

FREE LEAGUE

FORBIDDEN LANDS



RAVEN'S PURGE

LEAD WRITER

Erik Granström

EDITORS

Tomas Härenstam, Nils Karlén

ILLUSTRATORS

Niklas Brandt, Nils Gulliksson

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Christian Granath, Johan Nohr

COVER ART

Alvaro Tapia

TRANSLATORS

Carl-Johan Svensson, Karin Tidbeck

PROOFREADING

John M. Kahane, Kosta Kostulas

SPECIAL THANKS TO

David Eksell

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MERCY IN VOND

Merigall stretched an arm into the darkness, but the other half of the bed lay empty. The Rust Brothers must have taken the bedfellow away at least a couple of hours ago, as the sheets that met the fingers were damp and coolly dead.



The youngling must not have resisted nor tried to wake Merigall, in all likelihood due to the priests whispering of how every action of disobedience would bring harm to his village. The Rust Brothers feared Merigall, but they feared ravenous Krasylla even more, to whom the boy had now been taken for a final tryst.

The demon rose to correct its face in a small, silver mirror. The features had slid as they were wont to do during deep slumber, but Merigall willfully stretched them to conventional beauty, choosing a strict, dark and androgynous face above colorless clothes that was in keeping with the day's mood. The eyes remained yellow as a cat's, as always.

Outside the stuffiness of the bed chamber, the cold stone corridors of the holdfast of Vond lay deserted. None dared stand guard outside Merigall's chambers and no guard was needed anyway. The demon had taken the former quarters of the dwarven lord, high on the

mountainside, for its own use after the human king, Alvagard, had conquered Vond three hundred and fifty years ago before leaving the region to march to new wars. The clan sign of the Crombe dwarves was still carved into each door, but it had long since lost its meaning.



The Nightwalker's fog still embedded the rising sun. Even so, the day promised clarity in cold as well as in view, and beautiful vistas of the scorched valleys of Harga opened up to the eye where the demon passed. The passage down the mountain ran along the balustrade above one of the goddess Hemes's places of anguish. A couple of priests garbed in rusty masks over capes draped in ochre bowed in silence when Merigall passed, but the demon neither recognized them behind the iron nor responded to their greetings. A glance down towards the courtyard revealed that the church's supply



of sacrificial prisoners was running low, for a lonely old man stood fettered to the poles, thin as a barren goat. Maybe he was already dead, as there was no reaction as white-painted shadows of death clawed out stripes of blood over his wretched body in their dance. The twisted tree trunk representing the goddess Heme looked quite jaded as well.

The only doors to Krasylla's chamber were set into rotating drums tied to a mechanical delaying device. The one who was pushed or chose to enter of their own volition was trapped for several minutes, moments that belonged to Krasylla, and let him deal with his guests however he pleased. Merigall didn't hesitate, however, but forced the door forward until from within the walls the sound of dripping mercury started counting down the time for the audience. The hall was warm and reeked like a slaughterhouse in comparison to the cool, clean air outside. The room was spacious, but Krasylla's semi-liquid form still occupied half of it. Merigall immediately saw its premonitions confirmed, for the body that had experienced fingers that caressed it only hours earlier was half embedded in Krasylla, whose large, clawed hand squeezed the torso, neither lovingly nor to keep it trapped, but like the milk maiden squeezing the cow's teat to empty it of its contents.

"You've stolen my playmate," said Merigall. "I wasn't done with him."

Krasylla's grotesque face turned towards his guest in the twilight. It already bore the features of the devoured youngling, albeit twisted, enlarged and deformed. The larger demon usually borrowed the face of his food, saving him the trouble of keeping track of where

noses, mouths and eyes were supposed to be placed to achieve a passable human likeness.

"How was I to know?" Krasylla's voice answered, cracked dull. "I can scarcely tell one from the other. I was hungry."

"You are always hungry."

"The body still lives," said the demon and smacked the boy's sweaty, vaulted back, causing it to convulse beneath his touch. "You can make use of it as I eat."

Merigall had a vision of the praying mantis' habit of eating its spouse while mating, but the offer held no appeal. A dark mood had gripped its thoughts, as if the night itself lingered beneath the skin.

"You feel repulsion," the fiend noted. "Do you then, as the Rust Brothers, believe mighty Krasylla to have become an aimlessly glutting swine, wallowing in its own lard?"

"You have previously told me that you are eating yourself towards sarmog. Nothing else has ever occurred to me. The only accusation I have against you is that you ate someone I still desired."

Krasylla found no retort that hadn't already been spoken. As he snorted, a torrent of bodily noises thundered from within the mountain of flesh.

"Do you plan to return home when you've reached sarmog?" Merigall continued. "Do you mean to slaughter the soulless in the pass of Mistra to reach nexus and maybe challenge Goder himself in Churmog?"

"Not at all," Krasylla grunted in his closest approximation of laughter. "I enjoy this world. It is full of colors and delicious flesh. Let Goder keep Churmog, while I make mog of the Forbidden Lands!"



He squeezed the youngling's body until it turned blue and writhed in his grip.

"You don't have to be alarmed, Merigall," he added. "I prefer you as the other, even if your contribution would strengthen my sarmog. You have traveled far and gotten to know the world. I appreciate our talks."

"Very generous of you, Krasylla," Merigall answered without signaling either fear, gratitude or irony.

Peripheral throats, stretched like nets of veins across Krasylla's surface, transported the dissolved tissue from the body to the melted mass of the demon through peristaltic motions. Merigall waited patiently while the body of the youngling convulsed in powerful spasms before returning to stillness, broken only by a persistent tremor, before answering.

"Zytera stored my essence in a statue when he remade me. I couldn't leave the Forbidden Lands even if I wanted to. Besides, I too enjoy this world – some days more than others. Aren't you bound to obedience by a blood covenant with the wizard as well?"

