

The Palladium® RPG Book V:

# "Further" Adventures in the Northern Wilderness

By Kevin Siembieda



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# “Further” Adventures in the Northern Wilderness

An adventure and source book for the Palladium® RPG.



**Dedicated to Julius Rosenstein, the friend who introduced  
me to role-playing and one of the best players on the planet.**

**First Printing — April 1990**

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PALLADIUM BOOKS® PRESENTS . . .

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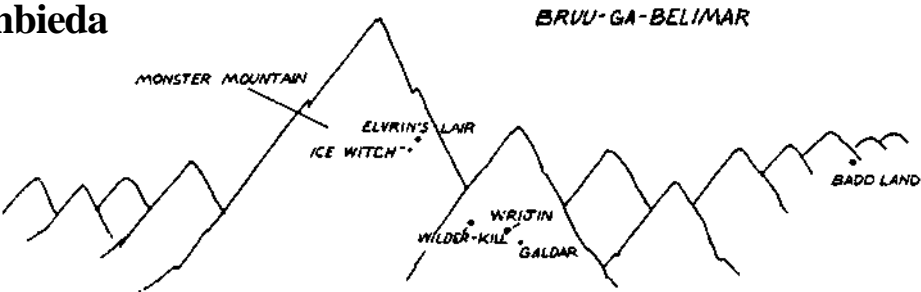


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## An now a few words from our sponsor...

Welcome to **Further Adventures in the Northern Wilderness**, the companion book to *Adventures in the Northern Wilderness*. We promised all of you **Palladium RPG** fantasy fans that there would be more supplements coming. The Palladium Fantasy Role Playing system has always been the mainstay of *Palladium Books*. It was the first RPG product in the industry to use the "trade paperback" format and introduced the basic Palladium game system in its full glory. The fantasy RPG also has a special place for *Kevin Siembieda*, because it was the ideas from this game that ultimately enticed him to create **Palladium Books** as a company.

We at Palladium hope you will enjoy these *new* adventures, and look forward to giving you many more in the months and years to come. If you like what you've seen so far, you'll love what we have in store for you. Let us know what else you would like to see/learn about in the Palladium world of adventure.

Chester Jacques

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## The Bones of Belimar

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"Hurt you real bad. Yep, the entire mountain range is just filled with danger. Passes through the range have been known to close within hours due to blinding blizzards and avalanches. When visibility is good, snowblindness and icecrevices are only minor hazards compared to the frost giants an' other critters that don't take kindly to intruders.

"Why, if it weren't for the stories of lost dwarven treasure hordes, I'm sure few human folk would venture into these parts.

"What's that? Oh, the treasure. Well, legend has it that a long time ago, back when the dwarves were a mighty race, great treasures of gold and silver and precious gems was dug out of the mountain and hidden in secret subterranean caves.

"Not only would it be safe from bands of thieving elves and goblins, but also from some of the not-very-honest humans who were starting ta spring up everywhere.

"I seen lots of treasure hunters come and go, but I never seen any treasure. Those who return at all, come back empty handed, save fer tales of frost giants and howling winds.

"Now, I'm telling ya, I ain't one to believe in superstitious ways, but I seen things as a soldier in the Wolfen Imperial Army that's taught me to consider the possibility of most anything. Flesh an' blood monsters an' mystical monstrosities do exist. I've fought my share of 'em too. Now, lissen close, 'cause I'm going to give you a piece of advice. There are unnatural things up in them peaks. Things that prey on poor fools looking fer a fast way to happiness, but only find a fast passage to hell.

"Everyone has heard of howling winds, but if I had a gold piece fer ever one of these guys who insists the wind spoke to them, I'd be a rich man. Others will tell you thet they were just out in the cold waaaaay too long. Me ... I'm telling you thet mountain harbors things you don't want to learn about."

From the recollections of Ithak

## The Setting... Bruu-ga-Belimar

Even peasants in Timiro have heard tales of the *Algors*, a perilous range of mountains in the heart of *wolfen* territory. The mountains are named after the frost giants who dwell in its frozen valleys and snow covered peaks. However, we will turn our attention to a less notorious, but equally dangerous range of mountains, the *Bruu-ga-Belimar* (wolfen, meaning "the bones of Belimar," a dwarven god in the Pantheon of the North Gods).

The **Bruu-ga-Belimar** mountains mark the end of the *Eastern Territory* and the beginning of *Wolfen* territory in the *Great Northern Wilderness*. Although they fall in the hotly disputed border of men and wolves, neither has shown any great initiative to claim the mountains with more than words.

In practicality, the mountain people hold no allegiance to humans or wolfen. Many races and kingdoms have claimed the mountains over the centuries, and troops have come and gone, but always the mountain people tolerate the intrusion, quietly waiting for them to leave. And leave they inevitably do.

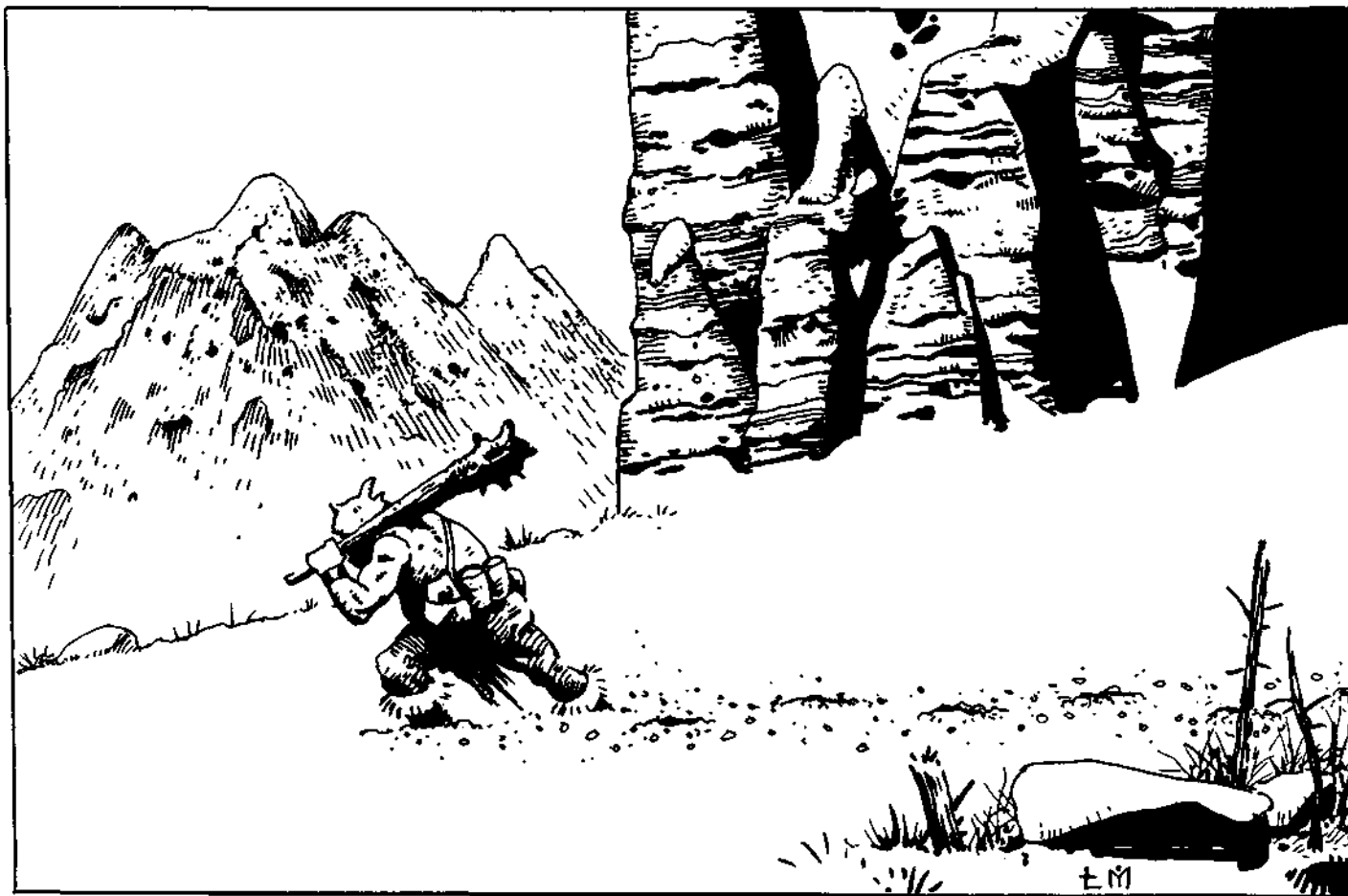
Although racial prejudice may motivate the actions of some, there is no official government. Each village is usually quite independent, governed by a council of elders, or by a patriarchal family, or warlord. Some can scarcely be called a village because they are so small.

### Nomads

**Mountain nomads** are tiny communities of people who continually wander the mountain ranges. These are almost always a small band of males, females, and children, seldom exceeding more than 50 individuals. Some nomadic groups will be as few as a single family or friends numbering a paltry six or seven members. A typical group will contain 20 to 30 members. Most will wander high into the mountains in the summer when weather permits, but venture back to the lower, forested areas as winter approaches.

They live off the land by hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering fruit and roots. Nomads are almost always passive, non-violent groups who will try to avoid trouble/combat at all costs (remember, they are usually family groups). They do not like the confines of civilization and enjoy their hard life in the wilderness.

Although accustomed to life in the wilderness, only a few members will be skilled huntsmen/rangers. In game terms, most would be considered the peasant O.C.C., while perhaps as many as 20% may be of the ranger O.C.C. (that would be six people in a band of 30). However, there are often two or three people who are spiritual leaders or advisors. These characters will be of the *druid or healer O.C.C.*; non-human nomads may have a *shaman* instead. Such characters are believed to be linked to the land and as such, have special powers and insight. They may be young or old, male or female. Yet, despite their powers, they are seldom the group's leader, but functions as one of the group's advisors. The leader of a nomadic group is most often a strong ranger type, because it is his job to lead the people through the wilderness and insure their survival. It is the group leader who selects the best area to pitch camp, it is he who knows what types of food can be found where, determines how long they will stay in an area, and when and where to travel.



Most of the nomads in the Bruu-ga-Belimar mountains are non-humans. Nonviolent orcs and goblins can be encountered in the lower regions and the forest around the mountains (but conniving orc and goblin bandits also roam this area and often pretend to be harmless nomads). Coyles, ogres, trolls, and giants are found in the mid to higher regions. Wolfen and humans tend toward large permanent towns and villages, so there are few nomadic groups composed of them. Kankoran, although somewhat nomadic are more organized and territorial (*see tribes*).

A nomad camp will be composed of animal hide tents and/or lean-tos of wood and leaves. A nomad settlement is a place where the group will actually remain at for a month or two. These settlements will have larger and more sturdy tents, tepees, and wood huts, but are more common among the largest groups.

## Mountain Men

Of course, mountain men also wander these ranges trapping animals for fur and living off the land. They are certainly nomads but do not travel in groups. They usually travel alone or in pairs. It is the rare *group* of huntsmen (Ranger O.C.C.) that travel in a troop of four or more. A majority of mountain men are humans. Next in line are wolfen, followed by ogres, trolls, bearmen, kankoran, and orcs. Although the elven ranger and long bowmen are quite famous, they are common to the lowland forests and not mountains.

**Human** and **wolfen** huntsmen can be encountered throughout the full range of mountains. (Bear in mind that their numbers are small compared to the vast range of mountains. One ranger may not see a fellow huntsman on the same mountain for a year or more.) **Ogres** and **trolls** are found in higher altitudes and away from human settlements. **Bearmen** and **kankoran** are

generally found in the most remote and/or forested regions and hunt alone or in pairs. Both are incredibly hardy and skilled hunters who love the solitude and freedom that the unpopulated mountains provide. **Orcs** are the least common huntsmen, but there are enough to warrant a mention.

All mountain men dislike civilization, the encumbrance of laws and social etiquette, and the confinement of a town. They are generally tough loners who pride themselves on their physical might, hunting prowess, and forest savvy. They come down into the towns and villages a couple times a year to sell their pelts or if a winter is particularly savage. Except for an occasional mountain man's jubilee, these stout fellows seldom gather into any kind of formal group.

## Tribes

First of all, we must define the difference between a tribe and nomads. Nomads wander all over the country yet claim no one place as their home. A tribe, regardless of its size, is almost always territorial. Each tribe claims an area or range as its land. This is true even if that land is shared by other creatures or even other tribes. For example, a tribe of ogres may live in harmony with a *non-competing* tribe of kankoran who also live on their land. The ogres live in their area and the kankoran in theirs, even though the territory is considered to be ogre territory by the ogres and the kankoran consider it theirs. Both tolerate the other because both stay out of each other's way, neither destroys the land, nor threatens the other in any way. Basically, both tribes cohabit the same land but leave each other alone. However, if a tribe of coyles or orcs should defile their territory it is an act of war! Depending on the circumstances, this invasion by an enemy tribe may invoke the ire of only the ogres, or both

ogre and kankoran may join forces to expel the invader and then go their separate ways.

Nomads can have come from anywhere and share no common ancestry. Tribes are usually indigenous to the area, meaning that they are creatures native to that land. All the mountain tribes are composed of races that have inhabited the *Great Northern Wilderness* for thousands of years. Their tribe has lived in the area for countless generations. They share a common ancestry and a common culture.

The nomads have an acting leader and advisor, but the group has no formal leader nor laws. All tribes have a *chiefor* headman who speaks for the tribe, acts as its official leader and enforces tribal law and customs. The chief is often an inherited position; i.e. the son of the chief is the heir to leadership of the tribe just as his father before him, as it has been for generations. The hereditary chief is groomed from birth to lead his people (as is his brothers and, to a lesser degree, cousins). A chief is usually a male, especially among warrior tribes, but a female may also be chieftain depending on the social status of women in the tribal community. However, not all chiefs are born into the job. Some tribes have a trial by combat or test of strength and/or cunning to select a new leader. Others select their chief by election or a chief is picked by a council of elders. Still others may use divine insight in which the chief is selected by the shaman or priest after a long period of fasting and meditation.

The smallest tribe is usually larger than the biggest group of nomads. A typical tribe will contain 100 to 400 tribesmen, while the largest tribes may number 3000 or more. However, these large tribes are often splintered into smaller communities of several hundred members all living within the tribal territory. Although tribes may be broken into smaller communities and they may move from one location to another, they stay within the borders of their land.

### Tribal Villages

A tribal village can be comparatively small and resemble a large nomadic encampment with tents and lodges, or it can be a village with large wood, clay, or stone huts or cabins. The village is like any other village composed of homes, gathering places, corrals, and so on. The types of buildings depends on many elements, including how long the tribe has lived at that location, its prosperity, the size of its population, life style, and the type of creature. For example: **Ogres** tend to establish villages with large stone and wood and clay buildings. They raise horses and livestock, so they often have large grazing lands and corrals. An ogre tribe can range in size from 200 to 1200, but they are so ornery and competitive that, with rare exception, they break up into much smaller communities with 40 to 160 ogre members. Ogres also like to subjugate other races as a labor force or slaves. These servants are inevitably orcs or goblins or both. The orcs and goblins offer their services in labor and defense in exchange for the protection of the ogre community. Or they are warriors enslaved by the conquering ogres and forced into servitude. Thus, a typical ogre community will have twice as many orcs and/or goblins as ogres (i.e.: 40 ogres means 80 orcs live in the same village, and they live to serve the ogres).

**Kankoran and Bearmen** on the other hand, have small tribes that rarely surpass 800 total members and live in tiny tribal communities of 100 or less. The buildings are simple wood huts and lodges built among the trees and therefore unobtrusive. The

simple life style reflects the two races' closeness to their environment and primitive culture.

**Trolls and Giants** teeter on the brink of extinction. Consequently, they are often found only in the most remote areas and seem to have an affinity for difficult terrain. Both are found in and around caves, ravines, gorges, mountain passes, and steep cliffs. The Bruu-ga-Belimar, like the Algor mountains, is one of the last true homelands of these giants. This means that they are far more common here than in most places. There are several communities of trolls and giants known to contain 50 or more tribesmen. One place, high among the Northwest peaks is said to harbor a tribe of over 200 Algor giants and nearly as many trolls. The natives call this place "Monster Mountain."

**The coyles** are found mostly in the forests and hills around the base of the mountains. None are known to inhabit the mountains themselves, although the coyles often send raiding parties to plunder mountain tribes. Coyles have no regard for other races or their tribal borders. They will travel into any area to do or take what they want. Large groups of young male coyles have been known to massacre entire villages to simply prove their manhood. They are regarded as plundering rouges and are hated almost as much as humans by mountain natives. A coyle in the mountains can only mean two things: 1) there are other coyles nearby, and 2) trouble.

### Politics at work: Humans enemy, Wolfen friend

Most of the non-human races share an intolerance for humans, elves, and dwarves, and tend to view all "civilized" folk as arrogant and weak, but also treacherous villains. Many of the so-called monster races, such as orcs, ogres, trolls, and giants, see the mountains as their last domain and resent intrusions by humans and their allies. Their hatred for these races can lead to easily provoked attacks and sometimes wholesale slaughter. The monster races see themselves as protecting their land and their people from invaders. Humans see this as the actions of brutal and savage monsters who seek only to destroy human life. Neither sees the self-perpetuation of the tragedy of their actions.

Wolfen are more readily accepted for two reasons: one, they too are considered to be "monsters" by the humans, and secondly, they will generally acknowledge and respect a tribe's territory and laws, unlike humans who tend to take what they want (after all, they are just "monsters"). Perhaps the wolfen's own struggles in the wilderness and tribal origins enables them to be a more sympathetic intruder, but even their presence is not overly welcome. Still the wolfen have been cunning enough to use the hatred toward humans and human folly to their advantage. By acknowledging these tiny tribes' wishes for autonomy and not invading their land, the great wolves have made friends, not enemies. They have even come to the protection of the mountain people by fending off marauding hordes of human settlers come to claim the land. To further emphasize that they are friends and humans are the enemy, they are swift in spreading the word of human atrocities and invasions, and the Wolfen Empire's efforts to stem the tide of humanity that threatens to wash over the land. Their land.

### Algor Frost Giants

The Bruu-a-Belimar mountains are one of the last domains of the Algor frost giants. The giants were once a proud and noble warrior race, but their involvement on the side of the elves in





the ancient Elf/Dwarf war has all but obliterated them. Today, they live in seclusion high in the snow-capped mountains in the north. Among their own people they are kind and compassionate. They are extremely patient with the young and caring of the aged. The adults usually mate for life and the family bond is strong and loving.

Unlike trolls and ogres, they seek no vengeance against elves or manlings (as they call humans), but seek only to be left alone. They realize that to vent their anger and pain is to destroy themselves. The Algor do not underestimate the power of their enemies. However, do not let this gentler, rational side to these behemoths fool you, the Algor harbor an unrivaled hatred for elves. A hatred that has been passed down from generation to generation, for the Algor were duped by the elves to fight at their side, only to be cast away as fodder in the ancient war. Pawns to be thrown out to destruction without a thought or a care. Just one of the many atrocities that have lived on to haunt the elves eons later. The dwarves are loathed almost nearly as much and "manlings" stand next in line because they have allied themselves with both enemies and seem to carry on their tradition of arrogance and destruction.

As a result, the giants may not go looking for trouble, but tolerate little from elves, dwarves, or manlings who enter their domain. The slightest infraction, an act of aggression, a dishonest action, a snotty remark, will send the giants into a killing rage. The perpetrator(s) of said deed will pay dearly, probably with his life. Those who choose to defend or protect the offender will also suffer their wrath. Often, humans, elves, and dwarves will be warned away from an Algor lair, such as: "Do not enter the land of the Algor lest you seek an early death. Do not take this warning lightly." Any further action on the part of the non-giants may be seen as an act of aggression to which the giants will respond with deadly force. The Algor have made it clear for centuries now, that humans, elves, and dwarves are considered to be mortal enemies. Only the most humble and submissive actions will enable a human, elf or dwarf to survive an encounter with these giants without bloodshed (and even this is no guarantee).

A typical Algor village will contain 30 to 60 members. The largest, 90 to 140. It is the rare exception that harbors more than this. However, it is not uncommon for them to share their village with friendly trolls, wolfen, or other giants. These non-Algorian members of the village seldom surpass the number of Algor.

The villages are often walled fortresses made of ice and/or stone. One side will usually be built into the side of a cliff or at the edge of a ravine or other natural barrier. The towering homes are also made of ice and rock.

The giants have a fairly sophisticated society and hierarchy. The leader is always a warrior chieftain, but there is also a council of elders and at least one man of magic, typically an air or water warlock, wizard, mind mage, or druid (they tend to avoid summoners and diabolists). The warrior chieftain is a knight, the elite male defenders are also knights. Other warriors tend to be rangers and soldiers, while the remaining males and women are craftsmen and healers.

The Algor speak *troll*, the universal giant tongue, elven and wolfen fluently (all three may be considered their native tongue). Most can also speak goblin/orc, but few speak the manling tongues and fewer still can read any language. They are fair craftsmen, competent hunters, and excellent warriors. **Note:** The

Algor are impervious to the cold, so they are often seen wearing little more than a loincloth even in killing winters. Also the giants have a natural defense in the form of damaging *frost breath*.

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## A Typical Frost Giant Warrior

**Alignment:** Any; but usually scrupulous, unprincipled, anarchist, or miscreant.

**Hit Points:** 30 to 50

**Attributes:** I.Q. 10, M.E. 6, M.A. 9, P.S. 20, P.P. 10, P.E. 14, P.B. 9, Spd 6

**Age:** 70 to 150

**Height:** 14 to 16 feet **Weight:** 750 lbs

**Level of Experience:** 4th to 8th level

**Skills of Note:** Scale walls, identify tracks, trap/skin large animals; W.P. Large shield, W.P. Large swords, W.P. Pole arms, W.P. Ball and chain, and W.P. Blunt are all common weapon skills. They may also know any number of weapon proficiencies and skills.

Typical secondary skills include one or two additional languages, carpentry, racial history, and sense of direction.

**Attacks Per Melee:** Three attacks per melee

**Bonuses:** + 8 to damage, + 3 to parry and dodge, + 1 save vs magic/poison

**Favorite Weapons:** Pole arms (giant size 4D6 damage), large swords (giant size, 3D6), mace and chain/flail (3D6)

**Description:** Towering muscular humanoids that resemble humans (only 3 times as big). They have golden hair and pale white or light blue skin and dark eyes. The men often grow beards and mustaches and have shoulder length hair. The women have long, flowing hair that often extends to their waistlines. Young and attractive Algor giants are sometimes mistaken for Titans.

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## Dwarven Ruins

Rumors abound of ancient dwarven cities laden with treasure. However, they are apparently tall tales. Only a couple dwarven communities have been unearthed. All have been small and without treasure. Finding a dwarven city is a difficult task because these mountain domains are built right into the mountain itself, with few, if any, outdoor structures. The entrances to these underground dwellings were usually concealed in the first place. Snow, ice, landslides, and other debris over the thousands of years have served to conceal them all the more. No dwarves are known to live in these mountains.

# Random Encounter Tables

The following encounter tables are provided to give the game master an easy means for creating antagonists and action when the adventure may seem to slow down. They will also provide

an idea of the types of creatures and villains that wander this part of the country. As a rule, these encounters are not applicable within 10 miles of Wrijin or most towns or villages.

## The Forest and Foothills at the base of the mountain

The forest areas around the mountains are mostly wilderness. However, because it is on the border of human and wolfen territory, there is more activity here than in other places in the wilderness.

**01-05 Suddenly** out of a small mound of dirt and rocks lunges an angry devil digger. Foam and saliva flies from its mouth as it roars and growls threateningly. Devil diggers are notorious as crazed, beserker type, mammals who will fight to the death at the slightest provocation. You have provoked it by simply walking within 20 feet (6 m) of its den. Inside the den is its mate and 3 young. If the male is slain the female will rush out and continue the fight. Running away is a possible alternative but the creature(s) will pursue interlopers for at least 200 yards/meters.

**Male:** 32 hit points, Natural A.R. 8, Speed 12

**Female:** 24 hit points, Natural A.R. 8, Speed 12

**Note:** See *Monsters & Animals*, page 24 for more details.



**06-10 1D4 + 1 wolfen soldiers** patrolling the area in search of spies and bandits. They will stop and ask the group questions like: "What is your destination? What is your business there? Have you seen any bandits or suspicious looking individuals,

if so where?" and so on. They will give humans a long speech about what happens to spies and bandits in the Wolfen Empire and caution their behavior. Then they will leave. No combat will ensue unless a character(s) acts suspicious or extremely rude. If this occurs, the soldiers will want to escort the character, or even the entire group, to their camp (36 soldiers) for further questioning. Resistance will be met with force.

