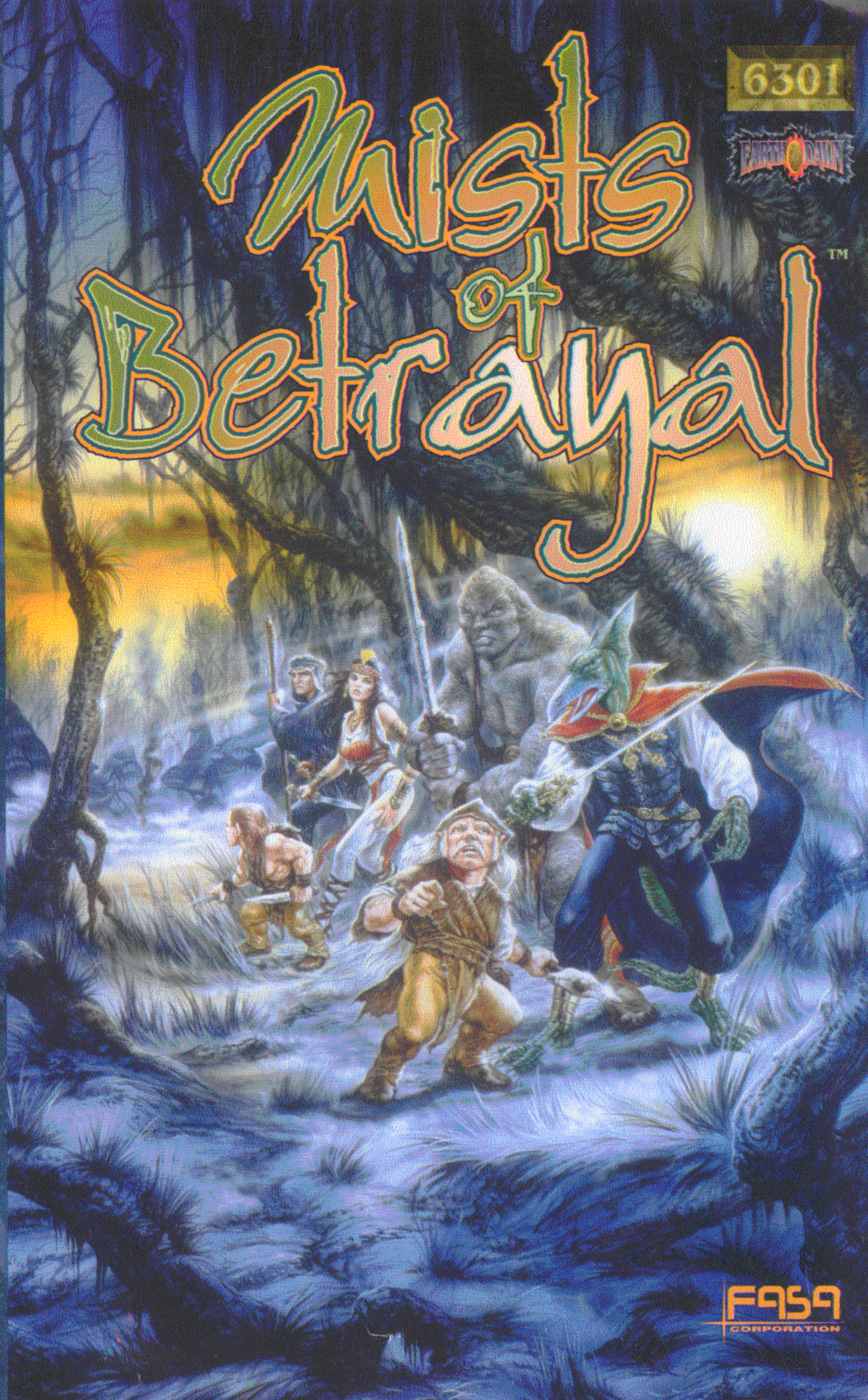




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# Mists of Betrayal™



AN EARTHDAWN  
ADVENTURE  
by  
JOHN J. TERRA





# Mists of Betrayal™



FASA CORPORATION



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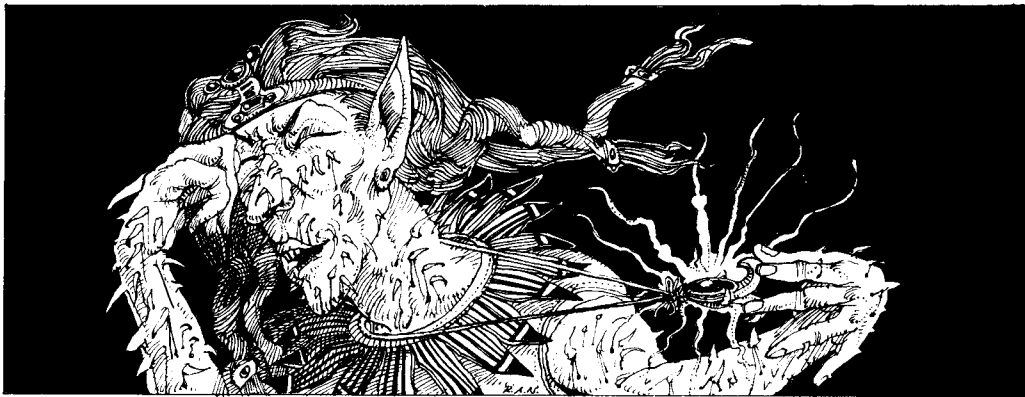


R.A.N.





## BLOOD REVENGE: A PROLOGUE



“**F**eed me, elf!”

The voice seemed to be coming from everywhere at once, but the blood elf knew that only he heard it.

“Feed me now,” the voice repeated, growing more insistent.

“I don’t have time for you now.”

“Your time is mine, impudent fool. Now feed me, lest you feel the lash of my anger.”

As always, the rune-covered pendant around Kalourin’s neck had begun glowing with the insistent pulse of magic even before the Horror spoke to him. The abomination took a perverse pleasure in calling him at unexpected times, regardless of the risks it posed for both. This time the elf feared the Horror’s call would make him late for the Queen’s meeting.

“I must go, Horror. I will attend to you later.”

"You will feed me when I demand it. Contact the slaver and have him bring me my feeding."

Kalourin stepped toward the door. Late for the Queen's assembly or not, he would suffer far more if someone discovered that one of Queen Alachia's Blood Warders was in league with a Horror. He hurried over to a small thatched hut, cast a quick glance up and down the street, then entered.

"Warder Kalourin. . ."

"Be still, Trebor," the warder told the hut's lone resident. "I have no time for pleasantries. Go and find the Theran slaver and tell him the Horror desires his feeding."

"Yessir, right away sir," the elf said.

"And remember, Trebor, if anyone sees you, we will both die."

"Yessir."

Kalourin left the hut and hurried to the Queen's residence, rushing past the grim-faced guards who stood outside the thick vine walls of the palace. The Blood Warder entered the Great Hall and found the other warders had already taken their places. He sighed with relief when he realized the Elven Queen herself had not yet arrived; Alachia was an impatient woman, and when she summoned her Blood Warders she expected them to jump. Those who did not sometimes found themselves left to die in the pit outside the palace, surrounded by the rotting corpses of others who had tempted the Queen's displeasure. Ah, but soon you'll no longer need fear the ire of the insane old hag, he told himself. Only a little longer, Kalourin, old boy, and you'll be taking your rightful place on the throne.

"All hail Alachia, the Beautiful and the Terrible, Protector of Blood Wood, Ruler of All Elvenkind," intoned one of the royal guards at the doorway.

The warders kneeled as the Queen entered, and Kalourin felt a mix of disdain and regret as he watched the figure before him. Clad in a gown of white blossom petals, Alachia seemed to glow in the eerie emerald light that shone through the leafy palace roof. Even the tiny thorns that covered her alabaster skin and the scowl on her face could not hide the radiant beauty that had inspired tales of the Elven Queen far beyond the borders of Blood Wood. At one time Kalourin had even felt the Queen's lithe body, writhing with impatient desire, against his own. Once, he had believed he would someday rule at her side. That childish dream, however, died the day he found himself barred from the royal bedchamber. When he realized that Alachia viewed him no differently than any other of her countless consorts, his ardor turned to hatred. Soon he viewed the Queen's entire court with disdain as well—the kowtowing elven nobles

that surrounded her, the other Blood Warders, always eager to please their sovereign like so many lap dogs.

He even began questioning the Queen's strict prohibition against unauthorized contact with outsiders. What he had once considered a prudent precaution against foreign threats, he now saw as a foolish, immature reaction to Barsaive's ostracism of Blood Wood. When the elves' wooden kaer failed during the Scourge and they sought the magical protection provided by the Ritual of the Thorns, few of them considered how outsiders would react to the sight of their mutilated bodies. The evergrowing thorns would protect them from the Horrors, and that was all that mattered. But when the outsiders reacted with with revulsion and fear to the so-called blood elves, the Elven Court foolishly declared that it did not need the foreign barbarians anyway and virtually closed the borders of Blood Wood. Although this decision made Alachia's power nearly absolute within the Wood, Kalourin realized she was not invincible. When he later encountered the Horror, he realized he'd discovered the outside ally he needed to usurp the throne and humiliate Alachia, "the Beautiful and Terrible," as she had humiliated him.

"Rise and face your Queen," Queen Alachia said, as she sat on a throne of woven rose bushes. "We have summoned you all here because we have heard disturbing rumors, rumors of a Blood Warder dealing with outsiders."

A murmur rose from the group as the warders voiced their indignation at this blasphemy.

"Silence!"

The murmur faded even more quickly than it had arisen.

"You all know the Elven Court will not tolerate unauthorized dealings with outsiders, nor will it tolerate slander that divides and weakens us. We wish to know the source of these accusations, so that we may decide whether they are true and bring swift retribution against any who would betray the Elven Court."

The room seemed to grow even more still, and Kalourin found himself nearly overpowered by the sickly sweet fragrance from the thousands of roses that lined the walls of the Great Hall. For one insane moment he was certain he had been discovered and considered confessing his crime and begging the mercy of the Court, when a voice broke the silence.

"Your Majesty, I fear I am the source of these rumors," said the warder called Takaris.

The Queen merely watched the elf for a moment. "Continue, Warder Takaris."

"Your Majesty, I . . . I believe Warder Kalourin's involvement with outsiders exceeds the boundaries of





normal prudence and threatens us all," the warder stammered.

Noting Takaris' nervousness, Kalourin guessed that he lacked evidence to support his accusation. The little upstart had undoubtedly been spying on him, trying to learn something damning, when the rumors reached the Queen. Realizing that he might be able to turn the proceedings against Takaris, Kalourin seized the offensive.

"Warder Kalourin, do you wish to reply?" the Queen asked.

"Your Majesty, Takaris speaks truly when he says I associate with outsiders. However, he exaggerates the extent of my contacts and the threat they pose to the Elven Court. The mistake is certainly understandable, as Warder Takaris is known to be overcautious in his thinking."

"Overcautious?" Takaris blurted out, unable to control himself. "You have such nerve. How can one be overcautious regarding our relations with the outer world?"

Kalourin turned away as the Queen acknowledged Takaris' words with a slight smile.

Takaris continued his attack. "Your actions could cause great conflict between us and the other peoples of Barsaive. We shall see whose actions are the most unwise, my caution or your..."

"And what actions are these?" Alachia asked, her voice taking on a harder edge. "Are our warders involved in matters that might jeopardize our Court? Could it be that we have given all of our warders too much power and freedom? To what actions do you refer, Takaris? We warn you to think carefully before you answer."

Takaris shuffled his feet uncomfortably. He had no intention of exposing Kalourin until he had evidence of the warder's wrongdoing, but this meeting had forced his hand. Although the Queen disdained rumormongers in her court, she would avoid publicly disciplining one of her Blood Warders if given a choice. Takaris realized his only chance to survive this with his position intact would be to apologize to Kalourin.

"Perhaps. . .perhaps my conclusions were premature," Takaris mumbled.

"Oh, really?" Alachia asked in mock surprise. "Then why, pray, were you so vehement a few moments ago? What could possibly have filled your speech with such anger?"

Realizing that he had won, Kalourin stepped forward. "If I may, Your Majesty, it could be that Warder Takaris, in his impetuosity, was perhaps a tad...



overzealous? Perhaps his zeal to defend our Wood seized his tongue before his brain could act?"

The Court tittered and snickered. Takaris clenched his fists so tightly that the thorns on his fingers bit into his palms and drew small droplets of blood.

"Yes, Majesty, that must be the reason," Takaris said through gritted teeth. "Forgive me for wasting your valuable time. And forgive me, Warder Kalourin, for any trouble my reckless accusations may have caused you."

Alachia's expression changed again, her face taking on the aspect of the kind, reflective ruler. "There now, all is well. Truly, our warders should be able to resolve their differences among themselves and perform their duties without regard to their personal feelings. And while we look dimly on the spread of dissension in our Court, we shall show mercy to Warder Takaris. He shall hereby refrain from casting unfounded aspersions on any Blood Warder, lest he draw the wrath of the Elven Court. And *all* of you would do well to remember that *we*, your sovereign, have granted you the freedom you enjoy to pursue your goals. And should your actions ever jeopardize the Court or the elven race, we will not hesitate to take back what we have granted."

With that, Alachia dismissed the warders. Within minutes Takaris was back in his opulent chambers, barely able to contain his rage at failing to expose Kalourin as a Theran sympathizer and slave monger. He paced the room, muttering bitterly to himself. Suddenly he stopped, his attention caught by an unopened scroll, apparently delivered during the warders' meeting.

The simplicity of the scroll's exterior marked it as a message from the outside world, obviously of little consequence. As the Blood Warder charged with overseeing all contacts with the outer world, the task of reading such useless correspondence fell to Takaris. He absentmindedly picked up the scroll, then dropped it with a start as the document began squirming in his hand. In moments the plain scroll had turned into an exquisitely detailed parchment. Intrigued, he unrolled it and began to read.

To Whom It May Concern in the  
Court of the Elven Queen:

I am Hiermon, a wizard by trade, and I wish to offer you an arrangement of trade. Within the confines of Blood Wood—and only in the Wood—grows a plant called sanguil in your language and blood ivy in ours. I seek a specimen of this blood ivy for certain experiments I am conducting. I realize this is not a welcome intrusion, so please understand that I am willing to pay handsomely for the plant. I most humbly request that you relay this message to your Queen.

I ask also that you grant me the favor of an expeditious reply. I await word from you in hopes that it will be favorable.

May peace and beauty be forever yours,

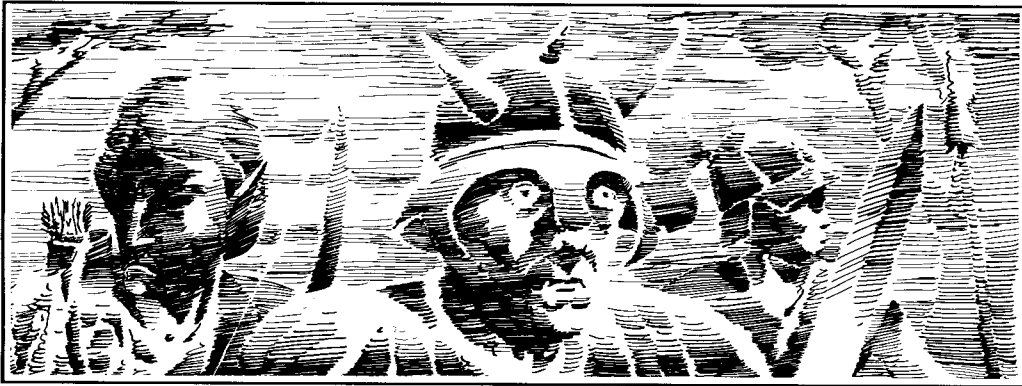
Hiermon of Haven

Still filled with anger at his recent failure, Takaris almost crumpled the beautiful parchment and cast it aside, but then a slow smile began to creep across his face. A plan began to form in his mind, and he decided this Hiermon would have his sanguil. In exchange for a small favor, of course.





# INTRODUCTION



**M**ists of Betrayal is a roleplaying adventure set in the world of **Earthdawn**.

Thousands of years ago there existed an ancient age of magic, the age of **Earthdawn**. Every person could draw on magic to perform wondrous feats and ordinary tasks. The power of magic flowed freely through their lives. But the dawn of magic also brought Horrors to Earth, creatures from the depths of astral space that devour all life in their path. For four hundred years, the people of Barsaive hid underground as the Horrors devastated their land in what came to be called the Scourge. Now the humans, trolls, elves, windlings, obsidimen, and other races of Barsaive have begun to emerge from hiding, ready to fight for life and freedom against the remaining Horrors and the oppressive Theran Empire.

At the heart of the province of Barsaive lies the dwarven Kingdom of Throal, guardian of Barsaive's freedom from Theran slavery. From Throal and everywhere across Barsaive, bold heroes arise to champion their



land and its people, arming themselves for their daunting task with powerful magical spells and treasures. As these heroes and adventurers explore and reclaim their world, they become Barsaive's living legends.

**Mists of Betrayal** takes place in the northeastern reaches of Barsaive. The adventurers will travel to the town of Haven, built near the ruins of the forgotten city of Parlainth, and to Blood Wood, the seat of elven power. On the way, they will confront a tangled web of deceit, corruption, and betrayal that strikes at the heart of Barsaive.

## GAMEMASTERING NOTES

**Mists of Betrayal** is a linear adventure, meaning that each event follows a particular sequence. However, the gamemaster should feel free to adapt the adventure to suit his or her group of players. Though the encounters progress logically, the gamemaster need not follow the adventure precisely as written in order to run a successful game. Many things are not as they seem in **Mists of Betrayal**; plots and manipulation go on constantly behind the scenes. Though the players have a legitimate task to perform, much more happens in this adventure than the characters realize. Keeping this in mind, the gamemaster should let the players believe that they control their own destiny while arranging events to lead the characters exactly where he wants them to go. To run the adventure, the gamemaster needs a thorough familiarity with the contents of this book, and both the gamemaster and the players should be familiar with the **Earthdawn** rulebook (ED). The contents of **Mists of Betrayal** are for the gamemaster's eyes only.

**Mists of Betrayal** is best suited for six to eight players using First, Second, or Third Circle characters. If necessary, the gamemaster may adjust the individual encounters that make up the adventure to suit larger or smaller groups. For example, if the group has only three players and their characters battle 24 orks because the adventure says so, the game session will end very quickly. To avoid such problems, the gamemaster should feel free to change any part of the adventure that he deems fit. However, the adventure should pose a challenge for the players. Without the risk of failure, the game becomes dull and no one has fun. The gamemaster should ensure that the player characters can only survive the adventure through hard work, smart playing, and a little bit of luck.

## MAKING TESTS

During the course of **Mists of Betrayal**, whenever characters attempt to take actions such as casting a spell, swinging a sword at an opponent, tracking a Horror, or flirting with a barmaid, the gamemaster or the player rolls dice against a Difficulty Number to determine the action's outcome. These dice rolls are called Tests. To make a test, the player or gamemaster rolls the appropriate Action dice based on the step number of the ability being used (see the **Step/Action Dice Table**, p. 36, ED). If the dice roll result is equal to or greater than the Difficulty Number, the test is successful and the character accomplishes his action. If the result is less than the Difficulty Number, the test is unsuccessful and the character fails to accomplish his action. In tests that deal with magic, the dice roll result often determines the duration of a magical effect.

Frequently, a test result determines not only success or failure, but the level of success. A test may have one of five success levels: Poor, Average, Good, Excellent, and Extraordinary. A Poor success level indicates failure bad enough to have unpleasant side effects. An Average success, equal to or barely exceeding the Difficulty Number, means that the character just barely accomplished his action. A somewhat better die roll yields a Good success, and a result close to double the Difficulty Number means an Excellent success. To achieve Extraordinary successes requires an even better roll. Any success level greater than Average may give the character some gain for his actions or else valuable, extra information. The amount of gain for each success level is determined by the gamemaster unless otherwise noted.

*Oznod the warrior is tracking an ogre. The Difficulty Number for successfully tracking the creature is 12. Oznod's player makes a Tracking Test and gets a result of 40, more than triple the Difficulty Number. This result gives him an Extraordinary success. The gamemaster rules that Oznod not only found ogre tracks, but also knows that five of them passed by ten minutes ago, and one of them was carrying something heavy.*

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the **Earthdawn** rulebook, this book contains everything required to run **Mists of Betrayal**. Gamemasters may also find the **Gamemastering Earthdawn** section from the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack** helpful.



The gamemaster should read through the entire adventure and familiarize himself with the background before beginning the game. Several important plot developments will not become apparent to the players until well into the adventure, but the gamemaster must understand and lay the groundwork for them earlier on. He or she can do that best by being familiar with the storyline. The gamemaster should also carefully examine the maps found in **Mists of Betrayal**. Finally, though this adventure covers most of the choices the characters may make, it is not possible to cover every contingency. The gamemaster should be prepared to deal with the unexpected.

The **Plot Synopsis** in this section summarizes the story background and the most probable course of the adventure. The following chapters, called encounters, describe the situations and events the characters must deal with during the course of the adventure. Each encounter contains five sections: **Overview**, **Setting the Stage**, **Themes and Images**, **Behind the Scenes**, and **Troubleshooting**. The **Overview** gives the gamemaster a general summary of the material presented in the encounter and tells him the encounter's objective.

The next section, **Setting the Stage**, contains a narrative description that the gamemaster reads aloud to the players. The narrative describes the player characters' location and what is happening to them as if the characters were actually there. Any special instructions for the gamemaster are printed in **boldface** type.

**Setting the Stage** is followed by **Themes and Images**. This section gives the gamemaster an emotional background with which to fill out the facts of the story, including ideas and tips about imagery to use in the scene, emotions to convey, sounds, sensations, and so on. The information provided varies in form and content from scene to scene, ranging from general themes to specific sensory impressions.

**Behind the Scenes** explains what is really going on in each encounter. This section includes important game information needed for each encounter, such as statistics for creatures or gamemaster characters, specialized information on events or locations, and so on. If the players or gamemaster need a map to play an encounter, it appears here.

The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, suggests ways for the gamemaster to bring the adventure back on track in case things go too far wrong. For example, the characters may miss an important clue or lose a fight that they need to win. Most gamemasters will not want the player characters to get discouraged or killed off too easily. This section offers the gamemaster options for keeping the game

going over trouble spots. The gamemaster can, of course, ignore these hints and invent his own solutions or simply let the chips fall where they may.

Following the encounters, **Loose Ends** sums up the consequences of the adventure and suggests ways in which the gamemaster might use material from this adventure to create additional adventures in his overall campaign. This section also includes **Awarding Legend Points**, guidelines for awarding the adventure's **Legend Points** to the player characters. The gamemaster awards **Legend Points** after each gaming session (see **Game Session Legend Points**, below) as well as at the end of the adventure. **Cast of Characters** provides game statistics and descriptions for significant gamemaster characters, including creatures and/or Horrors. Finally, **Rumors and Research** provides gamemasters with all the information the characters can obtain from outside sources: rumors, tales and legends, library research, and so on. If he wishes, the gamemaster can adapt much of the information in this section to future adventures.

## GAME SESSION LEGEND POINTS

In addition to awarding Legend Points to player characters at the end of the adventure, the gamemaster awards Legend Points at the end of each game session, whether or not the entire adventure fits into that session (see **Gamemastering Earthdawn**, p. 241, ED). Because **Mists of Betrayal** outlasts a single game session, the encounters are grouped into several approximate sessions (see **Awarding Legend Points**, p. 81 of this book). Sometimes, these sessions may seem shorter or longer than the normal session length; for example, the sessions in **Mists of Betrayal** include four to five encounters, but game sessions in subsequent **Earthdawn** adventures may include seven or eight. The flow of the story, rather than the number of encounters, determines the length of each game session. Each session also has a clear session goal (see **Completing Session Goals**, p. 242, ED). **Awarding Legend Points** lists the encounters and the appropriate **Legend Awards** in each session for defeating creatures, finding magical treasures, creative roleplaying and heroics, and so on.

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

It is impossible to create a published adventure that provides the appropriate opposition level for every diverse group of player characters. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others.



The gamemaster must adjust the game statistics and capabilities of the opposition to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for his or her group. If the adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, the gamemaster may use it as an outline, the bones to develop an adventure of his own. Or, if it works well except for a glitch here and there, the gamemaster can change any part of the plot or events to make the adventure a better one.

Maps provided for the adventure include a map of the area of Barsaive in which the adventure takes place, as well as of the towns and villages that figure in the adventure. Also included are plans of the upper and lower sections of the Kaer of Akarem, which the characters must explore.

To aid the players in roleplaying **Mists of Betrayal**, the gamemaster should create a framework that explains why these particular characters have embarked on this adventure together. Whether or not the characters have adventured before, most if not all are inexperienced. The group may have come together by chance, seeking security in numbers; after all, Horrors still lurk in Barsaive's wilderness. Or perhaps everyone is from the same town or a kaer that only recently opened up. The latter suggestion also gives a plausible reason for the characters to be ignorant of many potential hazards. As for their destination, Haven is a natural choice for a group of adventurers who want to make a name for themselves. The group may have heard of the fantastic ruins of nearby Parlainth and decided, out of sheer curiosity, to strike out for the city together.

If he wishes, the gamemaster may create a short scenario that ends with the characters near the village of Tureem, where **Mists of Betrayal** begins. If **Mists of Betrayal** is the players' first exposure to **Earthdawn**, running a short scenario may be a good idea. **Mists of Betrayal**, though introductory in the sense that it shows new players some of Barsaive's unique and fantastic places, is not an easy adventure. An opening scenario may help the gamemaster and players get a feel for the rules and setting of the game.

Keep in mind that you, as the gamemaster, have a unique responsibility to make the adventure exciting, keep the players involved, and hold the story on track. In describing the world of **Earthdawn**, try to answer all the players' questions about what the characters see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Feel free to go beyond the descriptions provided in this book when evoking places and moods. To keep the players connected to the action, ask "What do you do?" each time you describe a new scene to them. By having to describe what they want their characters to do, the players help to tell the story and add to their own enjoyment. If the players wander from the storyline, nudge them back in

the right direction. If the players make choices that interrupt the story or make them miss a vital clue, drop hints to encourage them to do what the adventure expects. Remember, however, to keep it subtle. A gamemaster guides the players; he does not tell them what to do.



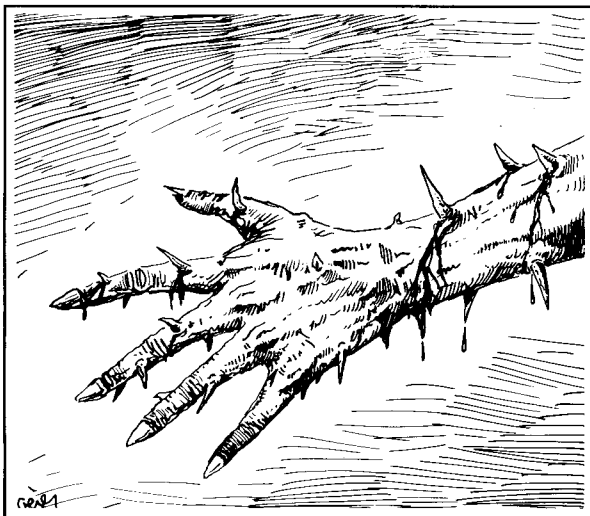
## PLOT SYNOPSIS

The threads that weave this tale begin in Barsaive's ancient days,

just before the coming of the Horrors. Hundreds upon hundreds of years ago, the magicians of the mighty Theran Empire unlocked the secrets of the Books of Harrow and learned of the coming Scourge. To safeguard the life of the world, they created the Rites of Protection and Passage, powerful magical protection against the ravages of the Horrors. The Therans offered their magic to the cities, towns, and villages of Barsaive in exchange for allegiance to the Empire. In dread of the terrors to come, many—but not all—accepted this bargain.

When Theran emissaries traveled to the Elven Court in Wurm Wood, the elven Queen Alachia defied Thera and refused their aid. Proud and willful, she bade her Warders devise a magical shield against the Horrors that would serve the elves alone. Obedient to their sovereign's will, the Queen's magicians built a shelter of elemental wood and earth. As the corruption of the Horrors darkened the fair land of Barsaive, the Elven Court closed its kaer and settled down to wait for the four centuries of the Scourge to pass.





Whether through some flaw in the elven magic or the sheer power of the Horrors, the elven kaer began to fail a mere two hundred years after its sealing. Desperate to protect the besieged Elven Court, the Queen's Warders devised a hideous solution. Knowing the Horrors' need to inflict the pain and suffering on which they fed, the Warders chose to drive them off by inflicting never-ending agony upon themselves. Through a terrifying ritual, the Warders brought forth thorns from within the very bodies of the elves of Wyrn Wood. The Ritual of Thorns saved the elves from the Horrors' corruption, but at a terrible cost. To escape the Horrors' corruption, the elves of Wyrn Wood embraced a twisted mockery of life worse than the fate they had feared. The once-fair Wyrn Wood became Blood Wood, named for the drops of blood that continually seeped from the elves' thorn-pierced skin. The Elven Court, once a place of grandeur and power in Barsaive, became a dark, twisted place of corruption, betrayal, and deception.

In the days following the end of the Scourge, the Queen's Blood Warders managed the affairs of the Elven Court. Various factions within the court wished to re-establish ties with the outer world, but Queen Alachia would hear nothing of such ideas. Though many of those who opposed her met death at her command, the young Blood Warder Kalourin escaped the Queen's wrath. Silent and crafty, he sought to build his power by secret correspondence with the Theran Empire. He sent messages to Thera through Fegis Kul, a slaver who plied his evil trade near Blood Wood, gathering slaves for the Therans.

Now begins the adventure of the heroes of this tale. Journeying across Barsaive, they happen upon the village of Tureem, sorely beset by a pair of jehuthras. In

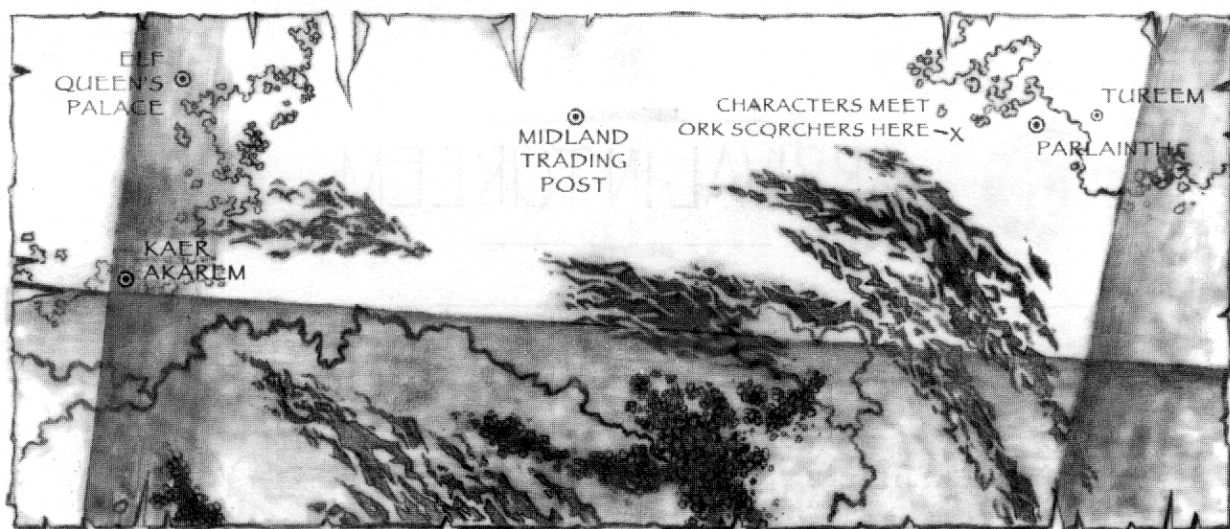
defeating these loathsome creatures, the adventurers find a mysterious, magical amulet. To learn its nature and mayhap use its power, the adventurers travel to the village of Haven, built on the ruins of the Forgotten City of Parlainth. There they seek the wizard Hiermon, who can tell them the amulet's secrets.

Hiermon the wizard gladly agrees to unlock the amulet's mysteries in return for a service. He requests that the adventurers travel to Blood Wood to deliver a magical treasure to the Blood Warder Takaris. Having become an enemy of Blood Warder Kalourin after learning of his treacherous contact with Thera and having suffered humiliation at his hands before the Queen, Takaris has sworn revenge against him. The wizard Hiermon unwittingly offers him the perfect vengeance by asking for sanguil, or blood ivy, a plant that grows only in Blood Wood. As his price for the plant, Takaris asked for the Everliving Flower, an ancient elven artifact lost in the ruins of Parlainth. The adventurers agree to deliver this artifact to Takaris and bring back the blood ivy. Takaris intends to buy back his Queen's favor with the Everliving Flower and to use the adventurers to expose Kalourin's alliance with Fegis Kul.