"Zytera is old. He would already be dead if the daughter fragment wasn't keeping him alive," Krasylla answered with a disgusted look on his face, constructed with no sense of proportion. "My time will come!"

"We are mog!" Merigall said in parting, suddenly overcome with disgust and despair.

"We are mog!" Krasylla answered, lost in thought.



From the chamber of its kin, Merigall continued down through the lower levels of the hold-

fast of Vond and steered its steps to the dungeons on a whim. Some wardens from the Iron Guard moved to intercept, but the demon gave them the eye and pressed onwards. All members of the Church of Rust in Vond appeared equally nervous and when Merigall reached the cells the reason as to why became abundantly clear. The dungeons lay empty, doors gaping like the maws of nestlings. The demon sauntered along the rows of spaces where only ingrained anguish wailed from the walls. At long last, in the furthest reaches of the darkest and dankest vault, Merigall found a lone woman fettered to a wall by rusty chains. The cuffs were grossly oversized, probably to cause discomfort and at the same time hinder the prisoner's movements. She was battered and bruised, neither young nor old, and her black clothes were torn to filthy rags. Burnt into her right cheek the mark of the god Rust glowed with such heat and pain that Merigall could sense it from the door. In addition, there was a tattoo of a raven above the brand. That the Rust Brothers had kept a Raven Sister as a sacrificial lamb instead of immediately tearing her limb from limb showed more than anything how dangerously low their supply of prisoners was running. Rites had to be performed and Krasylla took the sustenance he needed – if there were no prisoners to be had, a Brother would have to be sacrificed, already a reality on several occasions. That was why the Raven Sister had been saved, as an emergency cache for the gods. The wall behind the woman was messy with fresh blood. Maybe she had tried to pound the life out of her skull against the stone, or maybe the Rust Brothers had mutilated her wings while she was still in the guise of the raven.



Merigall opened the barred door and stepped into the cell. The woman had appeared to be sleeping, but one of her eyes became visible at once where that coal black, lank hair parted. The gaze was odd: defiant, filled with distaste and empty all at once.

“You wear no iron mask. Who are you?” she said, her voice bright and unexpectedly steady.

Merigall pushed a bowl of dirty water to the side and squatted in front of her.

“Who do you want me to be?”

“Be the quick death, if I am allowed to choose,” the woman answered immediately. “Kill me! Kill as many as you can and then kill yourself. Then the world will be better.”

The demon had not expected such a response.

“So, you don’t want to escape and continue the battle against Rust and Heme? You praise the Raven God as a champion of life, yet you speak to me of death and murder.”

The woman shook in what Merigall assumed to be a fit of coughing, but then her hoarse laughter broke through.

“When I became a novice with the Raven Sisters, my uncle mocked me,” she said. “Last we met, he tried to strangle me. My cousins chased him off.”

“He was possessed?” Merigall asked, intrigued by the woman’s incomprehensible mood.

“Maybe possessed by faith. My uncle worshipped Corax – the scavenger aspect of the Raven God. My sisters may love the farmers of the forest, but the Blackwings claim that the humans defied the God by coming to Ravenland. They say that Corax won’t lift his curse until the land has been rid of humankind. Uncle didn’t hate me any more than anyone else, but he found it fitting to kill me first, since man was led to

Ravenland by the Raven Sisters in the Old Age.”

Her tongue clung to the words, so Merigall offered her diluted wine from the wineskin in its belt. The demon reached out its hand and brushed the woman’s hair from her face while she drank greedily. The Raven Sister stiffened but allowed it to happen. Past the wounds, the dirt and the festering brand on her cheek, Merigall found her beautiful, but then again saw beauty in almost everyone.

“Now at the end of life and torment, I understand my uncle,” the woman continued and dropped the empty wineskin in the dirt. “The Reapenters are right! Everyone might as well die – especially me, who has believed in the folly of hope!”

“The Reapenters don’t kill everyone, only humans.”

“Everyone!” the Raven Sister insisted and held Merigall’s gaze, unwavering. “Consciousness always breeds evil and never deserves its existence. Try to convince me otherwise.”

Her words urged contemplation.

“I find your dejection unbecoming. I have seen dead worlds and they are all excruciatingly dull,” Merigall mumbled. “You are right that all thinking beings show cruelty, but also compassion. Would you prize sweetness so highly if it was never tempered by venom or brine?”

Then the demon had an idea.

“Let us make a bet! If I can show you that mercy exists in the Forbidden Lands, you will renounce the teachings of the Reapenters and face death with defiance instead of listlessness.”

“What is my faith to you, Yellow Eye?”

“Nothing. But challenges are the essence of my life,” Merigall replied, smiling. “Come!”

“Perhaps you haven’t noticed, but I’m



bound to the wall,” the woman said, laboriously lifting her chains towards the demon.

“Give me a kiss and we will stride beyond the iron!”

“I have given a vow of chastity,” the Raven Sister answered, but she still contemplated Merigall’s softly inviting lips with tired curiosity.

“I give no kiss of either love or even lust. Regard our touch as duty and faith, as a passage towards fairer climes,” the demon answered and let the hand slip under the woman’s hair, at the neck where it lay stiff with blood.

“My name is Rimenda. The village of Karnevera witnessed my birth,” she mumbled and closed her eyes to the world as Merigall’s golden eyes gleamed like twin suns as they came near.



The two occupied space once more in a small, vaulted room where a boy woke with a start, sat up, and watched his unexpected guests with eyes as yellow as Merigall’s.

“Sleep unto the morning, my child!” the demon said and gently pushed the small body back against the bed. The boy let it happen without making a fuss and appeared to go back to sleep in an instant.

After days on the cold prison floor, Rimenda was so weak and stiff that Merigall had to support her as they proceeded into the great hall of the dwelling. There, the hosts had already woken to first breakfast with their visiting relatives.