Each wolfen is a third level soldier, has approximately 26 hit points, two attacks per melee, dressed in half-plate armor (A.R. 13, 60 S.D.C.), and armed with short sword (2D6 damage) and pole arm (4D6 damage, giant size).

**11-15 A mean little bogie** (*Palladium RPG*, page 229) decides to have some malicious fun at the group's expense. First he animates small loose objects and stones used to pelt the characters. No damage is done except for a point or two and much frustration and a couple bruises. After a few minutes, the assault stops and he lets the group continue in peace, for a while. Then, using ventriloquism, the bogie makes a moaning noise come from behind a clump of bushes, like somebody in distress. Characters approaching the bushes with caution, and looking around, will see and avoid the steel jaws of a huntsman's trap. Those who are not careful will step into the trap and suffer 1D6 points of damage (only armor with an A.R. of 14 or higher will prevent hit point damage). The adventurers will find nobody behind the bushes, but now, mournful wailing seems to be coming from the neighboring tree. Suddenly, a glowing sphere of light appears floating above the bush. Next melee, all those by the bush/sphere must save vs faerie magic or fall victim to wisps of confusion. His next attack will be a fog of fear, followed by a wind rush.

This cunning little fiend will not be found, even if the group looks for the instigator of the assault, because the tiny fellow is using his prowl ability (77%) and has metamorphed into the form of a large spider about the size of a human's fist. A spider should not be seen as a danger and should be ignored if noticed. Characters with a knowledge of faerie lore may suspect the assault to be by faeries and take the appropriate action, such as turning one's clothing inside out.

The bogie has had his fun and takes his leave. Our heroes are likely to think that they've just traveled through a patch of haunted forest. They'd be wise to avoid it if they should pass this way again.

**16-20 A giant spider's web** blocks the path creating a wall of sticky fibers that is 80 feet (24 m) wide as it is tall. Looking up shows a giant timber spider feeding on a bird caught in its web. However, the real danger lays wait in the 3D4 web covered burrows on the ground. Inside each is a hungry gaint spider; average hit points: 18, A.R. 6, the bite inflicts 1D6 damage plus poison. (See the *Palladium RPG*, page 243 or *Monsters & Animals*, page 121.)

The area around the web is littered with the bones of small animals and what looks to be the remains of a goblin. The

body has no valuables other than a pair of rusty daggers and 4 gold pieces. Examining the body will entice 1D4 spiders to attack! Stuck to the web is a dozen or so skeletons of birds and a squirrel. As long as the characters stay 30 feet (9 m) away and do not touch the web they can avoid a fight with the giant arachnids. If one attacks, the others will all join in two melees later.



**21-25 A band of goblins and orcs.** This is a seedy group of 2D6 goblins and 1D6+1 orcs. They are more like two-bit punks than bandits. They live off the land and take what they want from travelers they encounter. They will attack, but will flee at the first sign of magic. They are a cowardly lot of first level mercenaries and thieves. Average hit points: 18, armor is hard and studded leather.

**26-30 Big time trouble!** Centaur bandits!! These guys are fast, tough and mean. They raid along the entire length of the Bruu-ga-Belimars on the northern side. They are well equipped, wearing studded leather armor (A.R. 12, 38 S.D.C.) and have a variety of weapons. 1D4 are long bowmen, 2D4 have a spear and a saber (1D6 damage each), 1D4 have a small shield and Hercules club (2D6 damage), and 1D4 ride with horseman hammers (1D8 damage) and small shield. An elven druid also runs with the bandits (hoofed/horse totem).

All are third level thieves or mercenaries. All have two attacks per melee and the *average* centaur is +6 to damage, +3 to strike, +4 parry and dodge, +3 to save vs magic and poison, and has a speed of 28 or faster (max is 48).

Fortunately, the bandits are not out for bloodshed, and only seek booty. They will strip characters of all gold, gems, and jewelry, as well as magic potions, medallions, scrolls, and useful magic weapons. They are not interested in armor, weapons, clothing, horses, food, or equipment, just small, easily salable items. If the group fights them, they will fight until the group submits or until they have suffered serious casualties (half the bandits are down to 1/3 their hit points).

**31-35 A pair of woodsmen.** Roll to determine their race: 1-20 Human, 21-40 Coyle, 41-60 Wolfen, 61-80 Orc, 81-00 Bearmen.

The two will seem friendly enough and stop to talk with the group. They will be glad to share what information they may know about the area (exactly how much they know or how accurate the data is up to the GM). However, these scoundrels are thieves (2nd level) as well as rangers, and will attempt to pick pockets/saddlebags for gold, booze, and other small, valuable items that they can easily conceal.

They will make up a terrible story denying that anything was taken should they be caught at it. If the group seems puny, the two may try to beat them up and take what they want.

**36-45 Coyles** out for human blood. They aren't bandits, but coyles with a hate for human beings. They are young, foolish, and have more guts than brains. They will attack any group that is predominately human and/or elven, even if in the company of (traitorous) coyles or wolfen.

These young rebels are all first level mercenaries, are garbed in soft leather armor, and average about 12 hit points each. All have one attack per melee and wield swords and maces. There are two coyles for every one character.

**46-55 A family of kinnie ger** see intruders in their neck of the woods as either food or fools who should die for their intrusion. They will leap out from high in the trees and try to knock the characters to the ground. Then they will hunch on all fours, ready to leap, and hiss the question: "Tell use manlings (everyone is a manling except the wolfen and their kin), why should we not kill?"

The creatures will toy with the group, holding off from full attack until they have an idea of how powerful they might be. This may lead to a challenge between one of the characters and a kinnie ger. They will claim that if the player character wins, the group can pass unmolested, but if the kinnie ger wins, the group must give them 100 gold and go around their land, which is a 40 mile detour.

This is all really a test to see how tough our heroes are. If the player character wins decisively, the felines are likely to back off and let them pass without further incident. If the battle was close, they may attack regardless of who won. If the kinnie ger wins, all three will attack the rest of the group. They really don't care about any amount of treasure or magic, the request for 100 gold was just a ploy. They want to kill, plain and simple. Kinnie ger hate all humanoid life, including wolfen. If the group seems too powerful they will run off. Otherwise, they will fight to the end.

The three kinnie ger include: The father, who has 45 hit points, +4 to damage, +3 to strike, parry, and dodge, three attacks per melee. The oldest son has 31 hit points, +5 to damage, +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, three attacks per melee. The youngest son has 22 hit points, +2 to damage,

+1 to strike, parry and dodge, two attacks per melee. All three wear no armor and use no weapons; claws or bite inflict 1D8 damage plus bonus. (See *Monsters & Animals*, page 49).

**56-60 A wild animal** lumbers out of the brush. It has been wounded by a hunter and is crazy with pain. The beast will attack anyone who moves and fights to the death.

Roll to determine the type of animal. 1-20 northern grizzly bear, 21-40 tusker, 41-45 scorpion devil, 46-50 nipper worm (see Worms of Taut in *Monsters & Animals* page 96), 51-55 timber wolf, 56-65 wild boar, 66-70 brown bear, 71-75 tiger, 76-80 devil digger, 81-85 mountain lion, 86-90 wolverine, 91-95 lynx, 96-00 fire worm (see Worms of Taut).

**61-70 1D4 + 1 rogue wolfen and 1D4 coyotes** are looking for trouble. They are basically bandits, but only molest non-wolfen/canine travelers. They will spring out of the bushes, brandishing giantsized pole arms, demand everybody's purse and flee back into the woods. Resistance will result in combat. They will fight until two or more of the wolfen are severely wounded or killed. Afterwards they will flee for their lives. The wolfen average 30 hit points and are all third level mercenaries. The coyotes average 22 hit points and are all third level thieves.

**71-75 Slave merchants** hunting for slaves to sell back in the civilized parts of the wolfen empire. They are an ugly and unlikable band of low-lives who have already caught themselves quite a haul. Their prisoners include a half dozen orcs, six goblins, and three humans (two of which are women). The slavers are not going to bother a *group* of adventurers, although they may inquire whether any of them are slaves for sale.

Our heroes' predicament will be that all the slaves will beg for help and freedom. Good characters will be in a quandary. The slavers claim that everything is legal (wolfen do not abide the abduction of wolfen citizens), but it is obvious that these slime are capturing people along the border. No amount of talk or threats will convince them to release their catch. To purchase everybody is costly, 2000 gold for each goblin, 4000 gold for each orc, and 10,000 gold for each human. Furthermore, the slavers are just the type to come back afterwards and recapture everybody. A fight is the only way to set these people free.

The opposition includes: Three ogres whose average hit points are 30, +5 to damage, +2 to parry and dodge, each is a third level mercenary, wears double chain mail (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 55) and is armed with a huge sword (2D8 damage) and battle axe. Four muscular orcs whose average hit points are 20, +3 to damage, +2 to parry and dodge, each is a third level mercenary, wears studded leather (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38), and is armed with a mace and small shield.

A wolfen mind mage is the second in command. He is a thin, black and brown haired fellow with a sinister look about him. He is third level, wears lightweight splint armor (A.R. 16, S.D.C. 82), and is armed with a pair of silver daggers (1D6 damage) and a falchion short sword (2D8 giant size). Knows all psionic powers from levels 1-3, has 54 I.S.P.

A massive wall of muscle is the troll leader, a brute named Kreet. He is garbed in weightless splint armor and wears a pair of magical gryphon claws. A bull whip (1D8 damage) hangs from a belt on his left hip and a giant Goupillon fail

(4D6 damage) hangs on his right. Kreet is clever, mean and tricky. Although a fierce fighter, he knows when to retreat and will never personally fight to the death. He will not forget nor forgive those who defeat him. I.Q. 14, P.S. 25, P.P. 17, Spd 5; bonuses: +10 to damage, +1 to strike, parry, and dodge. Fourth level soldier.

**76-80 A travelling caravan** of apparently friendly merchants that cater to huntsmen and the many little villages that dot the area. They sell all kinds of everyday items such as dried meats, cutlery, knives, axes, axe handles, nails, hammers, horseshoes, rope, snare wire, waterskins, hats, capes/cloaks, gloves, and similar items. No magic. The caravan is 2D6 wagons long, with a merchant and two assistants in each. All the merchants are wolfen, while a few assistants are orcs.

The leader is a huge black-haired wolfen who has an obvious disdain for humans and dwarves. He is a fifth level ranger and an excellent warrior. The other characters are all second level merchants or mercenaries. They are fairly well armed, with spears, swords and crossbows, and fly the Wolfen imperial flag, implying that they are government sanctioned.

The caravan is good for restocking supplies and accumulating rumors. The merchants are fairly friendly and prices are only slightly higher than normal.

**81-85 Human hermit**, an old fellow who will protest any interruptions of his solitary life. He has no valuables other than food. Of course, he knows the surrounding 30 mile (48 km) area like the back of his hand and may be convinced to describe what lays ahead and perhaps even draw a map. Kindness and an offer of spices, tobacco, candy, or alcohol will help loosen his tongue. **GM Note:** At your discretion, the hermit may be protected by neighboring faerie folk, wing tips, or drakin. Also, you may change the hermit's race to any of those common to the region.

**86-90 A brown bear mother and cub** are foraging honey from a beehive. If anybody comes within 100 feet (30.5 m) of them, the mother will charge. She will be happy with chasing intruders away, but will chase them 2D6 x 100 yards/meters. If the characters stay a safe distance, but hang around, they will find themselves being attacked by angry bees who will attack anything within 300 feet (91.5 m) of the hive. The bee attacks do no significant damage, but are painful and distracting, sleep may be difficult; penalties: —3 on initiative, and -5% on skills for 1D4 days.

**91-00 Bad Weather** (rainstorm, sleet, blizzard). Travel proceeds at half the normal speed, people get cold and cranky, mules and horses refuse to go on, and you get soaked down to your underwear.

## Mountain Random Encounters

The inhabitants of the Bruuga-Belimar mountains are mostly non-humans and include races that are rare or uncommon elsewhere. It is an inhospitable land that requires a strong will and character to carve a home in it.

The lower portion of the mountains covered in a forest of conifer and birch trees. But a third of the way up, the forest begins to rapidly thin, with increasingly stunted birch trees. It then turns into scrub and grassland much like the tundra. About

halfway up, the grass and shrubs give way to rock completely devoid of vegetation. In the winter this region is snow covered. Three quarters up is the permanent glacier. This region is always snow covered, and is the home of the famous Algor giants (and some say, ice dragons).

**01-10 Avalanche!** And you are lucky because it is only a small one. A person can not escape an avalanche unless he/she can fly or unless there is a cave or huge boulders (20 tons or more) to hide behind. In the latter two cases, an individual could still find himself buried under a ton of snow.

An avalanche will scoop up humanoids, animals, and tents and carry them 2D6x1000 yards/meters down the mountain. Any items that were loose or held in hand will be lost and buried under tons of snow and ice. The characters themselves will suffer 6D6 points of damage and be stunned/unable to move for 4D6 minutes. They will also be soaking wet and are likely to develop a cold that will last 1D6 days. **GM Note:** Yes, I know this is not particularly realistic. Realism would dictate 6D6 x 10 damage or worse.

**11-18 A band of ogres and orcs** give you the once-over, as if sizing you up for battle. They wear tattered furs and leather armour and look thin and tired. They will grunt and growl at humans, elves, gnomes, and dwarves, but will ignore them in every other way. They hate the prettier races and are deciding whether or not they should kill this group. They are not bandits. They simply hate humans and their friends.

The band will attack if the group insults them or if they outnumber the adventurers. Fortunately, these thugs will not fight to the death and will flee if they begin to suffer too many casualties (hit points down to 6 or less and a couple are dead).

There are 2D4 orcs. All are first level mercenaries, miscreant alignment, and wear soft leather armour. They average about 14 hit points each, an I.Q. 6, P.S. 18 (+3 to damage, P.P. 10, and are spooked by magic). They are armed with oncin picks (1D8 damage) and daggers. They obey their ogre masters to the last letter.

The 1D4 ogre warriors are the boys in charge. They are mean, tough, and hate filled. All are 2nd level mercenaries, miscreant alignment, and wear studded armour and furs (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38). They average about 22 hit points each, an I.Q. 10, P.S. 19 (+4 to damage), P.P. 12, and P.E. 14. They are armed with giant battle axes (3D6 damage) and short swords (1D6 damage).

**19-24 A northern grizzly bear** suddenly stands up from behind a boulder or shrubs and bellows a challenge to the heroes who have ventured too near its sleeping place. Grizzlies are fierce and this one will attack the nearest person without further provocation. It will fight till the death. Hit Points: 50, 2D6 + 8 to damage from claws, bite does 1D8 damage, +2 to parry, and has three attacks per melee.

**25-30 Goblin bandits!** 2D6+1 goblins and an orc leap out from their hiding places and attack. They tend to leap before they look, so they will be startled if their intended victims prove to be quite powerful and will flee if things look bad. These bandits are too dumb and cowardly to bluff or threaten. Their tactics are hit and run.

Each goblin is a third level thief, miscreant alignment, and averages about 18 hit points; I.Q. 6, P.S. 10, P.P. 18.

Bonuses, including hand to hand and attribute: +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, kick attack does 1D6 damage; two attacks per melee. Armour is studded leather (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38). Weapons: Half use daggers and crossbows, the other half use daggers and morning stars.

The orc is all muscle and no brains; I.Q. 4, P.S. 22, P.P. 15, P.E. 17, Spd 14. Hit points: 36. Alignment: Anarchist. She is a 4th level mercenary and enjoys a good fight. Bonuses, including hand to hand and attribute: +2 to parry and dodge, +9 to damage, +1 to save vs magic/poison, and has two attacks per melee. Her armour is studded leather. She wields a falchion short (1D8 damage) and a glowing long sword (1D8+2 damage). Two daggers hang from her belt. The glowing sword is magic, but its only powers are that it glows and adds a +2 saving throw vs magic.

**31-35 A blue skinned pixie** appears out of thin air in front of the lead character. He announces in broken elven and/or goblin that he and his hidden cohort are bandits and that the group must pay the price of passage or suffer their wrath! Now granted, this tiny extortionist stands only a foot tall, but even *one frost pixie* can mean big trouble (see the *Palladium RPG*, page 225, for the full range of magic abilities).

The cost of passage is five gold each and a jug of sweet tasting alcohol or, preferably, candy, honey, or jam. If the group is mostly polite and complies with his demands, they will be allowed to pass without trouble. Refusal, insults, and/or attack will cause the angry pixie to turn invisible and hide. Moments later, the group will find itself caught in a snow or hailstorm that will plague them for the next 1D6 miles, forcing the group to take shelter or suffer physical damage. Of course, the storm is faerie magic, created by the pixie(s). After a while, the pixie will appear again and politely request the payment again. This time however, he will demand 20 gold each, all the sweets the group can provide, and that the most offensive individual travel the next half mile naked except for boots and gloves. **GM Note:** Whether there is more than one frost pixie is up to you, the game master.

**36-40 A pair of bearman and a wolfen** stop before you, laughing and pointing fingers at the foolish "city folk." They will continue to hurl insults, laughing and mocking everything said and done. Any retaliation in words or action will make the trio laugh even more, but this time there is something menacing about the laugh. The three will step in front of the group, blocking the way and snarl, "Think yer goin' somewhere, boy?" Play time is over. "You want to continue, yer gonna have to go through us, city boy." These mountain men bullies have something to prove and challenging the group is their way of doing it.

The biggest bearman laughs and howls, throwing off his cloak and pulling out a huge two-handed battle axe (4D6 damage). The other two step back and draw their weapons as well. Their courage has been bolstered by a few drinks and they share a hatred for humans, elves, and other city folk. This being the case they may fight to the death. Other than weapons, a total of 40 gold, and a skin of moonshine, the trio have no valuables. None wear armor, only furs.

The biggest bearman stands 10 feet tall (3 m) and wields the giant axe. He is a 4th level ranger, miscreant alignment, 48 hit points. +4 to strike and + 2 to parry and throw with



the axe; otherwise + 1 to strike, + 1 to parry and dodge, and + 10 to damage. I.Q. 7, Spd. 10, P.S. 25, P.P. 14, P.E. 32 (+ 8 to save vs magic and poison). Two attacks per melee.

The smaller bearman stands a mere 8 1/2 feet tall (2.6 m) and has drawn a wicked looking large sword (3D6 damage). He is a 3rd level ranger, diabolic alignment, 32 hit points. +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +7 to damage. I.Q. 6, Spd. 11, P.S. 22, P.P. 17, P.E. 24 (+5 to save vs magic and poison). Two melee attacks.

The wolven stands nearly 9 feet tall and is armed with a small pick (1D6 damage) and a giant size-morning star (2D8 damage). He is a 2nd level ranger, diabolic alignment, 27 hit points. +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +2 to damage. I.Q. 9, P.S. 19, P.P. 15, P.E. 14, Spd. 17. Two attacks per melee. Also has minor psionics, 18 I.S.P., psi-powers include detect psionics, resist cold, resist fatigue, sense magic, and presence sense. **Remember**, bearmen have a natural A.R. of 11.

GM Note: If this table is used often, you may avoid repetition by turning the villains into ogres, trolls, orcs, or wolven. You may also wish to add a fourth or fifth member to the evil band.

**41-45 A Troll Bridge!** A bridge or passage of land that lays before you is owned by a huge potbellied troll who demands a payment of 10 gold per person to cross. If he is paid, characters will be allowed to pass unmolested. Refusal will incite combat (and the troll is not alone, although it may seem like it). Rudeness in the way of racial, personal, or regional slurs will double the price of passage for that individual. *Each* insult will *double* the price.



The troll will not start a fight unless the character/group tries to continue without paying. The troll will rush forward and knock offenders down with his giant pole arm using the blunt non-blade end (2D6 damage plus P.S. bonus). He does not want to fight or kill, he only wants to be paid. If the group does not have to gold he'll take trade in furs and/or weapons. If the group insists on battle he will stand his ground and fight until subdued or killed. However, his two younger brothers will join in the fight. They get first strike, because they are magically invisible!

Toll Troll, the big brother, towers 12 feet (3.6 m) tall and wields a giant runka (3D6 damage). He is a 4th level mercenary, anarchist alignment, 39 hit points. I.Q. 10, P.S. 20, P.P. 21, P.E. 18 (+2 save vs magic and poison). Bonuses including hand to hand (W.P. not included): +3 to strike, +5 parry and dodge, +7 to damage. Two melee attacks.

Troll brother is a bearded fellow who stands 10 feet (3 m) tall and is armed with a gigantic morning star (2D8 damage) and sword (1D8 damage). He is a 2nd level mercenary, anarchist alignment, 26 hit points. I.Q. 9, P.S. 19, P.P. 17, P.E. 20 (+3 to save vs magic and poison). Bonuses including hand to hand: +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage. Two attacks per melee.

Youngest brother troll is a strapping brute standing 11 1/2 feet (3.5m) tall and fights with a huge halberd pole arm (4D6 damage) and has a sword dangling from his side (2D6 damage). He is also a 2nd level mercenary, anarchist alignment, 24 hit points. I.Q. 13, P.S. 20, P.P. 18, P.E. 19 (+2 to save vs magic and poison). Bonuses, including hand to hand: +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +6 to damage. Two attacks per melee.

**Note:** All wear studded leather armour under their furs, A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38. All also wear a medallion of invisibility (turn invisible 3x daily). Big brother also wears a magic fly medallion (fly as an eagle 2x daily).

**46-50 Algor giant looking for blood.** An Algor frost giant rises out of the snow as if he has been laying in wait for just this moment. He is burning with hate for humans and elves and the blood of any who dares to keep their company. He will bellow and attack. There is no reasoning with him and he will fight to the death.

The giant towers 16 feet tall (4.8 m) and attacks with a giant two-handed axe (3D6 damage) and short sword (2D6), and frost breath (4D6 damage, 30 foot range). He is a 4th level mercenary, anarchist alignment, 36 hit points. Armour is double mail, A.R. 14, S.D.C. 44. I.Q. 11, P.S. 26, P.P. 12, P.E. 20, Spd. 7. Bonuses, including hand to hand: +2 to parry and dodge, +3 to save vs magic and poison, +13 to damage. Two hand to hand attacks plus one breath attack per melee (3 total).

**51-52 A hungry mountain lion attacks!** The big cat is desperate from hunger and will attack horses or pack animals. If there are no domestic animals the beast will jump the smallest person in the group or somebody who smells of blood (wounded). Once the melee has begun, the mountain lion will fight crazily until killed. 31 hit points, three attacks per melee, claws inflict 1D8 damage, bite 1D6; +3 to strike, parry, and dodge. See *Monsters & Animals*, page 123 for details on wild felines.

**53-56 A hideous peryton swoops down** from the clouds in search of prey. This horrible creature is a carnivorous winged deer (see *Monsters & Animals*, page 64). It charges, first with its antlers and then kicks with its feet, snapping at anyone who gets too close to its head. 44 hit points, evil incarnate, natural A.R. 10, three attacks per melee, head butt by antlers 1D8, charging butt 4D6, kicks 2D6, bite 1D6 damage; +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +4 to damage, and +2 to save vs poison.



**57-61 Wolfen bandits demand** the characters' valuables. They are only interested in gold, silver, gems, jewelry, and any obvious magic items. They will leave without a fight if they believe that the group has given them a significant amount of their valuables.

If a fight occurs, the wolfen will fight only as long as they think they can win. If their opponents seem too powerful or possess magic, they will flee.

The wolfen are all 2nd level mercenaries and thieves. A typical bandit has 20 hit points, I.Q. 9, P.S. 17, P.P. 12, Spd 18; +2 to damage, one attack per melee. Weapons are large swords (2D8+2 damage), daggers (1D6 damage), and/or morning stars (2D8 damage). There is one bandit for every character plus the wolfen leader and his two wolfen aids (both 3rd level meres with two attacks per melee). Each carries 1D6x10 gold on their person.

The leader is a 3rd level mind mage: Aberrant alignment, I.Q. 13, M.E. 19, P.S. 18, P.P. 12, Spd 20; +1 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage (includes hand to hand: non-man of arms), +3 to save vs psionics, +1 to save vs magic.