The adventurers begin the long, overland journey to Blood Wood, trailed by Theran spies who wish to know of the treasure from Parlainth. Highwaymen paid by the spies attack the adventurers, but the bold heroes beat them back. Reaching Blood Wood after many trials and travail, the adventurers come face to face with elven guards loyal to Kalourin. Kalourin and his guard escort the adventurers to Queen Alachia's wondrous palace, curious to know what business these strangers would have with Kalourin's enemy, Takaris. Unknown to the adventurers, Kalourin is in league not only with the Theran slaver, but also with a Horror called the Mist.

For many a year, the Mist fed its hunger for suffering on the helpless people of Akarem, a small village near the edge of Blood Wood. Needing more victims, the Horror entered Blood Wood and met the elf Kalourin. Penetrating Kalourin's dark thoughts, the Horror uncovered his dealings with the slaver Fegis Kul and sensed a ravening thirst for power. With the swiftness of a heartbeat, the Horror entered the elf's mind and offered him the power he sought—for a price. In exchange for victims brought to Akarem by Kalourin and Fegis Kul, the Mist swore to give Kalourin magical knowledge and gifts beyond mortal ken. Hungry for power, Kalourin sealed the unholy pact with blood magic, and Kalourin's sigil became its symbol. Through an amulet that bears this symbol, Kalourin tied himself to the Horror. The Mist also





demanded that Kalourin guard the area surrounding the village, so that no adventurers would learn of its existence and come to slay the Horror. Kalourin ordered blood elves to guard Akarem, but Blood Warler Takaris questions his action. Keeping a close watch on Kalourin, Takaris learned of Kalourin's ties with Fegis Kul, but his attempt to bring Kalourin's treachery before Queen Alachia came to nought. Lacking enough evidence, Takaris dared not speak too loud against Kalourin. Humbled by his rival before the Queen, Takaris vows to take revenge.

As part of his plot against Kalourin, Takaris greets the adventurers and tells them that the blood ivy has yet to be gathered. Praying their patience, he tells them that in further exchange for the blood ivy, they must find the slave trader Fegis Kul.

The adventurers track the Theran slaver into the dark heart of a patch of forest hard by Blood Wood. Elves bearing the sigil of Kalourin travel with the slaver and his captives, guarding him from harm and them from rescue. Passing through a strange mist, unknown to them a sign of the Horror, the adventurers come upon the cursed village of Akarem and its ruined kaer. Here, the adventurers discover that the people of Akarem and the newly brought slaves have been taken over by a Horror in league with Kalourin and Fegis Kul. Their discovery, alas, comes too late. Kalourin's blood elves ambush and capture the bold heroes, throwing them into a room in the ruined kaer to await the Horror's tender mercies.

The adventurers escape from their prison, but only by destroying the Horror can they escape from the village. With courage befitting the great ones of legend, the adventurers search the kaer for the Mist and defeat it in a

titanic battle. Alas for Barsaive, they do not destroy it, though it seems they have. Their victory drives the Horror from Akarem, freeing its people to die in peace after years of false life in thrall to the Mist.

Returning to Blood Wood, the adventurers bring Takaris word of Kalourin's alliance with not only the Theran slaver, but also with the Horror. Their courage in carrying out their task earns them the blood ivy from Takaris. Well pleased with the news they have brought him, Takaris arranges for the band of heroes a rare audience with the Queen. He bids them tell her of Kalourin's perfidy, but Kalourin disappears before his sovereign's wrath can fall on him.

Bearing the wizard's blood ivy, the adventurers return to Haven, with no more to mar their journey than a meeting with an arrogant band of ork scorcher. They find Hiermon unlike himself, seemingly touched with lunacy. As the adventurers present the blood ivy, Kalourin reveals himself, along with the Theran spies who followed the adventurers from Haven. Angered by his downfall and lusting for vengeance, Kalourin attacks the adventurers with the Therans' aid. The Mist, seeing its own chance for vengeance, comes forth from the elf's amulet, slaying Kalourin as it does so. The fearsome Horror turns its wrath against the bold adventurers who drove it from the village of Akarem. The adventurers fight a terrible battle and destroy the Horror, ridding the world of its corruption. A grateful Hiermon, released from Kalourin's evil hold by the elf's death, gives the adventurers their amulet and shares with them the secrets he discovered.

## ARRIVAL IN TUREEM



### OVERVIEW

This section describes the village of Tureem and its residents, giving the player characters a feel for daily life in Barsaive. In this encounter, the characters are mistaken for adventurers hired to destroy hostile creatures that are troubling the village.

### SETTING THE STAGE

As the sun sinks low in Barsaive's western sky, you reach the small village of Tureem. Still a half-day's walk from the bustling town of Haven, you choose to stop in the village to rest before being on your way with the dawn. Like any sane group of travelers, you seek safe shelter before nightfall. Though strangers to you, the people of this tiny village might give you shelter in a barn or a loft. If fortune favors you, a kind heart may even give you a meal, strangers though you be.



As you stride into Tureem, the villagers tumble from their houses into the well-worn dirt streets. They smile and wave in greeting, some even holding up babes to watch you pass by. Many gaze at your weapons and armor, nodding and passing knowing looks. You find their welcome strange—it seems unnatural that strangers should greet strangers as friends in such times as these...You hunch into your traveling cloaks and gaze at the road ahead. This village unnerves you. You only want shelter and a bite or two, and the morning will see your swift departure from this strange place.

Before you looms a building whose signboard reads "Common House" in almost every tongue of Barsaive. Emblazoned across the bottom are a frothy mug, a plate of food, and a bed. Your stomachs empty, your throats dry, and your bodies aching from days of walking, you make the only choice you can, despite your secret fears. You decide on this one night you will eat honest food and slumber in an honest bed, though it cost you life or soul.

**When the characters enter the Common House, read the following:**

A fair crowd fills the tap room of the Common House, drinking, eating, carousing, and gambling. As you enter, many of the revelers look up at you. You expect frozen silence, but it never comes. Far from being wary or fearful, the people smile in welcome. For all they know, you might bring with you the corruption of the Horrors, and yet they smile and bid you good evening. Are they mad or simply a village of fools, that they show strangers such dangerous kindness?

Before you can speak, an aproned dwarf approaches with a gleam in his eye. "Good welcome to you," he says. "The village overseer will come soon. If you will do me the honor of sampling my food and spirits at the finest table in the House, I will count you good friends. And my friends, gentle strangers, need pay no coin." He lets you make no answer, but calls over his shoulder. "Malisa! Brynwar!"

Two barmaids step forward, such beauties as mere mortals rarely see. They lead you to a round table of polished oak in the corner nearest the kitchen. You have the

best view of the tap room and the warmth of the kitchen to soothe your cold bones. Smiling sweetly, the barmaids set down foaming mugs before you, then skip to the kitchen to fetch your food.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the sense that the village expects the group. Drinkers and gamblers in the tap room may shoot expectant glances at them, or smile and nod. The adventurers should find this behavior unsettling, even creepy; in these troubled days, few people in Barsaive welcome strangers. After all, they could be Theran spies, controlled by Horrors, or brigands out to rob the town.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

The village of Tureem has seen more than its share of trouble in the past few weeks. A pair

of jehuthras nesting in the forest just outside the village have attacked travelers going to and from Tureem, and have also killed a few villagers. The overseer of Tureem, a man named Turan, anxious to rid his village of the attacking jehuthras, has hired a group of adventurers to come to Tureem to hunt down the creatures. Unknown to him, however, that unfortunate group met with a messy and ignominious end on the open road.

By chance, the player characters arrive at the village close to the time that the other group should have shown up, and the villagers mistake the characters for Turan's hired guns. For this reason, the villagers show them an unusually warm welcome, and the proprietor of the Common House gives the characters free food and drink.

## MEETING TURAN

After the characters have spent a few minutes eating and drinking in the Common House, an older man with an air of authority passes through the room and approaches them. Once within earshot of the characters, he addresses them, saying:

"Welcome to Tureem, friends. I am Turan, overseer of this village. Your arrival is timely; the beasts have attacked another band of travelers. We can bear this no more; if you kill these creatures, sixty silver pieces each are yours. My sorrow is that the fee is so

low, but we can afford no more with our all but empty coffers."

This offer should confuse the characters; they have no idea what Turan is talking about or why he seems to know them. If they tell Turan that they are not the adventurers the village is expecting, he will be puzzled, but will offer them the job anyway. The group Turan hired should have arrived two days ago, and so Turan feels that he has waited long enough for Tureem's deliverance. If the characters do not explain the mistaken identity, Turan presumes that they are indeed the heroes he sent for.

**If the characters ask Turan for details of the task they are to perform, read the following:**

"For many weeks, monsters have terrorized our village and all who try to leave or enter it. Twice they have entered Tureem, attacking citizens during the night. We are but a small village; we have no militia, and can scarce defend ourselves against this evil. Some of us have tried, but they lacked strength and had little magic. Sadly, they all perished in the attempt. If you track down the monsters and destroy them, we will pay you in good silver.

"The attacks have all taken place to the west of the village; we believe the creatures have nested there. We know little of them, but some villagers claim to have seen the shadows of huge, spider-like things lurking on the village outskirts."

If the characters agree to the terms, Turan will make arrangements for them to stay at the Common House. The village will pay the cost of the characters' lodging, but not for their food and drink.

**Negotiating with Turan**

Players who wish to negotiate the terms will find that task difficult. No matter what kind of persuasion the player characters try, Turan will make only two additional concessions: he agrees to pay the group half the fee now and the other half when they destroy the jehuthras, and he agrees to let them buy whatever they need from his store and from Graka, the village healer, at half-price.

**VILLAGE OF TUREEM**

The player characters may decide to explore the village of Tureem in search of supplies and gear for their upcoming adventure. Following are brief descriptions of some of the significant places and people in Tureem.

**Common House**

This two-story structure has rooms for travelers, as well as a tap room serving food and drink. Because the Common House is a Guild inn (see p. 260, **ED**), it costs twelve silver pieces to rent a room for one night and four silver pieces per meal. The doors to all the rooms have security locks. The inn's proprietor, Tergal, is a dwarf who helped the village rebuild after its people emerged from their kaers eight decades ago.

**Graka's Hut**

Graka the ork is the village healer. Her small cabin is cluttered with all manner of healing elements: plants, powders, salves, ointments, and so on. A skilled healer, Graka feels compassion for the truly ill or seriously wounded, but has little patience with those she considers malingerers or hypochondriacs. Her services cost ten silver pieces per visit, and she sells all types of healing aids (see **Goods and Services**, p. 258, **ED**).

**Turan's Everygoods**

The village overseer also owns the village's only mercantile. Turan's Everygoods sells mundane items of all sorts, such as clothing, lanterns, bedrolls, tents, and so on, but no weapons, armor, livestock, or magical items.

**Eeeng's Livestock**

A fast-talking windling, Eeeng specializes in horses and pack animals. Always trying to get the best end of the deal, he often exaggerates the quality of a mount. Eeeng has three human assistants who do the muscle work while he bargains with customers. Brun, one of Eeeng's stronger assistants, doubles as the village blacksmith. In addition to as selling livestock, Eeeng boards them; travelers can shelter their animals for five silver pieces per night.

**RUMORS IN TUREEM**

During the characters' stay in Tureem, they have the chance to overhear rumors about the surrounding region. For details, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 100.

**TROUBLESHOOTING**

At this point, the only way the players can disrupt the adventure is by declining Turan's offer. Should they do so, Turan will press them for their reasons. He will ask about the group's destination and purposes, and try to convince them that they can find the fame, money, magical knowledge, experience, chance to do good deeds, and so on in Tureem.



# GOING HUNTING



## O<sub>VERVIEW</sub>

In this encounter, the characters hunt down and confront the jehuthras. In the creatures' lair, they find a mysterious magical amulet.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Turan leads you through the village, stopping at its western outskirts. He points out the westward road, and swears he will go no further. His face is pale as ice, and he flicks sharp glances in every direction. The crack of the smallest twig might send him shrieking back into Tureem, and you with him. Only the promise of silver and glory can make you set foot across the village bounds. The road is little more than a footpath, overgrown with tough vines and jagged-edged leaves, leading into a forest so thick that the keenest eye cannot pierce its darkness.

A few hundred paces down the winding path, the forest seems to close around you. Your hearts in your dry throats, you look back toward the distant safety of Tureem. But the woodland has swallowed the village. Tureem cannot call you back. Glory, you remind yourself. Sixty silver pieces and undying glory. You shiver, wishing that some word other than "undying" had crossed your thoughts. Hero or no, your fear rises to choke you. Still you go on, step by step by step. Each step draws you closer to finding and destroying the creatures that plague Tureem. Unbidden, your hand clenches around your weapon as you walk forward.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

In this encounter, fear of the unknown should almost overwhelm the characters. Where most travelers in Barsaive merely suspect that its forests and jungles conceal monstrous creatures, the characters know for certain that an unknown but horrible creature lurks nearby.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The jehuthras' lair is located half a mile from the village. Turan leads the characters to the village boundary where the creatures entered and attacked the citizens. A well-worn path runs westward from the village, twisting and turning through dense, six-foot thickets of vegetation. In order to find the creatures, the characters must track them through a virtual jungle.

## TRACKING THE JEHUTHRAS

Finding jehuthra tracks requires a result of 10 or better on a Tracking Test. Any success level shows that the tracks begin at the village outskirts and wind their way north and west through the forest toward a small copse. An Excellent success level or better reveals that

two creatures made the tracks, and that each creature has more than a half-dozen legs.

The tracks lead ever deeper into the jungle-like tangle of plants, and so at least one player character in the group must make two more successful Tracking Tests in order to stay on the trail. If a Tracking Test fails, the characters lose the trail and must return to the place where they last found clear tracks to try again. If

a player character rolls all ones on a Tracking Test, the characters have disturbed the jehuthras, which immediately attack. If the jehuthras attack, they take the characters by surprise. If the characters succeed in tracking the jehuthras, they discover the creatures in their lair.

## THE LAIR

The jehuthras' lair lies within a small group of trees. Scattered among the tree roots are the bones of humans, dwarfs, and orks, and an occasional scrap of leather. The jehuthras themselves lie hidden in the brush ten or fifteen feet from the lair. If a player character rolls a 21 or better on a Perception Test, he or she sees a jehuthra leg sticking out from the foliage.

As soon as any of the characters enter the lair area, the jehuthras charge the characters. One of the creatures attempts to use its Frost Web ability (see **Creatures**, p. 305, **ED**) before closing to melee combat range. The other uses its Lacerator ability just before charging the characters.

As soon as three or more characters enter the lair area, the jehuthras use their Iron Web ability to create a maze around their attackers (see **Creatures**, p. 305, **ED**). Once they have formed the web, the creatures will charge down its paths to attack each character.





**JEHUTHRA (2)****Attributes**

DEX: 5      STR: 5      TOU: 7  
 PER: 8      WIL: 9      CHA: 5

**Initiative:** 5**Number of Attacks:** 2**Attack:** 13**Damage:** 11**Number of Spells:** (1)**Spellcasting:** 11**Effect:** Frost Web**Abilities**

Iron Web

Lacerators

**Death Rating:** 55**Wound Threshold:** 13**Unconsciousness Rating:** 50**Legend Points:** 250**Equipment:** NA

**Loot:** Thorax web worth 1D12 x 10 silver pieces, that counts as treasure worth Legend Points; 48 silver

**Physical Defense:** 9**Spell Defense:** 13**Social Defense:** 9**Armor:** 8**Mystic Armor:** 4**Knockdown:** 5**Recovery Tests/Day:** 3**Combat Movement:** 30**Full Movement:** 60**Jehuthra Loot**

Forty-eight silver pieces lie scattered on the ground in the jehuthras' lair, some near a recently deceased corpse. The corpse wears an ornate amulet around its neck.

**Amulet of Dirac**

Though the characters do not realize it, they have found the Amulet of Dirac, a finely wrought silver starburst on a silver chain. The starburst is stained a deep crimson, and the stain does not wash off. If the characters use astral sight or the astral sense spell to investigate the amulet, they discover that it is magical. The amulet has a Spell Defense of 14. To find the amulet's thread ranks and Key Knowledges, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 98.

**BACK IN TUREEM**

Once the characters have killed the jehuthra, they return to Tureem to claim their reward and find Turan waiting for them. He pays them the silver he owes them and thanks them in the name of the whole village. Turan tells the characters that they may stay in Tureem for as long as they please, though he does not offer to pay their way.

If the characters show the amulet to Turan or to anyone else in the village, no one remembers having seen either the amulet or a traveler wearing it. If the characters ask who might help them identify the amulet, Turan tells them about the wizard Hiermon, who lives in the Old Neighborhood in the town of Haven. Turan extolls Hiermon's great wisdom and recommends that the player characters seek him out. He tells them to give Hiermon his good greeting.

**TROUBLESHOOTING**

In this encounter, one or more of the characters might die fighting the jehuthras. To avoid killing off the characters in the first fight of their first adventure, the gamemaster should keep careful track of how much damage each character takes, and then try to manage the encounter so that none of the characters suffer fatal wounds. The gamemaster may have to fudge the amount of damage done to a character, or choose not to allow the jehuthras to attack a character who has taken a level of damage too near his Unconsciousness or Death Rating.

If the characters seem disinclined to travel to Haven, inform the players that studying the amulet will be much easier if they get assistance from an expert instead of trying to find out its secrets on their own.





# HAVEN



## **O**VERVIEW

The characters arrive at the town of Haven, where the wizard Hiermon lives. After finding room and board, they attempt to learn his whereabouts. Unknown to the characters, Theran spies watch their every move in Haven, becoming particularly interested when they inquire about how to locate the wizard.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Before you stands Haven, perched at the southern end of the ruins of the Forgotten City of Parlainth. Crowded and bustling, the little town seems to exist simply to aid and succour those foolhardy enough to explore Parlainth's shattered ruins. At the sight of the town, your hearts beat faster. Here seems to lie all the life of the world, in the shadow of ruined Parlainth's ancient magic. Here lives the wizard who can give you a taste of that magic...if he wishes to.

As Turan bade you, you travel across the town toward the Old Neighborhood. The name makes you laugh; a scant decade since its building, and yet men call it old. As you walk through the streets, beings from all the name-giving races jostle you as they scurry from place to place intent on private business. Those who notice you regard you with suspicion; despite the numbers of strangers who pass through its gates, Haven remains wary of outsiders. Vendors watch the passers-by, half with suspicion and half with interest. A stranger may bring unknown hazards, but he also may bring custom. Merchants hawk their wares, criers exhort you to their taverns, and beggars plead for copper or silver. Food vendors, money changers, jewelers, fortunetellers, weaponsmiths. . . all manner of sellers line the streets, calling for custom. Rival questors of the Passions Thystonius and Chorrolis, recognizable by their unusual garb, form swirling lines of color in the crowd.

You slow your steps, then stop to gawk. But only just for a moment, lest you betray yourselves as peasant bumpkins. A small pack of orks and dwarfs stagger across your path and away down a side street, bearing two bleeding comrades and one seemingly lifeless. No doubt they fell afoul of the dangers of Parlainth, you tell yourselves, suddenly feeling worldly-wise by comparison.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Haven resounds with bustle and noise. The streets are crowded with visitors and vendors shouting for customers at the top of their lungs. Besides the food vendors, money changers, and so on, Haven attracts experts at valuing treasures, though some may be charlatans. If he wishes, the gamemaster may let the players get distracted briefly by one of these "honest gentlemen."

The Old Neighborhood looks and feels only slightly older than the rest of Haven. Eight sturdy buildings cluster along both sides of its single street, looking venerable by comparison to the rest of the town.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Following is a brief description of Haven's Old Neighborhood, including its best-known establishments. The descriptions provide only the information needed for this adventure. Future **Earthdawn** products will describe Haven and its residents in detail.

### OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

Haven's Old Neighborhood, the town's oldest district, was built by merchants who founded their estab-

lishments five years after the troll Torgak built the first inn in the Forgotten City of Parlainth. The primary buildings in the Old Neighborhood are the following:

- Loak's Legacy, an excellent inn
- Brenula's Arms, an armory
- Hiermon's residence, an apartment in the upper floor of Brenula's Arms
- Agramen's Import/Export Company, a caravan trading company run by men who spy for the Theran Empire
- Dag's Allgoods, a general equipment emporium

### Loak's Legacy

Loak's Legacy is named in honor of its late owner, Loak Ironfist, a retired adventurer. His statue, or something that looks like one, stands in the dining room near the bar. The three-story inn has adjoining stables in the rear. Occupying the bottom floor are the kitchen, bar, dining room, and private meeting rooms. The two upper floors contain bedrooms, including a communal sleeping room. Accommodations cost eight silver pieces per night, and each meal costs four silver pieces. Individual drink prices average one silver piece.

The vast dining room has two hearths, a long bar with padded wooden stools, and several long tables with benches set along each side. Loak's has no small, private tables; instead, customers belly up to one of the long tables and rub elbows with their fellow patrons. During the day, the dining room does a modest business; at night, the place gets a little rowdy, with guests bragging about what they have recently found or killed in Parlainth's ruins. Brawls often erupt, especially if a patron challenges another's story.

For those who desire at least a little privacy, one of the three private rooms adjoining the dining room can be had for one gold piece. In each of these rooms, up to ten people can sit and enjoy their dinner in peace and quiet.

The communal room on the third floor contains plenty of bedrolls and sleeping furs. Guests pay one silver piece for the privilege of staking out a spot on the floor overnight. Needless to say, security in the communal room is non-existent.

### Brenula's Arms

Presided over by Brenula, a female ork expert at repairing weapons and armor, Brenula's Arms is Haven's best-known smithy. Brenula sells all weapons normally available (see **Goods and Services**, p. 248, ED). As she sees it, quality armor and weapons earn the wearer a measure of respect.

### Hiermon's Residence

The rooms above Brenula's shop belong to the wizard Hiermon, Brenula's personal friend. He has lived in these apartments for ten years and filled them with the clutter one might expect in a spellcaster's dwelling. Old books, mysterious crystals, alchemical implements and the like abound. The characters can find Hiermon's residence by asking around; everyone knows where he lives and will direct the characters to Brenula's Arms. For more details about Hiermon, see **Visiting Hiermon**, the next encounter.

### Agramen's Import/Export

In this compound of low-slung buildings, the human Agramen organizes his caravans, stores his wares, and runs his business. Caravans are constantly arriving with goods departing for points all across Barsaive. Many adventurers and mercenaries congregate here, seeking employment.

Unknown to the good people of Haven, the prosperous Agramen is a Theran sympathizer. His two chief assistants, Tural and Alkor, also do most of the spying for the Empire, and even commit an occasional assassination. For more information regarding Theran activity in Haven, see **Theran Spies**, below.

A good caravan-organizer needs an efficient network of informants to find out whether any worthy warriors are in the vicinity who might want to make a few coins. Agramen's network will let him know if the characters stay in Haven for more than two hours.

### Dag's Allgoods

Run by Dag Orksbane, a retired dwarf warrior, this shop specializes in everyday items, adventuring gear, and various potions and charms, many of them supplied by Hiermon. The bad-tempered Dag always looks and talks as if he wants to bite someone's head off, but ever since his retirement he has not been known to harm a soul.

### THERAN SPIES

Agramen runs a ring of spies and informants who ferret out anything and everything of potential interest

to Thera. Because of Haven's close proximity to the city of Parlainth, the former Theran provincial capital of Barsaive, the Therans make a point of monitoring the activities of adventurers within the ruins of the Forgotten City. Agramen also hires bands of mercenary adventurers to search the ruins of Parlainth for ancient Theran treasures.

Besides keeping tabs on explorers in Parlainth, Agramen's spies keep close watch on activities in Haven, particularly the arrival of adventuring groups from other parts of Barsaive. Agramen has standing orders from his Theran superiors to report anything of particular note or value taken from Parlainth. Two weeks prior to the characters' arrival in Haven, the wizard Hiermon hired a group of adventurers to search a particular area of Parlainth for a unique treasure dating from the pre-Scourge days of Theran rule. Hiermon now has the treasure, but Agramen has not yet discovered its identity. His henchmen, Tural and Alkor, are currently occupied in ferreting out that secret. For details on the treasure, see **Visiting Hiermon**, the next encounter.



### SETTLING IN

Once the characters arrive in Haven, they will likely want to find room and board. They may also want to roam about the town before finding Hiermon. As stated earlier, anyone they ask about where to find Hiermon will direct them to Brenula's Arms. Once

they are ready to visit Hiermon, go to the next encounter, **Visiting Hiermon**.

### Rumors and Legends

During the characters' stay in Haven, they may hear rumors about the local region as well as the legend of Loak Ironfist. For details, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 97.

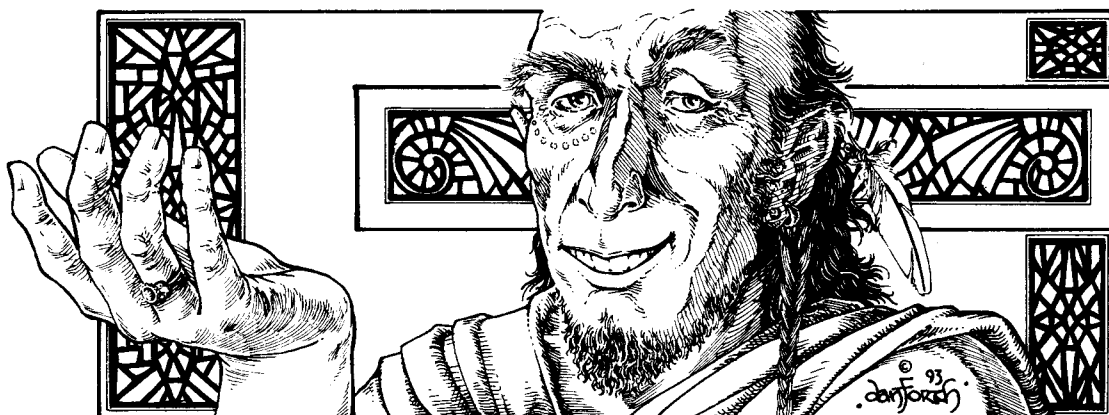
## TROUBLESHOOTING

Little can go wrong in this encounter. Its main purpose is to introduce the characters to Haven and the Old Neighborhood and to let them settle in.





## VISITING HIERMON



### **O**VERVIEW

In this encounter, the characters meet with the wizard Hiermon, who offers to identify the amulet in exchange for the team running an errand to Blood Wood. As payment for the two weeks' time and the considerable energy he will spend in penetrating the amulet's secrets, Hiermon asks that the characters take a treasure of Parlainth to Blood Wood, then bring him back a rare plant.

### SETTING THE STAGE

A stone's throw away stands Brenula's Arms, the weapon and armor smithy to which Haven's good citizens directed you. 'Tis here that the wizard Hiermon dwells. It seems well-favored enough, large and well cared for. You walk your horses across the packed-earth street and dismount, offering silent petition to the Passions that you have chosen rightly in coming here.

As you enter the shop, an ork woman greets you. She wears fine clothing, and looks upon you guardedly. Around her neck hangs a crystal talisman on a fine silver chain. She fingers the talisman as she draws near. For a fleeting moment, it seems she is looking not at you, but into you.

"Good greeting," she says. "Brenula of Haven, at your service. How may I aid you?"

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Like all merchants in Haven, Brenula strikes an uneasy balance between welcoming a stranger's coin and fearing the dangers a stranger may bring. Her close scrutiny should unsettle the characters a bit; they may even feel she is judging them. Play up the feeling of caution, as if a single wrong word or action might get them thrown out.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

In addition to running her shop, Brenula also helps the wizard Hiermon by intercepting those who seek him and allowing only those whom she trusts to meet with the wizard. To help her in this task, Hiermon has given Brenula a talisman that enables her to detect Horrors or those corrupted by them.

As Brenula approaches the characters, she uses the talisman to check them out. The gamemaster makes a Perception Test for Brenula, rolling her Perception dice against each character's Spell Defense. If the test result is equal to or greater than a character's Spell Defense, Brenula can tell whether or not a Horror has corrupted that character. However, the amulet cannot detect a Horror Mark. It can only detect whether or not a character is possessed by a Horror.

The characters cannot detect Brenula's use of her talisman by normal means, and therefore remain unaware of what the ork is doing. At his discretion, the gamemaster may allow magician characters to make a Perception Test against a Difficulty of 18, the talisman's Spell Defense Rating. If the test is successful, the magician perceives that a magical effect has just taken place, though he can pinpoint neither its nature nor its source. If the group of adventurers includes windling characters who wish to check the talisman with astral sight, such a character may also make a Perception Test against the same Difficulty Number. If the test is successful, the windling knows that Brenula's talisman has magical properties.

When the characters ask about Hiermon, Brenula tells them to wait while she tells the wizard of their request to see him. She then passes through a heavy curtain that serves as a door into the back of her shop, heading upstairs to see if Hiermon wishes to receive visitors.

## BRENULA

### Attributes

DEX: 5	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 5	WIL: 4	CHA: 4

**Note:** The above statistics represent step numbers for each of Brenula's Attributes.

Before Brenula returns, the gamemaster should have each character make a Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 19. If any character's test is successful, he or she notices a windling hovering near the entrance to Brenula's shop. The windling, a spy named Sijura who works for Agramen, is watching Hiermon, hoping for a lead on the whereabouts or nature of the treasure Hiermon took from Parlath. If any character attempts to approach the windling, it flies away and disappears into the crowds.

## MEETING HIERMON

### When Brenula returns, read the following to the players:

You hear the sound of ork footsteps on the stairs. A moment later, Brenula reappears. "Hiermon would speak with you," she says, beckoning you to follow.

Up the winding stairs you tread, then through a wooden door into the wizard's study. This odd room of his is dimly lit, full of the musty smell of old books and molding parchment mixed with the sharp scent of spilled herbs and minerals. A frail old man, his bent body seeming all but lost in his fine, flowing robes, sits in a chair whose embroidered velvet cushions nearly engulf him. As your eyes meet his, he speaks, his voice as rich and sonorous as the ringing of a bronze bell.

"I am Hiermon. What business have you in my house?"

### Amulet of Dirac

Once the characters explain who they are and what they want, Hiermon will ask to see the amulet. After examining it, he says:

"Aye, I can divine its purpose for you, but only by spending much time and strength. As I advance in years, friends, these things have become ever more precious to me. I can plumb the amulet's secrets, but know that my work comes at a price. To learn the knowledge hidden in this amulet will take perhaps a fortnight. If you undertake a brief journey for me to fetch a certain thing of which I have need, the knowledge shall be your payment for my services.



"I seek a rare plant, blood ivy by name, that grows only in Blood Wood. Ah, I see by your faces that you have heard somewhat of that magical, wondrous, accursed place. I have spoken with the elven Queen Alachia and Blood Warder Takaris, chief among her advisers. Takaris cannot send one of his servants to Haven, so I must go and claim the plant myself or hire some brave adventurer to go in my stead. These old bones, I fear, cannot make such a journey. If you agree to go on my behalf, I will give you the knowledge of this amulet in exchange. I can give you fresh mounts, to make the journey swifter, as well as a letter of credit to buy what you will for the journey at Dag's or Brenula's. Nothing too extravagant, mind; I have no hoard of gold to spend, only a sum of silver such as might give comfort to any honest man.

"You will travel to Blood Wood, deliver a certain treasure in payment for the ivy to Blood Warder Takaris, and return to Haven with the plant. 'Twill take eighteen days on horseback to reach the wood, over untraveled paths that may hold some danger. Still, you need not fear too greatly; that you have traveled in safety to Haven speaks well of your strength and cunning. Such dangers as there are, you have surely met in other journeys.

"What say you, friends? Shall we clap hands at a bargain?"

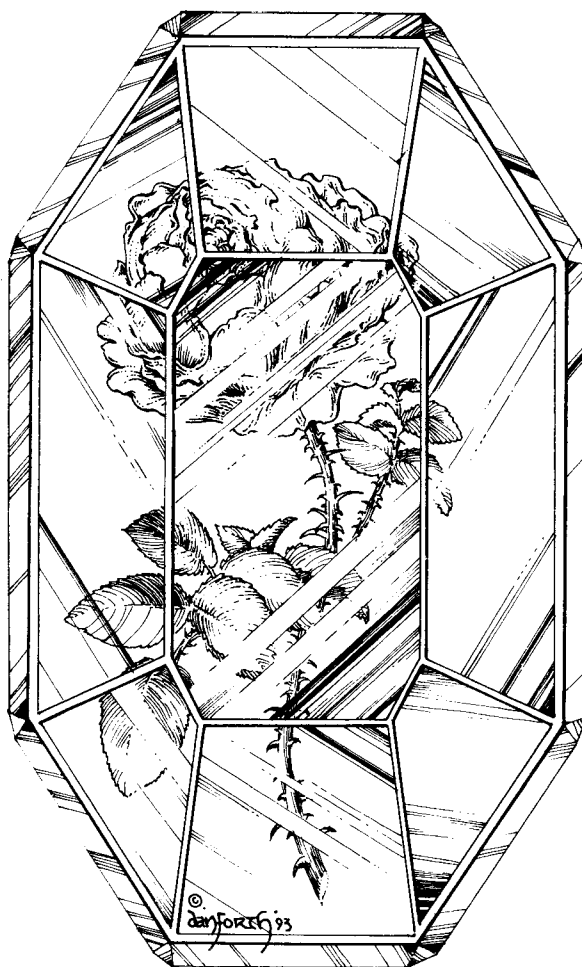
#### Hiermon's Terms

Because Hiermon so desperately wants the blood ivy, he is willing to pay the characters generously for helping him get his hands on it, over and above agreeing to study the amulet. In exchange for the adventurers running his errand, Hiermon will do the following:

- Study the amulet, and share what he learns with the characters upon their return.
- Arrange for the characters to have horses for the journey, which the characters must return in healthy condition.