“No one can see or hear us.” Merigall calmed the Raven Sister who drew her black rags tighter around her body.

“I have brought you here because the halflings are the most good-natured kin in the Forbidden Lands. See how they start the day in joviality in spite of their still growling bellies and let that bring you hope for the good things in life!”

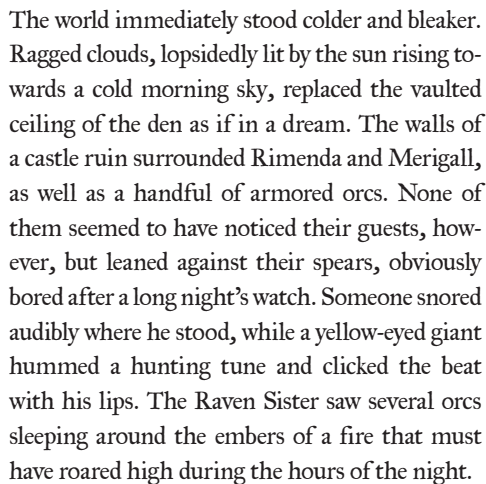
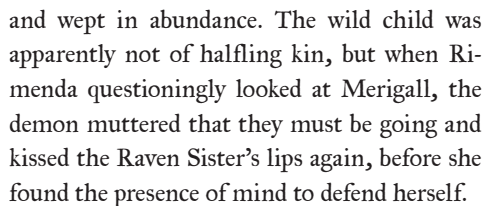
“Dear Medulda, don’t you want some stewed butter with that nut bread?” the hostess offered, then traced her index finger through the yellow fat to show how creamy the flowing mass was.

“Thank you for asking, fine Hulvia!” the in-law answered. She accepted the bowl, so greasy around the arch that it almost slipped from her grasp.

Before anything more could transpire, the women were interrupted by a circular door that crashed open, revealing a path towards the inwards of the house. Out stormed a very small, grey-black child, bare-assed and wildly squawking with glee over its freedom. In its wake lurched an elderly halfling thing, crashing on the doorstep with a bang, vomiting where he lay. Immediately behind him a younger, fair-skinned halfling woman appeared with yet another child pressed to her chest.

“Grandpa is drunk again and dropped him. I’m terribly sorry, mother!”

The runaway didn’t get very far, however. The master of the dwelling unfolded a leg, grabbing the child after it had fallen on its snout, and carried it, face white-hot with rage and with a grip around the offspring’s neck as steady as it was relentless, back to the den’s secret cubbyholes. The child’s nosebleed dripped in his tracks, but any continued screams were smothered with a steady hand. The wife of the house, for her part, hid her face in her hands



“We are located in the remains of the castle Eye of the Rose, where Emperor Hroka, the first and the greatest, holds court,” Merigall announced formally.

“Eye of the Rose? Are you implying that these orcs appreciate the fragrance of flowers? Every orc I’ve met so far has preferred its own bodily odors.” Rimenda’s words were calm, even if her expression had the look of surprise on her face.

“The castle received its name a long time ago when the Meromannian Dwarves built it as a gift of friendship for the elves,” the demon answered. “I have brought you here to witness how beautifully respect can be preserved across

As if summoned on cue, a human walked through the group of brutish warriors, a lanky man, dressed in an exorbitant number of trinkets on top of his filthy rags and with a superior demeanor. The orcs grunted in greeting without the slightest show of pride, even continuing to rummage around inside their nasal cavities and scratch at their mange as he passed. Merigall led Rimenda in the man's wake to an inner courtyard, across which coarse fabric had been hoisted as a canopy. Emperor Hroka himself sat on a throne, dressed in clothes that most likely would have been worn by children or women among humans, although in this case tailored in grotesque sizes. The orc ruler snapped a marrowbone with his teeth and loudly slurped its contents for breakfast.

“Your Majesty,” the visitor said and bowed with large, exaggerated gestures. “The Canidian messenger still awaits an audience.”

"You can see that I'm eating," the orc muttered. "The midget can wait."

“The dwarf has been waiting all night,
Your Majesty.”

“Don’t you think I’ve been up all night as well?” the regent roared, menacingly waving a thigh bone about before breaking it off against the log table.

"If I may make a suggestion, Your Highness?" the man interjected with an unpleasant smile.

“What?”

“The dwarf claims to be a blacksmith by profession. He appears old and weak, but in all likelihood, he possesses valuable knowledge. Why not ask him to teach our own smiths for a time, as a show of good faith from his kin?”





"Agreed! As long as I don't have to see him before I've gotten some sleep."

"A delegation from the human settlement of Karalend is rumored to also be heading this way," the man added. "If it amuses Your Majesty, we could let the two ambassadors battle each other when they are both in attendance to see who represents a kin worthy of Your Majesty's ear."

"Hrang Gala, you are as flimsy as catgut and ugly as few, but you have your moments!" the emperor grinned, and threw the empty bone shaft over his shoulder to a couple of waiting dogs who instantly flew at each other over the scraps. "So, pack yourself away from here and put the midget to work! We'll speak again this evening."

"At once, Your Majesty," the man answered with another bow, turned on his heel and left the area in such a manner that he passed between Rimenda and Merigall without seeing them.

"It seems we won't be seeing any respect across the boundaries of kin this day," the Raven Sister noted.

"Let us journey on instead," the demon answered in a huff and pulled the woman towards it.

"Is this incessant kissing really necessary?" she queried coldly. "Your mouth is certainly beautiful, but it is already bitter as bile to the palate."

"Technically, they aren't a necessity," Merigall confessed. "We need only touch one another to travel, but I happen to like kisses."

"Then you will receive my touch," Rimenda said and gave the demon a slap so loud that the emperor raised an eyebrow as the visitors faded from the Eye of the Rose castle.

