaves of enormous plants until it reaches the bottom of the **waterfall**. A mossy, abandoned **altar stone** of worn limestone stands in a small clearing, its surface pockmarked with red stains frozen into vivid **garnets**. The larger stones are worth 240 gp, but both the stone and the offender's hands will start bleeding if they are pried out (2d4 Hp +1/round until the flow is stopped in both).

Sacrificing the **enchanted flowers** carrying enchantments from along the spiral road at the altar opens a glowing gateway to parts unknown: those who step through the shimmering portal through find themselves in the opposite corner of the Isle of Erillion, in the Forest of Departures (hex **0703**), a colder and harsher place than the Highlands of Sibirk. **Jack Carsius**, the lost emissary, is lost somewhere in these same forests, his ultimate fate a mystery.

Digging up the ground around the **altar stone** yields a 300 gp gold vessel of antique make, and a horn scroll case containing druid spells (*hallucinatory forest* and *tree*), long forgotten.

Behind the waterfall is the carving of a spiral in the rock face, no special properties.

**9.** Snake trees: Snakes grow on a group of unpleasant-looking trees. The trees' sap is amber (2d6\*20 gp is available), but **2d6 snakes** attack if someone even passes by.

Snakes, poisonous (2d6): HD 2; AC 6; Atk bite 1d3 + deadly poison; ML 8; AL N.							
Нр	11	13	8	7	12	9	
	8	14	9	4	5	9	

**10. Orc camp:** This is Gurnald Yex's former farm, consisting of a **longhouse**, three sheds, and a few enclosures mostly surrounded by a wooden **palisade**. Having secured the farm once owned by the hapless Gurnald Yex, the orcs are hard at work fortifying the place. Working double shifts under the watch of **Lengnar the Swine Lord** (Fighter 5), and his underling, the justly despised **Wormheart** (Cleric 7 of Agak), they have so far erected the palisade, and demolished one of the outbuildings to serve as the base of a watchtower. For now, the **longhouse** is good enough against serious attackers (due to the damp moss, earth and flat stones heaped upon its roof, it does not burn easily). Ten guards with flaming brands and alarm horns are posted at the palisade at all times, and discipline is good.

The **longhouse** is where the orcs spend their days. Having smashed up the place a bit to suit their preferences, they occupy themselves with arm-wrestring, belching contests, torturing some wild animal, and eating and drinking. **Lengnar the Swine Lord** sits on a **treasure chest** serving as his throne and symbol of power. Therein are 250 electrum, 600 gp, an old iron crown (heavier and less comfortable than the one Lengnar is currently wearing, and once burnt by a great fire), and most importantly, a copy of the **property deed** that proves without doubt that the homestead belongs to the Lords of Tol Grannek, to be managed by their appointed steward.

In Lengnar's constant company is **Wormheart**, evil Cleric of Agak the orc god. He whispers evil advice to Lengnar, who would have long done away with him if he could lay hands on a priest of the orc state religion. Indeed, Wormheart is more here to spy on Lengnar than to be useful. The orcs have **five military tents** in an unruly heap at the back of the longhouse, a reserve for reinforcements.

The **root cellar** behind the property has been converted into a makeshift gaol, and this is where **Gurnald Yex** (Fighter 3) and his remaining cronies (**Bocko the Foot**, **Othild of the Highlands**, **Yair Plattick**, and **Bez**, **Cousin of Bez**) have been locked to spend their days until they are put in chains and transported overland to the mines of Tol Grannek where they can work off their outstanding debt (260 gp for Gurnald, 120 for every other fellow). In their misfortune, these miscreants have found some solace in cracking open a large wine barrel, and drinking them-selves into a content stupor. In their present state, they are a liability and worse than useless.

**Lengnar the Swine Lord:** orc Fighter 5; AC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk battleaxe 1d8+4; Str 18/87, Int 13, Wis 12, Dex 12, Con 15, Cha 11; ML 10; AL LE; 65 sp, 45 gp, *the horn of ages* (save vs. death or all in earshot age 2d6 years), wears an old iron crown. Hp 31

**Wormheart:** orc Cleric 4 of Agak; AC 2 (plate, shield); Atk mace 1d6+1; ML 6; AL LE. Spells: 3/2; 1: cause fear, cure light wounds\*2; 2: hold person, silence 15' r Hp 25

Orc b	bowme	n <b>(20):</b> HD 1; AC 6	; Atk shortsw	ord 1d6 or 2*sho	ortbow 1d6; M	L 8; LE.
Hp	2	1	5	2	8	4
	2	1	4	5	8	7
	6	5	1	8	4	2
	2	7				
Orcs	s (50): ⊢	ID 1; AC 6; Atk flai	l 1d6+1 or ha	and axe 1d6 or s	petum 1d6+1;	ML 7; LE.
Hp	3	3	3	7	4	4
	4	3	2	7	1	6
	8	7	4	5	8	8
	7	6	1	4	5	3
	4	1	4	5	4	5
	1	2	4	2	2	6
	2	6	5	3	6	7
	3	1	4	3	7	6
	4	8				

**Gurnald Yex:** Fighter 3; AC 10; Str 16, Int 9, Wis 8, Dex 11, Con 16, Cha 11; ML 7; AL NG. Hp 30

**Gurnald's Guys (4):** Fighter 1; AC 10; ML 6; AL LE, NG, CG, N. Hp 5 1 6 2

**11. Wyrm lair:** At the end of a trail, constant cold wind blows from a fissure leading to an icecave. This is the lair of a **newt-wyrm**, a distant and much more stupid cousin of the common dragon. The slippery brute has a treasure nest of 300 gp, a 70 gp amber symbol of the Twin Goddesses, and a badly bent helmet with a rended platemail.

**Newt-wyrm:** HD 7; AC 3; Atk bite 2d8; Spec hypnotic gaze on 1d3 victims, save vs. magic or be transfixed even while being eaten; ML 10; AL CE; handful of gemstones embedded into wyrm's belly are 300 gp, 10 gp, 500 gp, 300 gp – save vs. crushing blow if beast is slain in melee. Hp 25



#### Development

This is one scenario where just killing the orcs may not cut it. Not only are Lengnar's orcs numerous and fortified, they will readily tell any band who comes knocking they are here *legally*. They acquired the land in a lawful (if unethical) way, by hiring one of the recognised attorneys from the city of Baklin to first put a lien on Gurnald's farm, then foreclose on him when he didn't pay up. Lengnar has a notarised copy of the property deed whose original is with **Sir Silfond Cavaldi**, Lawful Litigator. Gurnald Yex, as the original owner, still owes the orcs a hefty sum, and he is set to be transported in a few weeks to enjoy the hospitality of Tol Grannek (on a second visit to the valley, he will be long gone).

Should the company assault the orcs in their legal holding and get away with it, or find a way to evict them, the masters of Tol Grannek will turn to the forces of true evil by initiating legal proceedings at the Baklin court, which, to everyone's horror, they are set to win. This would blow their secrecy in the Highlands, and prevent them from building up an invisible military force at this secluded place, but it would still gain them a sure foothold in the Highlands. The orcs will also hire assassins to find those who have wronged them and teach them some manners – but that is a different adventure.



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## **Table of Contents**

The Four Wives of Xantun	2
A Guide to Erillion	6
Eldritch Experiments	17
Does Energy Drain Suck?	18
Gont, Nest of Spies	19
Down the Smugglers' Walk	28
The Swine Lord	37