Knows all psionic powers levels 1-3 and has 60 I.S.P.; One psionic attack and One hand to hand attack per melee. He has 1D4x1000 in gems and 2D6x10 in gold.

**62-67 1D4 + 1 devil diggers** roar and growl threateningly. Devil diggers are notorious as crazed, berserker type, mammals who will fight to the death at the slightest provocation. You have provoked it by simply walking within a few feet of its den. The largest male attacks first. If the male is slain, his mate will rush out and continue the fight. The other diggers will join in the fighting frenzy, attacking other characters. Running away is a possible alternative, but the creatures will pursue for 200 yards/meters.

**Males:** 4D6 + 8 hit points, Natural A.R. 8, Speed 12

**Female:** +2 hit points, Natural A.R. 8, Speed 12

**Note:** See *Monsters & Animals*, page 24, for more details.

**68-72 2D4 + 1 Ogre tribesmen** who hate humans and elves and aren't too happy about those who associate with them. If they outnumber the group they will attack and try to beat our heroes into submission, and then steal everything they can carry. If the player group looks tough or equally matched,

the ogres will snarl but allow them to pass. **GM Note:** At the game master's option, the ogres may attack a little while later from behind or alert bandits to the group's presence.

The ogre warriors are mean, tough, and hate filled. All are 2nd level mercenaries, miscreant or anarchist alignment, and wear studded leather armour and furs (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38). They average about 22 hit points each, an I.Q. 10, P.S. 19 (+4 to damage), P.P. 12, and P.E. 14. They are armed with giant swords (2D8 damage), axes (3D6 damage), and short swords (1D6 damage). They carry nothing of value other than their furs and weapons.

**73-78 A pair of gigantes** block your path. They are evil bullies who terrorize everybody in the area, humans and non-humans alike. The giants insist that the group give them 50 gold per person and animal (or an equivalent trade). The money insures that the giants do not kill the group on the spot. Then they will demand that the group make a five mile (8 km) detour.

The giants are 3rd level mercenaries and have two attacks per melee unless stated otherwise. Roll percentile dice to see what type of mutants these two gigantes are:

01-20: 40 hit points, wings (flies, spd 20), large tail, +10 to damage, +2 to strike, +4 to parry/dodge, +3 save vs magic and poison; weapon: giant sword (2D8 damage).

21-40: 32 hit points, scaly skin (A.R. 12), turns invisible at will, +8 damage, +3 to strike, +5 to parry/dodge, +4 save vs magic and poison; weapons: giant scythe (2D8 damage) and mace (2D8 damage).

41-60: 36 hit points, fangs (bite does 2D6), impervious to fire, +6 to damage, +2 to strike, +4 to parry/dodge, +6 save vs magic and poison; weapons: voulge (4D6 damage) and short sword (1D6 damage).

61-70: 27 hit points, breaths fire (3D6 damage, 20 foot/6 meter range counts as one additional melee attack), claws (2D6 damage), +8 to damage, +3 strike, +5 to parry/dodge, +2 save vs magic and poison; weapons: none!

71-80: 29 hit points, see the invisible, thick and lumpy skin (A.R. 10), +12 damage, +4 to strike, +6 to parry/dodge, +4 save vs magic and poison; weapon: battle axe (3D6 damage).

81-90: 30 hit points, spits acid (4D6 damage, 20 foot range counts as one additional melee attack), additional leg, +9 damage, +5 to strike, +7 parry/dodge, +3 save vs magic and poison. Weapons: war hammer (2D8 damage) and oversize falchion (2D8 damage). Also minor psionic: resist cold, presence sense, object read, see aura, aura of truth.

91-00: 35 hit points, additional eye in back of head (no surprise attacks from behind), additional arm (adds one attack per melee; 3 total). +8 to damage, +4 to strike, +6 parry/dodge, +4 save vs magic and poison. Weapons: crossbow (2D6 damage per bolt), and a giant sword (3D6 damage).

**Note:** About 200 yards/meters away is the giants' cave. Inside, the smelly lair are two beds of sticks, rags, and fur. A huge kettle and bowls set in a corner. A giant size mace (2D8 damage) stand in another corner. A huge pile of bones, animal and humanoid, fills the rear of the cave. Under each bed are the giants' treasure hordes. There is 1D6 x 10 silver coins and 3D6 x 100 in gold, as well as a dozen human size short swords, two dozen daggers, a

couple small shields, and 1D4 battle axes. **GM Note:** If this random encounter is rolled again, you may want to add a gigante or make the villains three or four trolls or four ogres.

**79-84 1D4 + 2 Algor giants.** The giants view the group with extreme caution and make growling noises. However, they will not attack unless the player characters attack first. Each has one hand to hand attack plus one frost breath attack per melee. Average hit points 30, unprincipled or anarchist alignments. All wear soft leather armour, A.R. 9, S.D.C. 20, and are armed with giant staves (2D6 damage) and short swords (2D6 damage).

**85-90 Bad Weather** (rainstorm, sleet, blizzard). Travelers proceed up the mountain at one third the normal speed and there is a 1-35% chance of an avalanche or flash flood (same effect as the avalanche) for every mile/kilometer traveled.

**91-95 A wolf pack** made bold by their large numbers, 6D6 timber wolves. Six attack while the others momentarily stay back, growling menacingly. Any sudden movement or running will send another 1D4 wolves after the moving individual. Fortunately, killing a third of the wolves will send the others running. The average timber wolf has 24 hit points, and two melee attacks; bite inflicts 2D6 damage.

**96-00 A wild animal** lumbers out of hiding. It has been wounded by a hunter and is crazy with pain. The beast will attack anyone who moves and fights to the death.

Roll to determine the type of animal. 1-10 brown bear, 11-30 northern grizzly bear, 31-50 peryton, 51-60 timber wolf, 61-70 mountain lion, 71-80 devil digger, 81-85 grunor (see *Monsters & Animals*, page 40), 86-90 lynx, 91-95 northern grizzly bear, 96-00 zavor (see *Monsters & Animals*, page 103).





pitable environment. Of course, there are different dangers such as ogres, giants, avalanches, and snow blindness. Basically, adventure of all kinds is available if you look for it. The mountains are dangerous and challenging, but the potential rewards *could be* great.

## The Village of Wrijin

No matter where the group is heading or why they are in the Bruu-ga-Belimar mountains, they will inevitably stop at a friendly little village called Wrijin. It is the *last* point of civilization along one of the few known (and safe) mountain trails. Wrijin is likely to become the player characters' temporary home base. It is a pleasant, two horse (and one guy owns both horses), medium size village of predominately wolfen people, located about a third of the way up the actual mountain. From here every place in the Bruu-ga-Belimars is a reasonable distance.

The road, if you can call it that, is some 1000 feet (305 m) from the outskirts of town. A smaller, but well traveled path leads into the heart of town. As visitors approach town, they will see an occasional wood house peeking through the light woods. Many of the trees have obviously been cut down for construction and to make the village more accessible.

The village proper is a small cluster of a dozen or so buildings, with homes recessed farther away in the woods. The population is large and uncharacteristically friendly for these parts. The racial breakdown is approximately 60% wolfen, 20% human, 10% orc, and 10% other (goblin, coyle, ogre, etc.). Most of the wolfen and non-human individuals are cool toward strangers, especially human strangers, but tolerant and basically polite. Visitors are encouraged to stay in the main part of town and not to invade the privacy of the homes that surround it.

Although there is no formal peace keeping force, Wrijin is an honest, law-abiding, gods fearing village. The residents are close knit and caring. Any ill will toward one of the villagers will definitely cause the entire population to cast a wary and discerning eye on the visiting trouble-maker. Acts of violence and racial harassment of any villager will not be tolerated. The fool who attacks one of the residents out of malice or prejudice is likely to find himself tarred and feathered before being run out of town.

The village is governed by a council of elders, four wolfen, a human, an ogre, and an orc. Although not a member of the elders, old Ithak's opinions are regarded with great consideration.

## Ithak, the Storyteller

Ithak (pronounced ith-ack), is a gregarious, pot-bellied, wolfen ex-soldier and a storyteller of great renown. He has travelled across the wilderness, fought with the Imperial army, and seen many wonderful and horrid things. In addition to his personal escapades, he has collected an endless array of myths, yarns, rumors, stories, and legends about the wolfen, the land, and the mountains. If someone needs to know something about the mountains or current events, they speak to Ithak.

## Further Adventures

Continuing from our previous fantasy book **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** is ideal because the adventures all take place near the border of the Eastern Territory and the Northern Wilderness. The last adventure, *A Most Royal Conspiracy*, places the heroes only a few days journey from the mountains. However, playing the adventures from the previous title is *not* mandatory. In fact, the adventures from this book and the other can be mixed together and played in no particular order at all. The only thing to consider about the adventures contained herein is that they are intended to take place in the *mountains*, while those in **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** can take place just about anywhere in the wilderness.

The player characters can be in the area for any number of reasons. The mountains are considered to be an exotic place rich with stories of lost civilizations, treasure, gold, magic, rare and unusual creatures, frost giants, and adventure.

On a more practical level, the mountains offer a great many opportunities. There is almost always work available to those who want it. Many towns hire mercenaries for protection, or to escort a caravan of furs or supplies, or a wagon train of settlers. Healers are always in demand, as well as men of magic. Wildlife is abundant, making it a trapper/hunter's paradise. Another advantage is that the mountain folk are generally more tolerant of other races; specifically, the tensions between humans and wolfen are far less severe. The wolfen armed forces are not presently in the mountains and the coyles seldom venture into this inhospitable

His genuine interest in what people have to say combined with his perpetual cheerfulness, contagious laugh, sincerity, compassion, obvious intellect, and unbelievable endurance in the consumption of alcohol opens to him undreamed vistas of information. He is incredibly patient and always interesting. Everything reminds him of a story, but his stories are always captivating and helpful, never long or boring. He spends his mornings playing with the children and helping them with their chores. His afternoons and evenings are spent in pleasant conversation with friends and strangers alike. In the evenings he can always be found nursing a never ending stream of ale or beer ("Never partake in them more spirited brews. Can change a man's personality they can." Without a doubt, he is the most beloved and cherished member of the village.

He arrived at Wrijin about 40 years ago. He liked it so much he just never left. Nobody knows how old he is, including Ithak himself. When asked about his age, Ithak will grin and confess, "I don't rightly know. Some days I feel like a pup, other days as old as the mountain itself." That's his answer. From his appearance and exuberance one would think him to be no older than 40 or possibly 45 years of age. However, it is said that he arrived in the village when he was in his late 30's, which would make him ancient by wolven standards, about 78 years old. Those who remember that day insist that Ithak has scarcely changed a hair, except for adding 80 pounds to his weight and a few streaks of grey.

The jaunty old fellow has an unquenchable love of good ale and beer and a notorious sweet tooth as is evident from his belly. The women often bake him fruit pies (berries of all kinds are

his favorites) or give him jam as a gesture of thanks for looking out for their children and other acts of kindness.

Although nobody has every seen him raise more than a staff to protect himself, Ithak is reputed to be a great swordsman. One story that the cheerful wolven never tells himself is the time long ago (about 15 years ago) when a band of coyles abducted two of the village women (wolven). All the village men gathered and went off to pursue the villains. About a half day later, a traveler told Ithak that he had encountered a group of coyles with two female wolven captives. They were headed into the mountains to sell the women to a tribe of ogres. This was bad news indeed, for the village men had gone the opposite direction in pursuit of the main coyle contingent. Ithak told two of the oldest boys to run and find the men and send them in the right direction. Moments later the old wolven emerged from his home wearing his tarnished soldier's helmet and his traveling furs. At his side hung a seldom seen pair of swords, one large and one small.

The village men caught up with Ithak and the coyles almost three days later. All six of the coyles laid dead in the blood soaked snow of a recent melee. Ithak's clothing dripped with blood and gore. For the most part, the women were well and physically unharmed. They had been bound and blindfolded so they had seen none of what had transpired. Ithak smiled warmly and snorted, "Ah, the proverbial cavalry has arrived not a moment too soon. Good, the ladies and I will need your assistance back down this damn rock before the snow starts. Now please, tell me one of you has a keg of brew. My tongue is especially dry."





Ithak reports that he encountered two brave woodsmen who took pity on the village's plight and joined him in tracking and rescuing the women. He credits them with the slaying of the abductors, "I'm glad to say that I handled myself admirably in the fight." Of the details he is unusually silent, saying only, "There is no value in telling a tale of a man's death unless it serves to illustrate some point. These villains lived most foul and died most foul. The women are safe, let us go home and rejoice." Despite Ithak's report, the women neither heard nor saw any woodsmen. Although nobody spent a great amount of time searching the area, none of the village men could find any trace of Ithak's alleged companions. Most secretly credit the old storyteller with the slaying of the six coyle bandits. An amazing feat even for a young warrior let alone a wolfen in his 60's.

## Ithak, the Storyteller

**Alignment:** Scrupulous

**Hit Points:** 63

**Attributes:** I.Q. 14, M.E. 18, M.A. 17, P.S. 17, P.P. 10, P.E. 12, P.B. 12, Spd 15

**Age:** Estimated to be 78

**Height:** 8 feet **Weight:** 388 lbs

**Level of Experience:** 9th level soldier, 6th level scholar

**Skills of Note:** Scale walls 86%, identify tracks 68/47%, trap/skin small animals 68/72%, Prowl 54%, Medical 92/94%, Read & Write Wolfen 98%, Read & Write Elven 98%, Mathematics 98%, Racial History 68%, Demon & Devil Lore 90%, Faerie Lore 80%, Plant & Farm Lore 62%, Sense of Direction 90%, Cook 40%, Speaks Wolfen 98%, Speaks Goblin/Orc 98%, Speaks Northern 98%, Speaks Eastern 75%, Speaks Troll/Giant 75%.

**Combat Skills:** W.P. Small shield (+4 strike, +6 parry, +4 throw), W.P. Large sword (+4 strike, +5 parry, +1 throw), W.P. Short sword (+4 strike, +3 parry, +2 throw), W.P. Pole arms (+4 strike, +3 parry, +3 throw), W.P. Staves (+4 strike, +3 parry, +2 throw), W.P. Paired Weapons, Hand to Hand: Soldier.

**Attacks Per Melee:** Four attacks per melee

**Bonuses:** +7 to damage, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 save vs psionics/insanity; includes hand to hand and attribute bonuses, does not include W.P. bonuses.

**Favorite Weapons:** Currently uses a wooden Bo staff (1D8 damage) and is skilled in the use of all staves. However, tucked away are his old soldiering swords: matching pair of swords, one giant size broadsword (2D8 damage) and one largish size short sword (1D6 damage). Both are enchanted to be indestructible and return when dropped/thrown. They are also both of exceptional balance and weight and are used by Ithak as paired weapons.

**Armor:** Prefers padding and soft fur (leather) armor i.e. his "travelling furs," A.R. 8, S.D.C. 30 (special construction). Also from his soldier days is a full suit of wolfen size scale mail, A.R. 15, S.D.C. 75, but it is too small for the robust Ithak of today.

**Description:** As described earlier, Ithak is a pleasant, caring individual. He loves to meet people and exchange stories. He feels no disregard toward humans, elves, coyles, or any race, judging each person as an individual; "Condemn no man for his appearance, or skin." However, Ithak is far from naive or trusting. He is incredibly alert, observant, analytical,

and clever. His decades of experience with people of all races and social stature has made him an exceptional judge of character.

Ithak is a friendly and peace loving person who has put his years of war behind him. He dislikes violence and tries never to raise his hand in anger or fear. However, he is not quite a pacifist and will fight to defend himself and his village. Of course, he is old and out of practice (or so one would believe).

## Description of Wrijin

1) **The Grint Family Goat Farm:** The Grints are a family of three brothers, their wives, and 13 offspring (9 boys). They own about 12 milk goats, 30 sheep for wool, and another 30 goats and sheep for eating, plus 40 ducks and a half dozen chickens. They also have two fine plow horses and farm a few acres of land for potatoes, wheat, and cucumbers. The boys often give Uncle Brtt a hand at the stables.

2) **Mrrigot's Boarding House:** Mrrigot is the sister of Brtt the Blacksmith and, much to his dismay, operates a boarding house open to travelers of any race. In fact, she is known for freely accepting humans, ogres, and coyles, all of which may find difficulty acquiring a room elsewhere in town. When her place is full she has been known to insist that Brtt put travelers in his stables (at half price, although Brtt may extract the remaining payment or other reasonable gratuity for his inconvenience, like shovelling horse droppings, pitching hay, chopping wood, etc.)

Mrrigot is a sweet, 100% honest, compassionate, gods fearing woman who has a kind heart as big as the Northern Wilderness. She feels bad for weary travelers who have no place else to go so she opens her home to them. Her family is grown and has moved away so she has five wolfen size bedrooms available. Often she will divide the 15 x 20 foot rooms into smaller areas or rent space as a sort of communal sleeping place. She will put up to eight human size people in a single room and never rents a room to less than four human size (2 giant size) people unless there are no other travelers in need.

Visitors pay eight gold per person to get a roof over their head, a cot on the floor, a basin of water, and breakfast of bread and jam. There is no bath nor beds.

3) **Brtt the Blacksmith (and Armorer):** The blacksmith and stables is a good place to buy supplies. The smith, an old Wolfen named Brtt, is an accomplished haggler and dislikes humans, ogres, and coyles, whom he tends to overcharge. If offered 20 gold pieces for an item worth about that price, he'll immediately demand 200, and maybe, after a LONG session of bartering, settle for 50. Only characters with high Mental Affinity (M.A. over 15) will be able to make him stop before he has bargained the party down to their underwear. However, Brtt is fair when he is dealing directly with fellow villagers and wolfen.

Brtt does have a weakness for magical weapons and armor, and is often willing to make exceptional deals for them. He can tell at a glance whether the object is truly charmed (psionic ability), though the extent of the spell is beyond him. Thus, a shield enchanted to glow can be passed

off as a glorious barrier to all dragons' breaths. Actually Brtt will be almost as impressed with a shield that only glows. He loves magic weapons of any sort! Remember that he does own a smithy, and can quite easily test if something is "unbreakable" or "impervious to fire." He may be enamored with magic to the point of foolishness, but he is not stupid.

As for magic potions, scrolls, medallions, charms, and components, Brtt could care less, "Whaaaat, do I look like an alchemist?! Get dat garbage out my face." Likewise, he is not interested in selling magic items from his collection. If he does sell it will cost 10 times the normal rate. However, Brtt is very likely to be open to a reasonable *trade*, especially for magic weapons or armors that he doesn't already own, and he doesn't own much.

### Sales and Services

Brtt is an experienced blacksmith and skilled in repairing armour, weapons, metal items, and shoeing horses. He will stable livestock for six gold a night (20 if owned by a human, ogre, or coyle). This includes a feed of hay and water. Oats or better feed will cost an additional 5 gold (triple for you know who).

Items for sale include riding gear, lengths of chain, lengths of rope, animal traps, spikes, nails, hammers, pots, pans, cutlery, and common types of weapons, mostly large and small swords, knives, axes, and maces. Special weapons made on request will cost triple and take 2D4 weeks to finish, but will be of very good quality.

### Magic Items for Sale

Brtt does have a few magic items for sale. A couple things that he's grown tired of. The first item is a matching elven helmet and short sword. The helmet will fit most humans, elves, kobolds, and dwarves; orcs and most others will find it too small. Both items positively shine if "sense magic" is used. Both are nice workmanship, and will only be sold as a set.

All Brtt knows is this, "Da magic only works when da same person uses both da helmet and da sword. Separated by more 'n a hundred feet an' dere both useless. Deese are excellent if yer going into da wilderness. Da helmet keeps ya warm and da sword will heat up like an iron outta one of my furnaces. Here, watch..."

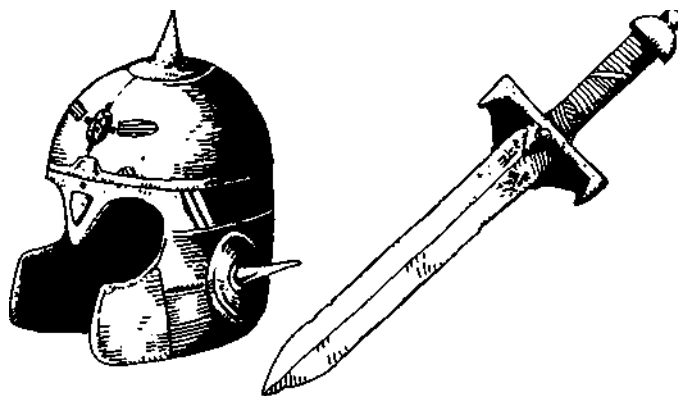
Brtt will then demonstrate how to use the items. The helmet is too small so it sits awkwardly on his head hooked over one ear. The sword looks more like a dagger in his giant hand.

**The helmet** is enchanted to keep the wearer at a constant warm temperature no matter how cold it is around the wearer. It works only when worn on the head and only while the sword is on the body/in hand of the person wearing the helmet. The only drawback that Brtt can see is if the person tries to sit or sleep directly on a pile of snow. Within an hour he will find himself resting in a puddle of melted snow, very wet and embarrassed. Brtt knows of this firsthand. **Note:** Neither the helmet nor the person wearing it radiates heat so others can not be warmed by standing near him. However, the person will be pleasantly warm to the touch and therefore can melt snow after a few minutes if he lays directly on it. Armour Rating of the helmet is 10 and has a S.D.C. of 50.

**The sword** works its magic only when the person using it also wears the helmet. It is activated by holding with tip pointed upright, toward the sky. It immediately begins to glow, and becomes red hot in less than ten seconds. Hot enough to light some firewood or cloth. However, it is not a flaming sword and does no additional damage from the strike (normal damage is 1D6). Nor is the glow bright enough to see by (only radiates a few inches of light). It cools down at the same rate as it heated up, within 10 seconds, when held with the point downward or horizontal.

**Note:** Neither the sword nor helmet protects against fire or heat, so fire attacks do full damage. Grabbing the blade while it is glowing, or putting it directly into a back harness before it has cooled, will cause 1D6 points damage per melee. Blisters hurt, and cost one point damage every time something else comes in contact with the burn, until they are healed.

If the sword OR helmet are broken, or if they are EVER separated by more than 100 feet (30.5 m), the items cease to function as magic. This can be disconcerting to anyone who is only wearing the helmet during a blizzard.



**The price** is a steep 50,000 gold for the set (120,000 to humans, ogres, or coyles). Brtt will settle for maybe half of that larger figure, but will be ruthless in his bargaining. Trade for a different magical combat article will be preferred!

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**Other magic items** offered for sale are more common and include the following:

- 1) Eternally sharp knife (1D6 + 3 damage), cost: 30,000 gold; he's selling it because the monstrous demon head on its pommel makes him nervous.
- 2) A glowing red metal shield (its only magic is the glowing color), cost 800 gold.
- 3) Weightless suit of double chain mail armor (for a wolfen), A.R. 14, S.D.C. 66, cost: 50,000 gold.

All items cost triple to humans, ogres, and coyles.

**Items in Brtt's personal collection** includes three glowing red shields (all different sizes), a silver shield with the emblem of the sun on it (can do a blinding flash 3 x per day), a suit of wolfen studded leather that is impervious to fire, a suit of plate armor (human/elven) that is completely weightless and noiseless (A.R. 17, S.D.C. 200), a javelin that returns when thrown, and an indestructible wooden quarterstaff.

## Brrt The Blacksmith

**Alignment:** Anarchist

**Hit Points:** 57

**Attributes:** I.Q. 11, M.E. 22, M.A. 8, P.S. 21, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 8, Spd 18

**Age:** 48

**Height:** 8 ft, 5 inches **Weight:** 310 lbs, all muscle

**Level of Experience:** 8th level blacksmith (Merchant O.C.C.)

**Skills of Note:** Horsemanship: General, Mathematics 98%, Pick Locks 60%, Carpentry 66%, Paint 98%, Recognize Weapon Quality 70%, Recognize Precious Stones 71%, Speaks Wolfen 98%, Speaks Goblin 98%, Speaks Eastern 80%, Speaks Elven 80%, Hand to Hand Mercenary, W.P Blunt (+4 strike, +2 parry, +2 throw), W.P. Battle Axe (+4 strike, +2 parry, +3 throw).