Through the morning Merigall led the Raven Sister across the Forbidden Lands in pursuit of the kindness that would grant the woman faith in life once more. They visited negotiations being grunted between goblins and reptile folk on a barge in the fetid Gargan Marshes, walked among growth warpers in the alleyways of Alderstone and saw ogres set fire to a deer just to bet on how far it would get before succumbing to the flames. By noon, it seemed to Merigall as if even the winds howled in opposition no matter where they set their sights. The druids of the elfin tribals nurtured the wildlife in the forests of the Shroud by attracting fox cubs through magic and then snapping their necks to cull this year's rich litter. The wolfkin trapped live rabbits and broke a single hind leg on each one to let the young practice their hunting skills. Everywhere blood ran in garish streams to the screams and wails of the ones being emptied. When the afternoon sun hung lethargic above the mountains beyond Vivend, the demon was in a very foul mood. Rimenda, for her part, opined that Merigall had lost the bet and that before darkness fell it should bring her back to the holdfast in Vond or drop her off at Karnevera, the village of her birth, where she intended to find her uncle among the Reapenters and gain entry to the murderous fellowship of the Blackwings.

"Let us visit one last location. If we do not find mercy there, I will do as you wish," the guide answered, and the yellow eyes glistened when it grabbed the Raven Sister's hand so firmly that her fingers faded instantaneously. After a short bout of vertigo, the grey haze in front of Rimenda's eyes coalesced into stone. She found them to be standing in a ravine below a gigantic bulwark. With difficulty the



sunlight fell betwixt the mountain walls, down a slope littered with bones. A vulture with golden eyes screeched from its perch, furious at being disturbed in its feast.

"Where have you brought us now? Rimenda demanded. "Is there really room for mercy in such a dismal place?"

"We are at the end of the world", the demon answered and glanced at the Raven Sister with a gaze as tender as it was expectant.

"Haven't the dwarves constructed the world in the form of a sphere? How is it possible for a sphere to end?"

"This is just where the Forbidden Lands end, but also where your world ends," Merigall explained.

"Are you saying that we stand before the bulwark of the Iron Lock?" the woman whispered, having heard of the place but still unable to grasp it.

She raised her hand to shade the merlons and the bright sky above at the same time as a hissing sound gave birth to an arrow. It pierced her palm and nailed the fingers against her shoulder, where they twitched like the legs of a dying spider. Surprise preceded the pain that didn't have time to arrive before another arrow from the mute soldiers on the crenellation split the right side of the Raven Sister's chest with a weight that threw her to the ground. Merigall caught the woman as she fell and held her gently in its arms, as if shielding a child.

Additional arrows from the guardians struck the demon's back, but mog suffered no injuries from arrowheads.

Merigall let the shafts remain, focusing its amber gaze on the faltering light of the woman's soul.

MERIGALL



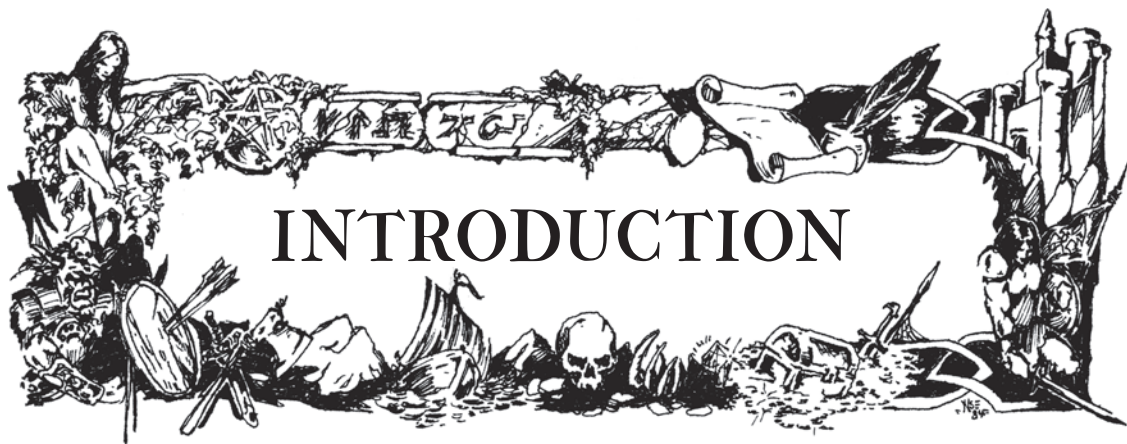
"Only evil. You lose ... our bet," she sputtered. Blood trickled from the corner of her mouth.

"No," Merigall answered, "here is my mercy: you escape being devoured by Krasylla as you were destined to. Now fight to your death as per our agreement!"

Rimenda's mouth moved a couple of instants yet, but red foam forced its way out instead of words.

Merigall couldn't tell if the Raven Sister wanted to thank or curse her guide.

The suspense was titillating.



INTRODUCTION

*The Stillmist breathed and beckoned behind Kalman Rodenfell.
Yet other matters held him back.*

*“The Whisperer has opened a boil in Vond. The infection
spreads, but our ancestors can heal the land. Forget your conflicts
and your discord. Find those who seek life among all kin and
search for the ancients!”*

*The elf regarded the motley crowd before him with some
concern.*



Welcome to the *Raven’s Purge* campaign for *Forbidden Lands*.

The Raven has every reason to purge the Forbidden Lands. The land that the Raven God allowed men to share with dwarves, elves and other kin for hundreds of years in ancient times has been ravaged by war and also invaded by otherworldly demons. Most of the inhabitants of the Forbidden Lands believe the humans and their sorcerous offspring with elves to be the cause of their current misery, a belief that has sown distrust and hatred among the kin. Now, when the Blood Mist has lifted, the time has come to purge the land – or to decisively claim it for their own.