- Give each character a letter of credit good for 150 silver pieces' worth of equipment at Brenula's Arms and Dag's Allgoods.

Hiermon also gives the party a letter to be delivered to the Elven Queen or to Takaris, instructing the Blood Warder to give the blood ivy to the characters upon receipt of payment. Finally, he gives them a small rune-stick that serves as a safe-conduct through Blood Wood for the one who possesses it. Takaris sent the stick to Hiermon to allow the wizard's emissaries to enter the wood.



#### HIERMON'S TREASURE

The treasure that the characters must deliver to Blood Wood is the Everliving Flower, long thought lost in the ruins of Parlainth. A rose encased in an enchanted crystal box to preserve its life forever, the Everliving Flower has a deep green stalk, crimson thorns, and lustrous black petals that glisten in the light.

The Everliving Flower is an ancient item famed in elven lore. Hiermon obtained it from a band of adventurers that he hired to explore the area of Parlainth in which the flower might be found, promising them they might keep anything else they stumbled over. For more information on the Everliving Flower, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 97.

According to the terms of the agreement between Hiermon and Takaris, the characters are to bring the treasure to Blood Wood and exchange it for blood ivy. Once the characters agree to take on Hiermon's errand, he gives them the treasure, sealed in a small chest. Hiermon seals the chest with a magical lock that has a Dispel Magic Difficulty Number of 24. This number also serves as the Difficulty Number for any Lock Pick Tests made to open the chest.



### PRYING EYES

Once the characters have spent more than two hours in the neighborhood, or as soon as Agramen's Theran spies see them entering or leaving Brenula's shop, Agramen sends the windling thief Sijura to keep an eye on the characters (see **Meeting Hiermon**, above).

Agramen knows that Hiermon has obtained a mysterious treasure from Parlainth and that the wizard has dealt with elves of Blood Wood interested in acquiring Theran treasures and artifacts from the ruins of Parlainth. Once Agramen learns that the characters are preparing for a long journey westward, he deduces their destination. He orders his best human spies, Tural and Alkor, to shadow the adventurers and to slow them down if the opportunity arises.

Taking advantage of all the opportunities for mayhem on a long road trip across Barsaive, Tural and Alkor will hire a band of highwaymen to rob the adventurers. Through contact with a scout for this band who lurks around the common room of Loak's Legacy looking for likely victims, Tural and Alkor arrange for an ambush a few days' journey down the road. They themselves tail the adventurers overland, traveling roughly two hours behind the characters.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

Attempts to negotiate with Hiermon will not prove fruitful. He is already offering the characters generous compensation for the trip to Blood Wood, and any attempts to squeeze more out of him will only irritate him. If necessary, the gamemaster should remind the adventurers that two weeks' research by a talented wizard into an esoteric item is an expensive proposition and that annoying said wizard with unreasonable demands is extremely unwise. If the characters do succeed in getting a better deal, Hiermon will increase each character's letter of credit to 200 silver pieces and offer to teach spellcasters a few new spells.






# CROSS COUNTRY


## **O**VERVIEW

Not a true encounter, this section describes the characters' preparation for the journey to Blood Wood, starts them on their way, and gives new **Earthdawn** players an overall impression of travel in Barsaive. After completing their preparations, the characters embark on the 700-mile journey westward to Blood Wood.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Bearing the wizard's letter of credit, you begin preparations for the long journey to Blood Wood. Not a one among you knows the place, except by strange and awful tales; uncertain of what awaits you, you fear

a little but wonder more. In those moments when your heart quails before the task ahead, you comfort yourself with memories of adventures past. You have survived dire peril before. How much worse can the road to Blood Wood be?

Hiermon's letter of credit opens to you all the shops of Haven. Seeing the wizard's name, wary merchants smile and rush to offer you the best of their merchandise. Surely you will need nothing on the journey that you cannot buy, for the right price. Every purchase seems to build your courage, your eagerness to face the challenges of the open road.

If you could but forget the feeling that unfriendly eyes are upon you...

## THEMES AND IMAGES

During the first part of this encounter, the characters should feel watched wherever they go in town. As in all of Barsaive, strangers in Haven are regarded with caution and not a little suspicion. In this case, however, the characters are indeed under surveillance by Agramen's two Theran spies, Tural and Alkor.

During the second part of this encounter (**On the Road**, p. 29), heighten the feelings of excitement, wonder at new sights and sounds, and fear of the unknown that the adventurers might experience during their journey. Assuming that the group travels during the day and camps at night, as most travelers do, play up the sense that the terrain they travel through brims over with life. When the adventurers camp for the night, emphasize the unfamiliar sounds of dangerous, mysterious, nocturnal predators: scuttling, slithering, far-off howls, and the like.

In addition to fear and wonder, the gamemaster should also convey a sense of the almost dull routine of cross-country travel. The characters' emotions should vacillate between heightened alertness for danger and the possibility that the intimidating stories they have all heard are no more than fireside tales.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Once the characters agree to make the journey for Hiermon, they next must buy provisions and gear and make any and all personal arrangements necessary. These preparations should take about a day to complete, giving the characters plenty of time to find any specific items they may want such as healing aids, blood charms, or special weapons and armor.

## MAKING PREPARATIONS

The characters can buy supplies and provisions anywhere in Haven, though the letters of credit Hiermon gave them are good only in the Old Neighborhood. If they buy equipment and supplies from other shops in Haven, they must use their own money.

As the characters browse through the shops of the Old Neighborhood, informants working for Tural and Alkor will shadow them. These people never

approach the characters, and retreat swiftly if the characters confront them. Tural and Alkor have instructed their hirelings to avoid contact with the characters at all costs. To handle this aspect of the storyline, the gamemaster should simply tell the players that their characters feel as though unfriendly eyes are upon them. He should not identify the watchers or even say definitely that the characters are being spied upon. After all, local people in most towns in Barsaive watch strangers



closely as a matter of course. For all the characters know, their uneasy feelings could be simple paranoia.

The characters will likely stay the night in Haven and make an early departure in the morning. Unless they failed to arrange for lodging upon arrival in Haven, they should not need to make new arrangements. If they do, have them take rooms at Loak's Legacy (see **Haven**, p. 21).

## ON THE ROAD

**Once the characters have completed their preparations and are about to leave town, read the following to the players:**

Well-equipped and ready to face whatever unknown hazards lie ahead, you depart the town and strike westward on your eighteen-day journey.

Your way lies over gently rolling fields and hills, thickly strewn with low brush and copses. The land spreads out before you like a fertile patchwork of varying greens; you can even see the dark lines of forests. A clear path cuts through the shrubs and trees, and your mounts find easy footing on the trail. So narrow is it that for long stretches of time you must travel single file.

The sun-warmed air feels pleasant on your skin, like the light touch of a lady's hand. On occasion, a cool breeze wafts by, rustling the dense undergrowth. Birds flit from tree to tree, and you hear the sounds of small animals scampering through the undergrowth. Flying insects hum in your ears and buzz around your heads; the scent of sun-warmed grasses, leaves, and earth rises around you as you pass.

Nightfall cools the air, making for comfortable slumber. The stars dance overhead in brilliant constellations, glittering like diamonds scattered across a field of midnight blue. A chorus of strange sounds echoes through the night air: far-off, mournful howls and men-

acing growls closer at hand. Leaves rustle and twigs snap as unseen wildlife scuttles through the undergrowth. Though wary of predators, you nevertheless marvel at the profusion of life; not long ago, none but Horrors bided in this place.

But now you bring it to mind, not all of the Horrors have gone away...

The characters run into no difficulties in this

encounter; they find both dangers and aid in the three encounters following. However, the gamemaster should keep in mind that Tural and Alkor are traveling two hours behind the group. Though the two Theran spies take great care to avoid detection by the characters, the gamemaster may choose to let the characters confront the spies. If this happens, the characters will probably kill the two spies, ending their role in the adventure.

Rather than risking the spies' premature deaths (or the characters' demise) in a stand-up fight, the gamemaster might prefer to allow the characters to notice a pair of travelers behind them, but prevent the two groups from meeting each other. In this way, the gamemaster can feed the characters' paranoia without eliminating the spies from the adventure.



## TROUBLESHOOTING

The trip to Blood Wood takes 18 days on horseback, 28 days on foot. To speed things along, the gamemaster should take every opportunity to provide the characters with horses if for some reason they turn down Hiermon's offer of mounts. Also, the gamemaster may need to remind the characters to care for their mounts during the journey.

# AMBUSH!



## O VERVIEW

In this encounter, taking place on the second day after the characters leave Haven, the highwaymen hired by the Theran spies ambush the characters. Tural and Alkor do not participate in this attack.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The second day of your journey draws on, as peaceful as the first. As your mounts amble over the gentle ground, you bask in the pleasant air and the lovely sight of the land rolling westward before you. You marvel at the fears that gripped you in Haven; far from meeting danger at every step, so far you have met only peace and a pleasant landscape.

Ahead looms another thick patch of woodland. Once, you would have feared what might lurk there; but thus far the trees have held only birds, and these surely hold nothing more fearsome. The path leads westward through the little wood. Half lulled to sleep by the sun's warmth, you guide your horses gently into the trees, trusting them to find their way.





An arrow buzzes past your ear like an angry hornet, startling you to full wakefulness. It embeds itself in the tree just a few inches in front of your leader's head. (**Gamemaster Note: Substitute the name of the character traveling at the head of the group for "the leader."**)

A man steps onto the path, appearing as if from nowhere. You feel a chill, but it is more than just the forest's shade; though you can see nothing, the greenery seems to hide a hundred enemies. "Consider my first shot a warning, gentlemen," your accoster announces arrogantly. "If you dare cross me, the second will find someone's heart. My men lie in the underbrush, arrows nocked, and would gladly sink a feathered shaft into any so foolish as to deprive them of their livelihood. Drop your weapons, gentlemen, and empty your purses. For the spellcasters among you, I give you this warning; my men have arrows aimed at your heads. At any act save giving over your valuables, the offender shall receive a shaft through his skull. If you would live this day, lay down your weapons!"

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Lull the characters into a false sense of security at first; the highwaymen's attack should shock them out of their sleepy contentment. Though they see only the bandit leader, Sogora Natalyl, the characters should feel surrounded by hostiles. Play up Sogora's arrogance; he sees himself as a gentleman bandit, though that façade disappears the minute the characters fail to obey his commands.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Tural and Alkor hired Sogora and his highwaymen back in Haven to slow the characters down and to find out what they are carrying into Blood Wood. Sogora demands that the characters disarm themselves and surrender all their valuables, including the chest that contains the Everliving Flower. Sogora wants the

chest in particular; Tural and Alkor have told him to get it, so that they can send it to Agramen back in Haven.

If the characters comply, Sogora summons his men from the brush to gather the loot. If the adventurers surrender the chest, Sogora immediately attempts to open it. When it resists his attempts, he will interrogate the characters in hopes of discovering how to open the

chest. The characters know only that Hierman sealed the chest in such a way that only Blood Warde Takaris can open it, and only within the confines of Blood Wood. When the characters fail to provide information, Sogora becomes enraged and attacks the nearest character.

Whether or not the adventurers surrender the chest, Sogora finds and reads Hiermon's letter to Takaris. This letter provides the evidence linking Hiermon

with the elves that Tural and Alkor wanted Sogora to find.

If the characters refuse to comply with Sogora, the highwaymen attack, only retreating when it becomes obvious that they stand to lose the fight. If a full-scale fight breaks out, Sogora joins the fray until three or more of his band are defeated, at which point he retreats. No matter what transpires, Sogora must escape; he and a band of hired orks will attack the characters in the following encounter, **Midland Trading Post**. Sogora may also make an interesting recurring villain in the gamemaster's **Earthdawn** campaign.

## SOGORA'S MEN

The highwaymen consist of Sogora Natalyl and one highwayman per player character. If the adventurers try an attack, the highwaymen open fire, eventually moving into melee combat range.

The highwaymen are hiding in the brush, but the characters can easily spot them after the first volley of arrows. A character wishing to locate the highwaymen must make a Perception Test against a Difficulty of 5; if the test is successful, the character sees one of his



attackers. All of the highwaymen are on the ground, making it easier for the characters to defend themselves. Aside from Sogora, none of the brigands knew about the ambush in advance.

Sogora is a Second Circle thief Adept. For his game statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 94.

### HIGHWAYMEN (1 per character)

#### Attributes

DEX: 5      STR: 5      TOU: 5  
PER: 4      WIL: 4      CHA: 4

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 6  
Number of Attacks: 1      Spell Defense: 6  
Attack: 5      Social Defense: 5  
    Damage: 10 (short sword)      Armor: 4  
                    8 (bow)      Mystic Armor: 0  
Combat Movement: 25      Knockdown: 5  
Full Movement: 50      Recovery Tests/Day: 2

Death Rating: 31  
Wound Threshold: 8  
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

#### Equipment

Padded leather armor  
Quiver w/20 arrows  
Short bow  
Short sword  
3D10 silver pieces each

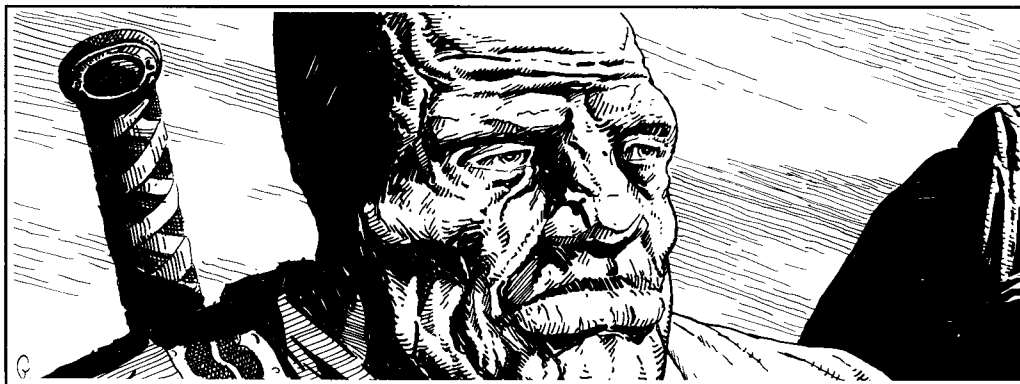
Legend Points: 60

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The greatest potential problem in this encounter occurs if the characters surrender everything to Sogora. Though unlikely, this may happen. If the players seem inclined in that direction, remind them that, first, they are heroes, and, second, surrender means not only losing their possessions, but also welshing on a promise to a powerful wizard. Such a move is less than wise.



# MIDLAND TRADING POST



## OVERVIEW

At a point roughly halfway between Haven and Blood Wood, nine days' ride from each, the adventurers come upon the Midland Trading Post. This group of buildings includes a large store where customers can buy, sell, and barter practically anything; the Midland Inn; the Halfway boarding house; and a smithy/livery. At the Trading Post, the characters can rest, relax, and replenish their supplies if necessary. If the characters stay at the Midland for the night, they will have to rent two of its small rooms in order to accommodate everyone. In this encounter, Sogora and his hired orks launch a second attack on the characters at the inn.

## SETTING THE STAGE

As evening draws nigh on the ninth day of your journey, you come across a cluster of wood and stone buildings set in the middle of a wide clearing. Small knots of people walk to and fro among the buildings, some packing wagons, some loading saddlebags, and some tying horses and exotic mounts at hitching posts. Among the war horses and riding horses in the clearing, you spy a few thundra beasts. The sound of voices reaches your ears; you hear haggling, shouts of welcome, and conversation in all the tongues of Barsaive. A breeze from the west brings the aroma of freshly cooked food. The scent reminds you how much you long to sup on meat other than trail food, to sleep on a bed other than the hard, cold ground, and to bathe away the road-grime of these past nine days.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

A busy oasis in the midst of a wilderness, the trading post plays host to beings from all the Name-giver races of Barsaive. The noises of commerce fill the air: iron ringing on iron as horseshoes are made at the forge, the low hum of conversation, the sound of carousing spilling out from the inn's taproom, the snorts and stamps of overburdened pack animals, and so on.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

An elf named Keris Briarthorne established the Midland Trading Post many years ago as a rest area and trading compound, envisioning himself as the master of a major trade route between Parlainth and Blood Wood and the cities and towns to the south. Unfortunately, the great trade route never materialized, though the trading post did turn a small profit from its modest business. Disillusioned, Briarthorne sold the entire complex to an obsidian named Gurt.

A shrewd trader, Gurt personally supervises the day-to-day operations of the large store and drives a hard bargain. His store sells all manner of items, even used weapons and armor at a one-fifth discount from the market price (see **Goods and Services**, p. 251, ED).

Gurt employs a female troll named Legbreaker to run the inn, serving as bartender and bouncer as well as proprietor. Food and drink is priced normally (see **Goods and Services**, p. 260, ED). Legbreaker loves good music, and often lets troubadours perform for food and drink. She also permits the occasional tavern

brawl, as long as the inn suffers no excessive damage and the fighting involves neither magic nor edged weapons. Naturally, everyone present in the tap room at the time of the brawl must help pay for minor damages, lest Legbreaker start living up to her name. The Midland is the equivalent of a Guild inn, and its rooms are priced accordingly (see **Goods and Services**, p. 260, ED).

Orias Shatterforge, a male dwarf, runs the smithy/livery. Travelers may purchase animals here, or have them traded, shod, and cared for as their masters conduct other business or spend the night. In addition to various steeds, Orias also sells dogs and falcons. To stable a mount costs ten silver pieces per night. For an extra fee, Orias will also make minor repairs to characters' weapons and armor.

Flitz, a windling, takes care of the boarding house. Its lodgings are equivalent to a Merchant inn (p. 260, ED) with a private room and bath priced at six silver pieces per night.

Gurt maintains a force of a dozen men to defend the trading post from raiders and predatory creatures. Acting as peace officers, these guards behave politely and helpfully to all customers, unless a customer commits a crime. Toward criminals, the guards administer justice as they see fit. Gurt's guards are the equivalent of Guard Veterans (see p. 297, ED).

## AT THE MIDLAND INN

Because the Midland Trading Post lies in an area with a respectable amount of traffic, beings of all Barsaive's Name-giving races frequent the Midland Inn's tap room. On any given evening, the party can meet ork scorchers, questors, t'skrang trading parties, and others. The tap room is also a good place to pick up a rumor or two. For more information about rumors at the Midland, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 101.

The Midland is also a good place to find cheap muscle. Out-of-work mercenaries and adventurers often hang around the inn, most looking for honest or semi-honest employment.

## Night Assault

The Theran spies Tural and Alkor, along with the highwayman Sogora, arrive two hours after the characters and go to the Midland Inn in search of their quarry. Once the spies discover that the characters are staying at the Midland Inn, they rent a room to keep the characters under surveillance. Meanwhile, Sogora hires eight orks to attack the characters during the night, hoping to cripple or even kill some of them and steal the chest in the confusion. The assault comes long after the characters have gone to sleep.



Sogora instructs the orks to split up and hit the characters' two rooms at the same time, dispatching the occupants as quietly as possible while Sogora rifles through the characters' belongings. Besides searching for the chest they are carrying, Sogora will look for clues to the nature of the characters' journey. Game statistics for the orks appear below; Sogora's statistics are given in **Cast of Characters**, p. 94.

### ORKS (8)

#### Attributes

DEX: 5 STR: 5 TOU: 5

PER: 5 WIL: 6 CHA: 4

Initiative: 2

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 7

Damage: 10

Combat Movement: 30

Full Movement: 60

Physical Defense: 6

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 7

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 6

Recovery Tests/Day: 1

Death Rating: 32

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness Rating: 24

#### Equipment

Broadsword

Chainmail armor

1D4 silver pieces each

Legend Points: 50

If the adventurers eliminate two-thirds of the nighttime raiding force, the survivors attempt to retreat. One survivor rushes off to tell the Theran spies what has happened. If any raiders are captured and successfully interrogated, they will tell the characters who hired them.

Sogora waits for the hired orks to deal with the characters before entering their rooms. If it looks like the orks stand to lose the fight, Sogora retreats to inform Tural and Alkor of the orks' failure. Though irritated, the spies make no further attempts to attack the characters at this time. Instead, they will continue to follow the characters toward Blood Wood. If the adventurers ask other Midland patrons about the orks who attacked them, they learn only that the orks hail



from a local tribe of raiders known to sell their services cheaply.

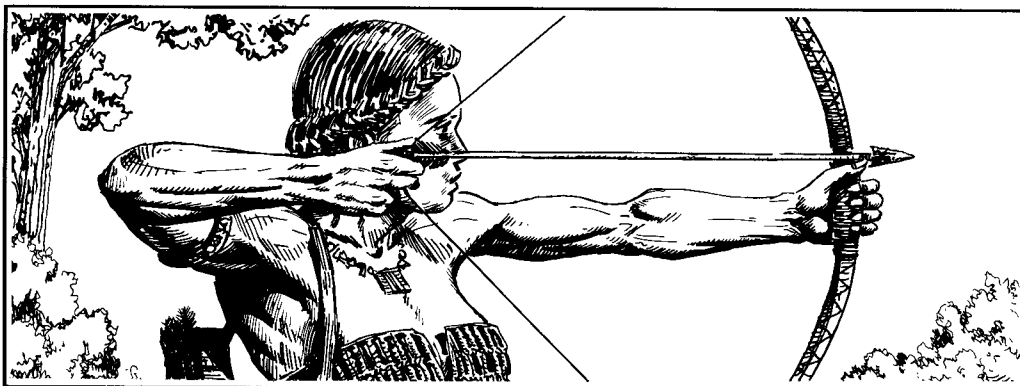
When morning comes, the characters should continue on their way. If they wish to purchase additional supplies or equipment before leaving, the gamemaster should allow them a little time to do this.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the players show no interest in stopping at the trading post for the night, the gamemaster should feel free to manipulate events to make them change their minds. For example, a horse might throw a shoe, a sudden downpour or thunderstorm may blow up, or threatening creature noises from the terrain beyond the trading post may frighten the characters into staying. If they choose to stay at the boarding house instead of the inn, simply change the venue of the orks' attack.



# CARAVAN OF DEATH



## OVERVIEW

One day away from Blood Wood, the characters stumble upon the remains of a caravan, apparently destroyed by some type of fearsome creature. Though this encounter does not relate directly to the storyline of the adventure, it is included to expose the players to situations common when traveling across Barsaive. This encounter also suggests a subplot that may lead to another adventure later in the gamemaster's campaign. For more information on using elements of **Mists of Betrayal** in future adventures, see **Loose Ends**, p. 84.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Traveling ever westward, you are little more than a day's ride from Blood Wood. Brush-covered hills rise around you, hiding the Passions-only-know what dangers. A breeze from the west carries the smell of burning wood toward you; above the crown of the nearest hill, a plume of

smoke scars the sky. As you draw closer, the sounds of wildlife diminish.

You round the hill's curve and arrive at the source of the smoke. Before you lie four wagons, all destroyed. A massive blow from some vast, dread, unknown hand splintered one. Two other wagons are smoldering; the fourth lies overturned and broken, its goods scattered across the dusty path. Flies buzz around the burning, mangled carcasses of sixteen horses. Beyond the horses—bold heroes or no—you flinch from the gruesome sight.

The corpses of the merchants and their guards lie strewn among the wreckage, blood seeping into the earth around them. Some of the dead are burnt so badly that you can see no faces, nor tell what race they are or whether they be men or women. Others lie torn to pieces, partly devoured for all that you can tell. Still others, left whole and unmarked in death, wear faces frozen in their final terror. And everywhere, everywhere you hear the buzzing of flies.

Despite the beauty of the day and the warmth of the air, standing before this carnage you feel a creeping chill.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Death, death, and more death. Something huge and angry waded through this caravan, effortlessly ripping it apart and setting fire to wagons and men. The only sound in the awful stillness is the buzzing of the flies on the corpses.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

This caravan has been utterly destroyed; the characters can find no salvageable wares or weapons. The one-sided battle occurred a scant two hours ago, when a Horror named Duaga descended upon the luckless traders. The Horror lives to the south, about two hours away on horseback or three hours on foot. A result of

12 or better on a Tracking Test reveals a trail of three-toed, claw-like footprints leading south. An Excellent success or better further reveals that the thing that left the footprints is at least seven feet tall. Though the Horror Duaga is not related to the main storyline of the adventure, the gamemaster can find a brief description of the Horror and its lair in *Loose Ends*, p. 85.

As stated in the **Overview**, this encounter is included to add atmosphere and to demonstrate to new players some of the perils of traveling in Barsaive.



## TROUBLESHOOTING

The adventurers should not track the Horror at this time. If they locate the Horror's tracks and wish to battle it, the gamemaster should hint strongly that if the creature slaughtered an entire caravan, a small band of adventurers might find that surviving the encounter is a doubtful prospect at best. Also, heading off to fight the Horror means traveling in the wrong direction, delaying the characters' arrival in Blood Wood. If the characters feel obliged to seek out and destroy the Horror, suggest that they do so after they have completed their current task.

# BLOOD WOOD



## OVERVIEW

In this encounter the characters enter Blood Wood, the forest home of the blood elves. The dense woods are filled with many mysterious things, both wondrous and terrible. The player characters, however, will only pass through a small part of the wood. As they enter, a party of blood elves accosts them; these elves serve Kalourin, the Blood Warder in charge of Blood Wood's perimeter defenses.

## SETTING THE STAGE

A vast forest that can only be Blood Wood lies before you, its borders lost to your sight. Great trees seem to brush the sky, their interlocking leaves and upper branches weaving a tapestry of deep green through which weak sunlight can barely enter. Despite the dimness, underbrush grows thick on the ground, ready to trap the foot of an unwary mount or walker. The cool green shade should invite you to rest, but instead



you feel unease. The growing things of this ancient forest are strange to your eyes; in all your travels, you have seen no such plants as these. Though your eye tells you they are but foreign plants, you sense a subtle wrongness as you gaze at them. Birdsong and the humming of insects fill the air; you hear the sounds of woodland beasts, many unfamiliar. As in the woodland ambush on the road some days ago, you sense unseen and hostile eyes all around you.

Entering the wood, you catch the pungent scents of sap, pollen, and moist earth. Underneath it all lies the rank smell of rotting leaves. Underfoot, the ground is soft and spongy, carpeted with dead leaves and decaying plants. You move slowly forward through the trees, caught between wonder at the wood's unexpected beauty and the growing sense of wrongness. You find yourself straining to see beyond the outward beauty to catch a glimpse of the subtle corruption that you pray is only in your mind. As you watch Blood Wood, you fancy that it watches you as well. Leaves whisper in a passing breeze: they seem to say *Leave this place, Leave this place.*

You have traveled for no more than two dozen heartbeats when a band of elves appears around you. Their unearthly beauty takes your breath away, yet you can hardly bear to look at the thorns that pierce every inch of their smooth skins. Their looks both repel you and draw you in a way you do not understand. The elves bear swords and wear armor made of woven, living plants. On their armor is a symbol that you recognize; the rune-stick Hiermon gave you as a safe-conduct through Blood Wood bears a similar sign.

The elf most terrible and beautiful, seemingly the leader, strides forward and stops a few paces from your band. If he embraced you, his bloodstained thorns would impale you at the heart. He favors you with the cold, proud gaze of a king facing an unworthy enemy.

"What is your business in Blood Wood, outsiders?"

he demands. To your ears, his voice is harsh music. You gaze at him, struck dumb as if by enchantment. Behind him, his elven followers take a tighter grip on their swords.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Blood Wood contains strangeness upon strangeness. Regardless of their experience or knowledge of such things, none of the characters have ever seen most of the plants in Blood Wood. Though lovely beyond words, the mysterious woodland is cursed and full of anguish. The characters should feel unnerved by the combination of beauty and corruption that pervades Blood Wood and everyone in it.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters have run across a guard patrol whose members report to Blood Warde Kalourin; their armor bears his sigil.

Once the characters present Hiermon's rune-stick to the elves, the patrol leader waves his hand and the dense vegetation parts like the biblical Red Sea to form a path leading directly to the palace.

The elven leader warns the characters not to stray from the path. "If you keep to it, no elf shall challenge or harm you. But you must be wary of the creatures that stalk the wood. From such as they, the path cannot protect you."



**BLOOD ELVES (8)****Attributes**

DEX: 7 STR: 6 TOU: 6

PER: 6 WIL: 6 CHA: 7

**Initiative:** 7**Number of Attacks:** 1**Attack:** 10

Damage: 11 (warbow)

10 (short sword)

**Combat Movement:** 40**Full Movement:** 80**Physical Defense:** 9**Spell Defense:** 9**Social Defense:** 7**Armor:** 2**Mystic Armor:** 5**Knockdown:** 12**Recovery**

Tests/Day: 3

**Death Rating:** 36**Wound Threshold:** 10**Unconsciousness Rating:** 28**Equipment**

Elven warbow

Fernweave armor

Short sword

1D12 silver pieces per elf

**Legend Points:** 105

If the characters attack the elves, let the fight happen. If it looks as if the characters may be killed, the gamemaster should send a second party of elves to halt the fight, ask who the strangers are, and bring them directly to the Queen's palace upon the mention of Takaris' name.

Should the characters step off the path, they will find travel conditions difficult, especially for the horses. The gamemaster might send groups of thorn men or other fearsome things to attack them until they wise up and return to the path. Hopefully, the characters will not need further lessons.

If the Theran spies are still tailing the adventurers, they enter the woods shortly after the characters do. If they inform the guard elves that they work for Agramen, the guards send a messenger to inform Blood Warde Kalourin of the spies' arrival. Kalourin will send word back to the spies, instructing them to wait near the point where the characters will emerge from the wood. Once the characters leave Blood Wood, the spies are instructed to resume tailing them, reinforced by a group of six blood elves loyal to Kalourin.

**TROUBLESHOOTING**

If the characters attack the patrol, the player characters may refuse to stop fighting even after the reinforcements arrive. They may also try to make their way through the woods without following the path; if they attempt this, they get hopelessly lost. If they happen to find the palace by sheer luck, the elves guarding its grounds will take them prisoner. Denizens of Blood Wood do not take kindly to uninvited guests. If this happens, the elves disregard any of the adventurers' attempts to explain, even if they display Hiermon's rune-stick. To get the adventure back on track, the gamemaster should bring Blood Warde Takaris onto the scene to straighten things out.





# MEETING A BLOOD WARDER



## **O**VERVIEW

The characters arrive at Queen Alachia's palace and meet with Kalourin, who attempts to learn the reason for their presence in Blood Wood. Before he can do that, however, Blood Warde Takaris arrives. He informs the characters that before he can give them Hiermon's blood ivy, they must fulfill one more errand: tracking down a Theran slaver.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The charmed path leads you to a vast clearing. Standing at its edge, you gape in dumbstruck wonder at the sight before you. Six trees, of greater size than any giant, hold between them a beautiful palace. The trees support its walls of woven vines and leaves, and also seem to cradle it as if it were a precious, lovely child. Its greenery shining more lus-

trous than gold, more dazzling than fine gemstones sparkling in sunlight, the famed palace of the Elf Queen Alachia stands resplendent and proud before you. Handsome elven lords and ladies, their beauty both marred and enhanced by the thorns that pierce their flesh, stroll across the greensward. Clad in fine raiment, they move with an arrogant grace. Delicate music, its eerie loveliness seeming not of this world, drifts from the palace windows. Honey-sweet and full

**When Kalourin appears, read the following to the players:**

After some time has passed, a tall elf emerges from the palace. By his lordly walk and rich clothing, he is no mere guard. In singsong elvish almost too swift for the ear to follow, he addresses the guards. They bow and part ranks, allowing you to pass. The elven lord awaits your approach, smiling. As you draw near to him, you see that he wears an amulet bearing the sym-

ng, it beckons your forward. That... indeed, a symbol very like the one carved into the

raised and eyes  
th suspicion. "Halt  
te your business  
one demands. His  
half melody and  
ice, frightening yet  
usic to your startled  
No stranger may  
mbidden the palace  
autiful and Terrible  
Alachia, She Who  
Elvenkind!"