**Attacks per Melee:** Three

**Bonuses:** +10 to damage, +3 to parry and dodge, critical strike on natural 19-20, +4 save vs psionics.

**Favorite Weapons:** A huge magical war hammer hangs at his waist; it is indestructible, does 5D6 damage and lets loose a booming thunderclap whenever it hits, and is the pride of Brrt's magic weapon collection. Otherwise, Brrt likes all types of blunt weapons and battle axes.

**Psionic Abilities:** Brrt is a minor psionic, not that he realizes it. He uses his psi-powers instinctively whenever he needs them. His powers are limited to: resist cold, resist fatigue, and sense magic. I.S.P. is 39.

**Description:** Brrt is a cantankerous fellow with a great dislike for humans, ogres, and coyles. If he had his way, he'd only associate with wolfen and elves. He is also a trifle greedy and vindictive. Covered with dark, curly fur, he tends to wear only a leather apron and shorts even on the coldest of days. He enjoys haggling, and will never simply sell something when he could get a good, loooong barter out of situation.

- 4) **Jazzkkrt's Meat Market:** Jazzkkrt and his family of eight run a market that caters to the needs of the mountain traveler (mountain men stop by often). Dried, smoked, pickled, and salted meats can be purchased here at very reasonable prices (standard book prices). The meats are mostly venison (deer and elk), sheep/goat, rabbit, and squirrel. Beef is a rarity and *not* liked by the villagers. Bear on the other hand is a treat, but is only available from time to time.

**Note:** Jazzkkrt is the brother of Hurrn who operates the slaughterhouse and cousins to the Grints who run the sheep and goat farm.

- 5) **The Visitor's Inn:** This is one of the largest establishments in town. It offers 20 wolfen-size rooms and 12 smaller rooms, called the "Elven Suites." The place is all wood, with furs and animal heads mounted on the walls. It is a bit dark, but warm and cozy.

A night at the inn costs 10 gold and gets one a comfortable bed, small table, lamp, and closet. A bath is available downstairs and costs an additional 5 gold. A boy will gladly run and fetch a stout meal from the kitchen, downstairs, for the price of the meal and one extra gold. The cost of most meals is 5 to 10 gold elven portion or 12 to 20 gold giant size.

The inn is owned by a partnership of wolfen and orcs. It is operated by a staff of 6 wolfen males, 4 wolfen females, 5 orc males, 7 orc females, and 3 goblins. Most of the

town's people stay away from the inn to avoid conflicts with strangers.

All travelers are welcome except humans, ogres, and coyles.

- 6) **Hurrn's Slaughterhouse:** The slaughterhouse are where livestock is butchered and prepared. Fresh meats, soup bones, and organs are available at low prices. The meats are mostly venison, goat, sheep, rabbit, squirrel, and sometimes bear, beef, and possum. The Hurrns also skin and prepare animal hides, as well as sell and purchase particularly nice furs.

The Hurrn family is wolfen and includes Grandma Hurrn, Uncle Strrv and Aunt Mayvv, Hurrn (the father), Fyth (the mother), three sons, three daughters, and seven cousins.

- 7) **The General Store:** This is a friendly, brightly colored place where the village women often stop to chitchat as much as to buy things. There is always a pot of tea brewing for neighbors to sip. The store owners are the three cheerful wolfen lasses known as the Grinfyll sisters.

The store sells everyday articles such as rope, string, jars, jugs, pots, cutlery, dishes, glasses, sewing needles, thread, fishing hooks, blankets, bolts of fabric, furs, capes, ribbons, tablecloths, and so on.

Food items include spices, teas, herbs, pickles, jams, honey, canned vegetables, fresh baked bread, goat's milk, and cheese.

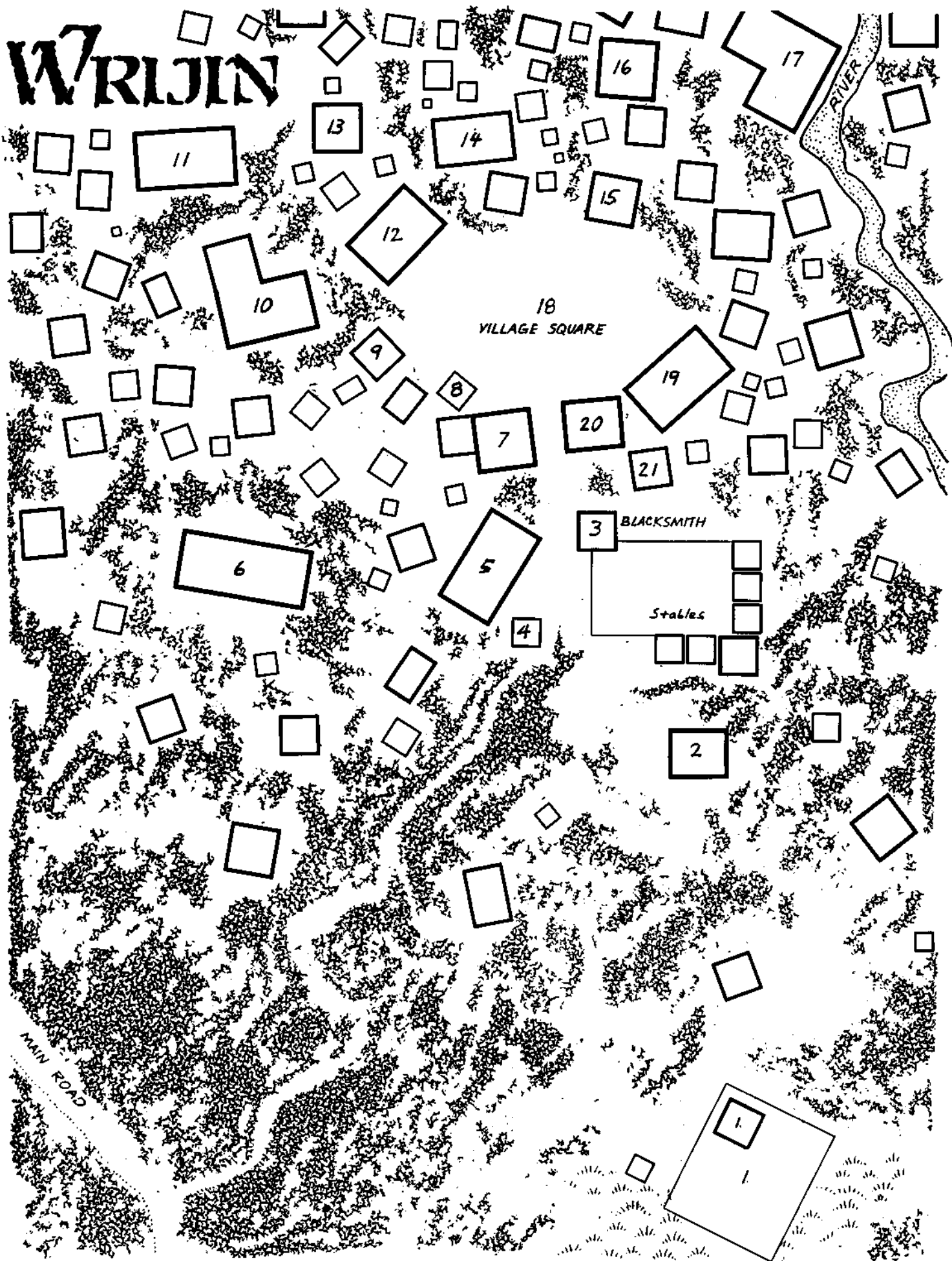
Outdoors equipment includes rope, climbing spikes, mallets, hand axes, knives, snare wire, small animal traps, backpacks, sacks, snowshoes, scarves, gloves, mittens, and tent material. A standard mountain climbing pack includes: two 100 foot long ropes (cost 25 gold pieces each), two dozen pitons (metal spikes with loops for rope, costing 1 gold each), a hammer for driving pitons (cost: 4 gold), two heavy blankets and/or a parka (30 gold), some flint and tinder (1 gold), fur gloves (8 gold), and snow goggles (eye coverings with only small slits in them, preventing glare off ice and snow from causing snow blindness, can be readily made from bark or strips of cloth). All packed into a knapsack with some dried food and torches, the whole pack costs 120 gold pieces.

- 8) **The Shoemaker:** A small family of humans are the village shoemakers. They are friendly and good craftsmen capable of mending shoes, boots, purses, belts, and most small leather goods. The father and his two sons can make the finest shoes, boots, and moccasins in the region. Prices are extremely reasonable for the high quality.

- 9) **Wrijin Furs:** A pair of orcs and a goblin run this establishment. It is a small shop that trades, buys and sells furs of all kinds. These are just the furs/skins and not finished articles of clothing. Fair prices for good quality furs. They will purchase furs at 1/4 the selling price or trade furs for furs.

- 10) **The Boarding House:** This is another place where visitors can hang their hat for 10 gold a night. The rooms are smaller and dingier than the Visitor's Inn and the food is of disgusting quality. However, it opens its doors to all travelers, even humans, although the latter must pay 20 gold a night. Non-humans get priority in service and available space. This means that humans can only rent a room

# W7RIJIN



on a daily basis and only as long as there are no worthier non-humans who need a bed. For example, if all rooms are filled and a tired wolven or goblin shows up, the human will be evicted to make room for the wolven or goblin. Not even a bribe will prevent the eviction; this is part of the proprietors' way of getting even with "arrogant, petty, little humans."

The proprietors are a motley bunch of scoundrels nicknamed "the Skeleton Crew." They include an ogre ex-mercenary who calls himself Bonecrusher (6th level, miscreant, P.S. 20, P.P. 17, I.Q. 12), a wolven ex-trapper called Bone-Breaker (4th level ranger, anarchist, P.S. 18, Spd 22, I.Q. 13), his wife Greela (4th level merchant, aberrant, P.S. 16, I.Q. 12), an ornery old, bald orc who calls himself Skull (5th level ranger, miscreant, P.S. 16, I.Q. 9), and a whimsical con-man coyle who calls himself Bones (4th level thief, anarchist, P.S. 13, P.P. 19, I.Q. 10, also a major psionic knowing object read, see aura, hypnotic suggestion, bio-regeneration, levitate, limited telepathy, mental bolt of force, see the invisible, teleport object, and evil eye: stun). All are the best of friends and watch each other's back constantly. They've run The Boarding House for eight years now. Despite their evil, mean, or unethical natures, they run a fairly decent place. They know exactly how much they can get away with in the village without getting thrown out.

The Boarding House is definitely the worst place in town and is avoided like the plague by most villagers. While it is the site of roughhousing, nightly fights, drunkenness, gambling, more than occasional theft, and other rowdy behavior, murder, severe beatings, prostitution and other vile incidents are not tolerated. Anybody who is too drunk, too mean, or too villainous to behave when told to is pummeled into submission. Further trouble will lead to his expulsion from the village. To ensure peace the Skeleton Crew employs eight powerful orcs (all are dumb but strong, P.S. 20 or higher, aberrant or miscreant alignments, and third level meres loyal to their bosses). The head bouncer is a chunky little bearman called Short, because he's only eight feet tall, a runt by bearman standards. He's a tough fighter and an earth warlock, unusual for bearmen. 4th level earth warlock, knows 8 spells: chameleon, dust storm, hopping stones, track, animate plants, wall of stone, repel animals, sand storm; I.Q. 7, M.E. 8, P.S. 26 (+ 10 to damage), P.P. 18 (+ 2 to strike & parry), P.E. 30 (+ 8 save vs magic and poison), 46 hit points.

- 1) **The Hunter's Lodge:** This is a favorite men's gathering hall. Beer and ale is served along with non-alcoholic drinks. The village hunters and mountain men come here from time to time to exchange tales of physical prowess, huntsmen skills, and rumors. Women are not barred from the building, but have little reason to visit except to bring their husbands home. It is the site of sing-alongs, arm wrestling, dart & knife throwing, dancing, and merriment.

Strangers are welcome, but non-villagers are viewed with suspicion. If a visitor is looking for trouble, this is the wrong place. The men are likely to ignore even the worse insults and fight only in self defense. If a fight breaks out the others will jump in to break it up.

- 12) **The Church of The Northern Gods:** This is the major church of the village, although many different gods are worshipped. The Church is run by a wolven woman named Creela. She is middle aged, quiet, but strong and friendly. Part of her priestly duties include acts of healing and teaching. She is a 6th level priest of principled alignment; spells include: Cloud of Slumber, Fog of Fear, Call Lightning, Extinguish Fires, Heal Burns, and Calm Storms. She is assisted by three acolytes (none are priests and none have magic powers).
- 13) **Creela, Priestess of the Northern Gods, home:** The kindly priestess sometimes opens her home to needy travelers, even humans and coyles, in exchange for chores around the house and church, like painting, scrubbing floors, etc. She has a little garden behind her home where she grows beans, tomatoes, and rhubarb.
- 14) **Rraoul The Carpenter:** Rraoul and his four daughters are supreme carpenters. They have assisted in building half the homes in the village, mend fences, build furniture, make handles for axes and tools, make wooden utensils (like spoons, spatulas, etc.). His cousin and his two boys next door are barrel makers. The girls are all close friends of the priestess, Creela, and often help her at the church.
- 15) **One of the Elder's Homes:** Ramus is the human elder of the village. He is a 7th level druid and considered to be one with the forest and wise beyond his years. He is of principled alignment.
- 16) **Alexander the Healer:** This building is small and unassuming. It looks much like any one of the villager's homes. Here lives Alexander, the only elven resident in town. He is revered as a wise man and an honored resident. He heals injured villagers for free and animals for a small fee. Strangers and mountain men are charged reasonable, but much higher amounts for his services. He will heal and help all in need regardless of their race.

Alexander has a small garden where he grows herbs and assorted vegetables.
- 17) **The Brewery:** A large building at the edge of town is a brewery. Numerous orcs and wolven work here, making ale and beer. Behind the building is an expanse of farmland where wheat, hops, and barley are grown.
- 18) **The Village Square:** This cleared area of town is the site of festivals, meetings, public ceremonies, and other village gatherings.
- 19) **Wrijin Dance Hall:** A large meeting place where families gather for weekly dances, singalongs, prayer, performances (usually by visiting actors and bards), story telling, and other indoor events.
- 20) **The Old Oak Tavern:** This is a small but friendly place with two huge fireplaces to curl up next to on a cold winter's night. The ale and beer are excellent, as is its famous rabbit stew (a pot is usually simmering in one of the fireplaces; 5 gold gets you a massive, wolven size, helping). The tavern is owned by a grizzled old wolven nicknamed Big Snoot, his young wife and two daughters. Cousin Gruulo and Andro also live and work at the tavern

The Old Oak is popular among the villagers and travelers alike. It is a place where friends and families can come for a delicious bowl of rabbit stew and good conver-



sation. One of the main attractions is Ithak. This is Ithak's favorite place. He even has his own cushioned chair near one of the fireplaces. He can be found there weaving tall tales every evening and most afternoons.

- 21) **The Algor Temple:** Although most wolfen hate to admit it in these enlightened days, they once worshipped the Algor giants. This is a small, innocuous temple/church built in honor of the great god Algor, patron of the Algor giants and lord of the mountains and maker of storms.

**Note:** All of the other buildings on the map are private homes.



## The Lair of Ice Demons (adventure)

By Kevin Siembieda and Chester Jacques

"There's said to be a place that only reveals itself once every few generations. A haunted place where ice demons wait for the foolish or greedy to come to their lair. For a great treasure is kept hidden within its winding caverns. A treasure collected from those whom the demons have slain. An' whose location is marked with the bones of the dead as a final warning. Can it be that this abode of hell is near the village of Wrijin? Ha! I think not."

From the Recollections of Ithak

One bright morning two young wolfen come roaring into the village square, pounding with excitement. "The lair of the ice demons," pants one, "we found it." "It's up along Wrijin Ridge,"

snorts the other. "There was bones ... and ... we saw one of the demons stepping out of a wall of ice ... and ... and then there was this horrible roar! It shook the whole mountain ... and we ... well, we ran to warn the village."

The boys are positive that they have found the lair of the ice demons from the legend spoken of by Ithak. One even has an old wolfen silver piece that he found at the mouth of one of several caves. Ithak and the other adults contend that no caves are known along the ridge, and that these caves must have been uncovered by a recent avalanche or sudden thaw. However, they laugh at the notion of ice demons and speculate that the roar they heard was a bear and the demon was a gnarled tree stump. The boys insist that it was no tree stump or old roots that they found!

A couple of the men suggest that they may go to investigate in a few days, but there is work to be done first. The boys are warned to stay away from Wrijin Ridge. If there was an avalanche the snow could shift again and bury them alive. And if a bear has claimed the caves, he will not take kindly to intruders.

If the player characters want to investigate, they will get the same warning, but nobody will stop them. Of course, our heroes can sit in the warm comfort of the tavern, but then we don't have much of a story, do we? The following is what they will find if they go to investigate.

### To Wrijin Ridge

There aren't many local guides nor available mountain men to escort the adventurers to the Wrijin Ridge, but it is a well known and easy to find area. A simple map and directions will do the trick. The journey is a mere three hour trip and no mountain climbing is necessary.

Of course, any character attempting to walk into the mountains wearing heavy armor, especially metal armor, will be laughed at by the locals. Besides getting iced up and hampering movement, armor makes the person even more likely to fall through an ice crevice. A better solution would be for the characters to wear full quilting, or a fur jacket and pants. These not only keep characters warm (it's colder than a troglodyte's left knuckle up there), but has an Armor Rating of 8, and Structural Damage Capacity (S.D.C.) of 15. Snowshoes can be carried on the back, to be worn when traveling on soft snow.

The trail up the range is steep, but often travelled, thus it has many firm hand-and-foot holds carved into it. During the first two weeks of summer many come this way to gather rare herbs that grow along the path. The other times of the year the trail along the ridge is used to reach other more treacherous trails that lead deeper into the mountain. The ridge is the last, comparatively safe range of mountain. Beyond it lay deep snows and monsters.

Without guides, those who step off the trail have a 1-40% chance of falling into a snow-covered chasm. Staying on the trail will safely avoid the hidden pitfalls. Roll on the following table if somebody falls into a chasm/crevice.

### Falling into a crevice

**01-35** Suddenly the individual disappears. Only a gentle "who-omph" noise and a swirl of snow mark where he once stood. Careful investigation will show a small indentation where the snow and comrade have collapsed. He's lucky and only 4D4

feet below the surface and has enough space to breathe. The snow is too soft for him to climb out. Unless a rope is thrown to him and he is pulled out, he will freeze to death!

**36-70** There is a loud thundering sound and the ground beneath everyone's feet trembles for a moment. Off to the side of the trail (where somebody wandered off to) is a cloud of snow and a huge crevice. Carefully walking to the edge of the crevice, one can see that the snow has plummeted some 2D6 x 10 feet into an ice encrusted pit/crevice. Everybody who has fallen down into it suffers 2D6 damage from the fall and debris. Rope or the ability to fly will be needed to get out.

**71-00** A load rumbling noise fills the air and a sheet of snow begins to slide down the mountain, carrying the poor fool who stepped off the trail along with it. The snow slide carries the person 4D6 x 100 feet away. Any items not attached to the clothing/body are forever lost. The individual is snow covered and wet from head to toe and suffers 1D6 damage. It will require 4D6 minutes to carefully pull oneself out of the snow. Faster attempts are likely to cause another snow slide, 1-70% chance. There is also a 1-61% chance that he/she will catch a cold; it lasts 2D4 days.

As the trail approaches its highest point, six small cave openings are visible. There is definitely evidence of a substantial avalanche, which has uncovered the caves. However, the snow is firm and there is little chance of another snow slide (only 1-9%). The caves are located about 400 feet up a sheer wall of ice caked snow. To reach them requires some method of mountain scaling. While levitation or fly spells can be used, those in the group with only "normal" abilities will have to go up the hard way. Standard techniques would have the most agile member of the group climb first, driving pitons and sending down ropes for the rest to climb up on. If no one in the troop volunteers, the N.P.C. guide will start up. The climb is not as bad as it looks; three successful *scale wall* skill rolls will do the trick. A failed roll means the character loses his grip and footing and slides 1D4 x 10 feet back down the wall. This will add another scale wall roll to reach the caves and is scary too.

At the top of the climb is a five foot wide shelf which is sturdy enough to walk on safely. In the snow are the tracks of the wolven boys, as well as bear tracks. The boys apparently peeked into each of the caves, the bear seems to have only entered the first one.

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## Game Master Data

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### Cave One

The cave opening is barely three feet (one meter) wide and four feet tall (.3 x .6 m). Larger characters will have a tight fit. Fortunately, the cavern inside is much larger. A tunnel cavern stands 12 feet tall, about six feet (1.8m) wide and runs at least several hundred feet into the mountain. Traveling some 300 feet (91.5 m) into the cave, the path starts to slope down at a fairly steep angle. The floor looks icy, too. If anyone steps out upon the ice, they will slide right around the next corner, 100 feet downhill. To safely negotiate the tunnel, a rope could be spiked

into the rock and our heroes can slowly slide down the path. Knives or claws might be used for slowing down the speed of a fall by them scraping into the ice. This stretch of cave is basically a giant ice slide, but where it ends, around the corner, nobody knows.

Observant characters may notice some large scrapes in the icy floor and walls. It is a reasonable assumption that the bear slid down this passage. There are no other passages or chambers. If the group wishes to continue exploring this cave, this is the path they must take.

The bottom of the slide ends in a large, unlit natural chamber that measures about 20 x 20 feet (6 X 6m), with a ceiling about 10 feet tall (1 meter). A sudden drop into the chamber will startle its slumbering occupant, not a bear, but a *bearman*! A more auspicious arrival will still startle the fellow and elicit the same response. The creature rises to his feet, his head bumping the ceiling. "Who dares to attack Hrrd of the North!" he snarls in wolven. "Let thee step forth and die." The beast waves a wicked looking sword and huge war hammer. Slobber flies from his mouth as he bellows a ferocious roar and snorts, "Thou may have trapped me, but I will not be taken easily." Everyone at the top of the slide will hear what is transpiring.

The place smells of booze and defecation. A jug of grain whiskey lays shattered at his feet, as does a knapsack and some dried meat. The bearman sways drunkenly and sputters, "Well? Come meet thy maker, swine."

**Game Master's Note:** This is the situation. Poor Hrrd found these caves a week ago. As fate would have it, he didn't notice the ice laden decline and slid into the chamber. He's been stuck here ever since. Try as he might, he can not get out. Finally he gave up and got drunk. Hrrd was sleeping it off when our heroes arrived. He is startled, drunk, and confused. Under different circumstances Hrrd would not be so rash as to stand up bellowing challenges. If the group does not launch into an attack, but tries to reason with him, they can avoid pointless bloodshed. Hrrd will meet any attack with a fierce counterattack and fight till the death.

Hrrd isn't the brightest guy around in the first place, the booze has muddled his thinking even more. This will make discussion with him difficult as he will continually misinterpret what the player characters are trying to say. Fortunately, he will not attack until somebody else makes a move to strike. However, he will roar, threaten, and posture menacingly to intimidate his opponents. Game Masters, you should milk this for suspense and humor.

Eventually, the group should realize Hrrd's plight and Hrrd should realize that they mean him no harm. Helping him escape from his icy prison will earn the characters his slobbering gratitude. The bearman has no real valuables, but will offer what little food he has left and 20 gold pieces (all the money he has). Hrrd will gladly join the group in their investigation of the remaining caves, insisting, "It is the lest I can do for thee. Thou hast saved my life." He will expect no share of anything they find. He is simply trying to repay their kindness. Of course, he won't turn down any offers to share in the loot. **Note:** There are no hidden treasures or ice demons in this cave. Nor has hrrd seen or heard anything unusual during his week long captivity. This chamber is a dead end, the only exit is back the way they came in.



## Hrrd The Bearman

**Alignment:** Unprincipled

**Hit Points:** 37

**Attributes:** I.Q. 5, M.E. 9, M.A. 4, P.S. 20, P.P. 15 (when drunk: 8), P.E. 25, P.B. 7, Spd 10

**Age:** 27

**Height:** 10 feet **Weight:** 1500 pounds

**Level of Experience:** 3rd level mercenary O.C.C. (mountain man)

**Skills of Note:** Scale Walls 48%, Climb 60%, Identify Tracks 35/20%, Track 68/68%, Trap & Skin Small Animals 40/44%, Sense of Direction 60%, Recognize Poison 90%, Swim 70%, Speaks Wolfen 98%, Speaks Troll/Giant 60%, Speaks Goblin 60%, W.P. Large sword (+2 strike, +2 parry, 0 throw), W.P. Blunt (+2 strike, +1 parry, 0 throw), W.P. Spear (+2 strike, +2 parry, +1 throw), W.P. Paired Weapons, Hand to Hand: Mercenary.