The legend tells of how six elves in ancient times oversaw and protected life on the

stone orb that the dwarves had built for the god Huge. Even before the humans came to Ravenland, the elves deemed that the creation was complete and withdrew so as not to disturb it. They shed their flesh and had their six rubies set into the crown Stanengist, which is said to have been worn by the first kings of the land. During the wars, several elf stones were stolen from the crown, however, and later it disappeared completely.

Now that the Forbidden Lands are accessible once again, the legend of Stanengist has begun to stir. The power, knowledge and value of the elven crown is the key to the Forbidden Lands, be it to save the land or to assume control over it.



OVERVIEW

Raven's Purge is an extensive campaign and lacks a linear plot, but is still not particularly difficult to run. This campaign is a smorgasbord of factions, locations and events that you can weave into your campaign in Forbidden Lands. Below is a summary of the contents of the book:

THE ELVEN CROWN STANENGIST

The next chapter deals with the crown, Stanengist, and the three other powerful artifacts set with elven rubies. Their history and their abilities are described in detail, as well as offering suggestions on where they can be found.

KEY PLAYERS

Next is a description of all the key players who in one way or another seek Stanengist or who in other ways seek to alter the balance of power in the Forbidden Lands. These key players all have their own agendas and will act to reach their goals during the course of the campaign.

ADVENTURE SITES

Following that are eight complete adventure sites, described according to the same format as the three in the *Gamemaster's Guide*. These adventure sites are in one way or another connected to the legend of Stanengist or the key players of the campaign, but they can be played in any order you choose.

Note that two of the adventure sites in the *Gamemaster's Guide* – Weatherstone and Vale of the Dead – also are connected to *Raven's Purge*. If you haven't already played these, your campaign may benefit from adding them in to the mix.

THE SHOWDOWN IN VOND

The book concludes with a chapter on the grand campaign finale – the showdown in Vond. Vond is an expanded adventure site which also describes different ways to resolve the struggle over Stanengist. There is no "right" ending to the story – instead, the decisions of the players will determine who falls and who stands vic-

LOCATIONS OF THE ARTIFACTS

Before you begin *Raven's Purge*, it is wise to decide where the Stanengist crown, the Maligarn longsword, the Nekhaka scepter and the Blood Star cloak clasp are located in your own campaign. There are suggestions in the descriptions of each artifact in the next chapter, but there is nothing stopping you from choosing locations as you please. You may have to change these locations during the game, depending on where the adventurers actually go.



torious among the key players. The future of the Forbidden Lands lies in the hands of the adventurers.

You can run the final confrontation to end the campaign whenever you please, but a number of conditions need to be met:

- ❖ The adventurers are in possession of the elven crown Stanengist, and one or more of the other three artifacts with elven rubies (see the next chapter).
- ❖ The adventurers have encountered most of the key players and become their allies or enemies (see Chapter 3).
- ❖ The adventurers have heard the legends about Zytera, Krasylla and Vond.



LEGENDS

The most important way for the players to get information on the key players and the four artifacts during the course of the campaign is through legends (page 6 in the *Player's Handbook*). As such, it is important that you let the players hear or read these legends on a regular basis. They are gathered as player materials at the end of this book and are available for download on the Free League's website.

As a rule of thumb, you should share at least one legend with the players each session. You can place the legends wherever you please. If there is no suitable NPC at hand to tell of a certain legend, you can let one of the adventurers remember it by the campfire, with the help of a LORE roll (page 55 in the *Player's Handbook*) and read it to the other players.

THE START OF THE CAMPAIGN

Raven's Purge can begin in many different ways. You can introduce artifacts, key players and adventure sites from this book long before the adventurers even get to hear of Stanengist.

However, the simplest way to get the campaign rolling is to let the adventurers hear the legend of Stanengist (see adjacent box). This can happen in different ways, and how it happens has no bearing on the campaign at large.

If you want to, you can use the starting scene described in the boxed text below as inspiration. The scene can take place anywhere during the adventurers' journeys through the Forbidden Lands and can be used to lure adventurers to any adventure site of your choosing. The scene will, of course, have to be adapted to your specific group.



STARTING SCENE

"Blessed benefactor, you delivered us from the monster! Who has ever beheld such magic?" the merchant exclaimed from inside the wagon. Yet he dared not emerge until the last vestiges of the red mist had dispersed in the evening breeze.

"That was not magic. I just pointed out a truth in the native tongue of the Bloodlings," the stranger muttered in response, bending over the jewelry box that had fallen off the table in the heat of battle. The stranger eyed an ame-



thyst dripping with fresh blood with disgust.

"That is my best stone, but you have earned it as your reward! It holds a higher value to me than my left nut," laughed the merchant, somewhat nervously, as he was simultaneously struck by the possibility that their savior was a highwayman. He shot a glance at Trisnir. The warrior had sheathed her sword and appeared completely smitten, though it was nigh impossible to tell if the beautiful stranger was man or woman.

"You peddle nothing but trash. I'm searching for the stone that once belonged to my beloved Viridia, and that is why I intervened," the wanderer answered, and then to the merchant's dismay, dropped the amethyst in the dust of the road. "Viridia's heart is an emerald that goes by the name of Gall-Eye. You haven't seen it, you who peddle in jewelry?"

The merchant's disaffirming answers seemed to distress the stranger, who exhaled a heavy sigh.

"Viridia and her five elven siblings once ruled this land, but after the peace was secured, their heart stones were set into the crown Stanengist, which was long worn by the rulers of Ravenland. If you as a merchant find the crown or any of its six stones, they can be sold for whatever sum of gold you desire. If you instead seek power, you will receive it with Stanengist on your brow. But if you want my friendship, you will return Viridia's heart to me."

"Have I understood correctly? Are these valuable stones really lost without an owner?" asked the merchant, whose business acumen once again had crawled free of fear.