## MES IMAGES

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The palace elves speak in formal, sweeping  
nts brimming with Queen Alachia's praises.  
outsiders, they behave with blatant arrogance.

## ND SCENES

matter what credentials the characters show,  
e guards refuse them passage. The characters'  
se of action is to tell the guards who sent them  
what errand, at which point the elven guard  
der sends one of his warriors into the palace  
mands the characters to wait. Several minutes  
ourin comes out to greet the adventurers.



the Elf Queen's palace, the beauty of it nearly over-  
whelms you. Elven lords and ladies, resplendent in  
their terrible, anguished beauty, spare you a momen-  
tary glance before resuming their discussions of matters  
far beyond your ken. Their voices weave a gentle har-  
mony that fills the air with spoken music as you pass.

Ushering you into a comfortable chamber, Warder  
Kalourin bids you sit. Gladly you comply, eager to rest  
your travel-weary bones on the sumptuously cush-  
ioned chairs. A servant enters, seemingly called by  
your mere presence, bearing crystal goblets brim-full  
of elven wine of a vintage fine beyond your dreams or  
experience. Having seen to the comfort of all, Kalourin  
takes a goblet and joins you in a ceremonial drink.

"Well met, gentle  
strangers. I am Kalourin,  
Warder to Her Gracious  
Majesty our Queen. I  
regret that Warder Takaris  
cannot meet with you as  
yet; in token of his esteem,  
he has asked me to greet  
you in his stead. If you will  
follow me, I shall guide  
you to the appointed meet-  
ing place. You may wait  
there in comfort for  
Warder Takaris."

You dismount from  
your horses, and as if by  
magic an elven guard  
appears to lead them away  
toward the stables. As you  
follow Kalourin through

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## TALKING WITH KALOURIN

Kalourin has intercepted the characters in the hope of discovering why they have come to see his rival Takaris. While they wait for Takaris, Kalourin will ask the characters why they have come to Blood Wood to meet his fellow warder. If the characters brought the chest into the palace with them, Kalourin inquires about its contents. Though he hopes to uncover information he can use against Takaris in the future, he does not wish to arouse the characters' suspicions, and therefore keeps his questions subtle.

Kalourin's guards may have warned him of the characters' arrival before they reach the palace grounds. If the Theran spies Tural and Alkor followed the characters to Blood Wood, then Kalourin definitely knows in advance of the characters' presence, though not the reason for it.

If the characters ask about the symbol on their rune-stick and Kalourin's amulet, he identifies it as the sigil of his office and tells them that it is on the guards' armor and the rune-stick because his duties as Blood Warder include guarding Blood Wood from intruders. He refuses to comment on the subtle differences between the sigil on the rune-stick and that on his amulet and the blood elves' armor.



## ENTER TAKARIS

**When Takaris enters the room, read the following to the players:**

In the midst of your convivial conversation with Kalourin, another elf enters the room. He wears rich court dress much like Kalourin's, but bears no amulet. For a heartbeat, Kalourin looks startled, but swiftly recovers his poise.

"My friends, allow me to present your host, Warder Takaris."

Takaris favors Kalourin with a chilly glance, seeming to dismiss him as of no account. He turns to you and speaks, his face and voice as gracious as natural elven

arrogance allows. "Well met, gentlemen. I am Takaris, Warder to Her Gracious Majesty our Queen. I understand you have brought payment for sanguil from the hedge-wizard Hiermon of Haven. May I see it?"

The characters should have the treasure chest with them, and offer it to Takaris at this point. Before he moves to open it, he orders Kalourin away to attend to his duties. Though noticeably angered by this dismissal, Kalourin has no choice but to leave.

Once Kalourin has left the room, Takaris turns to the chest, casts a quick *Dispel Magic* spell, and opens it. Upon seeing the Everliving Flower within, he openly shows his delight. If the characters can see the Everliving Flower, they notice that its petals have turned from black to a deep crimson.

**After Takaris opens the chest, read the following to the players:**

"And so the Everliving Flower returns to its rightful place. . . But I prattle on, and you will want your payment. I regret that matters of the Elven Court have kept me busy, and I have yet to gather the blood ivy for your wizard friend. My gracious sovereign has charged me to find the truth of a dreadful rumor, one that threatens the very safety of our beloved wood. I fear I have

had time for little else. If you wish to stay and wait, you are most welcome, though you may wait some while.

"I see by your faces that you do not like this offer. Yet I see no other way. . . unless you aid me. You despise slavers, do you not? I can see the love of freedom in your faces, the noble luster in your eyes. My friends, the rumor of which I spoke concerns a slaver, a Theran, by name Fegis Kul. It is said that he and his motley band of followers raid near Blood Wood, tainting our land with their filthy trade. If you will, find me out the truth of this rumor. Leave Blood Wood and travel to the southeast, and find him if he exists. I have heard that some elves of Blood Wood are among his

slaves; if this be so, I desire you to free his wretched captives. His possessions and money you may keep for your pains. I shall be free to gather the blood ivy in your absence, and you shall have it of me upon your return."

Considering the offer with care, you hesitate to answer. Takaris dislikes this delay; when next he speaks, his voice carries the edge of threat.

"If you refuse me, I fear you must go back to Hiermon empty-handed. . . if you can find your way out of the wood. Many a luckless traveler has lost his way, and few who do so see sunlight again." He watches your faces with narrowed eyes, then smiles in satisfaction at what he reads there. "Do we have a bargain, gentlemen?"

Unknown to the characters, Takaris wants them to track the slaver in order to bring him hard evidence of Kalourin's trafficking with the outside world. With such evidence in hand, Takaris can at least disgrace his rival Blood Warlder, and perhaps even have him executed for treason.

The characters should agree to help Takaris for many reasons, among them the fact that killing them would take little effort on his part. Also, only by helping Takaris can they get the blood ivy and give it to Hiermon in exchange for the Key Knowledges hidden in the amulet they left with him. Should the characters refuse the assignment, they will find it difficult to leave Blood Wood. Elven guards, thorn men, and evil trees and plants bent on stopping or even killing intruders combine to present the characters with a lethal obstacle course. If they escape Blood Wood but return to Haven empty-handed, Hiermon will angrily demand the return of his mounts and the equipment purchased with his letter of credit. The characters will have ruined their reputations in Haven, and dare not show their faces there for months to come.

If the characters choose to try stealing the blood ivy, remind the players that Takaris is one of the Queen's Blood Warders and can call on all the resources of the Elven Court to stop them. The palace

grounds are crawling with guards who will not hesitate to apprehend the characters at the slightest suspicion of wrongdoing. The characters have no idea where to find blood ivy or what it looks like and would waste valuable time searching for it. Any attempt at theft is likely to get the characters killed.

#### Everliving Flower

If the characters ask Takaris about the Everliving Flower, he shares its legend with them (see **Rumors and Research**, p. 97). If the characters ask about the change in the flower's color, Takaris cannot explain it.



#### LEAVING BLOOD WOOD

If and when the characters consent to perform Takaris' errand, he will order a band of blood elves to lead the characters safely out of the woods. In order to return safely, the characters must follow that same path back to the palace. Takaris will also give the characters provisions for two days; he believes the errand should take no longer. The gamemaster should remind the characters to take the rune-stick with them; they will need it to pass through Blood Wood when they return.

#### TROUBLESHOOTING

Most of the problems that might arise in this encounter are described above, including attempts to steal the blood ivy. The players might also decide to attack either of the Blood Warders. The gamemaster should strongly discourage such actions; gratuitous violence tends to get heroes killed. If they insist on being foolhardy, the gamemaster should pit them against the full might of Blood Wood. In addition to an unlimited number of blood elf soldiers, the players will face Adepts of virtually all Disciplines and of any Circle the gamemaster chooses. The characters will die; if they complain, remind them that anyone foolish enough to take on staggering odds for no good reason deserves to get killed.



# SEARCH FOR A SLAVER



## O VERVIEW

The characters find the Theran slaver Fegis Kul heading northwest into the forest near Blood Wood, traveling with a party of slaves and an armed escort. Though Takaris knows that Fegis Kul is Kalourin's ally and hopes to undermine Kalourin's influence by publicly exposing this fact, he is unaware of the whole truth behind Kalourin's pact with the slaver.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The sun is setting as you reach the southeastern border of Blood Wood. The forest casts its long, cold shadow on the grassy plain before you. You try not to watch the shadow grow dimmer, try not to watch the light leave the air. Though you can hold to your bargain with Hiermon no other way, at this moment no fate seems worse than searching for a mysterious Theran slaver near Blood Wood after nightfall. You have learned that the nights of Barsaive hold unknown but deadly perils.

The guides that Blood Warde Takaris sent with you point toward the southeast, where lies your path. As one guide speaks, you wonder if it is pity you see in his eyes.

"The slaver band you seek has been seen southeast of Blood Wood, between the wood and the Serpent River. We know not how many slavers there are, so be wary. Mark you this spot well before you depart; when you return to Blood Wood, you must enter the wood here. Should you enter elsewhere, you will face deadly peril. May the Passions send you victory."

The guides depart into the forest, which eagerly swallows them. You turn your weary gaze to the southeast, spying out the land through which you must travel. Like the terrain between Blood Wood and Haven through which you have already traveled, the grassy plain to the southeast gives way to patches of ancient woodland dense with undergrowth. Anything might hide there: brigands, creatures, even Horrors.

Even more so than fear, exhaustion numbs your bones. Only the promise of rich reward to come can make you stir a single step.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

The vast expanse the characters must cross should seem to stretch for thousands of miles, making the task more daunting than it already is. Faced with increasingly difficult demands, the characters should feel all but overwhelmed by weariness and discouragement.

Upon leaving the woods, the characters feel disoriented, as if their minds and bodies have been abruptly snapped back into synch with the world around them.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The slavers are near Blood Wood, traveling along a northwesterly road that leads to Blood Wood's southern edge. Having recently gathered a number of slaves, they are bringing them to the village of Akarem, to feed the Horror that makes its home there.

After three hours of travel, the characters come to a branching road that heads toward Blood Wood and spy the slavers on it. The slavers are traveling toward the adventurers and will be within earshot in ten minutes. When the characters first find the branch road, the gamemaster should have each player make a Perception Test for his or her character. On a result of 7 or better, the character hears the slaving party approaching from the southeast.

The characters can hide in the forest and watch the slavers go by or meet them on the road. Confronting the slavers will likely get the characters captured, if not killed, so hiding and watching represents the players' best option.

### FEGIS KUL'S BAND

The slavers are traveling to the village of Akarem, located near Blood Wood. Two dozen slavers and their leader, Fegis Kul, travel with three wagons, each pulled by four horses. Two of the wagons, little more than cages on wheels, hold the slaves. Each

slave wagon is locked. To pick the locks requires a successful Lock Pick Test against a Difficulty Number of 18. The slave wagons contain the following inhabitants:

**Wagon 1:** Males. Six humans, three dwarfs, and four orks.

**Wagon 2:** Females. Five humans, two elves, four dwarfs, and two orks.

The two elves in Wagon 2 are not blood elves, but elves from nearby villages. They know nothing of Blood Wood or those who dwell within it.

The third wagon serves as Fegis Kul's personal quarters, where he eats, sleeps, and conducts business. Built entirely of wood, it has a locked door and a few windows. To pick this lock requires a successful Lock Pick Test against a Difficulty Number of 20. Inside the wagon are a bed, a table, and two chairs.

In addition to the 12 horses that pull the wagons in four-horse teams, the slavers are also mounted on horses. Fegis' slaver band consists of four trolls, five orks, and fifteen humans.





## ORKS (5)

### Attributes

DEX: 5      STR: 5      TOU: 5  
PER: 5      WIL: 6      CHA: 4

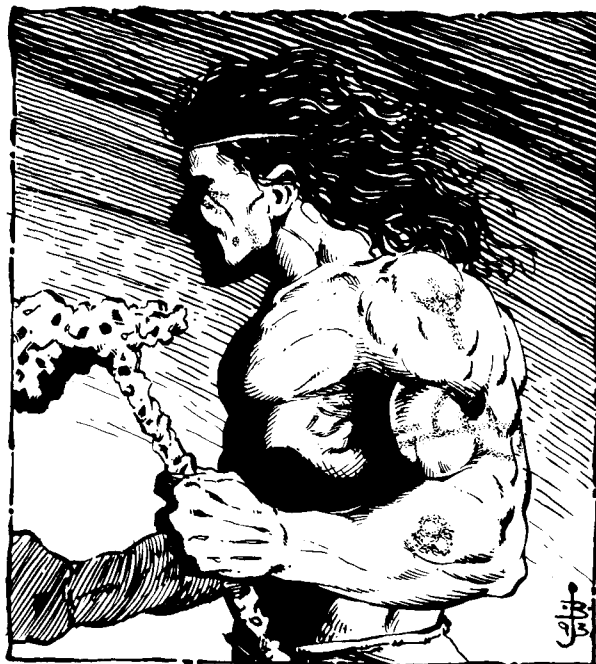
Initiative: 2      Physical Defense: 6  
Number of Attacks: 1      Spell Defense: 6  
Attack: 7      Social Defense: 6  
Damage: 10      Armor: 10  
Combat Movement: 30      Mystic Armor: 1  
Full Movement: 60      Knockdown: 6  
Recovery  
Tests/Day: 2

Death Rating: 32  
Wound Threshold: 8  
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

### Equipment

Broadsword  
Chain mail armor  
Footman's shield  
1D4 silver pieces/ork

Legend Points: 50



## HUMANS (15)

### Attributes

DEX: 5      STR: 5      TOU: 5  
PER: 4      WIL: 4      CHA: 4

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 6  
Number of Attacks: 1      Spell Defense: 6  
Attack: 7      Social Defense: 5  
Damage: 9      Armor: 4  
Combat Movement: 25      Mystic Armor: 0  
Full Movement: 50      Knockdown: 5  
Recovery  
Tests/Day: 2

Death Rating: 31  
Wound Threshold: 8  
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

### Equipment

Padded leather armor  
Riding horse  
Short sword  
2D10 silver pieces each

Legend Points: 50





## TROLLS (4)

### Attributes

DEX: 6      STR: 8      TOU: 8  
PER: 5      WIL: 5      CHA: 6

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 7  
Number of Attacks: 1      Spell Defense: 7  
Attack: 10      Social Defense: 7  
Damage: 14      Armor: 3  
Combat Movement: 30      Mystic Armor: 2  
Full Movement: 60      Knockdown: 8  
Recovery  
Tests/Day: 4

Death Rating: 44  
Wound Threshold: 13  
Unconsciousness Rating: 36

### Equipment

Adventurer's kit  
Leather armor  
Troll Sword  
2D10 silver pieces each

Legend Points: 75

If the characters attack the slavers and defeat them, continuing along the road will bring them to the village of Akarem, guarded by blood elves loyal to Kalourin. Go to **Village of Mists**, the next encounter.

### Attacking the Slavers

If the characters choose to attack the slavers, they will have a tough fight. Because the slavers greatly outnumber the characters, they may well defeat them. If this happens, the slavers take the characters prisoner rather than killing them, toss them into the slave wagons, and hand them over to the Horror in Akarem. Go to **Inside Akarem**, p. 52.

### Following the Slavers

The slavers leave a clear trail, and fortunately move much more slowly than the characters. If the characters follow the slavers, they will notice that their quarry is making for the eastern edge of Blood Wood. As the slavers pass the characters, the adventurers hear Fegis Kul talking. To understand the Theran's words, a player must roll a 12 or better on a Perception Test. If the test is successful, the character hears Fegis say, "We must arrive swiftly. The warder will brook no delays."

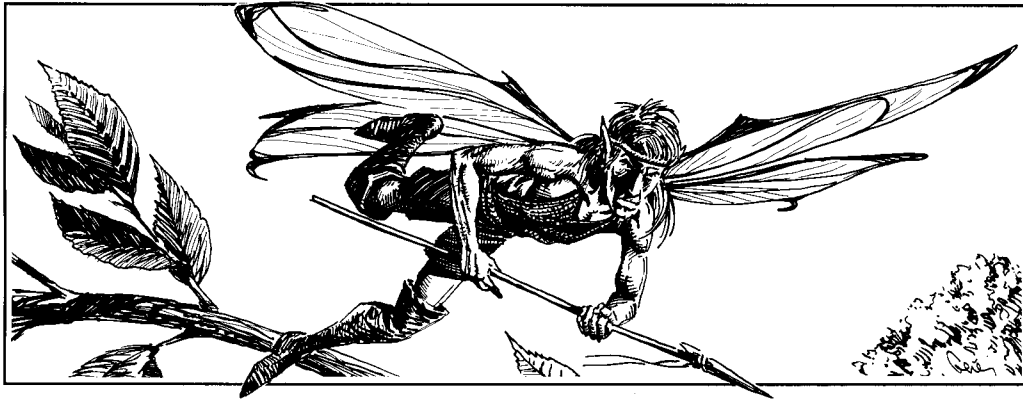
Unless the characters attack the slavers, they can follow the band until they arrive at the village. At that point, go to the next encounter, **Village of Mists**.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters attack and defeat the slavers, they may think they have finished their errand for Takaris and decide to return to Blood Wood. If this happens, they will miss the story's central element: the alliance between the Theran slaver, the Blood Warder, and a Horror. To make sure that the characters learn about the village of Akarem and Kalourin's involvement with the Horror that inhabits it as well as the slaver, the gamemaster should either dissuade the characters from attacking the slavers or else have the slavers capture the characters.



# VILLAGE OF MISTS



## O VERVIEW

In this encounter, the characters come upon the village of Akarem, located in a small patch of forest just outside Blood Wood and guarded by blood elves loyal to Blood Warde Kalourin. A Horror called the Mist controls the village, feeding on the suffering of slaves captured by Fegis Kul. The characters enter the village, only to be captured by the slavers and a band of Kalourin's blood elves.

## SETTING THE STAGE

**Gamemaster's Note:** The following text assumes that the characters follow the slavers into the village. If they do not, the gamemaster must alter the text to suit the situation.

The road leads you into a thick forest, as forbidding as Blood Wood. Ahead of you, the slavers leave the road and strike northward into the dense woodland. Despite the fear that threatens to choke you, you follow your

quarry into the pool of darkness between the close-clustered trees. The darkness stretches onward forever, and with every step you take your spirits sink lower and lower. After an endless span of heartbeats, the darkness ahead seems to lighten slightly. Peering through the gloom, you spy two figures standing guard; over what, you cannot tell.

As you draw nearer, moving as slowly as you can to muffle the faint jingle of harness, you see that the figures are blood elves clad much like those who accosted you at the border of Blood Wood. Their armor bears the symbol you saw on Kalourin's amulet. You halt briefly, wondering how best to escape the guards' vigilance. If they see you, they will know you for intruders; yet to pass by them unseen, you must risk losing your way. Suddenly you remember the rune-stick, with its symbol so like Kalourin's sign, and a plan grows in your mind. Boldly, you spur your horses forward.

At your approach, one elven guard steps forward and raises his sword. "Halt and show the sigil of Kalourin!"

**If the characters show the elves the rune-stick, the elves allow them to proceed further into the forest. Continue reading the following to the players:**

You travel deeper into the forest, pleased with the success of your desperate ruse. Tendrils of fine mist rise around you, yet you feel no moisture against your faces. You feel no coolness, either, such as you might expect from natural fog. Indeed, the mist feels faintly warm to the touch. Within a scant few heartbeats, the mist grows so thick that you can scarce see your companions only paces away. It deadens your footfalls, muffles the jangling of your horses' bridles and the rattling of your weapons. You almost cannot hear the sound of your own breathing.

The mist thickens further, until you can see nothing. Neither eye nor ear gives proof of your companions. Are they still near, you wonder, or spirited away by this unnatural fog? From one step to the next, the

mist turns bitter cold. The damp chill cuts through clothing and skin, freezing you to the bone.

A few more footsteps bring you out of the cold and mist. As your sight returns, you see the half-frozen but blessedly living faces of your companions. Thankful to be out of the chill, clinging fog, you can scarcely restrain relieved laughter. You look away from your compatriots, and your relief dies.



In the clearing before you, the ruins of a vast kaer loom out of the shadows like the head of a sea serpent from a benighted ocean. You have never seen such a kaer before, built three full stories above ground. One side of the dark, grim stone edifice has crumbled, exposing the deeper darkness of the interior. A single light burns in a small turret, high atop the roof of the kaer. A tiny village cowers in the kaer's shadow, built on and around the rubble of its collapsed wall. The thatched huts look ghostly next to the huge stone kaer, as if it were real and they only illusions. In

the faint light of a few, scattered torches, you can see several villagers staring your way. You spy the slaver caravan near the village; to your misfortune, they have also seen you.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the feelings of uncertainty and confusion, the sense of something unnatural hovering close by. Unknowingly, the characters have entered an area under the control of a Horror. Throughout this encounter, the gamemaster should portray the village as an unnatural, frightening place that the characters should never have set foot in.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The Mist detected the adventurers as they passed into its field of influence, and alerted the slavers to their presence. As soon as the characters enter the clearing, the slavers come at them with weapons drawn, demanding that the characters drop their weapons and surrender.



## SURRENDER

Once the adventurers drop their weapons, the slavers lead them into a second-floor room in the ruined kaer and lock them inside. Four of Fegis' men guard the room until daybreak, when the slavers will depart. The slavers do not bother to confiscate any of the characters' belongings; they know better than to tamper with sacrifices meant for the Mist.

## FIGHTING THE SLAVERS

If the characters choose battle over surrender, they have a single advantage in a tough fight. The slavers do not want to kill the characters, and so may pull their punches a bit. Rather than wanting the characters dead, the slavers want them unconscious, intending to leave them for the Mist to feed upon. However, what little advantage this gives the adventurers does not last long. During the third combat round, a band of blood elves working for Kalourin enters the fray on the slavers' side. Depending on how previous encounters have played out, the elves may bring with them Tural and Alkor, the Theran spies from Haven. If the spies are still tailing the characters, they join the attack. If the Therans have given up following the characters, the blood elves arrive without them.

## BLOOD ELVES (8)

### Attributes

DEX: 7	STR: 6	TOU: 6
PER: 6	WIL: 6	CHA: 7
Initiative: 7	Physical Defense: 9	
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 9	
Attack: 10	Social Defense: 7	
Damage: 11 (warbow)	Armor: 2	
10 (short sword)	Mystic Armor: 5	
Combat Movement: 40	Knockdown: 12	
Full Movement: 80	Recovery	
	Tests/Day: 3	

Death Rating: 36

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 28

### Equipment

Elven warbow  
Fernweave armor  
Short sword  
1D12 silver pieces per elf

Legend Points: 105



Between the slavers and the blood elves, the characters should lose this fight. Once defeated (and preferably knocked unconscious), the characters are locked inside a room on the second floor of the kaer. After they awaken the following morning, they begin to learn the horrible truth of the village and its people. Go to **Inside Akarem**, the next encounter.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The worst potential problem arises if the characters decide to return to Blood Wood instead of following the slavers. As in the previous encounter, such a course of action means that they will miss the main element of the adventure. To prevent this, the gamemaster can either nudge the players into making the correct decision, or allow them to do as they will and then ease the story back on track in some other way. For example, the slavers might capture the characters as they make their way back to Blood Wood, and send them to the village under guard. Or they may encounter the Theran spies from Haven along with Kalourin's blood elves, who capture the characters and bring them to Akarem. One way or another, the gamemaster must get the characters into the village, so that they can discover and destroy the Horror.

## INSIDE AKAREM



### **O**VERVIEW

In this encounter, the characters are trapped within the village controlled by the Mist. During their imprisonment, they learn of the Horror's atrocities and its alliance with Kalourin.

### SETTING THE STAGE

**If the characters got knocked unconscious in the previous encounter, read the players the following:**

You awaken, dizzy and bleary-eyed, lying on a cold, hard floor. Your head aches, as if giants danced through your skull in heavy boots. You cast a frantic look around for your companions, but soon regret your hasty movement. The giants go from dancing to leaping and kicking at your head bones, but at least you are all safe for the moment. With more care this time, you look around the small chamber in which you lie. Some fifteen paces square, it has a low ceiling and damp-encrusted



walls, and the close air smells faintly of rot. Opposite the single, weathered wooden door, you spy a hole in the wall where a few bricks have crumbled away. It is too small for even a windling to climb out of, though it might serve to tell you where you are. The only other gap in your stone-and-wood prison is a tiny window-hole in the doorway, just high enough for a human's eyes to reach. Without thought, you reach for your weapons, and find nothing. Your captors have left you all else that you carried, for what reason you dare not guess. A gleam from the corner of the chamber catches your eye; approaching it with caution, you see that your captors have piled your weapons against the wall. For the moment you do not question this, but arm yourself. You need only break through the door and dispatch the guard, and you will be out of this cursed village before another hour passes.

Taking a swift look through the hole in the door, you see no guard outside. It seems your captors either want you to escape, or. . .

As you finish the thought, a creeping chill comes over you. *Or they know that you can never leave this place. . .*

**If the characters were captured but not knocked unconscious, read the players the following:**

Your captors drag you inside the kaer and up a great, twisting, black staircase. They throw you into a tiny chamber some fifteen paces square, locking its heavy, weathered wooden door behind them as they leave. Bruised and battered from the fight, you look around your prison.

The walls and the low ceiling are damp-encrusted, and the close air smells faintly of rot. Opposite the door you spy a hole in the wall where a few bricks have crumbled away. It is too small for even a windling to climb through, and you abandon any notion of using it to escape. The only other gap in your stone-and-wood prison is a tiny window-hole in the doorway, just high enough for a human's eyes to reach. Without thought, you reach for your weapons, and find nothing. Your captors have left you all else that you carried, for what reason you dare not guess. A gleam from the corner of the chamber catches your eye; approaching it with caution, you see that your captors have piled your weapons against the wall. For the moment you do not question this, but arm yourself. You need only break through the door and dispatch the guard, and you will be out of this cursed village before another hour passes.

Taking a swift look through the hole in the door, you see three guards outside. They stand together in a small knot, talking and joking. Every so often, one of them gestures toward your prison door and laughs.

For the first time, you begin to wonder why your captors left you your weapons. . .

**After reading the appropriate section above, continue with the following:**

From the gap in your prison wall you can see the ground, too far below to jump safely. Escape by that route would cost you a broken leg at best, a snapped neck at worst. You realize that you must be in a chamber of the village's ruined kaer. The villagers below—to your eyes the size of dolls—pay you no heed. As you watch, a knot of people shuffles unwillingly toward the kaer. As they draw near, you recognize some of Fegis Kul's slaves among them. They pass from your sight, seeming to enter the kaer.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter should begin as a frustrating, no-win situation and gradually become the characters' worst nightmare come true. Every attempt the characters make to escape the village should meet with failure, and their terror mounts as they learn what awful fate awaits the wretched slaves and themselves.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters have been locked in a room on the second floor of the kaer. Though the Theran slavers initially guarded the room, they have departed the village by the time the characters wake up. Escaping the room should pose no challenge; to pick the lock and open the door, a character need only roll a 7 or better on a Lock Pick Test. Outside the room, however, the characters will run into trouble.

If the characters are conscious when captured and attempt to escape before the slavers leave the village, the attempt will fail. In addition to the three guards posted outside the room, the Mist uses its magical abilities to seal the door. To open the door, a character must roll an unlikely 25 or better on a Dispel Magic Test. Though in place when the characters land in the second-floor room, this lock disappears at daybreak when the slavers leave. The Mist temporarily weakens its magical control over the village boundaries to let the slavers depart; once they have gone, the Mist re-seals the village borders and allows the characters to escape the kaer in order to toy with them before killing them.

Once the characters escape from the room, they must deal with the village and its residents. The following text describes the village and its people.

## VILLAGE OF AKAREM

The village of Akarem is a haunted place. A full century before the end of the Scourge, a Horror called the Mist slithered into the village's kaer and began to destroy those who lived within it. The kaer's desperate defenders fought the thing and gravely wounded it, but only after it had killed most of the kaer's population. Forced to retreat to a safer area within the village's environs, the angry Horror cursed the survivors. The curse made them prone to violence; if the Horror could not kill them, it meant to ensure that they killed each other. The Mist's curse also kept them from replenishing their numbers; in a significant sign of the Horror's corruption, births in Akarem ceased 20 years before the kaer opened.

Controlled by the Mist, the people of the kaer began fighting among themselves. In a great battle, they destroyed one wall of the kaer. This act of violence prematurely opened the kaer to the outside world a full two years before any other kaers opened their doors. As the people staggered outside, they realized that the presence that had invaded their kaer had wrought dreadful changes in them. Though many wished to flee, they could not leave the shadow of the kaer that had once protected them. As time passed, the people realized that they had also ceased to age.

After recovering from its wounds, the Mist returned to the kaer it had corrupted. No longer satisfied with holding one tiny village in thrall, the Mist enshrouded Akarem in a cloak of fog that would trap unwary travelers within the village. Directed by the Mist, the villagers lured travelers to Akarem and sacrificed them to the Horror. Few who passed the village escaped its clutches, and those who did went mad by the time they reached safety. Akarem and its resident Horror captured countless unwitting victims for many years.

After a time, captive travelers ceased to satisfy the Mist. Seeking a way to gather more victims in order to sate its hunger, the Mist entered nearby Blood Wood and met the power-hungry Blood Warde Kalourin from the Elven Court. The Horror offered Kalourin an exchange; if Kalourin would persuade his slaver ally Fegis Kul to provide the Horror with new victims and also guard the village from adventurers who might slay the Horror, the Mist agreed to grant Kalourin unheard-of magical knowledge and power.

A ghostly place, the village of Akarem has no inn, no shops, no farms or village green. Its few houses are built of stone and other materials salvaged from the kaer. The village forge still operates on occasion, and the surviving villagers have buried their dead in a small, overgrown graveyard. The very air in Akarem

seems to exude desolation. Though the Mist suspended the people in time to keep them from dying of old age, on occasion a villager goes berserk and kills someone. The rest of the villagers then kill him, and bury both victims in the graveyard. It currently holds 13 graves.

## VILLAGERS

Sixty-seven strong, the people of Akarem go about their business with slow movements and a vacant, far-away look in their eyes. They do not age, they no longer require food or water, and they cannot reproduce. The youngest villager is 20 years old, the oldest 84. Though capable of speech and thought, the villagers never let outsiders know that anything is amiss. If asked why the outside world knows nothing of Akarem, the villagers simply say that they have always lived here, but that their village is so small that it is easy to overlook.

The villagers cannot die except by accident or murder. The Mist usually prevents them from killing each other, preferring to feed on the agonies of the living. However, when the Mist has not fed well, its mental controls slip just long enough to let someone kill a neighbor in a frenzy. The Mist forces the villagers to dispatch anyone who goes on a murderous rampage, or else suffer a year and a day of excruciating torture.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The characters may want to ask the villagers and the newly arrived slaves any number of questions about themselves and about the Horror. The following text offers answers to the likeliest questions.

### Talking with the Villagers

If asked how they manage to live, the villagers claim that they sustain themselves by selling artifacts and valuables found in the ruins of the kaer to passing merchant caravans. If asked about the kaer's dilapidated condition, the villagers explain that a Horror broke in and wreaked havoc during the latter days of the Scourge.

If the characters ask the villagers how long the Mist has controlled them, they say, "Long before the Opening, the Mist invaded our home and has held us prisoner here for many a year since. Though once the Horror fed on us alone, the caravans began to come with new offerings. Fegis Kul, who brought you here, and the elven Blood Warde bring the Mist new victims whenever it asks. You too will provide it with nourishment."

If the characters ask specifically where the Mist lives, the villagers say, "The Mist is all about Akarem, but it lives within the kaer." If the characters want to explore the kaer, the villagers gladly let them. The villagers want the characters to enter the kaer and fall vic-

tim to the Mist; once fed, the Horror will temporarily cease tormenting the villagers. If the characters decide to explore the kaer, go to **Kaer of Akarem**, p. 56.

### Talking with the Slaves

Half of the slaves have already been led into the kaer and consumed by the Horror. The surviving slaves can give the characters the following information. They are all from villages raided by Fegis Kul and his gang, all their villages lie in the region between Blood Wood and the Serpent River, and a few of the slaves overheard Fegis Kul and some of his men discussing their "arrangement" with Kalourin. Apparently, Kul and his fellow slavers have begun to doubt the elf's trustworthiness.

### LEAVING THE VILLAGE

The characters cannot leave Akarem until they destroy the Horror. Every time they seem to put distance between themselves and the village, they see the kaer looming ahead of them. No matter which way they go, the characters travel in a circle. If the characters ask villagers about this phenomenon, the villagers tell them, "None may leave Akarem. All who enter here belong to the Mist."