**Attacks per Melee:** Two

**Bonuses:** +6 to damage, +2 to parry and dodge.

**Favorite Weapons:** Giant war hammer (2D8 damage) and large sword (3D6 damage); uses them as paired weapons.

**Special Abilities:** Some add to his abilities to track and climb; plus night vision: 10 feet, superior sense of smell and painfully acute sense of hearing. Claws do 2D6 and bite does 1D8.

**Description:** Currently hung-over, which makes him a little bit silly, loud, and clumsy. Any loud noises will make his head throb and get him mad enough to attack with minimal provocation. He is not a quiet drunk nor is he the type to kill someone just for the heck of it.

He is dressed in a fur cape, fur leggings and skirt. The big sword is slung over his back and the war hammer hangs at his side along with a dagger and an empty wineskin. He has very few possessions, and relies more on his skill to improvise than on actual gadgets. Treated with even a little respect, he will aid the party of explorers and fight to the death to help them (Bearmen only recognize allies and enemies, there's no such thing as middle ground with them). He will remember a friend until the day he dies.

## Cave Two

The largest opening is a massive dead-end cavern. The ceiling is 30 feet tall (9 m) and easily big enough to accommodate a party five times bigger than our group of adventurers. There are no secret passages nor valuables inside. This is a good place to sleep or rest in comfort. The wind whips around the entrance but not in the cavern itself, and there are no piles of snow, just long, thick icicles hanging down from the rock ceiling. The floor slopes (just mildly) out to the face of the cave, so any loose objects tossed on the ground have a 15% chance of rolling right on out (and down). This would not apply to sleepers, unless they happen to sleep lengthwise across the opening and turn over a lot in their sleep.

If a fire is lit (or more than 3 torches), dripping from the ceiling will begin as the icicles will slowly start to melt. The warmth of the fire will cause the icicles to weaken and after 1D4 hours many of the heavy, pointy icicles come crashing down from the ceiling. If the party is asleep, there is a greater chance that somebody will be hurt. Roll twice per each character to see if they are struck by the plunging spears of ice. Each character must roll a 10 or higher to parry or dodge the icicles. If a sleep, the character must first roll for initiative, above a 12. A failed initiative roll, 11 or less, means the first icicle struck before the character could react; roll for damage. Now that the adventurer is aware of the danger he can try to parry or dodge the second icicle without rolling for initiative first. Each of these large ice spears does 1D8 damage. The cave is actually extremely safe if the use of fire is carefully handled.

## Cave Three

This tiny cave is bitterly cold and is merely a break from the wind. There is nothing of value inside.

## Cave Four

The fourth cave entrance is up the cliff wall another 10 feet (3 m). Inside is a long and winding tunnel about seven feet tall (2.1 m) and four feet wide (1.2 m). It appears to head downwards and to the left. The walls, floor, and ceiling are covered with a hard, shiny coating of ice. As the group progresses downwards, the walls get shinier and brighter. The ice is polished and hard, and reflects back all the light. If more than one torch is lit, it will become almost impossible to see in the glare. Any character with good nightvision (above 20 feet) will be blinded unless the light is kept to a minimum.

Further inspection of the natural tunnels reveals nothing unusual. After 300 yards/meters of turning and twisting, the tunnel suddenly widens to about 10 feet (3 m) wide and the ceiling opens to a more comfortable 15 feet (4.5 m). The ice here is not as polished, and is noticeably thinner on the walls. Torches



can be relit with no ill effects. There is still ice on the floor, as well as the ceiling, but nothing as slippery as in the first cave. If the bearman is present, he will caution the group that the icy floor looks treacherous to him and suggest that they travel single file, spaced 20 feet (6 m) apart, for the next section (it would be smart to pound a few spikes with rope into the walls to create a safety line, but let that be this a player suggestion). As they walk, the ice will creak and moan. As long as no combined weights exceed 700 pounds in a single 20 (6 m) foot area there is no problem. The characters may not realize it, but they are walking over an ice bridge. The bridge appears to be the natural floor, but in reality it is an ice encrusted expanse that stretches nearly 100 feet long (30.5 m) and is over 100 feet above the real rock floor below.

### Falling into the abyss

If the troupe passes over the ice without splitting into single file their combined weight will crack the ice floor, dropping them and a 20 foot (6 m) section of the ice bridge 150 feet (45 m) to the floor below. The bottom does not have sharp, nasty ice pointing up, but the fall will do  $5D6 + 6$  damage to everyone unlucky enough to hit bottom. Armor offers no protection from the fall. **Note:** Characters who have the tumbling skill can reduce the fall damage to half by making a successful tumbling skill roll.

If the adventurers survived this horrible drop the victims will find themselves at the bottom of a huge natural crevice. It is 100 feet long and 10 feet (3 m) wide. The sides of the drop are steep, and almost sheer ice. The only break in the wall is a small opening about 25 feet (7.6 m) above the ground. If all the characters fell, they will have to help the injured and plan for an arduous climb to the caves above. If some members of the group still stand topside, they can help by securing rope (or using magic) to effect an escape.

Investigating the small tunnel means a short, easy climb. The opening is a small tunnel about 4 feet (1.2 m) tall and three feet wide (.9 m). The walls are ice caked and cold. The tunnel runs west and upward for 70 feet (21 m) and dead ends in a cave-in of rock and ice (40 feet/12 m of debris that ends in a rock cliff). Creatures with nightvision will notice nothing unusual about the tunnel's walls, however, in lamp or torchlight the walls have a much different story to tell. Light will reveal shimmering articles encased in the ice. These articles are a treasure-trove of gems. Where the gems came from, how they got here, or who may have owned them is a mystery. It will take characters with a P.S. 22 or higher five minutes to dig a gem loose, those with a P.S. of 15 or higher ten minutes to dig a gem loose, and 15 to 20 minutes for those whose P.S. is less. There are a grand total of 53 gems, mostly diamonds and sapphires. Each is worth  $1D4 \times 1000$  in gold.

However, to dig them all out will take at least four hours, and the confining area means only two or three human size people can work at a time. Meanwhile, the broken ice bridge crumbles a little bit more with each passing minute. If the bridge caves in completely, those below will be buried alive. Note: It is quite impossible to fix the bridge with a wall of ice, clay, etc., as the sudden weight will break off another 20 foot portion and send it crashing to the ground below ( $4D6$  damage to those still in the crevice).

Likewise, calling in an elemental to support the bridge will only reduce the chance of it falling in by 20%. A weightlessness spell will have the same result as the elemental unless the entire expanse of ice is made weightless. Levitation and telekinesis also offer only minimal support. Melting the ice will cause the whole thing to collapse at once. **G.M. Note:** Roll percentile dice once every half hour to see if the entire bridge collapses on top of those below. The chance of the entire bridge collapsing is 1-59%! There will always be a loud creaking noise and rumbling five minutes before every half hour as the ice shifts and strains.

If the bridge collapses, those on the cavern floor will suffer  $3D6 \times 10$  damage and be buried under tons of ice (if not killed). Those in the little tunnel will not be hurt, but the exit will be buried under a hundred tons of ice, trapping them in the tunnel. If all fires are put out, their air supply will last 2D4 hours.

### Safe passage over the ice

If the party makes it across without breaking the ice, they will feel alternating blasts of air, both forward, and a while later, backwards. They face a steep climb up as the tunnel starts to incline at a 30 degree slope. The walls get shiny again for 100 yards/meters, then return to normal. After a long twisting climb up a slick, narrow passage, they will find themselves facing an exit to the mountain. Anyone looking out and around will be able to determine their new location. The party has entered cave four, travelled through part of the mountain, and exited through cave five, 60 feet (18m) above the other caves. Both caves are connected. The blasts of air are the breezes through the tunnel, polishing the ice to a mirror finish in areas.

Of course, safe passage over the ice bridge means the tunnel with the gems is never found.

## Cave Five

This is the connecting passage/tunnel to cave four. See Cave Four for description. Obviously the long, winding passage will start with cave five and exit from cave four.



## Cave Six

This is barely a cave, more like an indentation in the sheer face of the cliff. It looks much deeper from below, but it is only about 10 feet (3 m) deep. At the mouth of the cave are the skeletal remains of two wolfen adventurers frozen in the ice. Inside is a more frightening sight. Frozen in the ice, sticking half out and half in the far wall, a large figure can be made out in the dim light. It is the frozen corpse of an adult Wolfen, trapped in the ice. The corpse is very old and mostly decayed. This is what the two boys mistook for an ice demon walking out of the ice.

The body is starting to smell as it continues to decay. Tattered articles of clothing and leather armor show the wear of ages. Only a rose-colored cape seems to remain in good condition, although most of it is still frozen in three feet of ice. A magic or psionic detection for magic will show that the cape itself is enchanted. Anyone who tries a psionic object read will only get a good feeling about the cape, but nothing specific. He will also witness the vision of how this unfortunate traveler and his two companions were trapped and killed in an avalanche.

To remove the corpse and/or the cape in one piece is a bit tricky. Hacking the body out of the ice will destroy the cape. Making a fire to melt the ice will work, but the process is very slow, taking 4D6 hours and also creates a lot of smoke. The

smoke may attract curious orc and ogre bandits only a few miles away. Casting a fire ball in the tiny area will cause a backlash that inflicts half damage to everybody in the tiny cave and could damage the cape. A perpetually hot poker ... or magical sword like the one for sale by Brtt the blacksmith back in the village would be perfect. It could cut and melt through the ice like a knife through butter. The enter corpse could be cut free in less than an hour.

### The body

The Wolfen has been dead for decades, although the ice and cold has preserved it quite well. The exposed portion of the body is already starting to smell and fire/warmth will cause it to smell even worse. Other articles on the body include 30 silver pieces, a dagger, a wolfen short sword, a backpack with rope, 4 spikes, a hand axe, dried meat, and an extra set of clothes. The style of garb suggests that it was pre-wolfen empire, which would make the body about 100 years old.

**The cape** itself is long (7 feet) and *warm* to the touch. It will fit anyone over 7 feet tall, or can be used as a blanket by anyone smaller. It has magical properties unlike any seen before. The fabric is soft, yet incredibly strong. When worn, the enchantment comes into full play. It immediately calms anyone wearing it, and delivers a warm, wonderful feeling of well-being. Whoever has it covering them feels good and relaxed, no matter how bad the situation is. The caped character may find himself just standing in total joy, enjoying every minute. Unfortunately, the cape makes the individual slow to react to danger and suppresses aggression and fear, which can be important factors in saving one's life.

**GM Note:** The cape is a rare item known as the *Cape of Good Hope*, acquired by a wolfen tribal elder in an effort to unify his tribe. The elder went off to get the cape and was never seen again.

The cape's enchantment works only when it is worn. Folding it up into a knapsack will not activate its magic. However, it can be tossed over someone with instant results. That person will immediately stop fighting and look at the situation with a gentler and more philosophic eye. He will view his opponent's life as being valuable and will try to negotiate a less deadly/hostile resolve to their quarrel.

The Cape of Good Hope is meant as a good thing, making its wearer peace loving and appreciative of all life. It will soothe anger and dispel prejudice. It also negates magic and psionic attacks that invoke anger, hatred, fear, and hostility. Consequently, fog of fear and Evil Eyes: despair and fear have no affect. Likewise, mind control, hypnotic suggestions, and potions and circles that can be used to control or influence the mind to feel hate, fear, anger, despair and hostility do not work. The mesmerized individual can *not* be influenced to act out of anger, hate, or fear. Nor made to do an act that is evil or hostile.

**Bonuses:** The cape also offers the following bonuses: +2 to save vs psionic attack, +4 to save vs all magic mesmerism/mind control, and +6 to save vs being possessed by others. Armor Rating 14, and S.D.C. of 110, but the cape is only effective against back attacks unless the person wearing it wraps the cape around himself completely, but then he can not fight or move freely.

**Negative aspects of the cape** include the following penalties: -6 on initiative, minus ( - ) one attack per melee (can still use



that attack/action for *defensive* maneuvers), and reduce speed attribute by 20%. The character's personality will change too. He or she is now laid back and calm, not alert or aggressive. He never seems to get angry and always tries to find a peaceful solution/compromise to every situation. The individual will never fight to the death, never condone torture, and will never be the first to attack. Even in combat the character will try to negotiate for a peaceful end to the conflict. Once the S.D.C. has been depleted from the cloak, it is simply a pile of rosy rags. Likewise, it is only effective as this solid piece of fabric. Cutting it in two pieces to make two smaller capes will destroy all the magical

properties. Value in any alchemist's shop: estimated 20,000 gold (low because of the negative aspects). Value at Brtt's as a magic armor will net the seller 1000 gold cash, or up to 10,000 gold credit, or he will gladly trade the magic sword and helmet set and toss in 1000 gold worth of credit, or he will trade the weightless wolven chain armor or the eternally sharp dagger and glowing shield for the cape.

The trip home can be uneventful, which is likely, or the group can encounter orc or ogre bandits (no more than one bandit per character).

## A bad place to die (Adventure)

"Iffen yer looking for adventurous work, I hear that the mage at Wilder-Kill is looking for some good men to retrieve some kind o' mystic artifact or somethin'. I'm told the money is damn good, think it was 10,000 gold per man, impressive amount for them ogres, so this artifact must be somethin'.

"Now before you fellers go runnin' off half cocked, lemme tell ya a little about Wilder-Kill. It's called Wilder-Kill 'cause the people who live there have a saying: 'If the wilderness don't kill ya we will!' I ain't makin' that up either. That's their saying.

"This ain't no friendly place like Wrijin. Yeah, don't even say it! I know you boys are tough an' you've seen yer share of hell holes, but Wilder-Kill ain't yer typical town of lawless ruffians. It's a town of ogres and orcs an' gods know what else. All of them harbor a terrible hate for manlings, elves, and their friends. You go there an' you'll be walkin' into the heart of evil. There ain't no humans an' you kin betcha that noobody is going help you if you git in trouble. Now I've grown kinda fond of yer ugly mugs, so pay me some mind and skip this one."

From the Recollections of Ithak

A day or two later, a goblin messenger visits Wrijin. He stops at all the places where travelers and mercenaries are known to stay. His message is that the powerful magic user, Grrynt, needs the boldest of warriors to retrieve something for her. The pay is 10,000 gold per man. Anything else the adventurers might *acquire* along the way they can keep! The Great Grrynt will even hire "humans and similar trash" for this mission. Rumors tell of treasure and an ancient dwarven city. Speculation is high, but few accept the challenge. All Ithak is willing to say about Grrynt is that she is evil and "more than she appears. Much more." **GM Note:** You may have to add rumors of treasure and/or innocent lives in jeopardy if the allure of wealth or the challenge of adventure is not enough incentive to send your group to Wilder-Kill.

Wilder-Kill is about a day or two's journey up the mountain, depending on weather (it's about 50 miles/80 km). Although there is no road, it is an easy trek. It is up to the GM whether the group encounters trouble along the way. Personally, I suggest no. Jump ahead to the characters' arrival at the ogre town. They'll find trouble enough waiting for them there.



# Wilder-Kill

"Go home. You have no right to be here. Just pack up your things and leave. They call this place the Wilder-Kill, 'cause you pretty boys don't belong. If you insist on staying, yer going to die here. Not that that ain't a bad thing from where I stand."

This is the greeting humans, elves, gnomes, and dwarves will elicit from the monstrous populace of Wilder-Kill.

If characters ignore this first warning and continue into town, they will receive a second warning from a trio of orcs. "Maybe yo boys don' understand ogre," grunts one in broken elven (or whatever language the group can understand) "yo gon' die if yo don leave town now!" The three laugh and step aside, making racial slurs and comments about impending doom.

Moments later, a big, burly ogre dressed in splint amour and brandishing a glaive pole arm (3D6 damage) struts over to the group of adventurers. Two comparatively short but equally robust orcs accompany him. Both wear clanking chain and swords at their sides. One carries a huge mallet and the other a battle axe. A crowd is gathering to watch from a distance. Fingers point and voices whisper with anticipation.

The ogre stops and sneers. He addresses the characters in a language that he believes the adventurers will understand (he knows many), saying, "You've come to the wrong place. Turn around and go the way you came."

He will inform them that he is the law in this town and wants no trouble. The group suggesting that they don't want trouble either, will cause the ogre to grin and say, "Look at you. Your very presence in my town is trouble. How long do you think you'll survive here. An hour? Okay, perhaps a night? And how many townfolk will die before you leave or are killed? I don't like what your kind does to my people. Get out now or your trouble will begin now."

Stating that they are here to see Grrynt will get a grunt and a response of, "Did I ask you what your business here is? No, and I don't care. Get out! ... Unless ..."

## Game Master Section

The group has two alternatives. One, leave town and sleep outdoors. Or two, "earn the right to spend the night." The latter involves a street brawl with a hulking ogre named Jarh-maal. He is the town champion at wrestling. If one of the characters in the group is willing to fight and manages to win, the entire group can spend the night unmolested. If he/she loses, then each member of the group must crawl out of town on all fours, with an orc child riding on his back like a horse. The crowd cheers when the proposition is made, and it roars with delight if the challenge is accepted.

**GM Note:** Any attempts to bluff the townspeople into believing that Grrynt will be angry for delaying them will fall on deaf ears. The townsfolk know that's not true. This is Grrynt's way of testing the mettle of prospective employees. If our hero wins, Grrynt will be impressed and a giggling goblin messenger will lead them to her home. If they lose she will still hire them, but will send a messenger to them on the edge of town rather than engage in a face to face meeting (they are unworthy in her eyes).



### Fighting Jarh-maal

The fight is a submission style brawl that allows punches, kicks, and wrestling holds. NO weapons are used. NO armor is worn. NO magic is allowed. Nor psionics. Spectators are NOT allowed to interfere with the fight or help either fighter. The fight is over when one of the brawlers admits defeat, begs for mercy, or when one of the fighters is knocked unconscious. The fight is not to the death. The sheriff will serve as referee, as well as peace keeper. Cheating on the part of the player characters will get the entire group in trouble. Serious trouble, like getting run out of town.

This is a good opportunity to place some bets on the prospective fighters. The ogres and orcs who have gathered around are all ready to bet on Jarh-maal, although no single individual can afford more than a hundred gold, one of the local merchants will accept a bet of up to 1000 gold.

Jarh-maal is a lumbering bruiser who stands eight feet tall (2.4 m) and is 500 lbs (220 kg) of muscle. He smiles a wide grin that shows many missing teeth. An ugly scar runs across his dirty face, beginning above his right eye, across his oftentimes broken nose, and ending below his left cheek. The brute's apparent cheerfulness and confidence only add to his intimidating aura.

#### Jarh-maal

**Alignment:** Anarchist

**Hit Points:** 53

**Attributes:** I.Q. 8, M.E. 7, M.A.10, P.S. 23, P.P. 14, P.E. 24, P.B. 5, Spd 8.

**Level of Experience:** 6th level Gladiator

**Attacks per Melee:** Three, hand to hand gladiator (See *Adventures on the High Seas*, pages 14-16, for this additional O.C.C.)

**Bonuses:** Include hand to hand and attribute bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +10 to damage, +5 to save vs magic and poison.

**Skills of Note:** W.P. knife, W.P. short sword, W.P. spear/fork, W.P. blunt, W.P. targeting, W.P. net, dance 90/78%, speaks ogre 98%, speaks goblin/orc 85%, speaks elven 85%.

**Description:** Jarh-maal loves to fight and he is good at it. Despite his enjoyment of fighting, he is not mean or vindictive and will not try to kill his opponent. Jarh-maal is a good-natured and likable individual, as far as ogres go. He fights hard and to win. He will never underestimate an opponent.

**Secret Weapon:** The cheerful ogre also has minor psionics which includes resist fatigue, see aura, sense magic, and hypnotic suggestion. If he starts to lose, he will use his *hypnotic suggestion* to implant the idea that "You can not beat me." Or, "You are too slow to parry me." Or, "You are tired." and so on.

**Note:** Jarh-maal will quit when he is down to about 8 hit points.

## Grrynt's Mission

If our heroes won the fight, they can collect their winnings from disgruntled gamblers. One of Grrynt's goblin assistants has been watching the fight from the crowd the entire time. He introduces himself and escorts the group to the home of Grrynt. The mage will not tolerate any lengthy delays.

**Note:** If the characters lost, they will miss the opportunity of meeting with Grrynt in person, but will receive the same basic information from a messenger.

The home is a large, dark, stone structure. Carved into the front door is the mystic symbol for unbridled power. Charms and witch bottles hang over the door way. The messenger bids the group to be seated and disappears behind an oak door. On the table are eight silver goblets and a flagon of excellent wine. The room is thick with the scent of incense.

After about five minutes Grrynt enters the chamber. Arthritis has bent her profile nearly in half. Her skin is yellow-grey, wrinkled, and leathery. Her lips curve into a thin smile that does not show her teeth. "So, you brave lads have come to accept my offer, have you?" She slowly seats herself and pours a drink from the flagon. Then the mage looks up and smiles again, her eyes twinkling with an energy that her body denies. "Where shall I begin?"

Grrynt's tale is surprisingly straightforward. A rival has stolen an important dwarven artifact from her and she wants it back. The artifact is a statue. It is not magical, nor does it have any real value in the world of men. However, it does have great sentimental value. Any body who returns it to her will receive her *undying* gratitude and she will gladly pay all participants 10,000 gold each. She doesn't care what it takes to get the object, she just wants it back. A sincere tear trickles down her tortured face as she talks about the artifact, and for the first time she seems old and embarrassed for showing weakness, "Please ... I know what you think of me and my kind ... but please return to me my statue and I will be most grateful." The ogre continues, saying that she cares not for any booty that they may find along the way and that they are welcome to keep it.

The hag gives the group a small picture of the artifact, drawn in ink on parchment. It is a bronze statue of a thunder lizard,

dragon, that stands about a foot tall and two feet long. Again she insists it has minimal value to all but herself. According to her, the individual responsible for the theft is a mage named Elvrin. His theft of the statue is nothing more than a malicious act of cruelty vented at an old rival who has grown helpless in her old age.

Elvrin's sanctuary is in Monster Mountain, about 300 miles west and nestled among some of the most treacherous peaks of the Bruu-ga-Belimar mountains. Before the group can protest, she informs them that she can magically teleport them within 20 miles of Elvrin's abode. She will also provide the heroes with food, supplies, normal weapons and double chain mail armor, as well as a few magical goodies.

The magic items include: one scroll of *amour* of Ithan, one dispel magic barrier, one turn object invisible, one strength of Utgard Loki, and one magic pigeon to be used to notify her the moment they have the statue (supposedly she will then come and teleport them back to Wilder-Kill). She also gives them a 100 foot (30 m) length of Cherubot Rope (rope that levitates up; see *Adventures on the High Seas*, page 42). **Note:** Although she may have told the group about the magic items, none of it nor the armor is presented to them until they are ready to embark on their mission, not a moment sooner. She would like to have them leave immediately, within 24 hours at the latest. If there is a delay because of injury, she will see to it that all injured characters are healed to full strength within the hour!

## The Town of Wilder-Kill

It is not wise for adventurers to wander around Wilder-Kill. Only ogres, orcs, and trolls are truly welcome, others, especially those who associate with humans or elves, will be viewed with disgust. Even wolffen, giants, and other monster races are not appreciated, but generally tolerated for short periods. Adventurers can expect to be insulted and receive horrible service wherever they go. There is a furrier, general store, boarding house, and several taverns, but remember, everything is geared for ogres and orcs. A few of the most noteworthy places are as follows.

**The Ogre's Knuckle** is a huge saloon that is crowded 24 hours a day. Entertainment includes a variety of musicians, dancing girls (orc & ogre), gambling (dice & cards), knife throwing, and arm wrestling. A brawl of some kind or another seems to occur every ten minutes, but few are life threatening (averages only one murder a day). The saloon owner is a tall, skinny ogre who looks almost corpse-like, named Kraal. He is surprisingly friendly and has a quartet of goblins on the front porch beckoning visitors of *all* races to enter and enjoy a good meal and drink.

The meals are good, though usually limited to stews or mutton, the brew, strong and tasty, and the prices fair. However, Kraal is not a humanitarian, but a thief in barkeep's clothing. He entices travelers, especially human and elven travelers, to come in and enjoy his hospitality, while his army of thieves pick them clean. He employs 12 goblins and four orcs who pretend to be patrons, but they are all thieves who pick pockets and steal purses. The crowded environment makes bumping into people a constant occurrence and not suspicious.