The beautiful stranger regarded the party with a blank stare, and it was as if their thoughts were drawn from their souls by it.

"Defiant, Merigall stole Stanengist more than a thousand years ago and spread the stones across the land. No one knows where they are anymore. They say that the loss of Stanengist caused the fall of Ravenland."

"Who are you, really?"

The stranger's yellow eyes fixed on the merchant.

"I am Merigall."

Unabashedly, the creature met their stunned stares.

"I can't be everywhere all the time but must journey on post haste, but there is a place where you could help me search for Gall-Eye. If you find any of the six elven stones you will be rewarded beyond comprehension..."



THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN

When the adventurers have heard the legend of Stanengist, it is up to them to start the search for the crown and the missing rubies. Use legends to lead the adventurers on the right track



and let them encounter the different key players of the campaign at the adventure sites.

If the players won't swallow the bait and seem uninterested in the legend of Stanengist you can let them hear more of the elven crown and its history (see the next chapter), as well as the legends of the other three artifacts set with elven rubies. Hopefully, the players will sooner or later become interested in Stanengist.

The adventurers can encounter the key players and the four artifacts in any order during the course of the campaign, depending on the players' own choices and which encounters and adventure sites that they visit or you place in their path. Avoid trying to steer the players in a certain direction, instead allowing them to encounter the key players and the artifacts wherever they choose to go.

It is entirely possible for the adventurers to pursue other ventures between the encounters and events that are connected to Stanengist. By weaving in side quests, you can expand the campaign without limits.

When you feel that it is time to bring the campaign to an end, and the adventurers have

met the required conditions (as noted above), you begin the showdown in Vond.



PLAYER INCENTIVES

If the players won't take an interest in Stanengist of their own accord, you can entice them with paying missions from one or more of the key players of the campaign. The demon Merigall is especially useful, since this trickster wants to set events in motion and break Zytera's hold on the Forbidden Lands (see the next chapter). The adventurers may already have met Merigall if they have visited the adventure site of Weatherstone (see page 215 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

If the adventurers don't plan to use Stanengist themselves, there are several parties who'd offer them a handsome reward for the assembled crown – a castle of their own, a fortune, artifacts or knowledge are all possible rewards. It is most likely that the Rust Brothers and other key players will try to hire several adventurers for the hunt since they reckon that most of them will perish and that only a few hunters will find even a single stone. Alternatively, the adventurers can receive threats of their families being executed or their villages being burned down if they don't find the crown.

Many of the key players of the campaign want Stanengist for different reasons and may take advantage of the adventurers to achieve their goals. Read more about the motivations of the key players in Chapter 4.

ZERTORME





STANENGIST

It is said that the first six elves of the Forbidden Lands – the ones who planted the trees, drew the furrows of the rivers and gave the animals their home - after completing their mission, had their rubies gathered in the royal crown, Stanengist, the name of which means The Hanging Stones.



The elven crown, Stanengist, and the elven rubies it has housed are the core of the campaign of *Raven's Purge*. This chapter first describes in detail the history of Stanengist. After that come descriptions of the crown itself and its abilities, as well as the other artifacts that carry three of the elven rubies today: the Maligarn sword, the Nekhaka scepter, and the Blood Star cloak clasp.

available for download on the Free League's website.

The details of this history not made clear by the legends are not something that the players need to know. However, curious players who wish to deepen their knowledge of the crown can get more information from the key players of the campaign (see the next chapter).

THE HISTORY OF STANENGIST

The elven crown has a long and dramatic history that stretches over several centuries. This history can become known to the adventurers, bit by bit, through the legends of Stanengist and the other artifacts. All legends are collected at the end of this book. They are also

THE RED WANDERER IN THE SKY

Legends tell of how the first elves fell as rubies from the Red Wanderer in the sky and assumed flesh in the world. Greatest among these stones was the Heart of the Sky which, upon impact, shattered into six pieces from which rose six siblings as wise as they were beautiful, five sisters and a brother. Their virgin senses experienced the world and were mesmerized, and their heart rubies blazed, eager to further adorn their new home.



THE ELVES OF THE LEGEND AND WHERE THEY ARE NOW

- ❖ Gemelda – ruby set in Stanengist
- ❖ Neyd – ruby set in Stanengist
- ❖ Nebulos – ruby set in Stanengist
- ❖ Iridne – ruby set in the cloak clasp Hemella – the Blood Star
- ❖ Viridia – the emerald Gall-Eye set in the sword Maligarn – the Giant Slayer
- ❖ The Shardmaiden – shattered into shards that sit in the foreheads of druids
- ❖ Algared – ruby set in the royal scepter Nekhaka

Close to them fell also Algared the Resourceful, and even though he too saw the beauty of the world, he found that it paled in the presence of the radiance of the five sisters. He fell to his knees before them and begged them all to be his wives.

The Shardmaiden, whose inner ruby shone strongest, somberly took Algared's hands in hers and explained that her love, like his own, was like an ocean and far too immense to be shared with only one. She struck out and wandered east to settle on the island that, in her honor, came to be known as Maidenholm.

The moments that she didn't spend learning how to mold the earth with the god Clay were spent sitting by the great water singing, to attract lovers to her presence. And so it came to pass that the Raven god heard her song when the humans' homeland east of the seas had withered to dust and they had all embarked on their ships. The Shardmaiden's song led the Raven and his protégés across the seas to Ravenland.

After the Shardmaiden had left, Algared asked the remaining four sisters if they wanted to be his wives. The eldest sister, Gemelda, who was the wisest since the largest ruby dwelled in her chest, explained that she and her sisters looked favorably upon Algared's proposal, but that there was much work to be done first, since the Red Wanderer had charged them all to fill the world with life and beauty. The sisters agreed to the betrothal, promising that they would eventually gather their stones in joy and harmony. Till then, she recommended that Algared still his longing with work.