### TREACHERY!

Late on the first night the characters spend free in the village, the villagers attempt to kidnap them as they sleep and then throw them into the kaer. Armed with clubs, torches, and nets, the villagers apologize profusely as they batter the startled characters into unconsciousness. Though prevented by the Mist from answering direct questions, they may drop minor clues to the reasons for their behavior in statements such as the following:

"We have no wish to harm you. We cannot help ourselves."

"Only the names of the victims change. Time never ends."

"Cold Mist lurks deep in the kaer. It hungers. . ."

"Your sufferings or ours; we have no choice."

The Mist's awesome power allows it to re-animate slain villagers in 24 hours, unscathed by their fight with the characters. If they wish, the player characters may attempt to knock the villagers out rather than killing them.

If the characters defeat the villagers and interrogate them, regardless of whatever success level any character achieves, the adventurers learn only that the Mist fills the ruins of the kaer under the earth, the Mist must be fed, the Mist is everywhere, and the Mist controls all. If the characters choose to enter the kaer, go to **Kaer of Akarem**, the next encounter.

### CONTROLLED VILLAGERS (67)

#### Attributes

DEX: 4      STR: 3      TOU: 4  
PER: 3      WIL: 4      CHA: 4

Initiative: 4

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 6

Damage: 6

Combat Movement: 20

Full Movement: 40

Physical Defense: 5

Spell Defense: 4

Social Defense: 5

Armor: 0

Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 3

Recovery

Tests/Day: 2

Death Rating: 28

Wound Threshold: 7

Unconsciousness Rating: 19

#### Equipment

Clubs

Nets

Torches

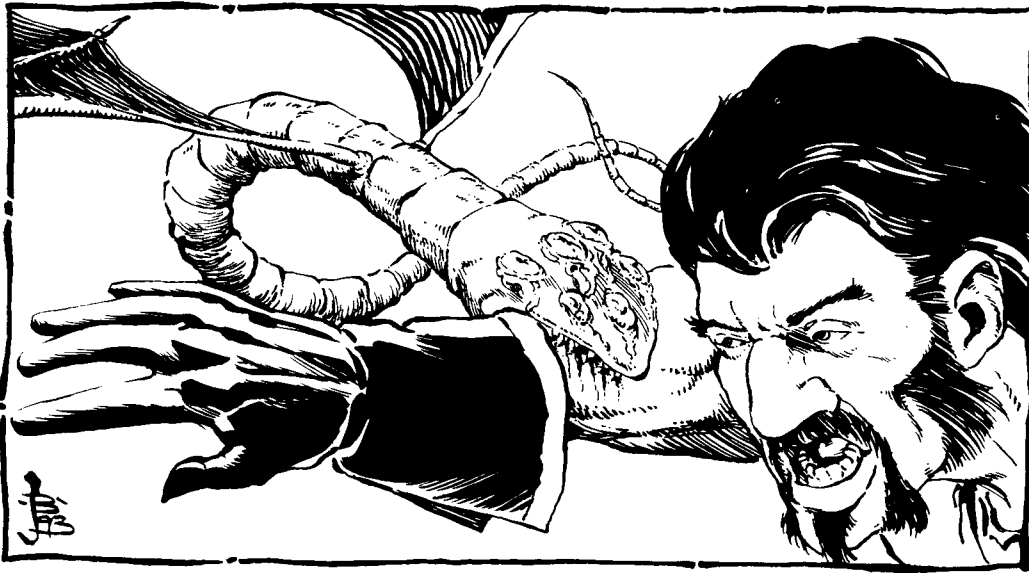
Legend Points: 10



### TROUBLESHOOTING

Little can go wrong in this encounter. It serves primarily to show the terrible power of the Horrors and the fate faced by many of Barsaive's people. Through this look at the suffering inflicted by one particular Horror, the player characters should begin to understand the devastation a Horror can cause.

# KAER OF AKAREM



## O VERVIEW

This section describes the kaer and its perils, including shadow-mants, ghouls, cadaver men, krilworms, and a spectral dancer. All but the spectral dancer are loyal to the Mist and keep the villagers away from the kaer's upper sections. During this encounter, the characters face the kaer's dangers and confront the Mist.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Akarem's ruined kaer looms over you in the gloom, defying you to scale its heights. Ring upon ring of black stones make up the kaer's outer wall, many still bearing carved runes that mark wards of magical power.

Neither age nor the elements have worn the carvings away. A small, solitary room crowns the black kaer; an eerie light shines from within it. Nowhere else over all the kaer do you spy windows or any other opening in the vast, blank, black walls.

As you walk around the kaer, you see the side of it that faces the village. The huge black wall has collapsed, revealing the chambers within as if it were a giant doll's house. From somewhere in the kaer's underground depths, a black marble stairway climbs toward the upper chambers. A better starting place than this you cannot hope to find.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Despite the collapsed wall, the characters should see the kaer as an imposing, dark fortress with an ominous atmosphere. Call attention to the rubble strewn across the grass from the fallen wall; make the characters wonder if it might not collapse further with them under it.

None of the villagers dare approach the kaer or set foot on the marble staircase, except when bringing hapless victims to the Mist.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Though most Barsaivian kaers were built underground, a few such as Akarem's kaer also have above-ground stories, as a small citadel might. Besides the Horror, the kaer is home to several nasty creatures under the Horror's influence, including ghouls, krill-worms, and shadowmants.

Because the dilapidated upper section of the kaer is prone to further collapse, the Mist keeps the villagers away from it. Though the Horror cares nothing for the villagers' well-being, it prefers not to lose its prime source of entertainment to a fatal accident. The Mist will allow the characters to explore all levels of the kaer, however; as long as a few survive for it to torment, the Mist does not care how many characters die from a fall or a rockslide.

### UPPER LEVEL

A combination of age and exposure to the elements has all the doors in the upper section stuck fast. To open any of these doors, a player character must make a Strength Test of 15 or better. If the character achieves an Average or Good success, the door opens. If the character achieves an Excellent success, he opens the door with enough force to pop it off its hinges. If a character achieves an Extraordinary success, he opens the door, tears it off its hinges, and loosens the surrounding

stonework. If this happens, each character within ten feet of the door must make a successful Dexterity Test against a Difficulty of 12 to avoid falling masonry. If the test is unsuccessful, the character in question suffers 12 steps of damage (see p. 194, ED).

The upper section of the kaer contains the following areas (see map, p. 59):

### Grand Stairway

This huge black marble stairway is covered with dust and debris. Two beautifully carved gargoyles, each three feet tall and strikingly lifelike, perch on the newel posts at the ground floor. In front of the staircase stands a massive, freestanding black marble archway, beyond which the stairway continues downward into the catacombs. It also extends upward to the kaer's roof, with openings branching off for each floor.

The first character to set foot on the stairs sets off one of the Mist's magical defenses. The gamemaster makes a series of Spellcasting Tests for the Mist against the Spell Defenses of each of the characters. If any of the tests are successful, the affected characters suffer the effects of a fog of fear spell (see p. 177, ED).

### Guard Barracks (1)

Dozens of old wooden bunks are stacked haphazardly in the room's corners. A few vermin scuttle underfoot, startled by the characters' entrance. Dust and cobwebs lie thick across every surface.

### Reception Hall (2)

Faded murals on the north wall of this large, airy chamber show members of Barsaive's various Name-giving races building the kaer as storm clouds gather on the horizon. Splintered chairs and tables and smashed crockery litter the floor. Rusting rings set in the walls show where torches were once set; the stone behind them is blackened from centuries of fires. Despite the chamber's size, the air feels musty and heavy.

### Blasted Room (3)

Whatever function this room once served has been obliterated by a long-ago disaster. Skulls and bones lie scattered everywhere, amid scorched and crumbled stone. Its south wall gone, the chamber gapes open to the unfriendly sky. A character making a successful Evidence Analysis Test against a Difficulty of 18 deduces that a battle took place in this room, leading to the chain-reaction collapse of the kaer's entire south wall. A closed door with a rusty lock leads to the shrine (Room 5). To open it, a character must make a successful Lock Pick Test against a Difficulty of 20. A second door leading to Room 4 is barred

caded from within, but the characters can reach that chamber by stepping around the crumbled south wall.

#### Barricaded Room (4)

Fire pits and rusted iron tools identify this room as a smithy. The door in the west wall that leads to Room 3 has a huge iron bar wedged across it. Seventeen corpses in rotting leather armor lie piled against the blocked door as if they died at their posts. A door in the north wall is not barricaded.

#### Shrine (5)

This room is a temple to Garlen, the Passion of Hearth and Healing. Within the shrine is the symbol of Garlen, and a statue of her stands in the middle of the floor surrounded by shriveled flower petals. The door that leads to the shrine is protected by a powerful ward trap, a magical ward triggered by any being who enters the shrine armed. For rules concerning ward traps, see *Adventuring in Earthdawn*, p. 210, ED.

#### Ward Trap

**Detection Difficulty:** 8

**Spell Defense:** 15

**Disarm Difficulty:** 14

**Trigger Condition:** If any being enters the shrine carrying or wielding a weapon, the gamemaster makes a Spellcasting Test (Step 14) for the ward against the Spell Defense of the offending character. If the test is successful, the ward triggers the spell effect.

**Trap Initiative:** 28

**Trap Effect:** Sleep spell (see p. 188, ED)

#### Sleeping Chambers (6, 7)

One on the second and one on the third floor, these sleeping chambers for the kaer's residents contain rows of straw pallets and a few lanterns. The straw beds are mildewed and bug-ridden. The characters were imprisoned in Room 6; Room 7 has a door in its east wall.

#### Dining Hall (8)

As in the Reception Hall, splintered tables and chairs and smashed crockery lie scattered across this long, rectangular room. Bits of rotting food lie here and there as if flung from dropped plates. Doors in the west and north walls lead out of the hall.

#### Supply Room (9)

Stuffed with food long since turned to rancid mounds of fungi and mold, this chamber exudes an overpowering stench. The foul smell has attracted a

colony of krilworms, which nest in a few cracks in the outer wall.

This room contains several large ovens and cooking pits. Rusted ladles, knives, serving platters, and similar kitchenwares lie on the floor or hang from hooks. If the characters search the room, they will find several pounds of coal in a scuttle, a flint and steel, and a jar of oil, all still usable. A door in the west wall leads to the supply room; the mold and fungi growing on the spoiled food have dampened and warped the wood.

#### KRILWORMS (12)

##### Attributes

**DEX:** 5

**STR:** 5

**TOU:** 5

**PER:** 6

**WIL:** 7

**CHA:** 1

**Initiative:** 4

**Number of Attacks:** 1

**Attack:** 5

**Damage:** 6

**Number of Spells:** None

**Spellcasting:** NA

**Effect:** NA

**Physical Defense:** 8

**Spell Defense:** 7

**Social Defense:** 7

**Armor:** 0

**Mystic Armor:** 2

**Knockdown:** 5

**Recovery Tests/Day:** 2

**Death Rating:** 30

**Wound Threshold:** 8

**Unconsciousness Rating:** 25

**Combat Movement:** 75

**Full Movement:** 150

**Legend Points:** 75

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** None



#### Kaer Roof

The marble staircase ends at the roof, whose surface is strewn with debris. Across from the head of the stairs sits a one-room turret with a locked door. Three shadowmants live on the roof, and they will attack if and when the characters turn their backs to them.

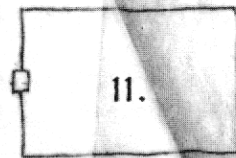
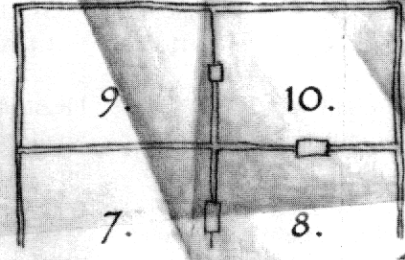
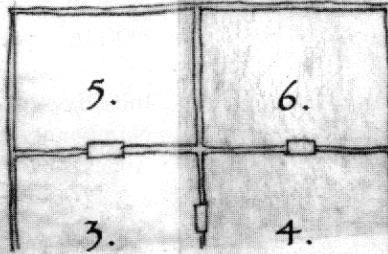
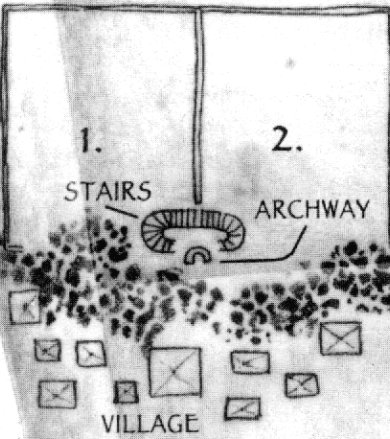


UPPER WORKS

GROUND FLOOR

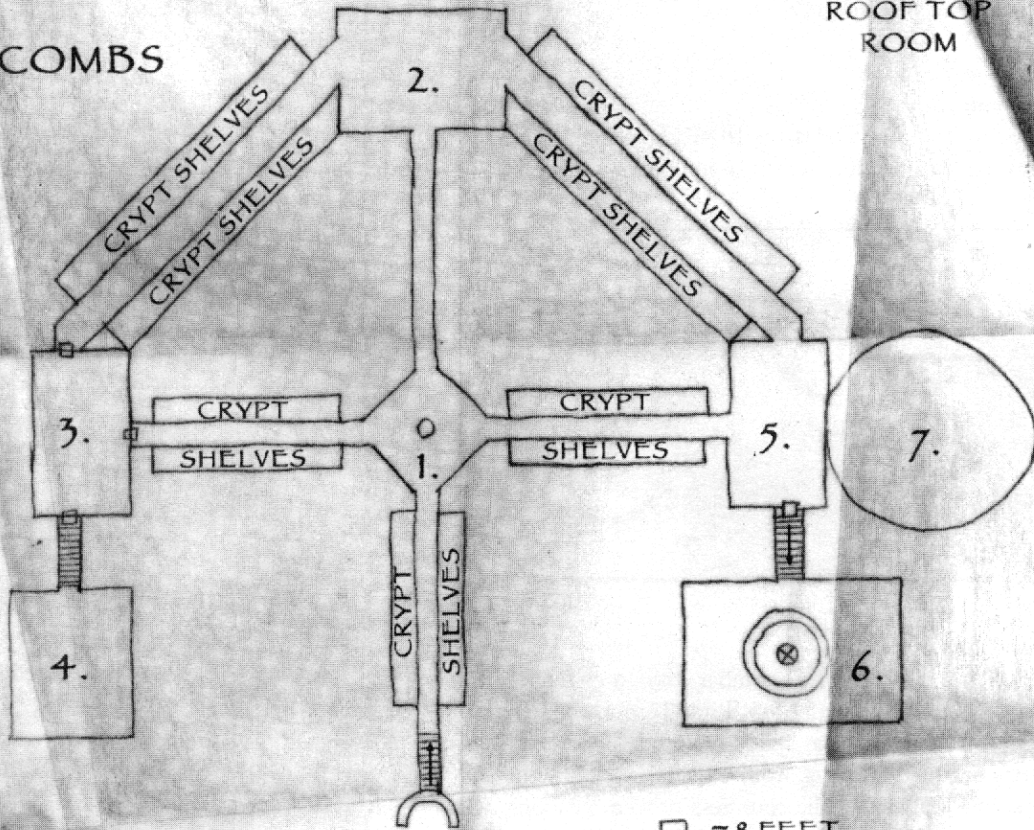
SECOND FLOOR

THIRD FLOOR



ROOF TOP ROOM

CATACOMBS



□ ≈ 8 FEET

KAER AKAREM





**SHADOWMANTS (3)****Attributes**

DEX: 5      STR: 5      TOU: 6  
 PER: 4      WIL: 5      CHA: 4

Initiative: 7      Physical Defense: 7  
 Number of Attacks: 1      Spell Defense: 6  
 Attack: 7      Social Defense: 7  
     Damage: 7      Armor: 4  
 Number of Spells: None      Mystic Armor: 0  
 Spellcasting: NA      Knockdown: 6  
     Effect: NA      Recovery Tests/Day: 2

Death Rating: 35      Combat Movement: 45  
 Wound Threshold: 9      Full Movement: 90  
     (flight)

Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

**Loot:** Stingers worth 1D10 x 10 silver pieces. The stingers count as treasure worth Legend Points.

**Rooftop Chamber (11)**

To pick the lock of the chamber door, a character must make a successful Lock Pick Test against a Difficulty of 14. Of all the kaer's chambers, only this room has narrow windows, from which a ghostly light streams. Inside the room lie countless broken weapons and cloven shields, scattered around the skeleton of a warrior. A successful Perception Test against a Difficulty of 15 reveals that the warrior was a human female. The chamber's eerie glow comes from the spirit of the female warrior, made into a Spectral Dancer by the Horror (for more information on spectral dancers, see p. 309, **ED**). The characters will also find a map of the kaer in this room, including its upper and lower sections.

**SHEENA, SPECTRAL DANCER****Attributes**

DEX: 13      STR: 7      TOU: 14  
 PER: 16      WIL: 20      CHA: 12

Initiative: 14      Physical Defense: 20  
 Number of Attacks: NA      Spell Defense: 15  
 Attack: NA      Social Defense: 12  
     Damage: NA      Armor: 0  
 Number of Spells: 1      Mystic Armor: 8  
 Spellcasting: 20      Knockdown: 7  
     Effect: 23      Recovery Tests/Day: 4

Death Rating: 90      Combat Movement: 45  
 Wound Threshold: 16      Full Movement: 90  
 Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Legend Points: 3,400\*

Equipment: None

Loot: None

**\*Note:** Though the **Earthdawn** rules give a Legend Point Award for destroying a spectral dancer, if the characters do so in this adventure they cannot possibly free the village of Akarem from its curse. Ideally, therefore, the gamemaster should award no Legend Points for defeating the dancer, though he may do so if he wishes.



Sheena will dance for several rounds, trying to convince a character to join her. If no one does, she uses her Spellcasting ability to attack the group, making a Spellcasting Test against her chosen target's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the dancer makes an Effect Test to determine damage.

A character who chooses to dance must dance until he manages to momentarily relieve Sheena's loneliness or else dies trying. In each round that the dance continues, Sheena's movements cause the dancing character a number of steps of damage equal to the number of rounds the dance has lasted (see p. 309, ED). No armor can reduce this damage. During each round of the dance, the character can try to make contact with the dancer, making a Charisma Test against Sheena's Social Defense. If appropriate, the character may use another Charisma-based skill or talent.

To lay Sheena's spirit to rest, the character must achieve an Extraordinary success on his or her Charisma Test. Every lesser success adds one step to the character's Charisma for the duration of the dance. Once the character achieves an Extraordinary success, Sheena's motions slow, then stop.

**When Sheena stops dancing, read the following to the players:**

The female phantom now appears as real as any living being. A human woman of great beauty faces you, clad in gleaming chain mail. A smile lights her lovely face, and she speaks in a voice like music.

"My blessing upon you for your courage and compassion. You have brought me happiness and released me from the Horror's torment. In token of my thanks, I give you the key to your salvation.

"The Horror Mist, who made a phantom of me, lies hidden deep in the catacombs. To free suffering Akarem from this Horror, you must defeat it in combat and take the essence of its remains with you. Place the remains upon the altar of Garlen, defender of home and hearth, in my grandmother's favored shrine. Light the forges nearby and speak the village's name. These acts will free the village, and abate the Horror's curse forever.

"May the Passions that guide us all ever keep their hands upon you."

Her final words hanging in the air, the spirit fades away, taking the room's ghostly light with her.

If the characters choose to attack Sheena, they will likely die in the attempt. The gamemaster should discourage them from such an action, because by dancing with her, they gain valuable information that might save their lives. Note that only one character at a time may dance with Sheena.

## UNDERGROUND LEVEL

**As the characters descend to the underground section of the kaer, read the following to the players:**

On the ground floor of the kaer towers an arch of black stone, from which hang skulls on frayed ropes.

Beyond the archway, the black marble stairs disappear downward into the gloom. As you peer down the stairway, straining to see past the curtain of darkness, a breeze rushes up to meet you, laden with the cloying scent of decaying flesh. Far away under the ground you hear water dripping, the squeaks of scavenging rodents, and the low, mournful wail of the wind through the fearful chambers that lie below.

The passageways in the lower section are three feet wide and six feet high, with arched ceilings. Only windlings are small enough to walk down them side by side; everyone else must walk single file. Occasional human or humanoid bones stick up from the packed earth of the passage floor.

Unless otherwise stated, the catacomb walls have burial shelves carved into them, on which lie the bodies of residents of the kaer. Depending on their status while living, the bodies are either mummified, wrapped in shrouds, or placed in caskets. Only the very wealthy lie in caskets, as the villagers brought few such items into the kaer. A few shelves contain nothing more than dust and scattered bones.

The kaer's underground section contains the following areas (see map, p. 59).

### Archway

A result of 18 or better on a Perception Test or other test using a related talent or skill reveals that the archway is a mere 80 years old, rather than being part of the original kaer. Made of the same black stone used to build the kaer, the arch is decorated with a score or so of humanoid skulls. Only by passing through the archway can the characters reach the catacombs.

### Central Chamber (1)

From this high-ceilinged room, passageways branch out in the four cardinal compass directions: north, south, east, and west. In the center of the room stands a black basalt obelisk with the following words carved on its surface:

Kaer Akarem, built with the grace and blessing of Garlen, Passion of Hearth and Healing. May her power protect us.

—Kedru Al, First Lord of Kaer Akarem

Books and scrolls line the chamber walls, testimony to the accumulated knowledge of the kaer's residents. Sadly, the ravages of time have reduced these books to heaps of rotting paper.

**Burial Room (2)**

Frescoes along the chamber walls show the various methods of interment used by residents of the kaer. Brittle rolls of dried-out bandages, pots of musty, dried herbs once used for mummification, dust-covered shrouds, and a dozen ceramic jars meant to contain the internal organs of the deceased stand on shelves located throughout the room.

Two huge, carved stone slabs stand in the middle of the floor, each side of them decorated with runes and symbols. Grooves cut into the top of each slab display reddish-brown stains. Four packages of dissection tools lie on the slabs, all opened. One package contains a full set of tools; the other three are missing a few sharp implements. A successful Evidence Analysis Test against a Difficulty of 14 indicates that the tools were taken recently. A successful Tracking Test against a Difficulty of 12 reveals evidence of numerous bipedal creatures, probably humanoid, walking around this room.

Just as the characters make these discoveries, or are about to leave the room, a Horror-driven pack of ghouls attacks them.

**GHOULS (1 per character)****Attributes**

DEX: 5      STR: 4      TOU: 6  
PER: 3      WIL: 3      CHA: 5

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 7  
Number of Attacks: 1      Spell Defense: 5  
Attack: 7      Social Defense: 7  
Damage: 8      Armor: 4  
Number of Spells: 1      Mystic Armor: 0  
Spellcasting: 8      Knockdown: 5  
Effect: Poison\*      Recovery Tests/Day: 1 (7)

\*See p. 295, ED

Death Rating: 36      Combat Movement: 50  
Wound Threshold: 10      Full Movement: 100  
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Legend Points: 90

Equipment: None

Loot: Each ghoul has a shroud fastened by an ornamental clasp. These clasps are worth 1D8 X 10 silver pieces each.

**Granary (3)**

Dry and small, this room contains moldering sacks of grain. The south door is locked; to open it, a character must make a successful Lock Pick Test against a Difficulty of 12.

**Wine Cellar (4)**

A short flight of slick stone steps leads to this small, cool room. To keep from falling down the steps, a character must make a successful Dexterity Test against a Difficulty of 8. If the test is unsuccessful, the character takes 4 Damage Steps from falling down the stairs.

Once the kaer's wine cellar, the room contains little more than smashed bottles. The contents of the few remaining whole bottles have long since turned sour.

**Water Collection Chamber (5)**

This room holds a dozen five-gallon, ceramic water jars. Murals on the wall show kaer residents collecting water outside the kaer. In the center of the chamber, two spigots carved in the likeness of open-mouthed gargoyles spew water into basins three feet wide and two feet deep. Each basin has a drain, which cycles the water uphill to the kaer's water source (Room 6).

A secret door in the eastern wall with a Detection Difficulty of 20 leads to the Mist's chamber (Room 7). The mural that hides the secret door shows a huge, fire-breathing creature about to attack the kaer. Camouflaged in the creature's painted mouth is a one-inch hole, through which the Mist billows when exiting its chamber. See **Mist's Room**, below.

**Water Source (6)**

A short flight of stone stairs leads up to this chamber. As the characters climb toward it, they hear water flowing and the air becomes cooler and damper. At the head of the stairs, a locked and warded door bars the entrance. To open the door, a character must make a successful Lock Pick Test against a Difficulty of 20, but picking the lock does not affect the ward. Writing carved into the door reads, "Water supply. Entry forbidden."



**Ward Trap****Detection Difficulty:** 12**Spell Defense:** 16**Disarm Difficulty:** 16

**Trigger Condition:** The gamemaster makes a Spellcasting Test (Step 16) for the ward against the Spell Defense of any character who passes it. If the test is successful, the trap triggers the spell effect (see **Trap Effect**, below).

**Trap Initiative:** 28**Trap Effect:** Suffocating Paste spell (see p. 162, ED)

Inside the chamber is a huge fountain made of four carved gargoyles standing back to back, facing each point of the compass. Water gushes from their mouths into a marble-lined pool 20 feet wide and four feet deep. Mystical runes are carved into the edge of the pool all around its circumference. A successful Read Magic Test against a Difficulty of 18 reveals that these runes conjure the water from the elemental plane. The water is cool, refreshing, and perfectly safe to drink.

**Mist's Room (7)**

Newer than the rest of the kaer, this chamber contains only a pile of skulls nine feet high and twelve feet in diameter. These bones are all that remain of the countless victims that the villagers of Akarem have lured into the Mist's clutches. On the back wall of this room, carved into the stone, is the symbol that the characters have seen on Kalourin's amulet and the armor of his guards. This symbol represents the alliance between the Horror and the Blood Warder.

Unless the characters begin disassembling the skull heap, the Mist does not appear; the Horror simply waits to act until the adventurers leave the chamber. As the characters depart, the Mist seeps from the center of the skull heap, wafts through the hole in the wall of the Water Collection Chamber (see Room 5, above), becomes corporeal, and silently attacks the character unlucky enough to bring up the rear. The Mist will try to eliminate the characters one by one, keeping each new victim unaware of the death of his comrade.

The gamemaster must play the Horror as an intelligent being. It has not stayed alive for hundreds of years by making stupid moves. The Mist will bide its time, waiting to strike until it has the maximum advantage.

If the characters sort through the heap of skulls, they can find 348 silver pieces, an aquamarine worth 500 silver pieces, a suit of crystal ringlet armor, a crystal Viking shield, a dwarf sword, a trispear, an elven warbow, a dwarven wintnight cloak, and the Staff of

Akarem the Mage Builder. It will take the characters more than two hours to remove all the loot from the Mist's lair.

**SUDDEN ATTACK**

As the characters travel through the catacombs, they pass pairs of corpse shelves (marked with an X on the Catacombs map). The shrouded bodies on each of these marked shelves are actually cadaver men, animated by the Mist. As the characters pass each spot indicated on the map, the cadaver men grab them.

**CADAVER MEN (4)****Attributes****DEX:** 4**STR:** 6**TOU:** 7**PER:** 3**WIL:** 6**CHA:** 4**Initiative:** 4**Number of Attacks:** 1 (4)**Attack:** 7**Damage:** 9**Number of Spells:** None**Spellcasting:** NA**Effect:** NA**Physical Defense:** 5**Spell Defense:** 6**Social Defense:** 11**Armor:** 0**Mystic Armor:** 0**Knockdown:** 7**Recovery Tests/Day:** 2**Death Rating:** 36**Wound Threshold:** 9**Unconsciousness Rating:** Immune**Combat Movement:** 25**Full Movement:** 50**Legend Points:** 110**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** Each cadaver man is buried in a shroud wrapped with a fine silver chain to hold the shroud in place. Each chain is worth 60 silver pieces.



### DEFEATING THE MIST

Because the Mist has established a link with Kalourin that will prove vital in the last act of the story, the characters cannot destroy it in this encounter. They can, however, damage it severely enough to drive it off. If they manage to defeat the Mist, it dissipates onto the astral plane, leaving behind a small crystal sphere. No matter how hard they try, the characters cannot shatter the sphere.

**When the Mist takes damage equal to its Unconsciousness Rating, read the following to the players:**

Sorely wounded by a final, mighty blow, the Mist's skeletal face contorts in pain and shock. As the glow in its eyes begins to fade, the Horror lets out a hideous shriek. Its misty body seems to collapse, gaining solidity as it shrinks. Slowly, apace with its body's collapse, the skull-like head crumples. As the last echo of the Horror's scream fades, the Mist dwindles into a smooth crystal sphere the size of a man's thumbnail.

### PERFORMING SHEENA'S RITUAL

To perform the rite that Sheena requested of them, the characters must take the crystal sphere, place it on the altar of Garlen (Room 5, Second Floor), then light the smithy's forge in the adjacent room (Room 6). The characters must then utter the village's name, Akarem.

**Once the characters have completed the above tasks, read the players the following:**

The word "Akarem" echoes around the shrine. It does not fade, but grows louder and louder until you must clap your hands over your ears to protect them. Rising into the air, the crystal sphere on the altar begins to spin wildly, shooting beams of light like arrows in random directions. More and more shafts of light it sends, until at last it blazes with the steady golden glow of the sun's tiny, vibrant heart.

Around you, the kaer begins to shake. The south wall of the shrine crumbles to dust, allowing you to see the land surrounding the kaer. Far below you, the villagers begin to run toward it, showing the first signs of true emotion you have yet seen. Some slipping to their

knees in their eagerness, they begin to ascend the black marble staircase. Like an enchanted thing, it stands steady as a rock, unswayed by the quaking earth.

With every step up the black staircase, each villager ages a little. Passing the shrine, they continue upward. As each of them reaches the roof, his body crumbles to dust. The villagers farther behind, watching this transformation from below, begin to weep; not in fear or terror, but with rapture. As each climbs higher, a look of contentment crosses his face as if a great weight has been lifted from his shoulders. One by one, the people of Akarem pass before your eyes into old age, death, and nothingness.

The last of the villagers, a woman of middle years with the bearing of a leader, turns to you and smiles through the tears that stream down her cheeks. "The village of Akarem thanks you for your brave deeds. For the first time since we left the kaer, we may know the sweet release of death. The Horror you vanquished kept us tied to an unnatural mockery of life, unable to eat, drink, sleep, love, laugh, or cry. You have given us back our souls, that we may die in dignity and peace. I ask but one last thing of you, who have given us so much; do not let the world forget Akarem. Tell them of our sufferings, that they may look upon us with compassion. Farewell, and may the Passions ever look with favor upon you."

With a jubilant laugh, she turns away and runs up the stairs, aging with every swift step. As she steps onto the rooftop, her withered body bursts into a flare of golden light and vanishes.

The kaer begins to shake again, black stone blocks half a man high tumbling off the crumbling exterior walls. The interior walls crack and buckle; not ten paces from you, a square foot of the floor collapses. Your senses sharpened by sudden fear, you make your way with best speed toward the marble stairs.

The characters have not destroyed the Mist, merely driven it back into astral space. Using the Horror Mark it placed on Kalourin to keep track of him, it will re-enter the physical world through Kalourin's amulet to destroy the characters. Picking its moment, the Mist will wait until Kalourin is ready to enact his own revenge against the characters, at which time it will join him. The process of re-entering the physical world will kill Kalourin, but the Horror will gladly pay that small price to avenge itself on the characters.

### LEAVING THE KAER

Unscathed by the collapsing of the kaer around it, the black marble staircase offers the easiest way out. Unfortunately, the adventurers are most likely at the shrine or the forge, and much of the kaer's structure

between those rooms and the stairs has crumbled away. The characters can either jump for the staircase or climb down the kaer's collapsing walls.

Jumping from the shrine or the forge to the stairs requires a successful Dexterity Test against a Difficulty of 12. If the test is unsuccessful, the character falls 12 feet to the ground and takes appropriate damage (6 steps; see Falling Damage Table, p. 207, ED).

To climb down the unstable side of the crumbling kaer, a character must make a successful Climbing Test against a Difficulty of 15. If the test is unsuccessful, the character falls 12 feet to the ground and takes appropriate damage (6 steps; see Falling Damage Table, p. 207, ED).

### Once the characters are clear of the ruins, read the following:

You stagger away from the dying kaer, throwing yourself to the ground at a safe vantage point to catch your breath. Behind you, the kaer collapses with a thundering roar, raising a cloud of black dust and burying Akarem's huts in the rubble.

As the dust settles, the mist begins to thin. For a moment you feel dizzy and your sight blurs. As it clears, you see before you a most welcome sight: the open road, a few dozen paces to the south. You head toward it, giving thanks to the Passions that you have survived to accomplish your errand. A brief return to Blood Wood to collect the blood ivy, and you may claim the payment that awaits you in Haven.