Kraal's thieves are all very good; 4th and 5th level, anarchist or miscreant, average hit points 24, wear studded leather or chain armor, average I.Q. 8, P.S. of goblins 11, P.S. of orcs

20, average P.P. 18. They go for small items of value that are not likely to be noticed missing immediately, such as coins, money pouches, and jewelry. They seldom go for magic items or weapons. Their tactic is to stealthily steal an item and leave so that they are nowhere in sight when it is noticed missing. The goblins' tiny stature enables them to slink unnoticed through the crowd of giant ogres.

If somebody is accused of theft, the majority of the saloon will rise to their defense. The angry mob will suggest that the character must have *lost* his purse and the matter should be dropped or a bloody fight will ensue. If a thief is caught in the act, Kraal will chastise the thief for stealing from his customers, whack him on his head very hard (1-50% chance of knocking him unconscious) and have the scoundrel physically thrown out of the saloon. Kraal will then apologize to the victim and give him a free meal and bottle of booze to make up for the incident. Kraal is an excellent actor and his outrage and apparent sincerity are very believable.

Kraal is a 6th level assassin (retired), miscreant, has 43 hit points, I.Q. 14, M.A. 15, P.S. 19, P.P. 17, and P.E. 21. Bonuses including hand to hand: Critical strike from behind or on a natural 17-20, +3 to save vs magic & poison, +6 to damage, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, three attacks per melee. He wears a cloak of armor (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 147) and has a large magic dagger that is indestructible and eternally sharp (+3 damage), as well as a giant size scimitar (2D6 damage) that spits lightning 3x daily (3D6+4 damage per bolt). Kraal is also a master psionic with the following abilities: object read, meditation, resist cold, resist fire, see aura, bio-regeneration, death trance, limited telepathy, mind block, see the invisible, teleport object, and evil eye: sleep.

**Bruumur's Magictorium** is the closest thing to a magic shop. Bruumur is an ogre who specializes in herbs and poison. She has all the poisons listed in the *Palladium RPG* and many of the herbs found in the pages of *Adventures on the High Seas*. (Which of these are available is up to the GM. She may also have some faerie food for sale.)

Magic items are limited. She has a special discount price on goblin dust, and sells all other magic powders and potions of healing. Other magic items' availability, I leave to the individual GM, but her supply is very limited, nothing too impressive.

Bruummur is a 4th level witch, diabolic alignment, 31 hit points, I.Q. 11, P.S. 18, P.E. 14. She also has the power to command rats. Her two assistants are 2nd level mercenaries with I.Q.'s of 8 and P.S.'s of 20; hit points 22 each.

**The Jail house** is one of the largest stone buildings near the center of town. There are always numerous drunks and rowdies locked up there until they simmer down. This is also where criminals are held until they are punished or executed. The laws of the ogres are harsh. Although they will tolerate much in the way of antisocial behavior, theft, and roughhousing, they are strict toward those who injure and/or kill a citizen of the town. Murder or murderous intent will see the perpetrator beheaded within days, including fellow ogres. Of course, acts of violence by the prettier race will outrage the entire town and the offending party will be tortured before the beheading. Likewise, a human or elf who steals from an ogre townsman will find the penalty for their crime the removal of one hand.

Lesser offenses from out of towners usually involves being chained to a stock and publicly ridiculed and pelted with vegetables or snowballs. The ogres are also fond of tar and feathering, and public beatings, after which the criminal is dragged out of town. He is given minimal clothing, food, and a dagger (and his worthless possessions). All items of value such as armor, weapons, gold, and magic, are kept as a penalty.

**The peace officer is Sheriff Orgg**, the fellow who addressed the group at the beginning of the adventure. He is a surprisingly fair and caring individual, although rough and rude. He will take no crap from anybody and answers only to the town council.

Orgg is a 5th level ranger who has grown tired of the wilderness and has settled into town life. Alignment is anarchist, hit points 41, I.Q. 14, P.S. 20, P.P. 11, P.E. 18, Spd 12. He wears lightweight splint armor with enhanced S.D.C. (A.R. 16, S.D.C. 140). Bonuses, including hand to hand: +2 to save vs magic & poison, +3 to parry and dodge, +7 to damage. Favorite weapons are a giant glaive (3D6 damage), a giant mace (2D8 damage) and gryphon gloves (3D6 damage). Three attacks per melee.

His main deputies are two burly orcs called Axx and Mallet. Axx is a 4th level mercenary, aberrant alignment (totally loyal to Orgg), I.Q. 9, P.S. 24, and also wears a suit of lightweight splint armor. Bonuses, including hand to hand: +9 to damage, +3 to parry and dodge. Two attacks per melee. Favorite weapon is a giant size battle axe (3D6 damage) that returns when thrown.

**Mallet** is a 3rd level mercenary, anarchist alignment, I.Q. 7, P.S. 21, and wears a suit of scale mail (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 75). Bonuses, including hand to hand: +7 to damage, +2 to parry and dodge. Two attacks per melee. Favorite weapon is a huge mallet (2D6 damage) that also spits fire balls three times a day and gives him the power of chameleon twice a day.

Other deputies are mostly ogres who are first and second level mercenaries, wear studded leather and are armed with large swords and shields.

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## Monster Mountain

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Did I ever tell you folks about the Monsterous Mountain? It's in the western part of the BruugaBelimars. It is said that giants and monsters of all kind live there away from humans and wolfen alike. Some also say that the monsters guard a fabulous treasure, with riches as plentiful as their ugliness. Of course, you'd have to be insane in the first place to want to tackle those brutes.

"Ah, here's my refill. There's nothing like Wolfen Ale to quench a story-teller's thirst. Now, where was I?"

From the recollections of Ithak

Grrynt teleports the adventurers hundreds of miles into the wilderness, onto some windswept peak in the heart of the mountains. The temperature is noticeably colder than Wilder-Kill. The wind cuts right through the warmest furs like an icy dagger. The terrain is unfamiliar and the altitude far greater. The characters should all suddenly realize that they are alone, far from friends or shelter. They are in the land of the frost giants. A place where Summer has no season and the peaks are always glacier covered.

In the distance, a plume of grey smoke curls upward to join the clouds. A campfire? The home of Elvrin?

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## Game Master Section

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### Lonely Treasure (encounter)

The source of the smoke is about 10 miles (16 km) up the mountain. As far as the group knows, that is the general direction to Elvrin's. As they climb ever upward, they stumble across a shallow cave. Inside the cave is what appears to be a bed of sticks, bones (humanoid bones!), and rags. Scattered among the bedding are gold and silver coins, tattered chain and plate armor, and a few wolven imperial helmets. The place has the smell of an animal's den, although few animals could manage the steep climb. Besides, what animal feeds on humanoids like this one? A clever character may suddenly realize that they are standing in the nest of a *peryton* (see *Monsters & Animals*, page 64 and/or the mountain encounter tables for data about *perytors*).

Vacating the cave and moving on is wise and will avoid a bloody fight. Staying to gather treasure will lead to a fight to the death with a pair of mated *perytors*! Because the characters have invaded the creatures' den, they will fight and pursue the interlopers with uncommon frenzy until they or the intruders are dead.

The treasure is hardly worth the fight. 2D4 x 10 silver coins, 2D4 x 100 gold, a small diamond (worth 1000 gold), a silver crucifix, a bronze shield, six short swords, five daggers, a human size suit of chain mail with 30 S.D.C., a suit of wolven half plate armor in near perfect condition, and three wolven soldier helmets.

### Where there is smoke there is fire (encounter)

#### Game Master Information

The source of the fire is deep inside the ruins of a human settlement. The town was completely destroyed years ago. Not

a wall remains standing. However, the rubble and blackened wood of buildings still stand as a mute testimony to the frost giants' anger. In the middle of the ruins sits an ancient looking frost giant woman. She is dressed in loose, tattered silks and appears to be alone (remember, frost giants are impervious to the cold). A full size sheep is roasting on an open fire, the source of the smoke. She grins and waves for the group to join her, saying, in elven, "Come join me. It is not often that I have visitors."

Characters who can see aura or sense evil or magic will sense them all. This giantess is an evil witch who has been banished from her Algor tribe for unforgivable atrocities against all life! It is giants like her who have created the tales of evil that humans so fondly tell about giants.

If our heroes avoid the giant, she will let them pass without incident. If they stop to talk or join her in meal, they will be inviting danger. She will look the group over closely and attempt to determine their strength by observation and questions. If she thinks they are weak she will consider attacking them. Her goal is the acquiring of treasure, magic items, and victims for her sadistic pleasures. Besides, she is a cannibal who would much rather enjoy a dinner of humanoid flesh than chewy old sheep.

She knows Elvrin and will talk about him freely and honestly, but *will* leave out some important and potentially deadly details. She will confirm that he and Grrynt are old, old rivals whose rivalry goes back decades. She describes Elvrin as a "deliciously devious monster" who, after years of manipulating and terrorizing lesser beings, decided to live in seclusion, here among the giants. The witch will go on to say that Elvrin was once a royal mage in the Western Empire, Timiro, and the Land of the South Winds. During his travels he has acquired unspeakable power; "A pity that he's given it all up for this rot. I think it had something to do with his rivalry with Grrynt?" But this is about all the witch is willing to offer. "I'm tired of chatting. And now you must pay."



With these cryptic words, the old crone attacks the character who seems to be the most powerful person in the group. Her logic is to quickly dispatch the strongest individual because it will have the greatest affect on the group. Of course, she will defend against other attacks. Fortunately for our heroes, the witch lost her demon familiar years ago. However, she does have an animal familiar, a northern grizzly, that comes charging from its hiding place and attacks.

## The Ice Witch

**Alignment:** Diabolic

**Hit Points:** 57 (+ 20 from the familiar)

**Attributes:** I.Q. 9, M.E. 8, M.A. 10, P.S. 20, P.P. 12, P.E. 14, P.B. 8, Spd. 7

**Age:** 243 **Height:** 14 ft (4.2 m) **Weight:** 890 lbs

**Level of Experience:** 9th level Witch

**Skills of Note:** Read magic, recognize enchantment 30%, recognize magic items 15%, pick pockets, W.P. Knife, W.P. Blunt, Hand to hand: thief.

**Attacks per melee:** Two spell attacks or three hand to hand.

**Bonuses:** Includes hand to hand and attributes; + 2 spell strength (opponents need a 14 or better to save vs magic), + 2 to save vs spell magic, + 2 to save vs circles/wards, + 7 to damage, + 4 to dodge, + 2 to parry, critical strike on a natural 19 or 20, critical strike (3x damage) from behind. Invulnerable to fire!

**Spells:** Cloud of slumber, invisibility, speed of the snail, amour of Ithan, familiar link, wall of ice, hail, snowstorm, calm storms, close fissures, ten foot wheel of fire, age (one of her favorites), metamorphosis others.

She can cast 13 spells per day, spell strength is 14, can bio-regenerate 2D6 hit points 4 times per day. Her grizzly familiar adds 20 hit points. Remember, if it is killed, she instantly loses those hit points.

**Description:** The ice witch wears no armor, although her second spell is likely to *amour of Ithan*, and carries no weapons. She will use her bare hands (2D6 + P.S.bonus) or may grab a chunk of debris to use as a club (2D8 + P.S. bonus). She relies mainly on her black magic and physical strength. Being mean and arrogant, she often underestimates her opponents. Her favorite spells are age, all the ice/snow magic, and metamorphosis others (she turns them into mountain sheep).

About a hundred yards/meters from the scene of the fight is the witch's home, a crude hut cut from ice. Other than animal furs, pots and utensils, there appears to be nothing of value. However, there is a huge slab of ice in one corner of the room. A detection for magic will indicate that magic is under it. A combined strength of 22 will be needed to move the slab. Underneath is her treasure-trove.

**Treasure includes:** Scrolls of one negate magic, one wall of stone, one teleport self, one mask of deceit, one magic net; all at sixth level strength, and an immobilize at second level strength. Potions include three impervious to cold (lasts 30 minutes), three superior healing (2D6 HP), one chameleon, one might of the Palladium, and one metamorphosis (the latter three each last 10 melees/minutes). Plus one human size cloak of protection (A.R. 12, 50 S.D.C., impervious to fire), iron quarterstaff (turns holder resistant to fire 4 times daily and is itself impervious to fire). Then there is 5000 in gold, 800 in silver, 10,000 in gems.

**The Northern Grizzly Familiar:** 40 hit points, natural A.R. 6, three attacks per melee, claws inflict 2D6 + 8 damage, bite does 1D8, + 2 to strike and parry. Will fight to the death for his master.

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## The Lair of Elvrin

Continuing up the mountain will bring the adventurers within 800 yards/meters of a group of four frost giants. Both groups will see each other as they round a peak. The giants will stop a moment, the youth among them will point in the group's direction, the Algor huddle in conversation a moment and move on, away from the characters. If the giants are approached, they will position themselves for combat, protecting the Algor boy, but do not attack.

They all speak elven and ogre; if nobody speaks these tongues then verbal communication is impossible. If communication is established, the giants will be surprisingly helpful, but curt. They can point our heroes in the direction of Elvrin and will confirm that he is a powerful elven wizard who befriends neither man nor giant. One of the frost giants is a mind mage. If he senses that the group is predominantly *good* he will suggest that they turn back, saying, "I see your hearts are filled with good intent, but to seek out Elvrin is folly. His heart is black, a creature of evil. Some say that he is not mortal, but a demon. Turn back and leave this place. The world of men needs hearts of honor."

They can add little more data. Elvrin lives alone, except for the occasional demon he summons. He has lived in these mountains for over 400 years and hates intrusions. Even the giants avoid his domain by many miles.

## The trail

The approach to Elvrin's is racked by bone-chilling wind. A few miles of difficult hiking and the group stands before two 50 foot (15.4 m) tall monoliths. Both are identical roaring dragons, from the neck up, carved in stone. At the base of each is a frighteningly huge pile of bones, human and giant. An inscription is carved into each about 10 feet (3 m) above the ground. The language is elven. It reads: "These fools dared to interrupt my solitude. Come any further and you shall join them."

Continuing past the statues is a trail marked by other, smaller, statues. The first is an uncomfortably lifelike gargoyle, the second is a frozen frost giant, the third a totem pole of a bear and several demons with a dragon perched on the top. The fourth is a 20 foot (6 m) tall bear with another pile of bones at its feet. The last is a giant X-shaped cross with a frost giant chained to it. The poor fellow is still alive and pleads to be released.

The giant's name is Frostmore. His story is that curiosity got the better of him and he came to spy on this legendary place. However, Elvrin did not take kindly to the intrusion and has placed the tortured Algor out to die slowly. Again the giant will beg to be released, with tears running down his azure cheeks. If freed he will drop to his knees in gratitude. Then he will rise, looking around nervously, saying, "We must leave or die. Come! Run for your lives!! My village will hide us until you can go from this place!" He will *not* join the group to face Elvrin, saying with terror, "You don't understand. I hit him. I hit him with all my might! My battle axe dug deep into his shoulder and into his chest! And still he struck me down. He is a demon! To face



him is death!!" With this the giant turns and runs down the trail without a look back.

## Game Master Section

### Elvrin's Sanctuary

Over the rise is Elvrin's sanctum sanctorum. A forbidding circular structure 100 feet (30.5 m) in radius and capped with a dome that reaches 80 feet in to the sky. The entire building is made of three foot (0.9 m) thick blocks of white stone. There appears to be only one entrance. Above the entrance are two frightening gargoyle statues. The door is wood with a multitude of mystic symbols carved into it (a diabolist, summoner, or man of magic who understands symbols will know that they are harmless). The one single door measures 20 feet wide and 20 feet tall (6 m) and is reinforced by large iron hinges and braces. It is unlocked, but is extremely heavy. A combined strength of 24 is needed push it open as little as three feet. **Note:** The door has 250 S.D.C. and is impervious to fire.

Inside is a great circular corridor that runs completely around an inner circular chamber. Four giant wooden doors, identical to the first, all lead into the same place. Like the front entrance, these doors are not locked either, but require a combined strength of 24 to pull open. The insides is a sight to behold.

**The eastern corner** has a human size table and four 0\*0\*0\* cushioned chairs. On top the table is a lamp, ink, pens, parchment, four blank books, a bottle of the finest wine and six delicate stemmed glasses. Along the wall near the table is a wine rack with 12 bottles of the finest Western Empire wine. The rack has 32 empty slots. A 25 gallon barrel of lamp oil sets near the wine rack. A few feet away from the wine is another table with two dozen scrolls on it, more ink, pens and paper, a cake of beeswax, another lamp, flint and tinder box, and a gold plated sacrificial dagger. Piled on the floor are over 40 books. **Items of Note:** The books are mostly anatomical and biological studies with scores of medical notes and drawings. These tomes include studies on frost giants, gigantes, ogres, trolls, orcs, goblins, wolven, elves, and humans. They are worth perhaps as much as 300 gold each to an alchemist or healer, but won't fetch more than 30 gold in the northern towns.

A dozen of the books deal with devil and demon lore. A half dozen on the history of the Western Empire and another dozen are Elvrin's personal diaries, which recount hundreds of nefarious deeds. These books have little value in the North, perhaps 40 gold, but would sell for 10 or 20 times more in Timiro or the West.

The scrolls are mostly companion histories but they do include one calm storms, one remove curse, one control the beast, and one water to wine. All are at eighth level.

**The western corner** is a human size sleeping area with a large canopy bed, a dozen pillows, a couch, small table, a worn but comfortable lounge chair, and a dresser filled with silks and clothing. There is nothing of value here.

**The southern corner** is a torture/medical area. There is one human size table with straps and manacles, two giant size table also with manacles, a small worktable and a row of shelves with bottles, jugs, jars, flasks, and operating equipment. There are also six sets of manacles anchored into the wall. The tables and floor are stained with blood. **Items of note:** Among the 200

different vials and jars are the following: four healing potions, two truth serums, one mute, one blind, one tongues, and two negate magic potions. There is also a vial of scorpion's blood poison. However, it will take at least 2D4 hours of examination to find the items (sense magic will reduce this to 2D4 minutes).

**The northern corner** is a 20 foot area filled with the bones of animals and humanoids a like.

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### The Great Horned Dragon

**In the center of the chamber** is a *Great Horned Dragon* sleeping on a pile of treasure that will knock the socks off the most laid back characters! This is where the good stuff is and there is no elven wizard in sight.

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The dragon looks old, which is bad, because it means he is likely to be extremely powerful. He is also missing a few teeth and looks kind of sickly, which may mean nothing at all. Even a sick, old dragon can be devastatingly powerful, and looks can be deceiving.

**Game Masters, this is how to play out this portion of the adventure.** This is a time when the characters should use their heads and avoid a battle. The object of their quest, the bronze dragon statue, lays three inches from the muzzle of the 50 foot (15 m) leviathan. A successful prowl will enable a character to sneak up to the statue and pick it up. Have the player roll another prowl roll to see if his character maintains the stealth on the way down the mound of clinking coins and treasure. A failed roll will wake the dragon within 1D4 melees (immediately if attacked).

Assuming that the statue is recovered without arousing the dragon, the group is free to go! The beast will not wake for another 1D6 hours unless disturbed. Characters can even quietly scoop up a couple handfuls of treasure, although characters of a good alignment will not steal, even from an evil creature such as this. After two scoops, the dragon will grumble and roll over; this is an indication that they are disturbing it. If the characters go for another scoop or decide to plunder some other part of the chamber, they will disturb the dragon again. This time, the giant serpent will bellow a yawn, stretch, and settle down, but his nose twitches as if he smells something (GMs, you may even have the monster mumble in elven or goblin, "Hhhumph, ahhhhghph, what's that ... I smell ... hhrmmm ..."). Staying even a minute longer will awaken the dragon!

**GM Note:** Roll on the following table for each scoop of treasure to determine what the character gets. No large items like weapons and armor are available.

#### Random Treasure Table

01-20	2D4 x 100 gold coins
21-40	1D6 x 100 gold coins
41-60	1D6 x 100 in jewelry
61-80	2D4 x 100 silver coins
81-90	2D6 x 100 in gems
91-00	3D6 x 100 in gems and gold

**If the dragon is woken,** it rises with alarming speed and roars, "Who dares to disturb Elvrin the Destroyer?!" Yep, most people don't know it, but Elvrin is a dragon. He only takes the guise of an elf when he walks among humanoids. Of course,

Grrynt knew, but she wasn't going to tell for fear that the group would never take the job. The ice witch also knew, but she was just too mean to tell.

The first thing Elvrin does is to seal the one outer exit with an *impenetrable wall of force* (a dispel magic barrier or negate magic can destroy the wall instantly). The second spell will be wisps of confusion cast upon the group. After that, you, game masters, can play the battle out as you see fit. Unless the player characters are especially powerful, their best tactic is to flee.

Elvrin is a vicious killer who will strike out with deadly force. Fortunately, he will not cast lightning bolts, fire balls, or other extremely destructive spells for fear of damaging his home and/or the bronze statue. This can work to the groups advantage, but he still has an immense selection of spells at his disposal.

Elvrin may try to lull his attackers into a false sense of security by assuming the less ominous shape of an elf, but he retains all his dragon abilities, including natural A.R., and spell magic. He will laugh at any threats or attempts to negotiate and answers by continuing his attack.

A great emergency escape is the activation of the immobilize scroll which can entrap the dragon for at least a little while. But Elvrin will pursue the thieves, for he is a vengeful creature. If he sees the group has the statue, he will know that they are hirelings of Grrynt's and will pursue them to Wilder-Kill. This battle can be as big and dramatic as you wish. If the fight is taken to Wilder-Kill, Grrynt may be forced to reveal that she is an ancient ice dragon (old rivals, remember?). A big battle may allow the characters to slip away if they decide retreat is in order. Elvrin will forget all about them if he defeats Grrynt, and will teleport away with her body. If he loses the battle, he will retreat to plot acts of vengeance against all parties involved. **GM Note:** This can be a vehicle for future adventures. Both Grrynt and Elvrin are pretty closely matched, although Grrynt is weaker these days (about 15% less powerful than Elvrin overall).

## Elvrin the Elf Mage

**Really a Great Horned Dragon;** Elvrin is not its true name.

**Alignment:** Diabolic

**Hit Points:** 612 A.R.: 15 **Age:** 6567 years old

**Attributes & Abilities of Note:** I.Q. 20, fly 90 mph (144 km), Natural Armor Rating 15 (this means only a strike of 16 or higher will do hit point damage), Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), see the invisible, fire and cold do half damage.

**Level of Experience:** Tenth level wizard and scholar.

**Attacks per melee:** Two spell attacks plus one breath attack, or four hand to hand or four breath attacks (or combination of the two). Fire breath inflicts 4D6 damage and has a range of 30 feet (9 m). Claws inflict 2D6 + 10 damage, bite 3D6 damage.

**Bonuses:** +3 to strike, parry, and dodge, +5 on all saving throws.

**Spell Magic:** ALL spell magic levels 1-11.

**Psionics:** ALL powers levels 1-3. 103 I.S.P.

**Note:** See the *Palladium RPG*, page 213, for full Horned Dragon stats.

**Description:** Elvrin is a cruel, evil creature who loves to cause others pain. In the last 500 years of his life, he has given up

his quest for power and political intrigue among men, and has settled down in the cool, desolate comfort of the Bruu-ga-Belimars. Here he has diddled away the time with medical studies regarding the various life forms that live in the mountains. Sadly, Elvrin takes great pleasure in the pain he inflicts on the victims of these studies. He also ventures forth from time to time, as a dragon and in his elf guise, to toy with unsuspecting villagers and travelers. These little expeditions always lead to tragedy for all whom he encounters.

The rivalry between Elvrin and Grrynt goes back 2000 years, when their mischief among men caused them to clash. Grrynt won the first few skirmishes which led to more escapades, like a series of chess games. Elvrin won the next few decisively. Grrynt set out to ruin him, which she did. Elvrin reciprocated by destroying her scheme. This all served to create a rivalry between them that has turned into hate. In the last few centuries, Elvrin has become increasingly obsessed about making Grrynt suffer before he kills her.

The bronze statue really does have little value in the world of men. But for Grrynt, the statue is a mirror to the past. It is a detailed and accurate sculpture of her when she was young and beautiful. Thus, vanity has made it her most prized possession.