STANENGIST IS FORGED BY DWARVES

The sisters' brother, the craftsman Nebulos, had already become friends with the dwarves that claimed to have created the world upon which they had fallen. To confirm the betrothal, as well as to please his sisters and his future brother-in-law, he asked the dwarves to forge the golden crown Stanengist, "The Hanging Stones," where they could all sit together when their world-task had been completed. The sisters were delighted by the



gift, but both they and Algared demanded that a slot be prepared for Nebulos as well in Stanengist, so that they could all find fellowship together in time. And so the golden crown, Stanengist, was forged with room for six stones.

NEYD GATHERS THE WATER

The elven sister, Neyd, wanted to plant forests, but found that the ground was either too dry or too wet, killing her plants. She then sought out the water goddess Flow and was told by her that the water flowed without direction since it lacked will. This worried the goddess as well, who was having a hard time rallying her domain. Neyd suggested that the waters should be given names and the ability to love, thus giving it the will to stick together. Flow felt that this was a good idea and soon, the waters of Ravenland no longer flowed hither and thither, but in rivers that gathered into lakes. Only the waters of the marshes remained unruly, but since Flow loved her element in all its capriciousness, she allowed them to stay that way, even though marshes have been considered god-

less lands ever since. Thankful for the idea, Flow named the first river of the lands "The Seyster."

NEBULOS CREATES THE STILLMIST

The brother, Nebulos, was pleased by his sister's gathering of the waters. When he noticed how the night fog now left tender dewdrops in the greenery in the morning, he gathered them and wove them, mixed with starlight, into a lofty sanctuary, the Stillmist, beyond the world, so that he and his kin could find rest from their work within it. Evil whispers claim that by then Nebulos had grown tired of his former friends, the dwarves, finding them too crude and clumsy, and that he created the Stillmist just so that he could be free of them from time to time.

VIRIDIA'S BATTLE AGAINST SCROME

At the beginning of this age, a giant named Scrome raged across Ravenland. He had two eyes, placed one over the other, that took turns sleeping. The giant's yellow eye was good and loving, while the green one only harbored rage and a lust for destruction. When the green eye was awake, the giant ravaged the land and destroyed what he himself and others had built, and even if he wept and tried to set right much of what he had wrought while under the influence of his yellow eye, he was feared by all.

The elven sister, Viridia, was a shield-maiden and tracked down Scrome to slay



the monster with her sword, Maligarn, and bring peace to the land. She found him when the yellow eye was awake and the giant remorseful. Viridia told him of the suffering he was causing under his evil eye's influence and Scrome willingly lay down on the ground, bared his throat and wept as he asked the shieldmaiden to slay him. But Viridia could not slay the innocent, so decided to wait until his evil eye had awoken. Scrome immediately came to love her for her mercy and wisdom. But when the giant's green eye eventually awoke, that love turned into rage. A violent battle ensued, in which Viridia was unable to hold her ground against the titan and was defeated.

The stories don't tell of how she died, but one thing is certain: he devoured her before the yellow eye next awoke and wondered where the elven woman had gone. When Scrome's yellow eye saw the elven blood, he was horrified and hid among the mountains.

VIRIDIA IS REAWAKENED

As soon as Gemelda heard what had happened to her sister, she armed herself, Nebulos and Iridne to reclaim Viridia's ruby heart and grant her a new body in the Stillmist. She called other elves to her aid, and in so doing, created the warrior caste of the Redrunners who have ever since hunted for lost elven stones. The hunters found Scrome while his gentle, yellow eye was awake. The giant assured them that Viridia's stone wasn't inside him, but also that he had searched his own offal since the murder without finding the stone. He thus demanded that the elven sib-

lings slay him and search his insides, since the elven ruby might have gotten stuck among his teeth, in his gullet, or in some intestinal pocket. Gemelda, however, pried open Scrome's sleeping, evil eye, peered into it and saw that Viridia's elfstone was lodged in there like a glimmer of lust.

They carved the eye out with Viridia's sword, Maligarn, but it awoke at the same time and rolled away from the avengers, fuming with rage. For several years, Scrome's evil eye haunted Ravenland and all it surveyed was fraught with sickness, discord and decay. It eventually happened to roll down into a dwarven mining hole and got stuck. There, the Redrunners caught it and cut out Viridia's stone, but they found that the ruby had been transformed into a green emerald by the evil eye's rage. What was left of the eye became the diamond chalice known as "The Well of Tears," which constantly and of its own power replenishes itself with blood-mixed saltwater.

The siblings carried Viridia's green stone back to the Stillmist where they once again dressed it in flesh, but Viridia was changed. No longer loving and dutiful, but angry and quarrelsome. The siblings suggested that she shed the flesh forever, and come to rest in the crown of Stanengist where they would eventually join her. However, Viridia pushed her siblings aside, grabbed her sword and stated that creation not only demanded nurture of that which grows but also the culling of the old and that henceforth that task would be her charge. She left her siblings, but a trail of truncated limbs and rotting corpses revealed her path. The green stone in her heart is called Gall-Eye.



The giant Scrome was now left with one eye, mild-mannered but in a melancholic mood and ashamed in front of all living things because of his actions. Gemelda brought him to an isolated vale beyond a temple comprised of monks sworn to silence, and charged him with keeping watch over the restless dead. There, he felt at peace (see Vale of the Dead in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

THE CROWN IN THE STILLMIST

The time came when Gemelda felt that Ravenland thrived of its own accord, that their task was done, the water smooth-flowing and the forests planted, signifying that the time had come for the elven siblings to retreat to the crown Stanengist in the Stillmist. She believed that they would otherwise stand in the way of their descendants. Iridne, Neyd and Nebulos, like Gemelda, shed their flesh and accompanied her, even if the brother often returned to the flesh to work with the Stillmist. Viridia was missing and Algared felt that he still had work to perform.