As you take your first step onto the road, you hazard one final glance back at the ruins of Akarem, committing to memory the scene of your triumph. You shall have quite a tale to tell. . .

The characters should return to Blood Wood to report on the activities of Fegis Kul. By now, they should also know that Kalourin was involved with the Horror as well as the Theran slaver.

Fegis Kul and his slavers have left the area in search of new captives. For more information about using Fegis Kul and his men in subsequent adventures, see **Loose Ends**, p. 85.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters fail to perform Sheena's ritual, the village remains intact and the Horror will return the next day. Gamemasters may consider letting the characters escape the cursed village before the Mist returns, but should give them the sense that they have left vital business unfinished. In this case, the characters should receive no Legend Points for defeating the villagers or the Mist in battle, though they may earn Legend Points for other creatures slain.

# KALOURIN'S LAST GAMBIT



## OVERVIEW

The characters return safely to Blood Wood, where thorn men created by Kalourin ambush them.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Tired but triumphant, you set out toward the northwest, making for the place at which you departed Blood Wood. After the terrors and triumphs of the past few days, your thoughts turn longingly toward the Elven Court, the palace with its sumptuous rooms, and perhaps a flagon or two of good elven wine. Remembering only the beauty and comforts, you forget the subtle danger of Blood Wood's strange magic and the unease you felt within it.

The journey from ruined Akarem to the border of Blood Wood passes without incident. Perhaps the Passions have taken pity on you and cleared your way; or better still, perhaps the powers of darkness fear to



confront you lest they share the fate of the Mist. No matter the reason, you are grateful for it.

The vast, cool, green dimness of Blood Wood rises before you on the horizon, looming closer with your every step. As you draw near the giant trees, your pace slows; their terrible majesty still takes your breath away. The strange cries of animals from somewhere deep within the green gloom, the sight of leaves and flowers that you still can put no name to, and the heady sense of power lying thick as honey over the woodland combine to inspire your fear and awe.

As you approach the place from which you left, the ferns and undergrowth part before you as if in reverence. Setting aside half-fearful wonder, you set foot firmly on the spongy soil of the magically cleared path and begin to follow it through the trees.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Though Blood Wood remains an unsettling place, the characters should feel overpowering relief in returning to it after the terrors they faced in Akarem. As much as possible, lull them into a false sense of security. Strange animal noises might give way to beautiful music, soothing despite its otherworldly quality, or the scent of some pleasant flower might briefly overcome the wood's characteristic faint smell of rotting leaves. Drop no hint of the coming ambush; let the attack come as a nasty surprise.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Having felt the loss of his Horror-granted magical abilities, Kalourin knows what the characters have done and hates them for it. He also knows that they will return to Blood Wood to claim the blood ivy from Takaris. Fearing that they will expose his treacherous

dealings with the Horror, he has prepared a nasty welcome for them. Once the adventurers have traveled a good way into the woods, have each player character make a Perception Test against a Difficulty of 22. If any character's test is successful, he or she senses something wrong.

**After a player character makes a successful Perception Test, read the following:**



A passing breeze rattles branches along your path, making the leaves whisper. As the breeze dies away, you hear the strange and unwelcome sound of loudly rustling plants, as if they are giving chase.

**If the characters look behind them, read the following:**

Dismayed, you watch as the plants that made way for your passage move to close the gap behind you, hiding the path beneath their glossy leaves. They move up to your very heels, as if herding you forward.

Give the players time to react to this odd phenomenon, roleplaying their surprise and confusion. If too much discussion begins to slow the action, continue with the following text.

**When the player characters decide to continue onward, read the following:**

A sharp whistle splits the air as a slender, flying thing misses your cheek by a fingerspan, imbedding itself in a nearby tree. It is a spear, its haft still quivering from the impact. Before you can draw breath, the surrounding woods come alive with spears, hurtling straight toward you!

The spear was thrown by one of the thorn men sent by Kalourin to ambush the characters. Once the thorn men have thrown their spears, they rush the characters and engage them in melee combat.



### THORN MEN (1 per character)

#### Attributes

DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 6  
PER: 5      WIL: 6      CHA: 4

Initiative: 7

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 8

Damage: 12

Number of Spells: None

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 8

Spell Defense: 10

Social Defense: 15

Armor: 4

Mystic Armor: 5

Knockdown: 5

Recovery Tests/Day: 3

Death Rating: 40

Wound Threshold: 11

Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Combat Movement: 35

Full Movement: 70

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: Spears

Loot: None

After four Combat Rounds, the thorn men suddenly crumple lifeless to the ground. A patrol of blood elves on a routine perimeter patrol, none wearing Kalourin's armor, heads toward the characters and orders them to sheath their weapons and follow. If the characters display the rune-stick, the elves disregard it. For this elven patrol, use the game statistics given for the blood elves in **Blood Wood**, p. 40.

Allied with neither Kalourin nor Takaris, these blood elves escort the characters to the Queen's palace to face judgement for trespassing. Go to **Back to the Palace**, the next encounter.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

In this straightforward ambush, the characters risk getting wiped out. If it looks like the characters are losing the fight, arrange for a squad of Takaris' blood elves to come to the characters' rescue before the patrol shows up.

If the adventurers decided to enter Blood Wood at any point other than the one from which they left, feel free to launch thorn men and hostile blood elves at them until they either die in combat or wise up and take the proper path.



# BACK TO THE PALACE



## OVERVIEW

Upon their return to the Queen's Palace, the characters meet with Takaris and tell him what they have learned. The Blood Warder rewards them by arranging an audience with Queen Alachia, hoping that they will corroborate his accusations against Kalourin.

## SETTING THE STAGE

You stand once more before the Elven Queen's magnificent palace. The Palace Guard, resplendent in their richly decorated uniforms, eye you with mixed arrogance and suspicion, but offer you no challenge this time. As before, the beauty of their clothing and faces coupled with the dreadful thorns that mar their smooth skins ought to repel you, but strangely do not. Elven lords and ladies of noble bearing and terrible beauty stroll along the greensward and the palace balconies, paying your insignificant selves no heed.

The leader of your armed escort enters the palace, returning moments later with Blood Warde Kalourin. His stern looks bode no welcome this time; instead, his dispassionate stare shows tight-reined anger. He speaks, his voice brittle and hard.

"So—you return at last. Takaris cannot see you; he bade me make arrangements for your payment and your departure."

Behind Kalourin, you see Takaris emerge from the palace. At the sight of you, he calls out, striding forward as he speaks.

"Greetings upon your safe return, gentle friends! I shall see to your refreshment and then hear your news. Warde Kalourin, I would speak with these outsiders privately. Attend to your duties; I do not require your presence."

Kalourin's face twists in mingled anger, fear, and injured pride. "As you will," he growls. Bowing stiffly, he departs.

Takaris summons two of the guards to take your mounts to the stables. A third guard accompanies you into the palace, following in the Blood Warde's wake. Once within the palace walls, Takaris leads you to the chamber where first you met with him. As before, a servant appears as if in answer to some magical summons, bearing flagons of elven wine. Takaris bids you each take a glass, raising the last one himself.

"So, what news of the Theran slaver?"

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the awe inspired by the Elven Court's royalty, power, and terrifying beauty. From the Palace

Guard to the domestic staff, all the elves react to the common, inferior adventurers from outside Blood Wood with arrogant distaste. This attitude contrasts markedly with Takaris' behavior; with his every word and gesture, he tries to make the characters feel important. Use Takaris' attitude to heighten the characters' expectations about the richness of their reward.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Takaris wants to hear what the characters have learned about the slaver Fegis Kul, particularly as it relates to Kalourin. When they tell him of the formal alliance between the two, he feigns dismayed surprise. At this point, the characters may also tell Takaris about Kalourin's alliance with the Horror. This information truly shocks Takaris, but also gives him the means to

a more satisfying revenge than he had dreamed. If Queen Alachia happened to feel benevolent, mere dealings with a Theran slaver might earn Kalourin no more than loss of status. Dealings with a Horror, however, carry an automatic sentence of death. When the characters tell Takaris of Kalourin's pact with the Mist, he goes to inform the Queen at once. No matter how much or how little the characters tell Takaris, they



make a powerful and dangerous enemy of Kalourin. See **Kalourin's Next Move**, p. 72 of this section.

**Once the characters have told Takaris everything they wish to, read the following aloud:**

Takaris leaves the chamber, bidding you await his return. A curious gaze out the door shows you a pair of guards outside. You wonder briefly if the guards are to keep Kalourin out, or to keep you in. Fortunately for your peace of mind, Takaris returns in the space of a few moments, bearing a large package. His gaze benevolent, he offers it to you. "Your payment, friends: the blood ivy sought by the wizard Hiermon."

You take the parcel. The weight of it surprises you; you wonder that mere plants should be so heavy. A spicy, herbal smell rises from it, and you see the edge of a dark green leaf peeking out from a corner of the wrapping.

"My thanks for your pains," Takaris says. "'Tis Hiermon's good fortune to employ such able folk." Looking you over appraisingly, he continues. "You have done such good for the Elven Court that I am moved to reward you further. I can offer you a prize rare and precious that few outsiders dare dream of. What say you, friends?"

The prize, of course, is an audience with Queen Alachia. Though he does not say so, Takaris expects that she will question them about Kalourin and they will corroborate his own accusations. If the characters accept their mysterious extra reward, Takaris smiles and tells them to follow him.

## MEETING THE QUEEN

Takaris takes the adventurers outside the palace and leads them to a complex hedge maze on the palace grounds. If they ask about the maze, he says, "The maze safeguards our gracious sovereign lady. The maze changes often, and only Her Gracious Majesty's most loyal retainers know the way through it."

**As the characters enter the maze, read the following aloud:**

Takaris beckons you into the hedge. Despite the honey-sweet scent of powerful magics that seems to lie heavy on the maze, you have no choice but to follow. Within a scant few paces, you can see nothing but dark, glossy leaves and the glittering cloak that swirls from Takaris' back. You smell the heady scent of roses, but no insects swarm about these unnatural hedges. The path under your feet twists and turns and turns again, until your heads turn dizzy with the effort of

remembering from whence you came. At last you emerge into a clearing, from which rises a tower of gleaming white stone akin to alabaster. A balcony juts out from the tower, seeming to hang weightless from the glimmering walls. You stand under the balcony, gazing upward. At last, a figure steps onto the balcony and looks down at you.

The woman on the balcony seems to embody beauty, power, and desire. Of all the wondrous and terrible sights you have seen in Blood Wood, she is the most lovely and most terrible. The thorns that pierce her body only enhance her beauty; though cold and regal, she draws you. You realize that you desire her so fiercely because none dare touch her. Compelled by the unseen power that she wears like a cloak, you kneel to her. This vision of loveliness and anguish can only be the legendary Queen Alachia, sovereign ruler of the Elven Court.

She fixes her chill, regal gaze upon you, meeting each of your eyes in turn. The briefest glance from her mysterious, beautiful eyes makes your pulse race with longing.

"I have spoken with Blood Warder Takaris," she says. Her voice is birdsong at the height of spring, the music of a running brook, all the gentle and beautiful sounds that you have ever loved. "He told me of treachery within Blood Wood. Did he speak true?"

You would say yes to anything this woman asked, yet you dare not lie to her. You nod your heads, feeling it a mercy beyond price that the truth and your desires are the same.

She smiles at you, and the very sunlight shines brighter. "You have my gratitude." Reaching down, she picks something up and tosses it into the air. "Catch it before it strikes the ground!" she commands.

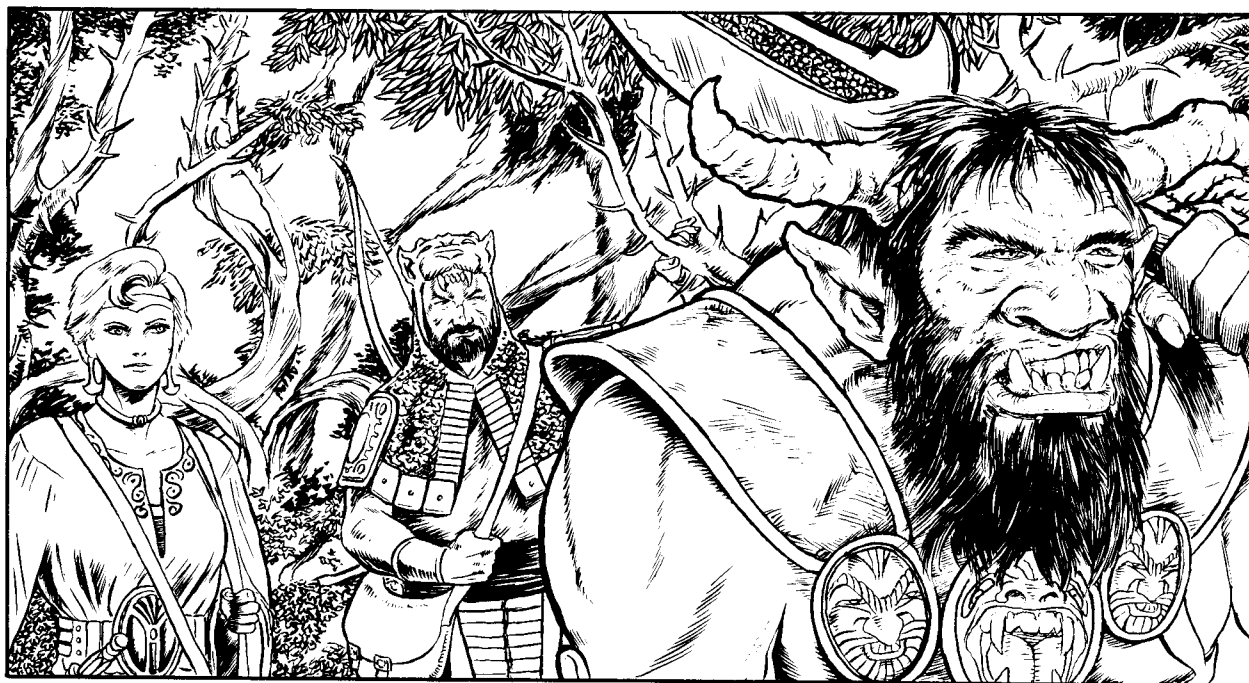
To catch Alachia's rose, a character must make a successful Dexterity Test against a Difficulty of 6. When a character catches the rose, one of its thorns pricks the character's skin, drawing a drop of blood which the rose absorbs.

**If a player character catches the rose, continue with the following:**

A lucky one among you reaches out his hand, and the object falls into it. He holds it up, and you see that it is a perfect white rose. Long, twisted thorns grow on its stalk.

"Study the rose," Queen Alachia commands. "Only by seeing its truths can you fathom what we are." Favoring you with a smile so full of sorrow that you cannot bear to leave her without comfort, she turns away and disappears into the tower.





His voice hushed, Takaris speaks. "You have seen Queen Alachia, as few save the Elven Court ever do. Truly, you are blessed among Name-givers."

### LEAVING BLOOD WOOD

After allowing the characters a good night's sleep, Takaris leads them to the border of Blood Wood, taking the same path that the characters took when they first arrived.

**When the characters set out for Haven, read the following to the players:**

Takaris steers you east toward the rising sun. At the border of the woodland, he stops. "Here we must part company," he announces. "Should you have occasion to visit Blood Wood again, carry the rose of Queen Alachia and none shall harm you. The rose will keep its bloom for a year and a day; beyond that time, it withers and its enchantment dies.

"One last warning before you depart; Kalourin has left Blood Wood. My soldiers know not where he has gone, but I fear he may seek revenge against you for what you have done. Fare you well; I wish you a safe journey!"

Takaris walks back into Blood Wood, which swallows him without a trace. Facing eastward, you feel the warmth of the rising sun on your face. Your strength renewed by sleep and hope, you spur your mounts toward Haven.

### KALOURIN'S NEXT MOVE

Regardless of how much the characters told Takaris upon returning from Akarem, they have made a powerful enemy in Kalourin. He knows their names and faces, and wants them dead. By wounding and nearly destroying the Mist, they have deprived him of his power; if they exposed any of his dealings with the Mist or with Fegis Kul, they have also deprived him of his home and privileged status. If the characters decided to keep quiet about Kalourin's unsavory activities, he seeks their deaths anyway to avenge the loss of his Horror-granted power and to prevent them from blackmailing him in future.

Kalourin has left Blood Wood for Haven to await the characters' return. If the Theran spies Tural and Alkor are still alive, he joins up with them; if not, he gets reinforcements from their employer, the wealthy trader Agramen.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

The only potential problem in this encounter occurs if the characters choose not to tell Takaris about Kalourin's involvement with the Mist or Fegis Kul. If this happens, Takaris does not arrange the audience with Queen Alachia or mention Kalourin's disappearance. However, Kalourin still travels to Haven to kill the characters, because their knowledge poses a threat to him.



# SCORCHED EARTH POLICY



## OVERVIEW

On the way back to Haven, the characters encounter a band of ork scorchers. Not related to the other events in this adventure, this encounter exists to present the players with another aspect of life in the world of **Earthdawn**. Despite the potential danger the ork scorchers pose, this encounter need not turn violent. If the gamemaster thinks it inappropriate to his game, he may skip this encounter.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Thus far, the ride back to Haven has proved uneventful. Saddle-weary after more than a week's travel, you feel grateful for the respite. As you travel through the gently rolling fields and patches of cool green woodland, the landscape that seemed so beautiful when last you passed this way now seems eerily empty and silent. The shadows of trees make you start in momentary panic whenever you approach them; whether



you will or no, you cannot help remembering the Horror of Akarem and wondering if some like dread creature lies hidden in every shadow. On this journey, you have faced the true corruption of the Horrors and the twisted evil of their allies. For the first time, you truly understand why Barsaive needs heroes.

You ride onward, lulled to drowsiness in spite of yourselves by the heat of the noonday sun and the muffled, rhythmic clapping of your horses' hooves against packed earth. Thus far, you have traveled within a day's ride of the Midland Trading Post and are ten days from Haven. Remembering the Midland Inn's good food, strong ale, and soft beds, you urge your horses to a swifter pace. If you hurry, you may reach the trading post by nightfall.

Ahead on the road, you make out a group of riders heading toward you. As they draw nearer, you can see ten orks astride great war horses. Seeing you, the orks spur their mounts to a gallop, all ten pulling their steeds to a halt as one within forty paces of you. The largest ork knees his mount forward, closing half the distance between you. Built like a small mountain, he wears leather armor that shows the shape of his bulging muscles. The

strength in his arms could snap your neck with a single blow. Well though not richly armed and equipped, he glares at you, then puffs out his chest and bellows, "I am Rustang! We claim this stretch of road as ours! Pay tribute, or you shall not pass!"



## THEMES AND IMAGES

Convey the feeling of a long, weary journey nearing its end. Make the characters feel exhausted, dragged, nearly spent; the ork scorcheders are just one more damned thing going wrong on this trip. The orks themselves are more interested in cold, hard cash and a chance to strut and swagger than they are in actual combat.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Rustang and his scorcheders ply their extortion trade in the region between Blood Wood and the Midland Trading Post. If asked how much to pay for tribute, Rustang demands 10 silver pieces per character. If the characters have no cash or not enough, Rustang and his cronies will take food, alcohol, or weapons of comparable value. For prices, see the Goods and Services Table beginning on p. 263, ED.

Should the characters decide to attack instead of paying, Rustang and his band gladly give them a fight.



**ORK SCORCHERS (10)****Attributes**

Dexterity: 5  
 Strength: 7  
 Toughness: 8  
 Perception: 5  
 Willpower: 5  
 Charisma: 5

**Movement**

Full: 65  
 Combat: 33

**Initiative: 5****Combat**

Physical Defense: 7  
 Spell Defense: 7  
 Social Defense: 7  
 Armor: 7  
 Mystic Armor: 0

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 7

Damage: 12 (lance)

13 (spiked mace)

**Damage**

Death Rating: 43  
 Wound Threshold: 12  
 Knockdown: 13  
 Unconsciousness Rating: 35  
 Recovery Tests/Day: 3

**Equipment**

Adventurer's kit  
 Daggers (2)  
 Lance  
 Padded leather armor  
 Rider's shield  
 Spiked mace  
 Trail rations  
 Traveler's garb  
 War horse  
 1D10 silver pieces/ork; Rustang has 1D6 gold pieces

**Legend Points:** 100



As mentioned above, the orks want money more than a fight. In a brawl with the characters, they attempt to beat the adventurers black and blue, rob them of coin and treasure, and ride off with their spoils. Even if the characters lose the fight, it is unlikely that the ork scorchers will kill them.

If the characters give in and pay the toll, they can escape this encounter without injury. If they wish, they may try to intimidate the orks into letting them pass without payment. To accomplish this difficult task, a character must make a successful Interaction Test (see *Gamemastering Earthdawn*, p. 237, ED).

**BACK AT THE MIDLAND**

If they wish, the characters may stay at the Midland Inn on their return trip to Haven. For details on the inn and the trading post, see *Midland Trading Post*, p. 35. During their stay, they may hear any number of interesting rumors at the gamemaster's discretion. See *Rumors and Research*, p. 100-01.

**ENEMY ACTIONS**

Though the characters do not interact directly with Kalourin and the Theran spies until the next encounter, *Hiermon Again*, the information below allows the



gamemaster to keep abreast of action taken by Kalourin and the Therans up to this point.

#### **Theran Spies**

Unless the characters killed Tural and Alkor in a previous encounter, they have since returned to Haven. They report to Agramen that the characters brought the Everliving Flower, which they consider a Theran treasure, to Blood Wood.

#### **Kalourin**

Whether or not the characters told Takaris about Kalourin's involvement with Fegis Kul and the Mist, Kalourin has traveled to Haven to await the characters' return. If Tural and Alkor are still alive, he will find them and order them to keep watch for the characters.

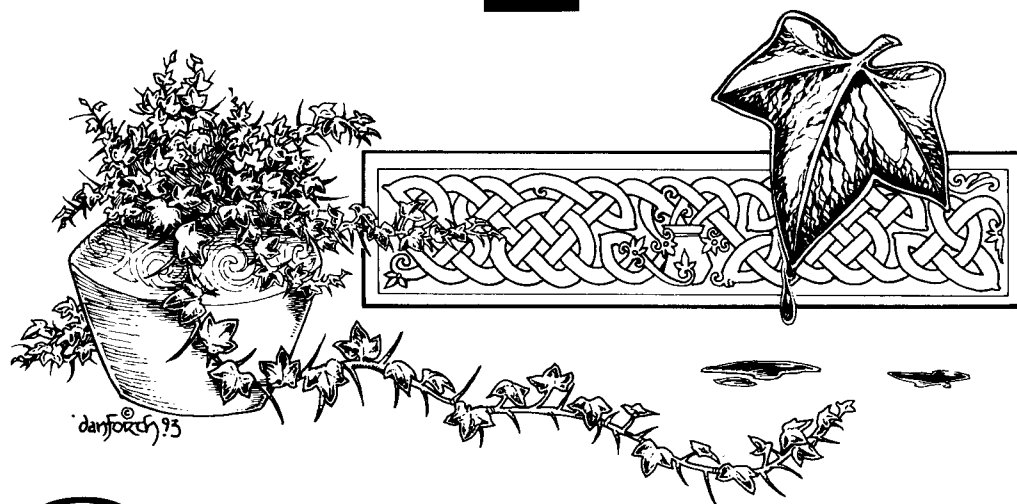
If they are dead, Kalourin will use Agramen's spy network to look out for the characters. In either case, Kalourin hides out in a secret chamber beneath Agramen's residence until the characters return to town.

## **TROUBLESHOOTING**

If the characters look as though they may get themselves killed in a fight with the orks, the gamemaster has two options. He may either fudge the outcome so that the characters simply come away battered, or he may allow them to die in order to reinforce the idea that engaging in combat tends to be a risky choice.



# HIERMON AGAIN



## O VERVIEW

In this final encounter, the characters return to Haven to deliver the blood ivy to Hiermon. Unknown to the characters, the wizard is under Kalourin's control. When the characters appear in Hiermon's apartments, the Blood Warder reveals himself and attacks them, aided by Tural and Alkor (or two other Therans working for Agramen). During the battle, the Mist manifests itself from Kalourin's amulet, killing him, and then turns on the characters.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The sun is high in the sky when you reach the town of Haven. You ride through the crowded, bustling, noisy streets toward the Old Neighborhood, eager to fulfill Hiermon's errand and receive his knowledge of your amulet in payment. Whether because you know where you are going or because of the air of hard experience that clings to you,



no one stares warily after you as you pass by shops and market stalls. You return your faithful, hardy steeds to the stable from which you acquired them, garnering a few curious looks but no questions. After arranging the night's lodging at Loak's Legacy, you turn toward Brenula's Arms. Your ordeal nears its end, and you can almost taste success.

If only you could shake the feeling that someone is following you. . .

Ignoring your nagging unease, you walk into Brenula's Arms. As before, Brenula comes to meet you. She seems not to recognize you, but you let it pass; your dearest comrades would scarce know you under so many days' worth of travel grime.

"Welcome to my humble shop," Brenula says quietly. "How may I serve you?"

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the feelings of excitement, triumph, and invulnerability. When the team first arrived in Haven, they felt like country bumpkins in the big city; now they are bona fide heroes, about to claim a rich reward of valuable magical knowledge. Let them swagger and strut; after surviving this adventure, they should feel almost invincible.

As the characters travel through Haven, every so often the gamemaster should puncture their triumphant dream bubble with hints that something can still go wrong. They may sense unfriendly watchers in the crowd or simply feel a creeping unease that they can't pin down. This feeling intensifies when they reach Brenula's.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Like Hiermon, Brenula is under Kalourin's magical control. The blood elf waits for the characters upstairs in Hiermon's chambers. Brenula does not remember them because Kalourin does not know whether the ork would recognize a band of adventurers she has seen only once, and the characters may find her lack of memory odd. At the gamemaster's discretion, the characters may make Perception Tests in order to notice any unusual circumstances. A result of 15 or better reveals that Brenula appears dazed, and seems to look through the characters rather than at them. On a result of 18 or better, a character also notices that Brenula did not handle her crystal talisman. At this point, the characters may begin to realize that something is amiss.

When the characters ask to see Hiermon, the ork leads them to him immediately, without checking first. Once again, the gamemaster may allow each character to

make a Perception Test; on a result of 15 or better, they notice Brenula's odd behavior. If they ask her about her strange actions, she claims that she is not feeling well.

## SEEING HIERMON

Kalourin is controlling Hiermon from the adjacent room, putting him through the motions of conversation with the characters.

**When the characters enter Hiermon's chambers, read the following to the players:**

The wizard has his back to you, seemingly lost in study. As you walk toward him, you see that he is studying the amulet you acquired from the lair of the jehuthra outside the village of Tureem.

Sensing your nearness, he turns toward you. His eyes are glazed, as though slumber has eluded him for many a day. "So, you have returned. You tarried longer than I expected, but no matter. Have you the ivy?"

**When the characters hand over the package of ivy, read the following:**

Hiermon drops the hard-won ivy on his work table with hardly a glance. "My thanks," he says, his gaze fixed unblinkingly upon you. "You shall now have your payment."

As the wizard's last word dies away, his body stiffens as though lightning-struck. As you draw breath to call out his name, Kalourin enters, followed by two armed men. With an evil smile and angry eyes, he makes the gestures of a spell. Kalourin's amulet begins to glow, growing brighter as he nears the spell's completion. With the final gesture, he shouts, "Any who harm Kalourin of Blood Wood shall pay the cost! You sought to expose me and take my power; now I will have your blood!"

## Kalourin's Spell

Kalourin has just cast the spirit grip spell on all the characters. The gamemaster may either make Kalourin's Spellcasting Test and follow up a successful result with an Effect Test to determine damage, or assume that Kalourin succeeds at his Spellcasting Test and simply make the Effect Test. For the Spellcasting Test, the gamemaster should use the highest Spell Defense among the characters as the Difficulty Number, plus 1 for each additional character. For example, if the highest Spell Defense among six characters is a 9, the Difficulty Number for the Spellcasting Test would be 14 (9 + 5 = 14).

If the spell is successful, each of the characters affected suffers 17 steps of damage (D20 + D10). Physical armor protects against this spell.



Combat begins in the round after the spell is cast. At the start of that round, Tural and Alkor (or two other Therans) enter the room and attack the characters. Kalourin and the Therans will fight the characters to the death. If a character dies in this battle, so be it. If the Therans are hirelings of Agramen's other than Tural and Alkor, use Tural and Alkor's game statistics for them.

## THE MIST RETURNS

At the beginning of the third combat round, the Mist emerges from Kalourin's amulet. As a Pattern Item of the alliance between the Blood Warder and the Horror, the amulet acts as a bridge by which the Horror can return to the physical world. For an explanation of Pattern Items, see *Workings of Magic*, p. 142, ED.

**When the Mist begins to manifest, read the following to the players:**

As Kalourin raises his hands in yet another spell, he begins to shake as if palsied. His glowing amulet flares as brightly as the sun, so brightly that it stings your eyes. From the center of the amulet, a swirling mist begins to form. As the mist pours out and grows more solid, the elf gives a thin, choking scream and collapses lifelessly to the floor. The swirling mist begins to hold a shape, one you hoped never to see again save in nightmares. A few more heartbeats and the Mist stands before you, its loathsome eyes turned on you with hatred.

The Mist has returned to exact revenge against the characters for driving it from Akarem, and the characters are in real trouble. Though the Horror's manifestation killed Kalourin, the characters now face an even deadlier enemy.

Luckily for the characters, the Mist cannot attack during the Combat Round in which it manifests. The characters can use this Horror-free round to attack the Therans, if they are still alive, or to attack the Horror before it finishes materializing. In the following combat round the Mist launches its attack on the characters, fully recovered from the damage they inflicted on it in *Kaer of Akarem*.

## Help From Hiermon

Kalourin's death shatters his control over Hiermon, and the wizard awakes to the sound and fury of battle. Realizing what is happening before his eyes, he attempts to use his magic to aid the characters. He first casts a counterspell spell to help the characters resist spells cast by the Mist. The gamemaster should

make a Spellcasting Test for Hiermon, using the highest Spell Defense among the characters as the Difficulty Number. If necessary, Hiermon will spend a Karma Point on his Spellcasting Test to enhance his chances of success (see *Game Concepts*, p. 37, ED). If the test is successful, the gamemaster then makes an Effect Test for Hiermon using Step 18 dice (D20 + D12). The result becomes the Spell Defense for all the characters for the next 17 combat rounds.

If the Therans survive long enough, they escape out the window two rounds after the Mist appears. At this point, the characters can concentrate on fighting the Horror. If necessary, the gamemaster may use Hiermon to help the characters defeat the Mist, but if possible should allow one of the characters to deliver the killing blow.

## After the Fight

Once the characters have caught their breaths, they may complete their business with Hiermon. In exchange for the blood ivy, the wizard shares with the characters the following Key Knowledges he has discovered about their mysterious amulet:

- The amulet has 5 thread ranks.
- No Deeds are associated with the amulet.
- The amulet grants its wearer increased resistance to attacks.
- In order to weave a thread to the amulet, the characters must learn its Name.

Gaining more information about the amulet requires further study using the Item History Talent. This talent is available to Troubadours, or can be acquired by a human character through his or her Versatility Talent.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Given the level of opposition, one or more of the characters may well die in this encounter. The gamemaster should try to keep at least some of the characters alive, but every adventure in Barsaive carries the risk of death. The gamemaster should not attempt to minimize or ignore this reality.

If all the characters die, the gamemaster might wish to create a follow-up adventure in which a new group of characters seeks out the dead ones and learns the story of their deaths at the hands of Kalourin. See *Loose Ends*, p. 84, for more on ways to use story ideas from this adventure in further adventures in the gamemaster's campaign.

## LOOSE ENDS



**T**he information in this section allows the gamemaster to tie up the adventure's loose ends, and suggests ways to use story elements and characters from **Mists of Betrayal** in future **Earthdawn** adventures.

### POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Though the characters have had a long and difficult journey, their trials have gained them much. In addition to learning the Key Knowledges of the amulet they found in the village of Tureem, the adventurers have considerably enhanced their reputations in more than a few eyes. In Haven and its environs, powerful and influential people might seek out the characters' services in the future. Most importantly for the players, their characters' exploits in this adventure have earned them Legend Points and enabled them to begin building their own legends (see **Building Your Legend**, pp. 218-27, ED).

In addition to giving the adventurers the knowledge he promised in exchange for the blood ivy, a grateful Hiermon arranges for the characters to keep the mounts he lent them. The wizard also expresses interest



in chronicling the characters' adventures, especially the horrifying events that took place in the village of Akarem.

If the characters defeated or talked their way cleverly past Rustang and his ork scorcher (**Scorched Earth Policy**, p. 73), Rustang and his band feel a grudging awe for them. Rustang admires strength and bravado, even when he is on the receiving end. By impressing the ork scorcher, the characters have made unexpected allies. The next time they land in desperate trouble during an overland journey, Rustang and his orks may ride out of nowhere to save the characters' hides.