**The Dragon's Treasure!** The treasure is a king's ransom, but is not worth dying for. Elvrin is incredibly powerful and cunning. Defeating him will not be easy. Game Masters, play the dragon as being incredibly intelligent, tricky, and mean. Remember, he is fighting for his life and wealth. He will not

die easily nor foolishly. However, if by some miracle, the adventure party slays the dragon, this is what they inherit.

Eight million in gems, two million in jewelry, one million in gold coins, 200,000 in silver coins and art objects worth a total of 200,000 gold.

Special items include: An enchanted ring that adds +1 saving throw vs psionics, a medallion of levitation, a talisman of invisibility, a greater holy sword (broadsword), a pair of gryphon claws, bottle of mystic ink, a quill of literacy, a case of magic make-up, an environmental tent, an elven suit of colors, and a crystal of light (the latter items are all found in *Adventures on the High Seas*, pages 40-45). There is also a magic claymore sword that is eternally sharp (+3 to damage) and spits lightning 3 times a day (3D6 damage), but is cursed with *vulnerability* (-2 on all saving throws).

Non-magic weapons are all of the best quality, many are dwarven, and include a dozen battle axes, 48 short swords, 19 large swords, 20 giant size axes, 40 giant size swords, 63 daggers, 27 small shields, 15 pole arms, 11 maces, and 6 crossbows. Special weapons include a pair of dwarven throwing knives that are +1 to damage and +1 to strike and parry, a dwarven Gouppillon flail that is +2 to damage, a dwarven Hercules club that is +2 to damage and +2 to parry, a Jotan battle axe (giant size; 3D6 damage) that is +3 to parry, and a kobold crafted military fork that is +4 to damage.

Armor includes 16 suits of dwarf size plate armor (yes Elvrin was lucky enough to have found a treasure cache in a dwarven ruin here, in the mountain), 5 suits of dwarf size double mail, one suit of human size scale mail, 3 suits of

human/elf size chain mail, 4 suits of wolfen imperial half suits of plate, and one suit of giant size (14 feet or bigger) scale mail. All are in like new condition.

Remember, the dragon's teeth and bones are worth a fortune too. However, Elvrin would have to be dissected to get at his bones, a horrible, gut churning experience that few good characters would be party to. Also, the super tough skin, A.R. 15, makes it a long and arduous task requiring days if not weeks, and numerous blades and sharpening. The teeth are the easiest to go for; Elvrin has 10 teeth total.

**The big problem** is carting the loot 300 miles (480 km) out of Monster Mountain and then to civilization, real civilization, another 900 miles (1440 km) to the east without it getting taken away by bandits. Smart characters will take only the most valuable items and leave the rest. The really smart characters may offer the remaining loot and dead dragon to the large tribe of frost giants who live near by (about 50 miles north) as an act of kindness and friendship (no strings attached).

## At the adventures end

If Grrynt receives the statue without Elvrin on the group's tail, she will be good to her word and give them the 10,000 gold per person. She will also offer them a meal and bed for the night and see that the wounded are healed.

If Grrynt is taken captive or killed by Elvrin, the group will be out of luck. No pay. Her home will be immediately placed under the protection of the law, whom will see to it that the proper town officials get their share of her estate.



Should our heroes kill Elvrin, they inherit his vast fortune. If they mention that he is dead to Grrynt, she will be delighted, but will also covet the vast treasure for herself. Grrynt is greedy and will not hesitate to enslave or kill the characters so that she can claim the treasure. Despite what she may have said, she knows exactly where Elvrin lived.

If Elvrin is killed during a battle in town, she will immediately teleport with Elvrin and claim his home and everything in it. She will not share the treasure and may even forget to pay them. To get paid, the party would have to travel back to Monster Mountain. Elvrin's sanctum sanctorum will become Grrynt's new retirement estate.

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## The Kidnapping of Kith (adventure)

"Infestation! A writhing mass of large worms, eating slowly into your innards, and then consuming your brain. As they chew their way into your skull, you finally pass out from the raw pain, and die a horrible death.

"Yeah, that's what it feels like after you've eaten at Jenny's. Try to avoid it, if you can. The service is fast, but so is a hangman's noose. O' course, the place is rumored to be an underworld hangout, with demons for hire, but I personally doubt it. Even the legions from hell would go somewhere else to eat."

From the recollections of Ithak

That was Ithak's frivolous repartee about a notorious saloon in a filthy mountain village not far from Wrijin. However, today he has no humor toward the place.

**Game Master Note:** The following adventure is the result of an unexpected turn of events. As such, it should be a surprise, with little time for preparation. Only immediate action will save the day. Our heroes can be returning from the previous adventure in Monster Mountain, weary and/or laden with treasure, or returning from some other adventure, or from a warm meal. The only requirement is that this adventure occur toward the end of their stay at Wrijin (heck, it could be the morning they are getting ready to leave). It is also important that they have come to know and like Ithak.

Whether they are coming from the confines of a building or emerging from the woods, they find the village of Wrijin in an uproar. Villagers are running around and a crowd has gathered around Ithak's favorite tavern. Fragments of conversations can be heard as the characters pass by, "... it's horrible, horrible ... What will we do ... Why? Why the little girl? ... he refuses our help ..."

The town is shocked. Ithak's five year old granddaughter has been abducted. Two people, a human traveler and a wolfen villager, tried to stop the kidnappers and were slain. The only clue, the word "Jenny's" written by the wolfen in his own blood. The villagers have worked themselves into a frenzy. The men brandish weapons and shout about attacking the offending establishment without thought concerning their own safety or the possible repercussions to their families.

Ithak stands on a barrel, rising above the crowd as the voice of reason. He is dressed in his "travelling furs" (leather armor) and is armed with his two swords. "Enough!!" Ithak howls angrily. "We've gone over this already. There ain't gonna be no attack on Jenny's or the village of Gaidar. First, the bastards

that stole little Kith would see us come from the edge of town, givin' them enough time to hide the darlin' or do worse to her. Much worse.

"Second, we've all heard the stories about what goes on at Jenny's. Believe me, you don't want to mess with that kind of trouble. You all have beautiful families, wives, children ... you can't jeopardize their lives. And that's exactly what you'll be doing if you attack Jenny's. Those filth will blame the whole village. The next thing you know you'll be shoulder deep in demons.

"I can't letcha do that. Not for me. Not for Kith. It's a hard world, don't make it harder on yerselves. I know you all mean well, and I 'ppreciate your kindness more than words can tell. But I have to do this alone. One old man out to rescue his granddaughter ain't gonna cause them to extract vengeance against the whole village. End of story. Now git outta my way."

With those words Ithak leaps down and makes his way through the silent throng of people. Several women are weeping, a few men too. A few still protest, but Ithak silences them with a steely glare and a single word, "No"

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## Game Master Section

Ithak's words are correct. The approach of villagers will definitely alert the abductors to trouble and give them ample time to hide, hurt, or kill the girl. Likewise, the evil forces at play will certainly seek ghastly retribution against the people of Wrijin if they play any part in the rescue. However, the player characters are *not* members of Wrijin. They are adventurers, free agents who can do as they please. As long as the villagers do not actually employ them, they can not be held responsible for the adventurers' actions. **(GM Note:** If the players don't come to this conclusion, have one of the villagers point it out. The villager will plead, "You are his friend. You must help him. He can't do it himself, no matter how great a swordsman. Jenny's is a place of sorcery and evil. One man doesn't stand a chance, but a group of warriors such as yourselves ...")

If player characters offer to join Ithak and point out that their involvement will not jeopardize the village, he will say, "I can ask no man to risk his life for me. You don't know what you're asking to git yourself into. Hell, I ain't sure what awaits me at Jenny's myself. But I can tell ya that Jenny's is known as a place where demons cavort among mortals and magic is used for the most vile of purposes. Thank you, but I must refuse. Where I walk, I walk alone."

However, a further appeal to Ithak's military sense of strategy (one man has no hope for success) and his love for the child (without our help you'll die and so will the child), he will stop and reconsider. Ithak will repeat that the group may suffer and die if they come with him, but if they insist, he will gladly accept their aid. This gets Ithak thinking a bit more cunningly. "You boys are right. The folks at Gaidar don't know you from a drunken gnome. They'll have no idea that yer in town to save my Kith. This'll give us the advantage of surprise and strength of numbers."

The old story-teller will suggest that the group enter town and sniff around for clues. Meanwhile, he'll hang back and watch Jenny's from a safe and "inconspicuous" vantage point. When they make their move on Jenny's, he'll be ready.

## The Town of Gaidar

Gaidar is more of a tiny village than it is a town. What gives it its distinction as a town is that it is laid out like a true town, with a main street and numerous shops which cater to travelers. It boasts a population of about 200 permanent residents, but has another 200 transients passing through at any given time. The majority of people are non-humans; approximately 30 % are wolfen, 10 % coyle, 20% ogre, 20% orc, 10% goblin, 5% human, and 5% trolls and giants. Non-human travelers, mercenaries, bandits, and rogues of all kinds use Gaidar as a sort of watering hole. A place to spend their loot, rest and relax, and restock on supplies.

The town's magistrate, Hurrbrmmnn, is a fat, greedy, old wolfen who has given himself to gluttony and debauchery. His primary concerns are personal comfort and wealth. Of course, by civilized standards, there isn't enough potential wealth in this mountain wilderness to bother with, but for this area; the magistrate has a nice little racket going. In recent years he has gotten more and more lax in his civic duties, allowing greater social decrepitude to creep in. He really doesn't care what anybody does as long as it does not affect his position and wealth, and does not dramatically harm the townspeople. After all, a despot ruler needs people to rule. On the other hand, what happens to individuals passing through town is of little consequence to him (remember, most are criminals or loners anyway).

The permanent residents are mostly farmers, huntsmen, and shopkeepers. Other than shopkeepers, the majority of the population keeps to itself and avoids contact with the rogues who frequent the main street area of town. The townspeople have no love for humans or elves and treat them with extreme prejudice. However, as a rule, they will avoid conflicts rather than instigate trouble.

It is the bandits and low-lives whom visit Gaidar who represent the real danger. These miscreant fellows are generally mean and troublesome outlaws who view life as a rough and cruel place where the strong take what they want. Still, they are not fools and realize that Gaidar is one of the few havens they have in the region. As a result, they try to keep trouble to a minimum. Brawls are constant, but the offending parties usually pay for any damage. Murder and treachery are directed toward fellow criminals and travelers, not the townspeople. In fact, the gang leaders will often punish any man in their band who severely

damages the town or harms a townsman. This all pleases magistrate Hurrbrmmnn very much, because his community prospers, they are kept abreast of all the latest gossip, and most importantly, he can grow fatter and lazier.

As a friendly and self preserving service, Hurrbrmmnn has instructed his people to warn him and the outlaws to any sign of trouble. This includes outside authorities such as the wolfen or human army, bounty hunters, posses, and rival bands. While Hurrbrmmnn will not jeopardize his puny kingdom by officially protecting criminals, he does what he can to secretly help them avoid capture or destruction. His standard routine is to warn the outlaws of trouble and step in to cover their escape by causing an interruption in the investigation/pursuit. He will typically greet outside authorities with open arms and confess that his town has indeed been visited by rogues who "may" be the scoundrels they seek, but "Oh, what is a tiny village such as ours to do? We do not have the might to expel these villains. So we let them be and pray to the gods that they do not burn our humble village to the ground."

Of course, he offers the hospitality of the town to the authorities just as he does criminals. Likewise, he pledges to cooperate in every way. He will instruct the towns people to be on the lookout and report any known bandits and strangers to him at once. He may even offer a few of his men to act as guides and scouts. He has gotten very good at his charade of sincerity and helpfulness. Naturally, nobody sees or knows anything. The few clues that may arise ultimately turn out to be dead ends. Meanwhile, the bandits conveniently fade into the forest until trouble is gone.

The town has no militia or formal peace keeping force. Like most villages, the people unite, if they must, to repel danger to their community. Ah, but Gaidar is not without its resources. Hurrbrmmnn has his bodyguards and then there is the crazed Toromek, who owns Jenny's.

## The Powers that Be

### Magistrate Hurrbrmmnn

Hurrbrmmnn is a wolfen mind mage who has carved out what he considers to be his private empire. He is a selfish cutthroat consumed by greed. He has found that bending with the wind is a sure-fire way to success. Despite anything he may say to the contrary, Hurrbrmmnn is a self-serving swindler whose only care is for himself. Everything and everybody is simply a means to an end.

The eternal diplomat, he will personally try to avoid all confrontations, especially physical combat. He will always take the road that offers the least resistance and the most profit. Although not given to acts of vengeance or cruelty (he's everybody's friend), Hurrbrmmnn will do *anything* to preserve his kingdom. If his world or wealth is destroyed he will become a terrible enemy and hunt down those who destroyed it.

### Magistrate Hurrbrmmnn

**Alignment:** Miscreant

**Hit Points:** 36

**Attributes:** I.Q. 13, M.E. 21, M.A. 11, P.S. 17, P.P. 12, P.E. 14, P.B. 10, Spd 18

**Age:** 53

**Height:** 8 feet 6 inches, **Weight:** 496 lbs

**Level of Experience:** 5th level Mind Mage

**Skills of Note:** Recognize runes, study wards, read/write elven 98%, read/write wolfen 74%, demon & devil lore 75%, forgery 50/21%, pick locks +2%, medical +4%, mathematics 78%, speaks Wolfen, Elven and Ogre 98%, goblin and eastern human 90%, W.P. throwing axe (+2 strike, +1 parry, +3 throw), W.P. blunt (+3 strike, +1 parry, +1 throw).

**Psionic Abilities:** All psionic powers level 1-5. I.S.P. 88

**Attacks per Melee:** Two hand to hand or two psionic.

**Bonuses (including hand to hand):** +4 to save vs psionic attack, +4 to damage, +2 to dodge, +1 to parry; kick attack 1D6 damage.

**Favorite Weapons:** Flaming broadsword (human size) 4D6 damage, silver plated throwing axe of exceptional dwarven quality: +1 to strike and parry, +2 to damage. Also has a giant size mace (2D8 damage).

**Armor:** Leather of iron (magic), A.R. 15, S.D.C. 90.



### Hurrbrmn's Guards

Hurrbrmn has six loyal wolfen bodyguards, all cousins. Two are fifth level rangers (both are minor psionics; know all first level psionic abilities; 33 I.S.P. each), while the remaining four are fourth level mercenaries. Each wears double mail (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 55) and are armed with oncin picks (2D8 damage), short swords (2D6 damage), and Berdiche pole arms (3D6 damage). Two attacks per melee. Average hit points: 34. Alignments: anarchist.

## Jenny's

Jenny's is a rank tavern that serves strong booze and foul tasting food. Only the desperate, foolhardy, and evil pass through its doorways. For Jenny's is far more than a filthy saloon, it is a place of evil and magic. The owner, Toromek, once pretended to be an elven healer, but now makes no effort to hide the fact that he is a changeling summoner.

Toromek is tolerated in Gaidar for two simple reasons: fear and power. He is an insane mystic who consorts with demons. The townfolk are simply afraid to confront him. At the same time, his presence ensures the town's safety, because no attacker wishes to face an army of demons. This latter possibility is exploited to its limits by magistrate Hurrbrmn and his henchmen, as well as by the town's merchants. They are quick to point out their relationship (supposedly friends) with Toromek and how they can not be responsible for his actions if he is angered.

A typical situation might go something like this: "Oh dear, yes, you can kill old Puungung, but Toromek the Insane will not be pleased. You see Puungung is the crazed sorcerer's favorite lackey. You kill him and ... ooooo ... gag ... I ... it's too terrible. The last man who angered Toromek was torn limb from limb by four shedim demons. And that was just for breaking his favorite drinking glass." This type of nonsense helps to keep the riffraff in line.

On a more serious note, Toromek has been known to unleash demonic forces in the town and on enemies. The most notable occasion was an assault on a gang of wolfen bandits who threatened to raze the town. That dusk they were slaughtered by shadow beasts. All were killed. 15 years later, everyone remembers the event like it happened yesterday.

Toromek is a psychotic and paranoid loner. He is consumed with his mysterious mystic studies and has forsaken the outside world, *never* leaving his subterranean quarters underneath Jenny's. In fact, the madman has not left the walls of Jenny's in 35 years. Only the continuing presence of demons and monsters confirms that he is alive and still summoning.

Rumors abound as to what goes on inside, as well as about what drove the changeling insane. All the stories are far more wild than real life, but fiction has replaced fact. The fear and speculation is only accentuated in that nobody really knows anything about Toromek or why he does what he does. Then, on top of all this, horrific monsters have been known to be unleashed to terrorize the countryside, frightening noises are often heard coming from inside Jenny's, and people just disappear from time to time. Of course, *all* disappearances and strange occurrences within 50 miles are credited to Toromek whether he is responsible or not.

### The facts about Toromek

**Game Master Information:** The crazed changeling was once a fairly good person who let his ambitions destroy him. For a brief time he was a powerful force in Lopan, but was seduced by power and wealth. Soon he lost track of the difference between right and wrong. All that mattered was success and power. Success at any price. Power without thought to the consequences. In the end he lost it all; the power, the wealth, and the love of his life, a beautiful elf maiden named Jenny.



The two were once betrothed, but Jenny rejected Toromek when she realized that he had become so evil and self serving. Nothing he did could win her back (mainly because he could not see his own corruption and did none of the things that could have won Jenny back, like give up his evil ways). In a drunken rage he abducted Jenny, summoned forth the demon lord Andras, and gave her to him to become one of the demon's playthings. Days later, Toromek regretted what he had done and pleaded with his demon master for the return of the girl. Andras laughed and said that he liked his play thing and could not just give her up without a price. The price was betrayal and murder. The treachery destroyed everything Toromek had built. But Andras was good to his word and gave him Jenny. Unfortunately, the woman returned to him was a gibbering idiot who trembled constantly and feared every shadow. Jenny was irrevocably insane.

Toromek's evil deeds forced him to flee Lopan or be killed. He took Jenny with him, confident that he could restore her sanity and build a new position of power elsewhere. However, such was not meant to be. The poor woman only got worse. In the end she was more animal than elven. Nothing he could do could restore her. Hunted and hated, he fled with his mad lover into the uncharted portion of the Eastern Territory. One night Jenny escaped her bonds (she had to be secured to avoid hurting herself) and flung herself off a cliff. In the middle of nowhere, with minimal power, Toromek could not restore her to life. It was summer and the body decayed quickly, but still he carried her to every town and village he could find, begging that they help her, but she was beyond anybody's help. Soon his sorrow and frustration turned to anger. If they would not help they would die. Thus, he unleashed his demonic minions to slaughter entire villages, for you see, by this point, Toromek was quite insane himself.

Now hunted by scores of pursuers, the madman was able to evade them all, but was pushed ever deeper to the north. Years would pass and still he carried the bones of his beloved Jenny. Years stretched into decades, decades into centuries. Finally, he ended up in Gaidar (about 200 years had passed). He had decided to become the man Jenny would have wanted him to be, a healer and counselor, but he was far too insane to maintain this facade for more than a few years. Melancholy enveloped him. Life was to unbearable without Jenny. As a result, the summoner refused to leave the confines of his home/tavern.

Today, he is even rarely seen in the tavern. Instead, he is found in his basement laboratory, constantly working on mysterious mystic experiments. The only ones who have frequent contact with him are the magistrate (as often as monthly) and Toromek's two malevolent changeling assistants, who manage the tavern and help him in every way. The purpose of Toromek's experiments? To breath, life into the 200 year old bones of Jenny.

At last he is certain he has discovered the missing ingredient in his circle of life. He needed a creature of the forest, young and innocent, yet vibrant with life. He has even secretly left Gaidar to personally observe this subject himself. Yes, this time everything is perfect, of this he is certain. With the sacrifice of the wolfen child, Kith, his Jenny will be returned to him, alive and sane. Of course, he is *always* certain he has found the magic to resurrect Jenny and has always failed.

## Introducing the heroes to this scheme

Asking too many questions in Gaidar can be dangerous and the player characters should exercise caution in their approach. Ithak will be able to give them a fair assessment of the town and attitudes. He will also advise them that they best take its low profile, but if antagonized or questioned, they should act bold, arrogant, and cocky. The best cover story is to pretend to be mercenaries looking for work or just passing through; i.e., "Just stopping for a night or two on our way east. We heard that this town ... uhmm ... appreciates men in our trade and doesn't ask too many questions, if you know what I mean."

If they act tough and like they belong here, they shouldn't run into any more trouble than a brawl or two. Asking about Jenny's is likely to entice the regulars into trying to play a joke on them. They will tell the group that Jenny's is an *excellent* tavern, with the best food and drink in town, and at the best prices too. They are not at Jenny's themselves because the place is just too crowded, but that our adventurers should definitely check it out. Asking about Toromek will get them a wide range of responses, most of which are tall tales about him being a demon prince and so on. They'll also learn that most people are afraid of him and that he is never seen outside of Jenny's. That's about it.

**GM plot option:** If you want to get the story moving along faster, you can have an old thief pipe up out of the crowd, saying, "That ain't entirely true. I seen the Insane One coming and going 'bout every third day fer a month." Everybody in the saloon will laugh uproariously and mock the old fellow (race of GM's choice) as being as crazy as Toromek. After all, everybody knows that Toromek never leaves Jenny's.

If the characters question him privately, he'll tell them that he's not crazy and that he is positive that it was Toromek. If the characters are subtle, the old thief will tell all he knows for the price of a drink, but if he realizes that this information is important to them he will have a memory lapse. Fortunately, a 100 gold or so will restore his memory. The wizened fellow does not know too much. Only that Toromek went off into the woods (in the general direction of Wrijin) at least five or six times in the last month. Each time he was accompanied by a large wolfen and a giant wrapped in heavy clothes and cloak. "Why if he was keeping ta 'is schedule, he should gone off in thet direction again this morining, but this time, only the two big fellows went alone. Huntin' I guess, 'cause I seen 'em return later wit' somethin' squirmin' in a big sack. The Insane One met 'em at the door, grinnin' like a kelpie."

## Going to Jenny's

Jenny's is a dark, two story building found at the end of a dead-end street. The wood is grey and blotchy with mold from exposure to the elements and years of neglect. The sign is a piece of wood, with deep scratches marred into it. It's more like an omen than a sign. Boarded windows afford no glimpse into the smelly interior. Rats scamper freely up and down the dirty entrance. Green puddles ooze around the door and thick, oily smoke squeezes out of the cracks around the top of the door. The smell is of burned meat, old vomit, and fresh bread. There are muffled screams, groans and laughter coming from inside.



Just as the player group comes up to the door, the portal is opened with a crash and a large Wolfen is thrown through its and onto the ground. He is comatose from drinking too much. His friends have been nice enough to play a small trick on him, and have shaved the entire lower half of his body. He now looks like a rat from the waist down. The upper portion of his torso is covered with grey fur, with bits burned off here and there. He is missing an ear, and looks pretty disgusting. No attempts at reviving him will be successful, outside of three days to sleep it off.

Peering inside, ten tables are visible in the large tavern chamber. Six are full. The occupants range from three dark, sinister-looking elves, conferring over a skull, to a quartet of ogres, sitting quietly as they play cards, to a rambunctious wolfen and orcs at the other tables. The bartender is a coal-black Wolfen. In the darkened interior, all that is visible are his glowing eyes.

IS a waitress at Jenny's. A hunchbacked female troll, wearing a greasy apron. She goes to the tables, picking up the empties and throwing out the drunks. If the party sits down, the stools are sticky, she will grunt out a questioning monosyllable. If anyone asks for a drink, any drink, they get a mug of brown bubbling stuff. The alcoholic content of the thick, bubbling brown liquid is nearly 90% (180 proof). If they ask for food, they get a lump of brownish meat, dripping with grease. That's it. Nothing else. No water, no rolls, no choice.

In the rear is a massive oak door with a large iron handle. Judging from the size of the room and the exterior dimensions of Jenny's, it leads out to the back. This door leads to a pair of stairs; one leads to the second-story living quarters of the staff, the other leads down to Toromek's basement abode and laboratory. Everyone knows this door is off limits. Newcomers will be warned away by the two changelings sitting near the door. These two are Toromek's trusted assistants. It is they who run the seedy little tavern and see to Toromek's every whim.

Observant characters will notice that the two are locked in serious conversation. Sitting at the empty table near them will enable the group to eavesdrop. The ugliest of the two is concerned that Toromek is going off the deep end and that sooner or later the mad summoner is going to snap, kill himself, and take them with him. The shorter and less ugly of the two snorts in disagreement and insists that Toromek will just go on with his experiments like he always does. "I don't know," counters the ugliest one, "I've never seen the master like this. He's put so much hope on the death of this little wolfen girl that if the circle doesn't work this time..." Again, the other changeling insists that all will be well. "Yeah? Well, I for one will not be within 1000 yards of this place after midnight. You know that midnight ceremony is going to fail just like all the others. And this time he's really going to go berserk."

The conversation continues along these lines for quite a while. Eventually, the ugliest changeling leaves, while the other one helps to clear the tavern. The patrons bolt out of the front door when he announces, "The great and benevolent Toromek will begin to conduct a magic experiment within the hour." He grins and goes down stairs. It is approximately 10:00 pm.



## Game Masters Data: The Rescue

The player characters now know that Toromek does have Kith and plans to use her in an evil magic experiment at midnight. They have about two hours till the experiment (sacrifice?) will begin. This will give them ample time to find Ithak (he's waiting for them outside) and make some quick preparations.

Ithak has one piece of important information, tracks around Jenny's indicate that one of the summoner's playmates is a demon. His guess is a Gallu bull or a Baal-Rog. This would confirm the old thief's report of a "giant" accompanying Toromek. **GM note:** The large wolfen is not a wolfen, but an Alu demon. Credit any player who surmises this to be the case.

Getting back into Jenny's is easy. Nobody is in the streets nearby (knowing that the Insane One will be experimenting tonight) and the front door is bolted with a shabby lock that can be easily picked or broken (8 S.D.C., A.R. 8). Likewise, the door to the basement and upstairs is unbolted. No one dares to steal from Toromek, so security is lousy.

### Up Stairs

The upstairs is the living quarters of Toromek's staff and assistants. If the group is quiet and does not go up stairs, they will avoid encountering any trouble from that part of the building.

The inhabitants will only attack if they are alerted to the presence of intruders. **Note:** The basement is fairly soundproof, consequently, those below will not hear the sounds of battle and vice versa.

**The wolfen bartender** is a 5th level assassin, diabolic alignment, hit points: 37, wears no armor, has three attacks per melee, critical strike from behind, +8 to damage, +2 to strike, prowls 62%, fights with a giant size battle axe (3D6 damage), or a pair of large daggers (1D6 each). Spd attribute is 19, I.Q. 14. He will try to dispatch any intruders, silently and quickly, by using deadly force.

**The ogre waitress** will likewise attack any intruders. She is a 3rd level mercenary, miscreant alignment, hit points: 31, wears no armor, has two attacks per melee, +12 to damage, +1 to strike, fights with giant scythe (2D8 damage), or a giant claymore sword (3D6 damage). Spd attribute is 3, I.Q. 9.

**The ugly changeling** has taken his most valuable possessions and gone into the hills.

**The other changeling** is downstairs, assisting Toromek. His room is one of the nicest and lavish rooms upstairs. Inside are miscellaneous personal items and a chest filled with 8000 in silver and gold, along with a few other items of note. (GMs, add a few items of magic or value, but nothing too outrageous. I'd suggest keeping it under 10,000 gold in total value.) The room is guarded by a *beastary guardian stone* of a hideous lizard; 80 hit points, spd 14, A.R. 14, two attacks per melee, claws do 3D6 damage. The statue comes to life the moment intruders come into the room. It will fight until the intruders leave the room, changing back into a statue. If an interloper enters again, the statue comes to life and attacks again. See *Adventures on the High Seas*, pages 43-44 for full details.

## The Basement

This is where the big trouble waits. First the group will find a 12 foot wide (3.6 m) stairway that ends at a solid steel door about 30 feet (9 m) down. The door is locked. A pick lock skill is required to open it silently, or ... the hinges can be carefully removed (the door pulls out so the hinges are on the characters' side of the door). This will take 2D4 melees/minutes. Of course, the door can be forced, but it has an A.R. of 15 and 140 S.D.C., requiring great strength and noise (characters will lose the element of surprise).

The steel door opens to reveal an empty 20 x20 foot chamber. Two wood doors are on the left, while a set of 20 foot (6 m) tall double doors are set into the wall directly ahead. No doors on the right, only solid wall.

The doors on the left lead to Toromek's bedchamber and study, respectively. There is actually little of value in either, as Toromek has no need for wealth or magic except those required in his experiments. Valuables include a silver ceremonial dagger with an opal (worth 1500), and 1D6x100 gold. The furniture is old and worn, everything else is personal items and blank parchment and inks. There are several hundred parchments describing his experiments to create his circle of life, but they are of no value except, perhaps, to a summoner or diabolist, and even then worth only a few hundred gold.

## The opponents

Voices can be heard through the double doors as Toromek prepares for the midnight ceremony. The doors are unlocked, although there are keyholes. Peeping through the keyholes will show the following: **Kith**, apparently drugged or unconscious lays in the center of a mystic circle. She does not move, but still breathes. Next to her is the skeleton of Jenny dressed in a beautiful white gown. Beyond the circle are some shelves and a table.

**A huge demonic wolfen** (alu demon) faces the double doors. **Toromek and the one changeling** stand near the circle, talking quietly. Toromek is anxious and nervously wipes a glittering ceremonial sword. The changeling assures him of success and assists in the preparations.

There is apparently a fourth party, but he is standing in front of one of the double doors and only part of his cloak can be seen. The stage is set. Now it's up to our heroes to make their move.

Toromek is only a fair fighter, but will attack like a madman and fight to the death if his plans are destroyed. He will not have time to summon more demons so the group's opponents will be limited to the four in the room. The most dangerous are likely to be the alu demon (see *Palladium RPG*, page 174) and the unseen brute by the door. Depending on how powerful the playing group is, the game master can make him either a gallu bull demon (for weaker characters) or a *baal-roq* demon if the group is a powerhouse team. If the group is really tough, the GM may add a second alu. Both fiends are listed in the *Palladium Role-Playing game*.

The changeling will only fight as long as Toromek lives. If the madman is killed, the changeling will flee. During the melee, the assistant will fight mainly defensively and always to protect his master.

The group will have to slay the demons and Toromek to avoid pursuit and/or acts of vengeance to follow later. Note: None of the villains will try to hurt Kith!

### Toromek The Insane

**Alignment:** Miscreant

**Hit Points:** 65

**Attributes:** I.Q. 15, M.E. 19, M.A. 10, P.S. 9, P.P. 12, P.E. 11, P.B. 11, Spd 8

**Age:** 431

**Height:** 6 feet 4 inches, **Weight:** 166 lbs

**Level of Experience:** 10th level summoner

**Skills of Note:** Recognize wards 90%, read/write elven 98%, read/write wolfen 64%, demon & devil lore 98%, forgery 88/44%, medical 96/98%, mathematics 98%, speaks wolfen, elven, ogre, goblin, and eastern human 98%, W.P. knife (+4 strike, +3 parry, +5 throw).

**Combat Skill:** Non-Men of Arms

**Attacks per Melee:** Three hand to hand .

**Bonuses (including hand to hand):** +3 to damage, +3 to parry and dodge, kick attack 1D6 damage, critical strike from behind.

**Favorite Weapons:** Knives

**Armor:** none

**Description:** Toromek is a tall handsome elf with long black hair streaked with grey. His face looks tired and drawn. Huge black circles hang under his dark eyes. By human standards he looks to be 40ish. He will fight to the death because he can not stand living and craves death. He has decided that Kith is the vital ingredient to his mystic formula and nothing anyone will say will convince him otherwise. This means that he will send his minions to retrieve Kith at any cost and will not give up until she is his or he is dead. **Note:** Toromek is completely deranged. His circle of life is junk. It has no magic power whatsoever.

Depending on the amount of destruction to the room caused by the battle, there may be items of value to be foraged. These are mostly magic items and components that may have little value in the northern mountains. **Treasure:** Potions: 3 charm, 1 negate magic potion, 1 impervious to fire, 2 mute, 3 tongues; all last 20 melees. Ruby ring that is also a charm of protection from undead. 2 vials of a paralysis drug, 1 dose of sleeping drug, 1 dose of weakness drug (*Palladium RPG*, page 138). Mystic components of value: 24 lotus petals, a pair of faerie wings, 2 ounces of demon bone dust, gold dust (worth 1000 gold), silver dust (worth 250 gold), 100 gold pieces, and a silver cross. There is also a hand held mirror, parchment, ink, and silver goblet (60 gold). That's it. Do not add more! This was a mission of mercy, not plunder.

## The Changeling, Cahh

**Alignment:** Miscreant

**Hit Points:** 33

**Attributes:** I.Q. 11, M.E. 25, M.A. 20, P.S. 10, P.P. 10, P.E. 8, P.B. 7, Spd 6

**Age:** 98

**Height:** 6 feet **Weight:** 160 lbs

**Level of Experience:** 2nd level wizard, 4th level thief

**Skills of Note:** Pick locks +35%, pick pockets +47%, prowl +51%, demon & devil lore 55%, medical 52/56%, mathematics 48%, speaks wolven, elven, ogre, goblin, and eastern and northern human 70%, W.P. knife (+2 strike, +1 parry, +2 throw), W.P. blunt (+2 strike, +1 parry, +1 throw).

**Combat Skill:** Thief

**Attacks per Melee:** Two hand to hand.

**Bonuses (including hand to hand):** +2 to parry and dodge, +5 save vs psionics, kick attack 1D6 damage, critical strike from behind.

**Favorite Weapons:** Knives; has two throwing knives and two daggers, also has a war hammer (1D8 damage). Magic talisman of invisibility.

**Armor:** Studded Leather, A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38

**Description:** A tall, pale, bald, thin humanoid with big ears and blood shot eyes. Totally loyal to Toromek and will die trying to protect him, but will flee if the summoner is killed.

**Note:** Has 500 in gold on his person.

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## Badd Land (adventure idea)



"...lop it right off, right at the neck. Then they post it on a giant pole, facing the road. I don't know why anyone would try to steal from those guys at the Badd Land. Sure, they got jewels the size of yer fist, but how does it help if ya don't have a head?"

"But let me tell ya, they got churches there that make yer eyes pop out. Yeah, you can worship sex, or booze (speaking of which, would you mind filling my glass?), or anything ya want. Those that live there say it's a little slice of heaven here on earth. Me, I say it's a hell pit. An' ya never know what's gonna crawl outta it. If ya can avoid the place, do it."

From the recollections of Ithak

Badd Land is the name of a rough and tumble town on the edge of the disputed wolven/human border. On a map it is almost on a straight line that ends 120 miles east of Wrijin. However, in reality, it is a difficult journey down the mountain, through dense forest, up and around scores of hills and back up into the foothills of the easternmost mountain range of the Bruu-ga-Belmar.

Badd Land is a foul smelling, filthy trader town. It is frequented by bandits, mountain men, and travelers who don't know better. If you are looking for mercenaries for hire, workmen, thugs, bandits, or assassins, Badd Land is brimming with them. Likewise, gambling, gladiatorial games, and decadence of all kinds can be enjoyed for the price of a few gold.

The town population is composed of every race imaginable, although predominately human. The population changes quite dramatically from season to season, but the current breakdown is approximately 50% human, 10% wolven, 10% coyotes, 10%



orc, and 20% others (bearmen, goblins, ogres, giants, etc.). The transient population of area rouges who visit the town are mostly humans, orcs, goblins, and coyles. The Eastern Territory tolerates the community because it gives humans a foothold on the disputed wolfen border (and it is out in the wilderness). The wolfen tolerate the town because it hurts humans more than any of its people and it gives them a convenient place to spy and keep abreast of rumors.

The path to the town is strewn with religious statues and totem poles. On the right, facing the road, are idols and icons featuring gods of light. On the left, looming over the pathway, are the gods of dark and demons. Hanging from trees along the road are totems of all types, ranging from cats and bears to clusters of woven leaves and vials of fluids. As you near the town, the sickening sight of the decapitated heads of criminals and blasphemers mounted on poles greets you.

The constant ringing of bells announces the town long before it is ever seen, up to five miles away. A muddy dirt and rock road leads to the town. There are no gates or walls, but two 40 foot tall totem poles with the carved faces of demons and monsters mark the entrance. There is a large sign, lit by torches at all times, that reads: "The Badd Land."

Visible down the main street are temples, churches and monuments to scores of gods. Northern gods and the gods of Light and Dark seem to dominate, but all are represented. Among the riff-raff of drifters, bandits, and travelers are monks, druids, and clergy of all types.

Any places the player group may desire, such as inns, bath houses, stables, armories, pawnshops, alchemist shops, saloons, and stores and services of all kinds, are available here, although there is usually a church attached. The inn keeper worships Belchus, the god of ale. The armorer pays homage to Hoknar, the northern god of war. The pawnshop clerk worships Kirgi the Rat god and money. Every transaction requires a small amount of additional money that is set aside for the church involved.

## Local Hot Spots at Badd Land

**1) The thieves' guilds:** There are three rival thieves guilds. The two biggest and most dangerous organizations are "The Vipers of Panath" and "The Gentlemen's Society." The third is a small band of mysterious newcomers known as The Misfits.

**The Vipers** are a group of scoundrels who mostly consist of very visible ruffians and thugs. They make no effort to conceal their trade or identity. The church of Panath and the neighboring saloons are their headquarters. Panath is the god of treachery in the pantheon of Rurga, a group of Old Kingdom gods whose popularity has waned over the centuries. The Vipers of Panath can be hired for theft, kidnapping, torture, murder, and assassination. Most of its members are non-human scum, attracting a large number of goblins, hob-goblins, orcs, kobolds, and coyles. All members of the Panath guild proudly display a tattoo of a green viper on their left arm. A typical Viper is a 2nd to 5th level thief or assassin (roll 1D4 + 1 for a random determination of level) and they are always of evil alignment. There are also a few wizards, warlocks and a crazy shaman called Hellfire among their ranks. They are bullies and punks always needing to prove how tough or deadly they are. The organization is one of the most powerful and influential in town. The Vipers operate most of the gambling and prostitution operations. However, the group is more like a powerful street gang than an organized crime ring.

**The Gentlemen's Society** is the other major thieves' guild. It is affiliated with the church of Dragonwright, specifically the black dragon, Styphon. They too deal in theft, abduction, extortion, and assassination, but they are much more subtle and sophisticated about it. Their headquarters is a quaint, elite men's club on the other side of town. Its members are predominately elves, humans, and wolfen, as well as a couple of notorious gnomes and a troglodyte named Sturge. The Gentlemen are typically 2nd to 4th level thieves and assassins. However, the Gentlemen's Society also employs twice as many men of magic (mainly summoners and diabolists) as the Vipers. The subtle use of magic and poison has come to be their trademark. Although the Gent-

lemen's Society has about a third fewer members as the Vipers of Panath, they are equally as powerful.

Throughout this book and its companion books, you will find mention of magic circle, wards, enchantment, spells, magical items, curses, demons, wizards, and much more. *Magic* is an important element in this imaginary world of fantasy. But please realize that this is a *fantasy* world. None of the spells in these books will cause demons to appear, and you shouldn't go around lighting candles waiting for it to happen. Everything in these books are *imaginary*. We made it all up.

Always remember that this is just a *game*, it isn't real. If you ever find yourself losing sight of that important fact, put your *game* stuff aside and go and talk to a friend, or parent, or somebody else who you can trust.

No demons are going to spring from these pages or from a meaningless incantation; this is fiction. An imaginary world that is brought to life only inside your mind's eye, to be explored in the company of friends, for the sole purpose of having a little fun.

In that same vein, game masters should try to remember to present elements of both drama and fun. Don't get so involved with the game mechanics that you forget to *enjoy* the game (this goes for players too). *Improvise* and *role-play*, throw in a pixie or two, remind the players about how bad a wet Wolfen can really smell, etc. A funny voice or touch of the sublime can go a long way. Don't go from one death-trap to another, whittling down the cast till no character is left alive.

Now, we don't recommend glossing over danger or details and making this whole setup a cake walk for the group. Don't have someone just "find" a +20 sword, but also don't have him meet 1,000 hungry orcs either. Moderate the situations to the experience levels of the characters and the temperament of the players. These adventures are written so you can add or subtract things. Feel free to add your own unique and personal touches.

In addition to their foul trade, the Society owns both of the Alchemist shops and the beautiful, palatial *Dragon's Den* dance hall/saloon. The Dragon's Den is a known hang-out for members of the Society and a means of gathering information from the innocent and unsuspecting (it is a huge, bright, friendly looking place, free of the usual rough looking and crude patrons). It is a favorite place with travelers and aristocrats.

**The third thieves' guild** is a little band of rouges who call themselves *The Misfits*. They are loosely affiliated with the temple of Kirgi the Rat God, but have no known headquarters in town. These mischievous fellows are master thieves, but rarely engage in murder, abduction, or blackmail unless it involves one of the other two rival gangs. The Misfits are reported to be less than two dozen strong. The founding members include an 8th level ratling thief from the Western Empire, a 6th level scarecrow wizard known as "Old Crow" (the suspected leader), a 5th level gnome thief, a 4th level coyle thief & ranger, a 4th level ogre thief, a 5th level kankoran druid, and a 4th level emerin mind mage. Their gang of bandits consists of wolfen and coyles. Their main targets seem to be the two other thieves guilds, but their attacks on the other guilds do not seem to be motivated by rivalry as much as they seem to be acts of *vengeance*!

The two major guilds are involved in a perpetual rivalry that borders on gang war. The mayor and his governing family are



all that hold these two from completely massacring themselves. The appearance of the Misfits has complicated matters even more as they try to play one against the other.

2) **The Crusaders** is the local police force. They keep their neutrality by accepting bribes from both the Vipers of Panath and the Gentlemen's Society. They will never accuse or imprison a member of either gang even if they witnesses a cold-blooded murder themselves. All they will do is clean up the mess and try to console the victim's friends and/or family; "There, there, oh how terrible. I'm so sorry. But you know, he shouldn't have fought back like that. If he'd just kept still, all he would have gotten was a beating. As it is, he got himself killed ... Arrest him?! Madam, we don't need any more trouble. Besides, your husband was probably looking for trouble and found it. Just go back to your room and I'll make funeral arrangements..." And this is an example of the Crusaders being polite and comforting. Those who protest too loudly about injustice often end up imprisoned or disappear.

The Crusaders' force consists of humans, orcs, and a handful of ogres and elves. No canine races are allowed. Typically they are ex-soldiers, mercenaries, thieves, and assassins who couldn't make it elsewhere and ended up here. They are usually only 2nd or 3rd level, anarchist or evil, and have a high mortality rate. Official armor is silver chain mail with black leather shoulder pads and silver highlights; A.R. 13, S.D.C. 44. The men are all given a spear and short sword, but they can use any weapons they may own.

The leader of the Crusaders is a brute called Captain Sharhar, an ogre with experience as a soldier in the army of the Wolfen Empire. (6th level soldier, miscreant, I.Q. 14, P.S. 21, P.P. 12, P.E. 18, wears weightless plate armor and a pair of gryphon claw gloves. His main weapon is a flaming sword that does 4D6 damage, but he is also an excellent swordsman and uses polearms.)

His second in command is a weaselly human assassin named Karm (4th level, miscreant, I.Q. 11, P.S. 13, P.P. 19). Karm is infamous for his use of poisons, drugs, and magic potions. His secret allegiance is with the Gentlemen's Society. Captain Sharhar is honestly neutral, seeing the Crusaders as his own little empire.

**Note:** The Crusaders know there is a vampire or two operating in and around town, but keep this knowledge quiet to avoid creating a panic which could hurt the tourist trade.

3) **The Badd Estate** is the home of the town's founding family of elves. Grandpa Badd is said to have been a genius who dabbled with magic. His studies in the art of summoning twisted his mind. He soon became obsessed with armageddon and gods. After decades of researching dozens of religions and hundreds of gods, he set forth to find the place that could accept all gods. His reasoning was that when the end of the world came, his community would be found pleasing to the gods and be spared. He led a little troupe of human settlers through the Eastern Territory and into the foot hills of the Bruu-ga-Belimar. Here he founded the town known as Badd Land. Generations of equally crazed men of magic with a lust for power have turned the town into the den of iniquity that it is today.

The current mayor of the town is **Eallysa Badd**, a stately looking elf with dark eyes and a crazed look. He is a patron of

the church of Darkness and rumored to be both a summoner and diabolist. Eallysa has run the town for 70 years and it is under his guidance that the Badd Land has added an additional score of dark religions and increased its population. A recluse, he is seldom seen on the streets. To get an audience with him is nearly impossible unless the subject involves great wealth, intriguing magic, or a pressing political matter regarding the town. Recently, he has signed a secret pact allying himself and Badd Land to the Wolfen Empire. Only Eallysa knows of the pact, his family and aids know only that he prefers the company of wolfen over humans. (Eallysa Badd: age 143, diabolic alignment, I.Q. 17, M.E. 15, P.P. 14, P.B. 19, power crazy and long term schemer, dislikes humans, loves wolfen, who treat him like a god, 6th level summoner, 5th level diabolist.)

**Laddimar Badd** is the second oldest brother and the person who handles most town business. He is polite and friendly, yet there is an air of evil about him. Laddimar secretly mediates between the two rival thieves' guilds to keep their warring from getting too bloody and destructive. Both guilds pay the Badd family 20% of all monies they make. (Laddimar Badd: age 123, miscreant, I.Q. 13, P.P. 21, P.B. 22, 6th level knight, 2nd level wizard.)

**Earlmilar Badd** is the youngest brother. He is a mean, bitter drunk who enjoys causing mischief for the town and his brothers, who he hates. He is an unpleasant, arrogant brat who thinks only of himself, power, and vengeance. (Earlmilar Badd: age 91, anarchist, I.Q. 12, P.P. 14, P.B. 24, 5th level noble, 1st level thief.)

**Sarah Badd** is the wife of Laddimar and a practitioner of witchcraft. She is evil and craves power, more power than her husband and Badd Land offers. (Sarah Badd: age 90, diabolic, I.Q. 15, P.P. 14, P.B. 28, 3rd level witch who is pledged to the demon lord Kubuera-loe, symbol of wealth and envy. She has a greater familiar: a gargoyle in the form of a cat; the demon familiar adds 20 Hit Points. She is also invulnerable to poison.)

4) **The Church of Vald-Tegor, Lord of the Undeadis** a large stone and marble temple with a tiny congregation of goblins and orcs, and a handful of humans. It is located near the old cemetery and usually looks abandoned. The only time that the temple seems to be alive is during the weekly religious ceremony and late at night, when lights can be seen lit around midnight lasting till just before dawn.

A wizened elf named Glorphroth is the sole priest (7th level priest of darkness, diabolic alignment, age 172 and looks it). He is rumored to have been banished from the Timiro Kingdom for performing human sacrifices, but information is sketchy and not easy to unearth (a royal family member may have been involved). In Badd Land he is just another villain lost in a refuse pile of villainy and depravity.

The church of Vald-Tegor is also the home of the three vampires that Glorphroth worships. The crazed old elf lives to serve his vile undead masters, an elf lord named Slan, his wife Lisa, and their daughter Florona. The diabolic quartet have lived in the town for nearly 19 years, feeding on transients who have the misfortune to be passing through. They also attack merchant caravans and rich travelers to accommodate their lavish life style, as is evident by the fabulous living quarters of the evil priest (and the vampires who secretly live with him). **Note:** The vampires are always careful to attack nonresidents to avoid attracting



attention to themselves. Remember, this is Badd Town, a place where murder, assault and robbery are everyday occurrences.

**Game Master Note:** I leave the rest of the town for your development. The place is very corrupt and decadent, but there are good and hardworking residents as well. Remember, the current power barons of the town are the Badd Family, the Vipers of Panath, and the Gentlemen's Society. These three are the big guns and the latter two presently acknowledge the Badd Family as the reigning power. The conniving and envious Sarah Badd could change this power structure somewhat, depending on how power hungry she gets and the opportunities that open to her. She is definitely not beyond conspiring against her hus-

band with his younger brother or other powerful individual if it means usurping the rule of Badd Land. Likewise, the Misfits are another element that can radically change the town. My original thought is that Eallysa Badd and/or one (or both) of the thieves' guilds hurt the founding members of the Misfits in some horrible way. Perhaps they killed their loved ones, imprisoned one for years perhaps as a scapegoat/framed. Perhaps another was financially ruined or persecuted by the powers that be in Badd Land. At any rate, each has his reason to see the guilds and the Badd family destroyed. I see the Misfits as a sort of "Robin Hood" outfit, mostly good, with noble purpose, but considered outlaws.

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