Having defeated his rival Kalourin with considerable help from the characters, Blood Warde Takaris is inclined to feel kindly toward them, and would certainly do nothing to harm or interfere with the characters should their paths cross in future. However, his natural elven arrogance may prevent him from actively doing the characters any favors. After all, a Blood Warde of the Elven Court has far more important concerns than the needs of a scruffy band of outsiders, particularly since Takaris has inherited the job of defending Blood Wood from trespassers.

Besides making friends, of course, the adventurers also make enemies. Agramen, the Theran sympathizer who owns the import/export business, hates the characters for having foiled his attempts to snare the Everliving Flower and for injuring (or killing) two of his best spies. He will listen to the stories told of the adventurers at local inns in Haven, and perhaps even buy the characters a drink or two, but only as a means of discovering some way in which to avenge his losses at their hands. Fegis Kul, the Theran slaver, also has little love for the adventurers who cost him a lucrative chunk of his slave trade. A few days after the characters leave the freed village of Akarem, Fegis returns to the village and finds it reduced to rubble. Having lost both a buyer for his slaves and his powerful Blood Warde ally through the characters' machinations, Fegis Kul may well plot revenge.

As for the Mist, if the characters fail to destroy it, they have made the worst possible enemy. The Horror will turn its considerable powers toward destroying them.

## AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

This section provides guidelines for awarding Legend Points to the players. As recommended in the **Introduction**, the gamemaster should award Legend Points at the end of each game session as well as at the end of the adventure. The following guidelines for Legend Awards indicate the points to be awarded by the gamemaster for each task accomplished or goal reached in a game session.

## GAME SESSIONS

The four suggested game sessions outlined in the following pages each include certain encounters; if the gamemaster has organized the encounters differently in his game sessions, he should award Legend Points as appropriate. Reflecting the fact that **Mists of Betrayal** includes several particularly difficult situations for beginning **Earthdawn** players, the system for awarding Legend Points described below differs slightly from the system given in the **Earthdawn** rulebook (pp. 241-42). Instead of awarding a character a number of Legend Points determined by his Circle and consulting the Legend Award Table (p. 242, **ED**), the points for each Legend Award are already given. In addition, these Legend Awards are somewhat higher than the average First, Second, or Third Circle character might normally achieve.

Each game session also includes several different Legend Point awards. The **session goal** is the objective of the session. If achieved, each character gets a given number of Legend Points, called the **Session Legend Award**. Note that each session has a different Session Legend Award, depending on the difficulty the characters face in achieving that goal.

The **Creature Legend Award** appears in the table on p. 83, and lists the available Legend Points for defeating creatures and/or opponents in each game session, arranged by the type and number of each creature and opponent fought as well as by the number of player characters. The Legend Points listed for each creature represent the total number of points for each type, not the number of Legend Points per creature; for example, the Creature Legend Award for the jehuthras that the characters battle in **Going Hunting**, p. 17, is 500 Legend Points for both jehuthras, not 500 for each one. The gamemaster should divide the total Creature Legend Award equally among the player characters (see p. 242, **ED**). Round points per character down to the nearest multiple of 5; for example, 500 Legend Points divided by 6 characters equals 83.3 points per character, rounded down to 80 points per character.

Entries marked with an asterisk indicate creatures or opponents that the characters may choose not to fight. If they battle these opponents, add the indicated Legend Points to the total Creature Legend Award, and divide that total by the number of player characters.

A character can also receive a certain number of Legend Points for **creative roleplaying and/or heroics**. Each game session below includes a list of the types of actions characters might take that warrant this award. A single character may only receive one such award during a given session. The Legend Points listed for various acts of creative roleplaying or heroics are not divided among the characters. If they choose, the player characters may sell certain items for a number of silver pieces equal to the Legend Points that item is worth.

Specific treasures found in each encounter bring the characters **Treasure Legend Points**; finding or



acquiring each of these treasures earns the group a given number of Legend Points. As with points for defeating creatures, the gamemaster should divide these Legend Points equally among the player characters.

The **adventure goal** appears in the final game session, in lieu of a session goal. The final session also includes an **Adventure Legend Award** in place of the Session Legend Award, representing the Legend Points awarded for completing the adventure successfully. For more information on completing adventure goals and earning Adventure Legend Awards, see p. 242, **ED**.

### Session One

In the first game session, the characters arrive in the village of Tureem, hunt down the jehuthras, discover the mysterious amulet, travel to Haven to meet the wizard Hiermon and agree to take the Everliving Flower to Blood Wood.

This session includes the encounters **Arrival in Tureem, Going Hunting, Haven, and Visiting Hiermon**. The characters' session goal is to meet with Hiermon and agree to bring the Everliving Flower to Blood Wood in exchange for the wizard's research into the mysterious amulet from Tureem. The Session Legend Award is 60 Legend Points.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for defeating creatures and/or opponents according to the table on p. 83.

The gamemaster should award characters Legend Points for creative roleplaying and/or heroics if they take the following actions:

Sharing tales with the residents of Tureem or Haven = 30 points

Accepting Hiermon's offer without negotiating for a better deal = 30 points

The treasures that the characters may acquire in this session are the thorax webs of the two jehuthras and the Amulet of Dirac. The characters gain 150 Legend Points for the thorax webs, which they may sell for the same number of silver pieces. The gamemaster should divide these Legend Points and the silver equally among the player characters. Legend Points for the amulet are awarded at the end of the adventure.

### Session Two

In this session, the characters leave Haven for Blood Wood. They fight off highwaymen on the road, and are attacked by a band of orks at the Midland Trading Post. As they continue on their journey, they come across a caravan recently destroyed by a Horror. Upon arrival at Blood Wood, the characters confront a band of blood elves patrolling the wood's borders.

This session includes the encounters **Cross Country, Ambush!, Midland Trading Post, Caravan of Death, and Blood Wood**. The characters' session goal is to arrive at Blood Wood alive and reasonably well. The Session Legend Award is 80 Legend Points.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for defeating creatures and/or opponents according to the table on p. 83.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for creative roleplaying and/or heroics if the characters take the following actions:

Sharing tales and legends at the Midland Trading Post = 40 points

Defeating the highwaymen without killing them = 40 points

Defending against the ork attack without destroying the inn = 40 points

Paying for damage done to the inn = 40 points

The characters gain no Treasure Legend Points in this game session.

### Session Three

In this session, the characters meet with Blood Warder Takaris, deliver the Everliving Flower, and agree to find the Theran slaver Fegis Kul. They follow Fegis Kul into the village of Akarem, where the slavers and a band of blood elves loyal to Blood Warder Kalourin capture them and leave them to be slain by the Horror, the Mist. They escape confinement in Akarem's kaer, search the kaer, and drive the Horror from the village.

This session includes the encounters **Meeting a Blood Warder, Search for a Slaver, Village of Mists, Inside Akarem, and Kaer of Akarem**. The session goal is to drive the Horror from the village, thereby freeing its residents from the Mist's baneful influence. The Session Legend Award is 125 Legend Points.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for defeating creatures and/or opponents according to the table, p. 83.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for creative roleplaying and/or heroics if they take the following actions:

Dancing with and/or freeing Sheena the Spectral Dancer = 65 points

Refusing to fight the villagers = 65 points

Attacking the Mist singlehandedly = 65 points

The treasures that the characters may acquire in this encounter are three shadowmant stingers and the Staff of Akarem the Mage Builder. For the stingers, the group earns a total of 180 Legend Points. If they sell the stingers, the group earns the same number of silver pieces. The group also gains 125 Legend Points for finding the Staff of Akarem the Mage Builder.

### Session Four

In the final game session, the characters return to the Queen's Palace in Blood Wood, overcoming an attack by Kalourin's thorn men on the way. At the palace, they meet Takaris and inform him of Kalourin's involvement with the Horror and the Theran slaver.



After an audience with Queen Alachia, the characters depart for Haven with the blood ivy that Hiermon requested. On the road, they encounter a band of ork scorchers. Once back in Haven, they go to see Hiermon and find Kalourin there with two Theran spies. Kalourin and the Therans attack the characters; during the battle the Mist emerges from Kalourin's amulet, killing the elf. The Horror attacks the characters, deter-

mined to kill them for driving it out of Akarem.

This session includes the encounters **Kalourin's Last Gambit**, **Back to the Palace**, **Scorched Earth Policy**, and **Hiermon Again**. The adventure goal is to return to Haven, deliver the blood ivy to Hiermon, fight off the Therans and Kalourin, and defeat the Mist. The Adventure Legend Award is 300 Legend Points.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for

### CREATURE/OPPONENT AWARD TABLE

#### SESSION 1

Creature/Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Jehuthras	500	500	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Award Per Character</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>60</b>

#### SESSION 2

Creature/Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Highwaymen	360	420	480
Orks	400	400	400
Blood elves*	840*	840*	840*
<b>Total (w/out blood elves)</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>880</b>
<b>Award Per Character</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>110</b>

#### SESSION 3

Creature/Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Villagers	335	335	335
Krilworms	900	900	900
Shadowmants	300	300	300
Ghouls	540	630	720
Cadavermen	440	440	440
Fegis Kul's men*			
Orks*	250*	250*	250*
Humans*	750*	750*	750*
Trolls*	300*	300*	300*
Blood elves*	630*	630*	630*
<b>Total (w/out Therans or blood elves)</b>	<b>2,515</b>	<b>2,605</b>	<b>2,695</b>
<b>Award Per Character</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>335</b>

#### SESSION 4

Creature/Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Thorn Men	600	700	800
The Mist	2000	2000	2000
Tural	150	150	150
Alkor	100	100	100
Ork Scorchers*	1,000*	1,000*	1,000*
<b>Total (w/out ork scorchers)</b>	<b>2,850</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>3,050</b>
<b>Award Per Character</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>380</b>

defeating creatures and/or opponents according to the table on p. 83.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for creative roleplaying and/or heroics if the characters take the following actions:

Speaking to Queen Alachia without insulting her = 75 points

Sharing stories at the Midland Trading Post = 75 points

Getting past the ork scorchers without paying toll or fighting = 75 points

Noticing odd behavior by Brenula and/or Hiermon = 75 points

Though the player characters acquire no new treasure in this session, they receive 150 Legend Points for the Amulet of Dirac that they found in *Going Hunting* (p. 17).

## TOTAL LEGEND POINT AWARD

The Total Legend Point Award serves as a guideline for the gamemaster. He may award more or fewer Legend Points depending on the circumstances of his game, but the total should not vary drastically from the average given below. Based on the figures listed above in each game session, a single character who completes *Mists of Betrayal* should receive an average of 1,845 Legend Points. This average assumes 7 players in a group and does not include points earned for battling optional opponents.

## CAMPAIGN IDEAS

Published *Earthdawn* adventures are designed to fit into an existing campaign with little or no extra work on the part of the gamemaster. Some of the situations and people the characters face in an adventure need not pertain to that adventure only, but can lead to other adventures in the gamemaster's overall campaign. For example, if the characters drive a Horror from a town or city but do not kill it, the Horror can turn up to plague the characters in a later adventure.

Similarly, the events preceding an adventure can lead to any number of other situations. For example, if an adventure's background involves disputes among the Blood Warders in the Elven Court, as in *Mists of Betrayal*, these disputes might lead to a full-scale war between the elves of Blood Wood and the Kingdom of Throal in a later adventure.

As the previous examples make clear, adventures do not exist by themselves. The world of an *Earthdawn* campaign should be dynamic, and should change over time. By using events in adventures to trigger changes in the overall campaign, the players and characters can watch the changes happen from day one, giving the adventures the sense of reality vital to good roleplaying.

By providing adventures that you can integrate into your campaigns, we hope to help make your *Earthdawn* game the best it can be. Whether or not you use a given adventure as written, you should be able to draw ideas and information from it that you can use to enhance your own *Earthdawn* adventures and campaigns.

The following characters and story elements from *Mists of Betrayal* can most easily be used in further adventures. The gamemaster should feel free to use the information in whatever way he sees fit in his *Earthdawn* campaign.

## THE MIST

If the characters defeat the Mist without destroying it, the Horror will most likely victimize another small village similar to Akarem. If it wants revenge badly enough, the Mist may follow the characters, biding its time until it can strike at them. It may choose to kill them or simply to make their lives a living hell. For example, the Mist may follow the characters on their subsequent travels and attack each town, city, or village that the adventurers pass through. By attacking innocent residents of these towns and cities rather than striking at the characters themselves, the Mist can ensure that the characters are blamed for the Horror's atrocities.



## FEGIS KUL

Fegis Kul, the Theran slaver, continues to operate in the area between Blood Wood and the Serpent River. Though the fate of Akarem ultimately causes him only minor inconvenience, Fegis Kul will be furious when he learns of Kalourin's disgrace and death. The former Blood Warder was a valuable ally, and the slaver will go to considerable lengths to avenge his loss. Through use of his extensive network of slaving contacts, Fegis can easily learn the identities of those who destroyed Kalourin and Akarem, and he will be out for blood. He may pay his hired thugs to assassinate the characters, attempt to capture them and sell them into slavery, or cause any number of other difficulties for the characters during the gamemaster's campaign.

## AGRAMEN

Though not happy at the characters' safe return to Haven, Agramen will not act openly against them for fear of exposing his operations. However, he may use his spy network to keep tabs on them and take future opportunities to make trouble for the adventurers.

Whether or not Agramen takes action against the characters, he continues to monitor activities in Parlainth. When Agramen informs his contacts at Sky Point of the removal of the Everliving Flower, his Theran superiors order him to retrieve it from Blood Wood. Agramen and his Theran spy network will appear in future **Earthdawn** products.

## TURAL AND ALKOR

If Agramen's spies Tural and Alkor survived the adventure, they will lurk in the shadows of the Old Neighborhood, tailing the characters and hoping for a chance to ambush them. Because the characters humiliated them by defeating them at every turn, the spies have every reason to want them injured, enslaved, or dead. Though the wizard Hiermon knows that Tural and Alkor worked with Blood Warder Kalourin, he and the rest of Haven know nothing of the spies' connection to Agramen's network.

## TAKARIS

With Kalourin gone from Blood Wood, Takaris has eliminated his primary rival and inherited the job of defending Blood Wood from trespassers. If the characters approach Blood Wood, they will meet the same guard patrol that they met on their first visit, though the guards' armor displays Takaris' symbol rather than Kalourin's. Takaris will allow the adventurers free passage through Blood Wood for the year and a day that Queen Alachia's rose lasts; whether he does them any additional favors is up to the gamemaster.

## DUAGA

This Horror destroyed the caravan in **Caravan of Death**, p. 36, and also created the jehuthras that the

characters fight in **Going Hunting**, p. 17. The destruction of its creatures by the adventurers gives the Horror a motive for revenge, if the gamemaster wishes to use it. Following are game statistics and a description of the Horror, as well as a brief description of its lair. Note that Duaga is a deadly horror; only characters of sufficient power should expect to survive a confrontation with Duaga. . .

### Attributes

DEX: 10      STR: 12      TOU: 11  
PER: 12      WIL: 12      CHA: 7

Initiative: 10

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 15

Damage: 15

Number of Spells: (3)

Spellcasting: 14

Effect: See **Commentary**, below

Physical Defense: 13

Spell Defense: 15

Social Defense: 9

Armor: 25

Mystic Armor: 7

Knockdown: 12

Recovery Tests/Day: 5

Death Rating: 55

Wound Threshold: 16

Unconsciousness Rating: 48

Combat Movement: 80

Full Movement: 160

Karma Points: 20

Karma Steps: 10

Powers: Combustible Touch 17, Skin Shift 15

Spells: 10th Circle Nethermancer, Terror 16

Legend Points: 10,000

Equipment: None

Loot: See **Duaga's Lair**, P. 86.

### Commentary

This humanoid Horror stands 8 feet tall, with sore-dotted leathery skin so hot that it smolders under normal conditions. It attacks its prey with its two arms, each of which ends in slender, flexible tendrils.

To use its Combustible Touch power, the Horror must hit the target with its limbs. To do this, the Horror makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the Horror makes an Effect Test to determine damage. The result gives the number of steps of damage the victim takes from the Horror-induced flames against his skin. During the first round in which it is used, Combustible Touch causes five Wounds on the target in addition to Wounds caused by the Effect Test result. Combustible Touch lasts for five rounds. In addition to hurting people, the Horror can use its ability to ignite flammable, inanimate objects such as wagons.

### Duaga's Lair

Duaga lives in a gloomy patch of woods a few miles from the road where the destroyed caravan lies in **Caravan of Death**, p. 36. The trees grow close together, their thick branches forming a waterproof canopy under which Duaga has built its lair. Fire-blackened skulls, rib cages, and other bones dangle from the tree limbs, and the sickly-sweet smell of burning flesh permeates the air.

Within the lair lie 375 silver pieces, a suit of crystal ringlet armor, a fern-dask shield, and the Headband of Kedar the Dark. This item is described in **Rumors and Research**, p. 98.

### EVERLIVING FLOWER

An enchanted elven creation, the Everliving Flower dates back to the time before the Scourge. Intended as a gift from the elves of the faraway nation of Shosara to the Elven Court at Wyrn Wood, the flower disappeared in transit. It eventually turned up in the Theran provincial capital of Parlainth, where it remained until adventurers hired by the wizard Hiermon recovered it. The legend of the Everliving Flower is related in **Rumors and Research**, p. 97. The history and significance of the Everliving Flower will be expanded upon in future **Earthdawn** products.

### AMULET OF DIRAC

From Hiermon, the characters have learned the Key Knowledges of the first two thread ranks of the Amulet of Dirac. In order to learn the Name of the amulet and more of its Key Knowledges, further research and adventuring is required. To find the Name of the amulet, the characters might travel to the great bazaar at Bartertown, hoping to find a merchant who knows the amulet's workmanship. Adventuring in quest of the amulet's history will allow the characters to learn the legend of Dirac. For more information regarding the Amulet of Dirac, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 98.



### ALACHIA'S ROSE

The rose given to the adventurers by Queen Alachia of Blood Wood grants them passage through the forest for a year and a day. Once that time has passed, the rose withers and dies as the blood magic that sustained it drains away.

If the characters go back to Blood Wood within a year and a day, they will see that the rose changes color depending on its distance from Blood Wood. In or near Blood Wood, the rose turns crimson. Far away from Blood Wood, the rose deepens almost to black. Particularly alert characters may remember that the Everliving Flower underwent a similar transformation, and may set out to discover more about Queen Alachia's mysterious gift.



## CAST OF CHARACTERS



**T**his section provides information and game statistics for the gamemaster characters who play a major role in **Mists of Betrayal**. If necessary or appropriate, the gamemaster may change some of these statistics to suit the abilities of the player characters in his game. Because these characters will likely appear more than once in the course of the adventure, their statistics and descriptions are grouped here for convenience. The gamemaster characters are presented in order of general importance to the story. Descriptions and statistics for other, minor characters are given in the encounter in which they make their first appearance.



## KALOURIN

A Blood Warder in the Elven Court, Kalourin's sharp, almost feline facial features might be handsome, but for the perpetual smirk he wears. Though among the youngest and least powerful of the Blood Warders, the devious and power-hungry Kalourin always has a plan or two spinning in his head. He regards his fellow Blood Warder, Takaris, as his greatest rival for power, and would do almost anything to bring him down if he could accomplish it without getting caught.

Recently, Kalourin has allied himself with the Theran slaver Fegis Kul and a Horror called the Mist in a corrupt, misguided attempt to extend his influence and power outside Blood Wood. His connection with the Horror has gained him extremely powerful magical abilities, but he has not yet dared to use those powers openly for fear of exposure. If known, his treasonous alliance with a Horror would bring an automatic sentence of death.

Kalourin is a Fifth Circle nethermancer Adept.

### Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12  
Strength (14): 6/D10  
Toughness (12): 5/D8  
Perception (17): 7/D12  
Willpower (15): 6/D10  
Charisma (16): 7/D12

### Movement

Full: 90  
Combat: 45

### Skills

Artisan/Embroidery  
(4): 11/D10 + D8  
Knowledge/Barsaive History  
(5): 11/D10 + D8  
Knowledge/Elven Lore  
(5): 11/D10 + D8  
Missile Weapon (4): 11/D10 + D8  
Seduction (4): 11/D10 + D8  
Tracking (3): 10/D10 + D6

### Equipment

Boots  
Breeches  
Chain mail armor  
Cloak  
Elven warbow  
Healing potion (2)  
Quiver w/40 arrows

### Karma

Dice: D6  
Points: 25

### Talents

Animal Possession  
(3): 9/D8 + D6  
Astral Sight  
(4): 11/D10 + D8  
Durability (5)  
Karma Ritual (5)  
Nethermancy  
(5): 12/2D10  
Read and Write Magic  
(5): 12/2D10  
Spell Matrix (4)  
Spell Matrix (5)  
Spellcasting  
(5): 12/2D10  
Spirit Hold  
(2): 13/D12 + D10  
Taunt (5): 12/2D10  
Willforce (5): 11

### Combat

Physical Defense: 10  
Spell Defense: 10  
Social Defense: 9  
Armor: 7  
Mystic Armor: 2

### Damage

Death Rating: 54  
Wound Threshold: 9  
Unconsciousness  
Rating: 41  
Recovery Tests/Day: 2  
Recovery Dice: D8

### Initiative

Dice: D6



### Spells

Animate Skeleton  
Bone Circle  
Bone Dance  
Chilling Circle  
Death's Head  
Evil Eye  
Experience Death  
Fog Ghost  
Fog of Fear  
Insect Repellent  
Life Circle of One

Pack Bags  
Pain  
Pass Ward  
Repel Animal  
Shield Mist  
Spirit Grip  
Spirit Second  
Viewpoint  
Visions of Death  
Wither Limb

## TAKARIS

A Blood Warder of the Elven Court, Takaris is Kalourin's chief competitor for Queen Alachia's mercurial favor. Cautious in his dealings with outsiders, Takaris genuinely cares about the overall well-being of the elves of Blood Wood. The only outsider that Takaris has chosen to deal with recently is the wizard Hiermon, mainly because Hiermon's innocuous request for blood ivy provided Takaris with the means to engineer Kalourin's downfall.

A quiet, pensive individual, Takaris wears his silver hair in a long, thick ponytail. He bears his thorns with shame, longing to remove them but knowing he cannot. His quietness camouflages the strong will and wily mind that have kept him a Blood Warder in the intrigue-riddled Elven Court.

Takaris is a Fifth Circle wizard Adept. Upon reaching that level of proficiency as a magician, Takaris chose to learn the Discipline of the Warrior, and is also a Fourth Circle warrior Adept.

### Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12  
Strength (16): 7/D12  
Toughness (14): 6/D10  
Perception (13): 6/D10  
Willpower (17): 7/D12  
Charisma (17): 7/D12

### Movement

Full: 80  
Combat: 40

### Skills

Artisan/Embroidery  
(4): 11/D10 + D8  
Knowledge/Creature Lore  
(4): 10/D10 + D6  
Knowledge/Shosaran History  
(6): 12/2D10  
Tracking (5): 11/D10 + D8

### Equipment

Boots  
Broadsword  
Chain mail armor  
Cloak  
Desperate Spell charm  
Grimoire  
Helmet  
Short sword  
Tunic

### Karma

Dice: D6  
Points: 25

### Talents

Air Dance (4):  
11/D10 + D8  
Anticipate Blow (4):  
10/D10 + D6  
Astral Sight (5):  
11/D10 + D8  
Avoid Blow (4):  
11/D10 + D8  
Book Memory (5):  
12/2D10  
Book Recall (3):  
9/D8 + D6  
Down Strike  
(3): 13/D12 + D10  
Durability (Wizard) (8)  
Evidence Analysis  
(4): 10/D10 + D6  
Karma Ritual (5)  
Melee Weapon  
(4): 11/D10 + D8  
Read and Write Language  
(5): 11/D10 + D8  
Read and Write Magic  
(5): 11/D10 + D8  
Spell Matrix (4)  
Spell Matrix (5)  
Spell Matrix (5)  
Spellcasting (6): 12/2D10  
Tiger Spring (3)  
Unarmed Combat  
(4): 11/D10 + D8  
War Weaving  
(3): 9/D8 + D6  
Willforce (5): 11  
Wizardry (6): 12/2D10



### Combat

Physical Defense: 9  
Spell Defense: 8  
Social Defense: 9  
Armor: 7  
Mystic Armor: 3

### Damage

Death Rating: 68 (65)  
Wound Threshold: 10  
Unconsciousness Rating: 52 (49)  
Recovery Tests/Day: 3  
Recovery Dice: D10

### Initiative

Dice: D6

### Spells

Astral Sense  
Astral Shield  
Ball of String  
Counterspell  
Crushing Will  
Dispel Magic  
Iron Hand  
Makeshift Missile  
Rope Ladder  
Shatter Lock  
Thorny Retreat

## THE MIST

This Horror most often manifests as a cloud of mist, sometimes filled with twinkling motes of light. At will, it can coalesce into a solid, human-shaped form with a ghostly skull for a face. When gravely injured, it flees into astral space to recover, leaving behind a small lump of cold, glittering crystal. A sadistic, sneaky entity, the Mist prefers playing with its captives to killing them outright.

The Mist can wander around Barsaive from sundown to sunup, during which it occasionally attacks and murders an unfortunate passerby. During one of its wanderings in search of new victims to torment, the Mist met Kalourin and made a pact with the blood elf. Discovering Kalourin's dealings with the slaver Fegis Kul by reading the elf's thoughts, the Mist offered Kalourin unique and powerful magical abilities in exchange for a steady stream of slaves sent to the captive village of Akarem for the Mist to feed on. For the present, this alliance amuses the Mist and suits its needs. However, the Horror may grow tired of it at any time.

Its malleable form allows the Mist to seep through tiny cracks. Only airtight doors and magical wards can keep the Mist at bay. The Mist speaks in a cold, whistling voice with a slight echo. In addition to its powers, the Mist can use a few, select Elemental spells.

### Attributes

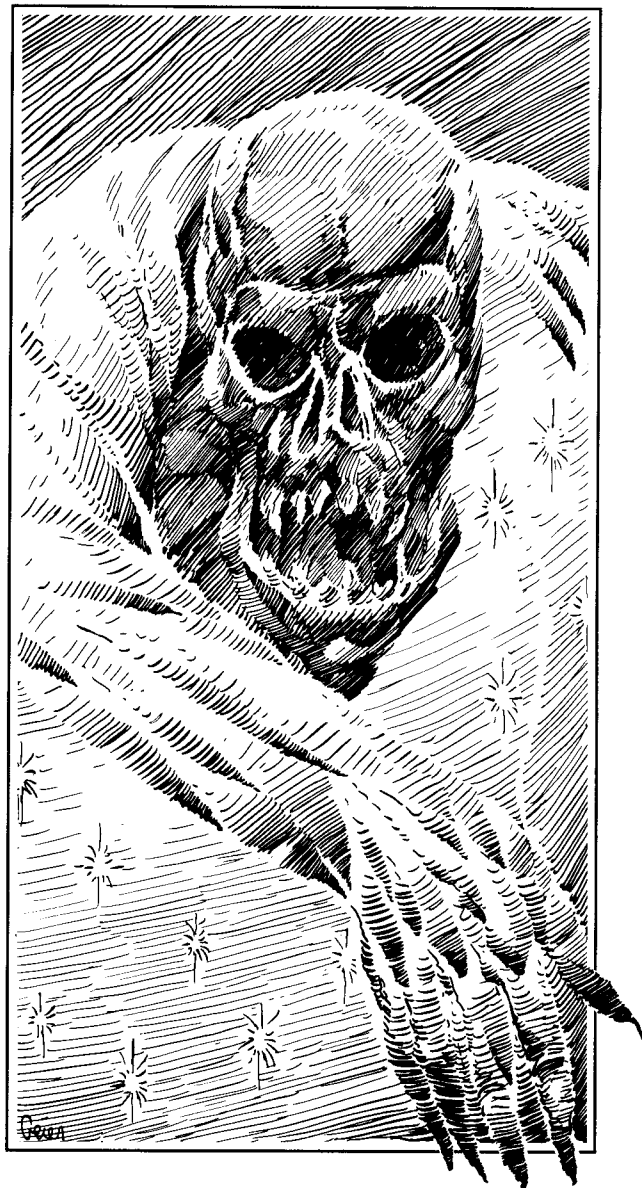
DEX: 11      STR: 14      TOU: 12  
PER: 12      WIL: 12      CHA: 11

Initiative: 11      Physical Defense: 15  
Number of Attacks: 2      Spell Defense: 7  
Attack: 18      Social Defense: 14  
Damage: 20      Armor: 15  
Number of Spells: (2)      Mystic Armor: 7  
Spellcasting: 16      Knockdown: Immune  
Effect: See below      Recovery Tests/Day: 5

Death Rating: 58      Combat Movement: 110  
Wound Threshold: 17      Full Movement: 220  
Unconsciousness Rating: 51

Karma Points: 40      Karma Steps: 15

Powers: Animate Dead 19, Corrupt Karma 18, Terror 17, Spells: see below



### Spells

Air Blast  
Boil Water  
Ice Spear  
Metal Scream  
Puddleddeep  
Resist Fire

Legend Points: 2,000

Equipment: None

Loot: See **Kaer of Akarem**, p. 56, for the loot in the Mist's lair.



## HIERMON

In excellent health despite his advanced age of 105 years, the wizard Hiermon can no longer undertake long journeys, but still manages to get around with a spryness that belies his stooped and wrinkled appearance. A human wizard of great wisdom and power, Hiermon specializes in acquiring knowledge of rare and mysterious objects. A shrewd bargainer and a stubborn man, Hiermon nonetheless has a good heart and willingly aids strangers even at cost to himself. His best friend is Brenula the ork, who owns a weapons and armor smithy in the town of Haven.

Hiermon wears an ornately embroidered robe of midnight blue, and uses a twisted staff for help in walking as well as for defense. He is a Seventh Circle wizard Adept.

### Attributes

Dexterity (9): 4/D6  
Strength (7): 4/D6  
Toughness (9): 4/D6  
Perception (17): 7/D12  
Willpower (15): 6/D10  
Charisma (11): 5/D8

### Movement

Full: 48  
Combat: 24

### Skills

Artisan/Robe Embroidery (1):  
6/D10  
Knowledge/Alchemy (4):  
11/D10 + D8  
Knowledge/Barsaive  
History (4): 11/D10 + D8

### Equipment

Embroidery kit  
Grimoire  
Leather armor  
Staff

### Combat

Physical Defense: 6  
Spell Defense: 10  
Social Defense: 8  
Armor: 3  
Mystic Armor: 2

### Damage

Death Rating: 54  
Wound Threshold: 7  
Unconsciousness Rating: 39  
Recovery Tests/Day: 2  
Recovery Dice: D6

### Initiative

Dice: D6

### Talents

Arcane Mutterings (7):  
13/D12 + D10  
Astral Sight (7):  
14/D20 + D4  
Book Memory (6):  
12/2D10  
Book Recall (7):  
14/D20 + D4  
Durability (6)  
Enhanced Matrix (7)  
Evidence Analysis (7):  
14/D20 + D4  
Hold Thread (5):  
11/D10 + D8  
Karma Ritual (7)  
Melee Weapons (2): 6/D10  
Read and Write Magic (7):  
14/D20 + D4  
Spellcasting (7):  
14/D20 + D4  
Spell Matrix (5)  
Spell Matrix (7)  
Willforce (7): 13  
Wizardry (7): 14/D20 + D4

### Karma

Dice: D8  
Points: 40



### Spells

And His Money	Mage Armor
Astral Sense	Move on Through
Astral Shield	Notice Not
Clean	Relax
Confusing Weave	Seeking Sight
Counterspell	Shatter Lock
Dispel Magic	Sleep
Divine Aura	Slow
Inventory	Spell Cage
Karma Cancel	Trust

## FEGIS KUL

Born and raised in Thera, Fegis Kul is a balding, grubby, ill-mannered, battle-scarred human mercenary in his early thirties. Some years ago, Fegis turned his attention from war to slaving because it paid better. Fegis sees every living being as a potential slave, sizing them up for market value in a single look. This repellent man truly gives humans a bad name in Barsaive. A band of slavers of various races follows and aids Fegis in his evil trade, regarding him with respect and even a little awe. Knowing his mercenary background, they trust his tactical skills implicitly in battle.

Fegis works with Blood Warler Kalourin, kidnapping and enslaving unlucky wanderers who leave Blood Wood. In return, Fegis keeps Kalourin informed of Theran affairs and politics. In addition to slave trading, Fegis also acts as a courier, ferrying information from his Theran superiors at Sky Point to Theran spies throughout Barsaive.

### Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10  
Strength (16): 7/D12  
Toughness (18): 7/D12  
Perception (9): 4/D6  
Willpower (10): 5/D8  
Charisma (6): 3/D4

### Movement

Full: 65  
Combat: 33

### Equipment

Absorb Blow charm  
Adventurer's kit  
Broadsword  
Chain mail armor  
Riding horse  
40 silver pieces in purse  
250 silver pieces  
in saddlebags  
Traveler's garb

### Initiative

Dice: D4

### Damage

Death Rating: 42 (40)  
Wound Threshold: 12  
Unconsciousness Rating: 32 (30)  
Recovery Tests/Day: 3  
Recovery Dice: D12

### Skills

Bribery (5): 8/2D6  
Conversation (3): 6/D10  
Hunting (2): 8/2D6  
Knowledge/Theran Politics (3):  
7/D12  
Melee Weapons (3):  
9 D8 + D6  
Navigation (2): 6/D10  
Streetwise (4): 8/2D6  
Tactics (2): 6/D10  
Tracking (6): 10/D10 + D8  
Trading (4): 7/D12  
Wilderness Survival (4):  
8/2D6

### Combat

Physical Defense: 8  
Spell Defense: 6  
Social Defense: 4  
Armor: 7  
Mystic Armor: 0



## TURAL

A small, wiry, Theran-born human, Tural has quick eyes and a glib tongue. An Adept of the swordmaster Discipline, Tural fancies himself an accomplished warrior and ladies' man. He serves the Theran Empire as much because it pays well as out of any sense of loyalty. Employed as a spy and enforcer by Agramen, Tural excels at what he does. He is a Third Circle swordmaster Adept.

### Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10  
Strength (13): 6/D10  
Toughness (13): 6/D10  
Perception (10): 5/D8  
Willpower (8): 4/D6  
Charisma (14): 6/D10

### Movement

Full: 65  
Combat: 33

### Skills

Bribery (1): 7/D12  
Disguise (3): 8/2D6  
Flirting (4): 10/D10 + D6  
Lock Picking (3): 9/D8 + D6  
Seduction (4): 10/D10 + D6  
Streetwise (3): 8/2D6  
Tracking (3): 8/2D6

### Equipment

Absorb Blow charm  
Adventurer's kit  
Booster potions (3)  
Broadsword  
Chain mail armor  
Dagger  
Riding horse  
Traveler's garb

### Initiative

Dice: D4

### Talents

Avoid Blow (3): 9/D8 + D6  
Durability (3)  
Heartening Laugh (1):  
7/D12  
Karma Ritual (3)  
Melee Weapons (3):  
9/D8 + D6  
Riposte (2): 11/D10 + D8  
Taunt (3): 9 D8 + D6

### Combat

Physical Defense: 8  
Spell Defense: 6  
Social Defense: 0  
Armor: 7  
Mystic Armor: 0

### Damage

Death Rating: 56 (54)  
Wound Threshold: 9  
Unconsciousness Rating: 45 (43)  
Recovery Tests/Day: 2  
Recovery Dice: D10

### Karma

Dice: D8  
Points: 25



## ALKOR

A muscular human in his late thirties, Alkor has a full head of brown hair and a lush brown beard. Unlike Tural, Alkor serves the Theran Empire wholly and sincerely. Not an Adept, Alkor relies more on brute force than cunning to get the job done.

### Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10  
Strength (18): 7/D12  
Toughness (18): 7/D12  
Perception (7): 4/D6  
Willpower (10): 5/D8  
Charisma (6): 3/D4

### Combat

Physical Defense: 7  
Spell Defense: 5  
Social Defense: 4  
Armor: 7  
Mystic Armor: 0

### Damage

Death Rating: 42  
Wound Threshold: 12  
Unconsciousness Rating: 34  
Recovery Tests/Day: 3  
Recovery Dice: D12

### Initiative

Dice: D4

### Skills

Animal Handling (3): 8/2D6  
Hunting (3): 9/D8 + D6  
Melee Weapons (6): 12/2D10  
Missile Weapons (5):  
11/D10 + D8  
Wilderness Survival (2):  
6/D10

### Equipment

Adventurer's kit  
Chain mail armor  
Hand-axe  
Healing potions (2)  
Longbow  
Quiver w/40 arrows  
Riding horse  
Traveler's garb  
Two-handed sword

### Movement

Full: 60  
Combat: 30



## SOGORA

Sogora leads a band of highwaymen who plague the region between Haven and Blood Wood. Though he fancies himself a gentleman bandit, most who have encountered Sogora regard him as a common thief. Sogora is a Second Circle thief Adept.

### Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12  
Strength (13): 6/D10  
Toughness (11): 6/D8  
Perception (12): 5/D8  
Willpower (8): 4/D6  
Charisma (13): 6/D10

### Movement

Full: 75  
Combat: 38

### Skills

Artisan/Blade Carving (1):  
7/D12  
Bribery (1): 7/D12  
Disguise (2): 8/2D  
Knowledge/Gem  
Appraising (1): 6/D10  
Knowledge/Trade  
Routes (1): 6/D10  
Streetwise (3): 8/2D6  
Tracking (3): 8/2D6

### Equipment

Adventurer's kit  
Booster potions (2)  
Broadsword  
Dagger  
Hardened leather armor  
Riding horse  
Traveler's garb

### Talents

Climbing (3): 10/D10 + D6  
Durability (3)  
Karma Ritual (3)  
Lock Pick (2): 9/D8 + D6  
Lock Sense (2): 7/D12  
Melee Weapons (2): 9/D8 + D6  
Picking Pockets (3): 10/D10 + D6  
Silent Walk (3): 10/D10 + D6  
Surprise Strike (3): 10/D10 + D6

### Combat

Physical Defense: 9  
Spell Defense: 7  
Social Defense: 7  
Armor: 5  
Mystic Armor: 0

### Damage

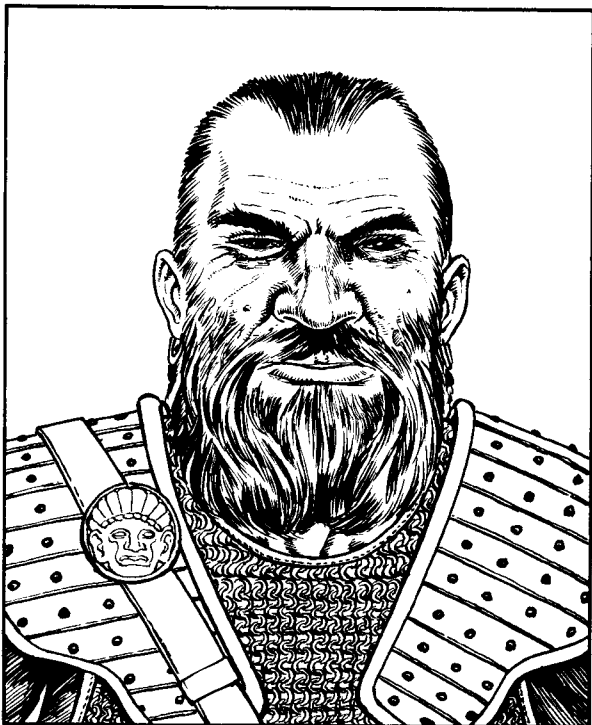
Death Rating: 47  
Wound Threshold: 8  
Unconsciousness Rating: 36  
Recovery Tests/Day: 2  
Recovery Dice: D8

### Initiative

Dice: D10

### Karma

Dice: D8  
Points: 10





## AGRAMEN

A middle-aged human, Agramen dresses lavishly and has the look of smug satisfaction that comes from a well-fed, well-dressed, financially secure life. The owner of Agramen's Import/Export Company in the town of Haven, Agramen is an expert caravan organizer and shrewd businessman. He lives in a splendid townhouse close to his business, where he has hidden away at least 4,500 silver pieces in a secret vault in his cellar.

Though born in Barsaive, Agramen is a Theran sympathizer and frequently offers his business premises to the Therans when they require a discreet base of operations. Though fearless in the marketplace, Agramen is a physical coward, and prefers to avoid physical combat by turning suspicion and blame away from himself in dicey situations.

### Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8  
Strength (9): 4/D6  
Toughness (11): 5/D8  
Perception (14): 6/D10  
Willpower (12): 5/D8  
Charisma (16): 7/D12

### Movement

Full: 50  
Combat: 25

### Combat

Physical Defense: 6  
Spell Defense: 8  
Social Defense: 9  
Streetwise (4): 10/D10 + D6  
Armor: 3  
Mystic Armor: 1

### Damage

Death Rating: 32 (30)  
Wound Threshold: 8  
Unconsciousness  
Rating: 24 (22)  
Recovery Tests/Day: 2  
Recovery Dice: D8

### Skills

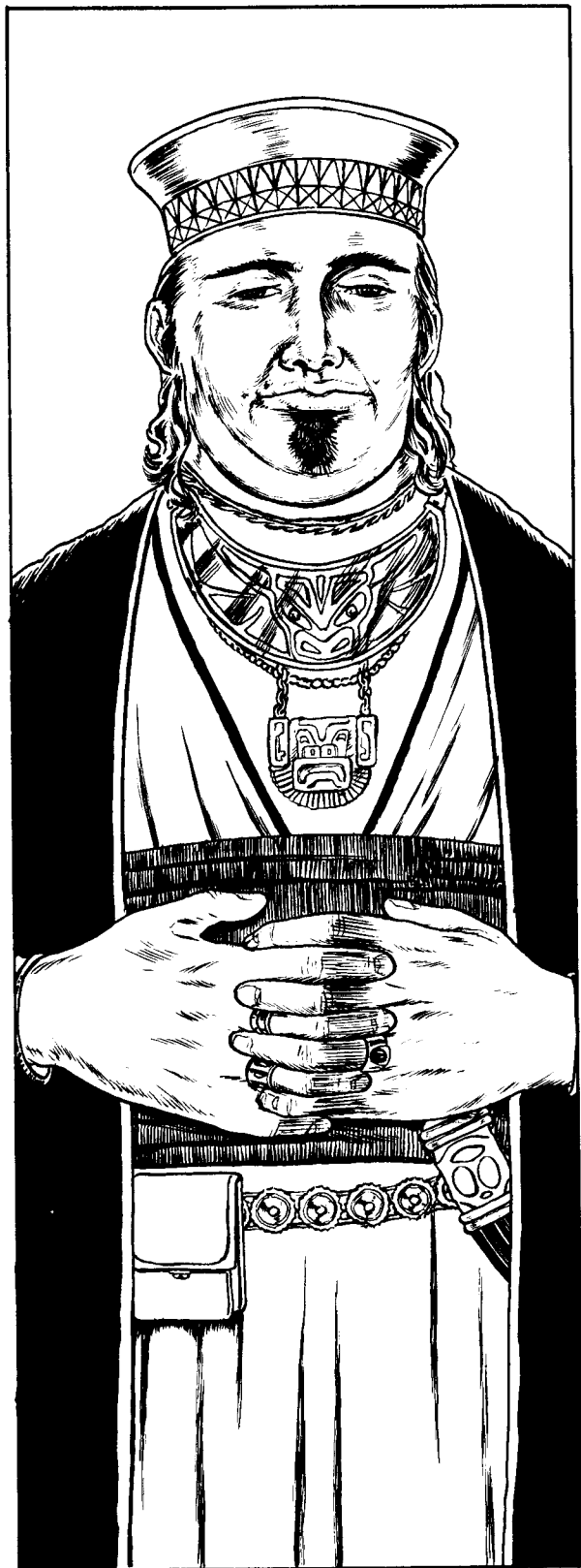
Animal Handling (4):  
9/D8 + D6  
Bribery (5): 12/2D10  
Conversation (4):  
11/D10 + D8  
Etiquette (3): 10/D10 + D6  
Forgery (2): 7/D12  
Knowledge/Barsaive  
Geography (3): 9/D8 + D6  
Knowledge/Caravans (4):  
10/D10 + D6  
Read/Write (5): human,  
Sperethiel, ork, t'skrang, troll  
Trading (7): 14/D20 + D4

### Equipment

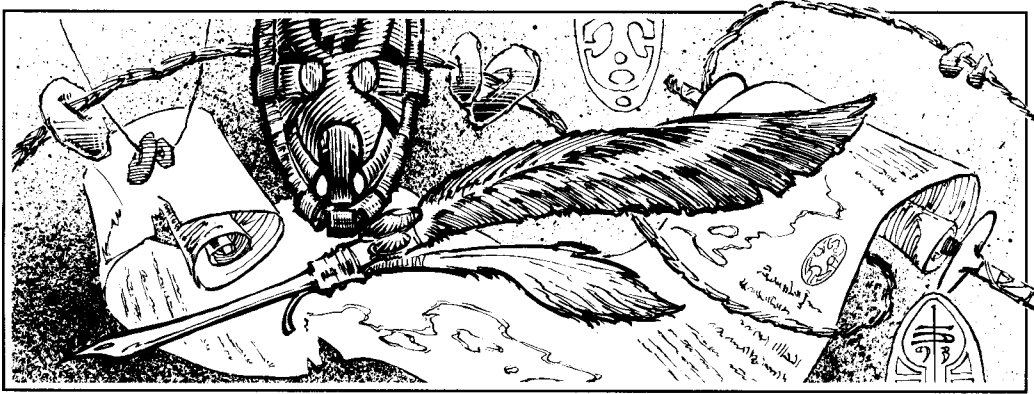
Absorb Blow charm  
Dagger  
Healing potions (2)  
Leather armor  
Quill and ink  
Sheets of paper (12)  
Wealthy traveler's garb

### Initiative

Dice: D8



## RUMORS AND RESEARCH



**T**his section describes legends and rumors that the characters may hear of during the adventure, and includes detailed descriptions of the magical treasures the characters come across during their travels.

### LEGENDS

During the course of the adventure, the characters will have the opportunity to learn certain legends common to the people of the areas through which they travel. Abbreviated versions of those legends are given below, and the gamemaster should make every effort to present these legends to the characters during the appropriate game session. If he wishes, the gamemaster should also feel free to alter events and locations in the legends to better suit his campaign. Certain legends also include an adventure idea, allowing the gamemaster to use the legend as a springboard for future adventures.

## LOAK IRONFIST

If the adventurers choose to stay at Loak's Legacy in the Old Neighborhood while in Haven, they may hear the legend of Loak Ironfist. An ork adventurer, Loak Ironfist explored the ghostly ruins of Parlainth 40 years ago, little more than a decade after the end of the Scourge. After 15 years of harrowing exploits and narrow escapes, he retired from adventuring and opened an inn called the Silver Scorcher. He spent the next 20 years as a successful innkeeper, until the day he chose to share tales of his exploits in the ruins of Parlainth with a band of young, green adventurers staying at his inn. Doubting Loak's claims of having explored Parlainth, they dared the ork to return to the Forgotten City and bring back proof that he had gone there. A defiant Loak took the dare and re-entered the ruins. Several days later, a scouting party found him in Parlainth, turned to stone. To this day, no one knows how Loak Ironfist met such a terrible fate. The scouts brought Loak's body back to Haven and the inn, and set him up near the bar. Keldys Tul, the leader of the scouting party, took over the Silver Scorcher Inn and renamed it Loak's Legacy in honor of the ork hero.

### Adventure Idea

Countless adventurers have tried to discover the events that led to Loak's petrification, with no success. Most shops in Haven that sell maps of Barsaive also peddle maps of Parlainth's explored areas, including the spot where Loak's stone body was found. The characters might easily acquire such a map and venture into the ruins of the Forgotten City to find the truth behind the legend of Loak Ironfist. The gamemaster may devise any number of plausible storylines; for example, Loak may have encountered a creature or Horror that turns its victims to stone or triggered an ancient Theran ward trap. If the characters can discover the manner in which Loak

was turned to stone, they may be able to reverse the process and bring the legendary hero back to life.

## EVERLIVING FLOWER

When Blood Warder Takaris opens the chest containing the Everliving Flower, he may tell the characters the legend behind that magical treasure.

According to the legend, elves of the kingdom of Shosara crafted the Everliving Flower centuries before the Scourge as a gift for the Elven Queen Failla at

Wyrn Wood. The elven artisans obtained a rose from the gardens that had once blossomed near the Queen's Palace in Wyrn Wood and enchanted it so that it would live forever as a symbol of elven culture's immortal, unchanging nature. They crafted a magical crystal box and placed the ensorcelled flower inside it, to ensure the rose's safety.

Before the Shosaran elves could deliver the Everliving Flower to Queen Failla, however, it disappeared. Years later, tales from the Theran provincial capital of Parlainth claimed that the Therans had taken the treasure and hidden it within the city. When Parlainth succumbed to the Scourge, many believed that the Everliving Flower had

been destroyed along with the city. Thanks to the efforts of the wizard Hiermon and a band of hired adventurers, it has at last been delivered to its rightful place at the Court of the Elven Queen.

Many elves believe that those whose skin is pierced by the thorns of the Everliving Flower will be granted eternal life. To this day, however, none have discovered a method of opening the crystal box.



## TREASURES

The characters may find several magical treasures during the course of **Mists of Betrayal**. The following descriptions of these magical items include the Key Knowledges and Effects for each thread rank of each treasure. The **Location** listing given in each entry below indicates the place at which the characters can find that magical item during the adventure. See **Magical Treasure**, p. 270, and **Workings of Magic**, p. 136, in the **Earthdawn** rulebook for guidelines on how to use magical treasures in a campaign.



### AMULET OF DIRAC TOL AMARRA

**Location:** The jehuthras' lair near Tureem. See **Going Hunting**, p. 17.

**Maximum Threads:** 2

**Spell Defense:** 14

The Amulet of Dirac Tol Amarra is a finely crafted silver starburst, stained crimson, on a silver neck chain. The stain on the starburst does not wash off.

#### Thread Ranks

**Rank 1**                      **Cost:** 200

**Key Knowledge:** The hero Dirac Tol Amarra waged unceasing war on the Horrors many centuries ago, just before the final sealing of the kaers. In Dirac's final battle, a Horror named Adugank mortally wounded the hero, splashing Dirac's lifeblood across the amulet he wore. The dying Dirac begged the Passions to let him live long enough to slay the Horror; they assented, and kept him alive long enough to strike down Adugank. In order to use the Amulet of Dirac Tol Amarra, the wielder must learn the Name of the item.

**Effect:** The amulet adds +3 to the wearer's Armor Value.

**Rank 2**                      **Cost:** 300

**Effect:** The amulet adds +2 to the wearer's Mystic Armor Value.

**Rank 3**                      **Cost:** 500

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn Dirac's full name.

**Effect:** At a cost of 1 point of Strain, the amulet heals its wearer in the manner of a healing potion. The wielder loses the point of Strain after using the healing effect.

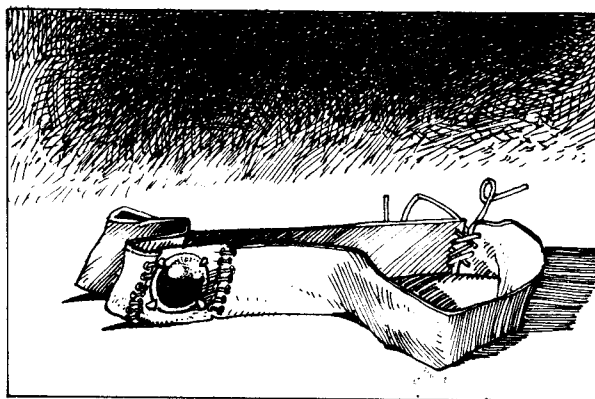
**Rank 4**                      **Cost:** 800

**Effect:** At a cost of 2 points of Strain, the amulet acts like a Last Chance Potion, except that the effect is instantaneous. The wearer may only use this effect once per day.

**Rank 5**                      **Cost:** 1,300

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the name of the Horror that Dirac slew in his final battle.

**Effect:** At an appropriate cost in points of damage, the amulet can serve as a Desperate Blow or Desperate Spell blood charm. The damage remains until the charm is used, at which time the damage can be healed. The wearer may only use this effect to resist attacks by a Horror or Horror construct.



### HEADBAND OF KEDAR THE DARK

**Location:** The lair of Duaga the Horror. See **Caravan of Death**, p. 36, and **Loose Ends**, p. 85.

**Maximum Threads:** 1

**Spell Defense:** 15

This black leather headband has a black pearl set in it, making the wearer look as if the pearl were a third eye.

### Thread Ranks

**Rank 1**      **Cost:** 200

**Key Knowledge:** This headband belonged to the swordmaster Kedar, who burned to death at the hands of the Horror Duaga. Kedar's lover, the wizard Leea Amberdust, made the headband to safeguard him. To use the artifact's power, the wielder must learn the Name of the man who wore the headband.

**Effect:** The headband adds +2 to the wearer's Social Defense.

**Rank 2**      **Cost:** 300

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the Name of the person who created the headband.

**Effect:** The headband adds +1 to the wearer's Mystic Armor Value.

**Rank 3**      **Cost:** 500

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the nature of the relationship between the headband's creator and its owner.

**Effect:** The headband adds +1 to the wearer's Armor Value.

**Rank 4**      **Cost:** 800

**Key Knowledge:** The wearer must learn the name of the Horror that slew Kedar.

**Effect:** The wearer can detect the influence of a Horror. To use this ability, the wearer makes a Perception Test against the Spell Defense of the target or the Horror controlling the target, whichever is higher. A successful test reveals that a Horror controls the target.

### STAFF OF AKAREM THE MAGE-BUILDER

**Location:** The lair of the Mist. See **Kaer of Akarem**, p. 56.

**Maximum Threads:** 1

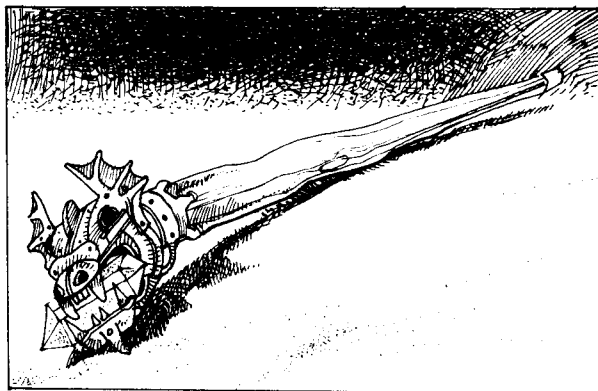
**Spell Defense:** 16

This five-foot staff is made of polished oak, its head a wrought-iron gargoyle face with an orichalcum piece in its mouth.

### Thread Ranks

**Rank 1**      **Cost:** 300

**Key Knowledge:** Akarem the Mage-Builder was an elementalist who designed and helped to build the kaer for the village that bears his name. The staff, his prized possession, aided him in many undertakings. He valued it so much that he gave it the nickname of Orichalus.



When the villagers of Akarem sealed up the kaer in the face of the oncoming Horrors, they discovered that their wizard had disappeared, leaving his staff behind. The occupants of the kaer placed the staff in the kaer's catacombs, burying the staff in lieu of the man. For many years, the villagers believed that Akarem would return to fight the Horrors, but he never appeared. In order to use this treasure, the wielder must learn the Name of the staff.

**Effect:** The staff adds +2 steps to the wielder's Spellcasting step.

**Rank 2**      **Cost:** 500

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the staff's nickname.

**Effect:** Used as a melee weapon, the staff adds +6 steps to the wielder's Strength step for Damage Tests.

**Rank 3**      **Cost:** 800

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the Name of the dwarven smith who created the staff's head, and where he obtained the iron ore for it.

**Effect:** The staff aids its wielder in locating secret doors, magical traps, and unsafe areas. Adds +3 steps to the wielder's Perception step for any Perception Test the wielder makes to locate the dangers listed above.

**Rank 4**      **Cost:** 1,300

**Deed:** Because Akarem was an elementalist, the wielder must use the staff in combat against four creatures that each have a relationship with one of the four elements. For example, the wielder may fight off a fire-breathing dragon, a water-breathing creature, an earth elemental, and a creature made up of mist (air and water). Accomplishing this Deed earns the wielder 3,400 Legend Points.

**Effect:** Increases the wielder's Physical and Spell Defense when resisting air, earth, water, and fire attacks.

**Rank 5**      **Cost:** 2,100

**Effect:** At a cost of 2 points of damage, the wielder may summon an earth elemental to serve him by using blood magic. The damage lasts for a year and a day.

#### Earth Elemental

##### Attributes

**DEX:** 8      **STR:** 10      **TOU:** 10  
**PER:** 5      **WIL:** 7      **CHA:** 5

**Initiative:** 9      **Physical Defense:** 15  
**Number of Attacks:** 1      **Spell Defense:** 10  
**Attack:** 10      **Social Defense:** 10  
                          **Damage:** 14

**Armor:** 10  
**Number of Spells:** None      **Mystic Armor:** 5  
**Spellcasting:** NA      **Knockdown:** 10  
                          **Effect:** NA

**Recovery Tests/Day:** 4

**Death Rating:** 51      **Combat Movement:** 120  
**Wound Threshold:** 15      **Full Movement:** 240  
**Unconsciousness Rating:** 44

**Legend Points:** 285

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** None

**Note:** Only by achieving an Extraordinary success in an Attack Test can the wielder breach the elemental's armor.

## RUMORS

Whenever the characters stay in the towns and villages described in **Mists of Betrayal**, they may hear rumors of recent events in the local area. The rumors most likely to crop up in each place are described below. The gamemaster must determine which of these rumors are true and which are false.

### TUREEM

"Someone saw a dragon south of these parts not too long ago. Theran airship, too. I hear tell the Therans are renegades, and the dragon calls them friend."

"You go to Haven, you watch yourselves. Can't hardly walk out a door without stumbling over a Theran."

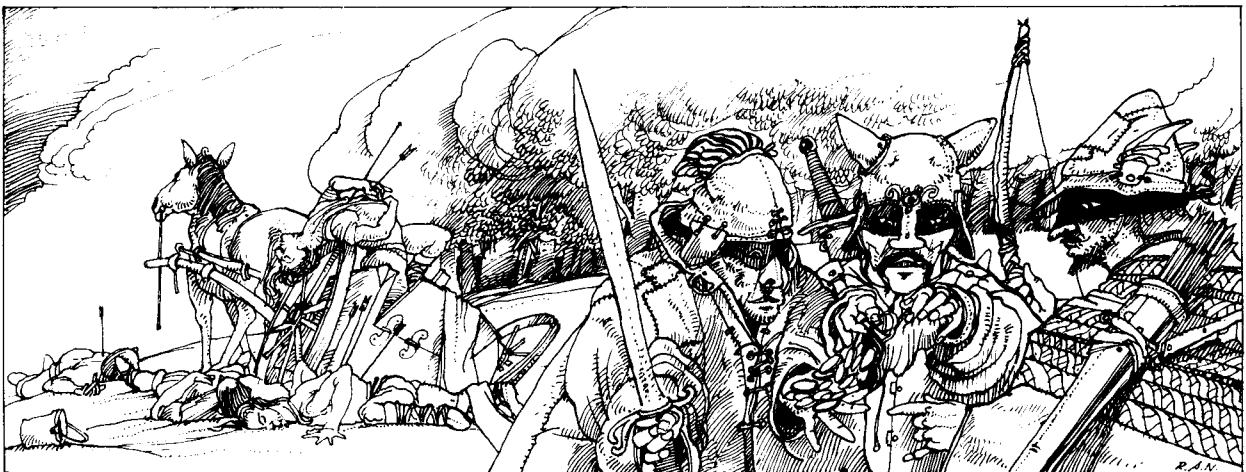
"I know you'll not believe this, but I've heard tell that the Elf Queen in yon Blood Wood has a taste for a human lover. . ."

### HAVEN

"Nay, the Elven Court is none so tranquil as they would have others believe. The Blood Warders who serve the Queen scheme and intrigue against each other as though they were Therans; and the Queen allows it, as long as their bickering weakens only themselves and not the Elven Court as a whole. Within those bounds, the Warders do as they will."

"You travel to Blood Wood? Beware the highway-men, strangers. Not a traveler between Haven and Blood Wood has met them and survived with his purse intact."

"I have heard a tale so dark and terrible, I can scarce believe it. Know you that an elven Blood Warder, perhaps more than one, has joined with the





Therans? It seems the lure of foreign hire can extract a spark of evil from anyone these days. . ."

"Them elves in Blood Wood hate dwarfs and obsidimen worse than poison. Any they catch in Blood Wood, they string up and skin alive."

#### MIDLAND TRADING POST

"Funny stories we do hear, sometimes. In the past four weeks, two crazed people came a-wandering from the north, babbling about a village that appeared and then vanished into a magical fog."

"Keep a sharp eye out for Theran slavers, friends. I hear the road is thick with the villains."

"Go south'ards, if ye seek adventure! I'm tellin' ye, a great dragon lies that way. A great treasure it keeps

in its lair: a treasure to give ye riches an' power to equal the King of Throal 'imself!"

"'Tisn't the Theran slavers alone that you need watch for. I hear the t'skrang by the Serpent River are buying slaves from the Therans for their own foul purposes."

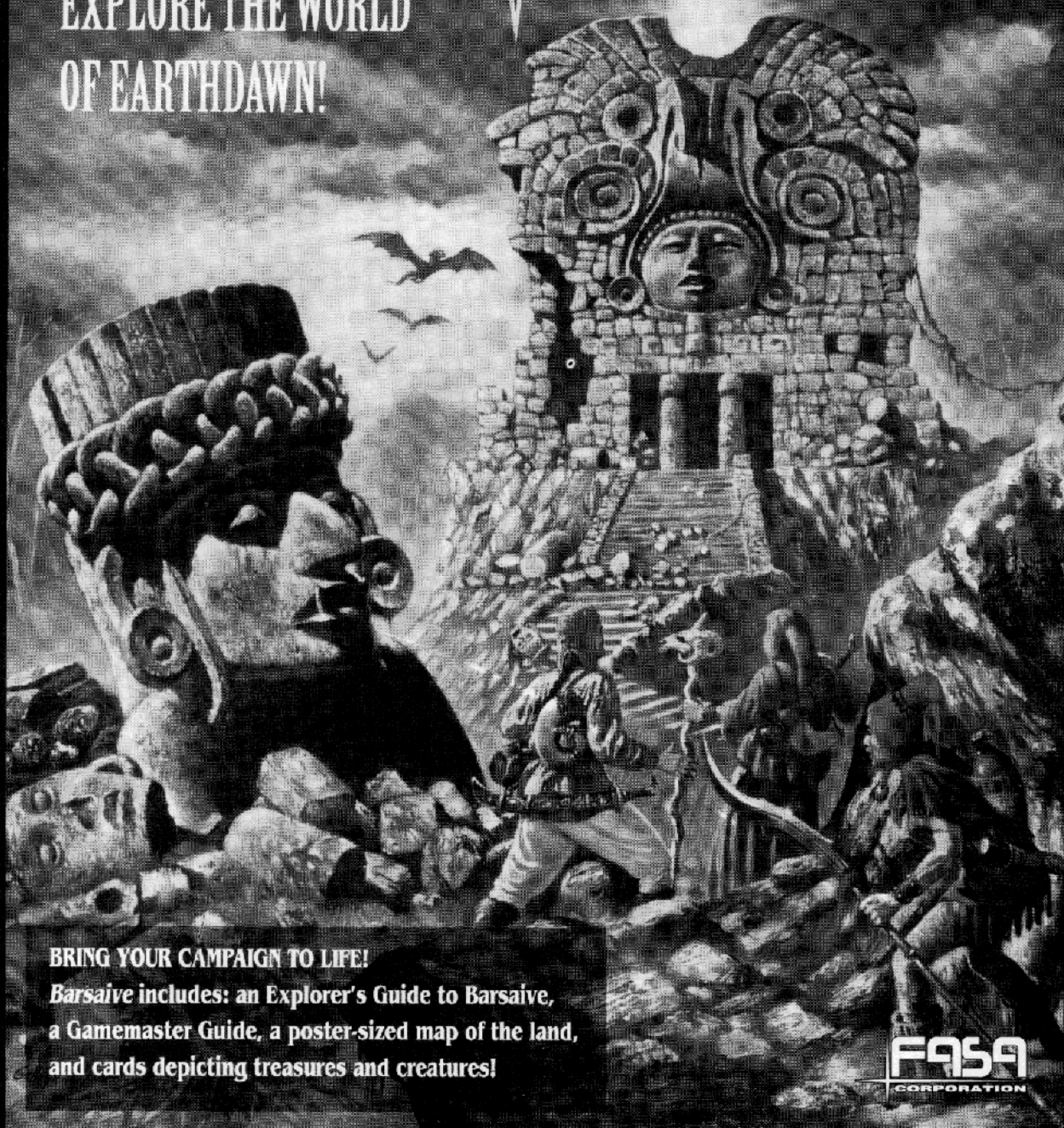
"Blood Wood's a funny place. Standoffish, like, but now some of the thorny elves are looking outside o' their greenwood. Seems they want trade wi' the rest o' Barsaive. Me, I wish they'd keep to themselves. Gives me the willies just to hear tell of 'em."

"Take great care in Blood Wood. They say travelers have only to lay eyes on a blood elf and they fall in love with the creatures, losing their minds to the elves' beautiful corruption."



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