THE SHATTERING OF THE SHARDMAIDEN

The Shardmaiden, sister to the five, welcomed the humans when they came from across the seas, and cared for all those left in Ravenland after the Raven god enacted the Shift. She had many children with them, taught the offspring magic, and so became the great ancestor of both Elvenspring and druids. With time, she became ever more mournful as her many human lovers without exception aged and passed away, and when Morander, who had become especially

close to her, died she let her heart be shattered into a thousand pieces so that all of her descendants could carry a shard with them, granting power and wisdom. The Elvenspring who carry a shard of the Shardmaiden fixed to their frontal bone are known as the Order of Maidens and possess extraordinary magical powers.

ALGARED IN ALDERLAND

After the Raven god shifted the land and granted the humans Alderland south of the Divide, the Shardmaiden summoned Algared to meet her at Maidenholm. She viewed the humans as her children, worried for how they would be able to make it on their own, and asked Algared to join them in exile to assist them with advice while they built their new land. Since Algared still loved the Shardmaiden as much as her sisters, he promised to oblige the elven woman's wish. So he and a number of other elves followed the humans to Alderland, ostensibly as hostages to guarantee the peace between the kin, but in reality as helpers and overseers.

Many of these elves were intrigued by the humans and had children with them in Alderland, even if Algared himself refrained. The offspring came to be known as Frailers by their human relatives because of their frail bodies. The elves taught them their music and their magic, but noticed how their students possessed traits like greed and a lust for power where instead discretion and gratitude should have been found. In distaste and silence, the elves left Alderland. Algared mourned his failure and returned to the Shardmaiden to tell her of his defeat. Dis-



tressed, he then retreated to the Stillmist, shed his flesh, and joined with those of his wives who had already been set into the crown Stanengist.

However, whenever increasingly alarming reports reached him from Alderland a couple of hundred years later, Algared could no longer be at peace since he still considered the country to be his responsibility, a charge given to him by the noble Shardmaiden who had shattered and sacrificed herself for the humans. He left Stanengist and once again assumed flesh, this time as a tall human, and returned to Alderland along secret paths known only to him and the Shardmaiden, alone. There, he overthrew the king and put himself on the throne as a powerful and wise regent. He sired offspring to establish a just dynasty and raised his son, Algadan, with a firm hand. Finally, when Algadan had proven worthy of the throne did Algared allow his body to age. He faked his own death and had his ruby set into the royal scepter, Nekhaka, which thereafter was passed down in the Algarian dynasty, to serve as an advisor. The kings Algamar, Alvagard and Algarod, who later invaded Ravenland, are all half-elfen descendants of Algared. The last king of the dynasty, Algarod, brought the scepter Nekhaka to Ravenland, where he and his entire army were slain by Zygofer's demonic hordes. The scepter's current whereabouts are unknown.

IRIDNE AND THE ORCS

Through the Shift, the elves had been given the orcs as servants or enslaved them by their own hand, and Iridne was distraught by the

tales of abuse and scorn that reached her. She believed that the elves had a responsibility to the orcs and wished to leave the Stillmist to help them. The elfen woman Klotinda had fallen in love with Iridne's gentle voice and helped her re-assume flesh. The two women took to the forests together to set things right. However, Iridne soon found that Klotinda wanted to own her and didn't share the same point of view. When the wars came, and the orcs were slaughtered in droves, Iridne was horrified, shed her flesh once more, and let her ruby be set into the cloak clasp Hemella – the Blood Star – with the hope that the leaders of the orcs would wear it, and that through it, she would be able to help them by advising them in their dreams. She deemed it pointless to explain her plan to Klotinda who, blinded by love, would just try to stop her. Thus, Klotinda still believes that the orcs have slaughtered Iridne and stolen her ruby. She has taken the form of an Ent to find and reclaim Iridne through violence.

VIRIDIA AND MERIGALL ARE DECEIVED IN THE STILLMIST

The bloodthirsty shieldmaiden Viridia continued to ravage Ravenland, possessed by Gall-Eye, the emerald in her chest. Gemelda, her elder sister, felt that the killing could neither be allowed to continue or excused any longer, and sent an invitation asking her sister to visit her in the Stillmist. Viridia became suspicious and said that she'd only enter the Stillmist in the company of her lover, the bard Merigall, who wasn't an elf and as such worthy of her trust. Gemelda approved her sis-



ter's request, but when the two guests arrived, Viridia was imprisoned and the green emerald heart was torn from her flesh by force.

However, Merigall was a demon versed in sorcery and while the elves were embroiled in their struggle, it grabbed both the crown Stanengist and the emerald Gall-Eye, which had been ripped from Viridia, and fled to Ravenland through magical means. The Redrunners immediately took up the chase, accompanied by the greatest elven magicians. Merigall mourned Viridia, but was unable to reawaken her in the flesh on its own. Instead, it had Gall-Eye set into Maligarn, the sword that the shieldmaiden had left behind. When the Redrunners finally tracked down Merigall, it defiantly spirited away both Maligarn and Stanengist to places unknown even to itself. As punishment, the Redrunners dissolved the demon's body in acid and poured the acid into Lake Harga, which turned red in color and was henceforth known as Blaudwater. When Zygofer much later made his seat in Alderstone, he sensed the demonic being in the lake and was able to reshape Merigall through sorcery.



THE FOUR ARTIFACTS

Below, the four artifacts are described with a legend about each, the abilities of the items in detail, as well as suggestions on where the adventurers can find them. All four artifacts are found on the playing cards included in the special card deck sold separately for Forbidden Lands.

PERSONALITIES OF THE STONES

All of the four elder artifacts hold elfstones with a certain personality and mood that also affects the bearer. The elves in the rubies often come to the bearer in dreams to give advice, but also to criticize thoughts and actions that they dislike.

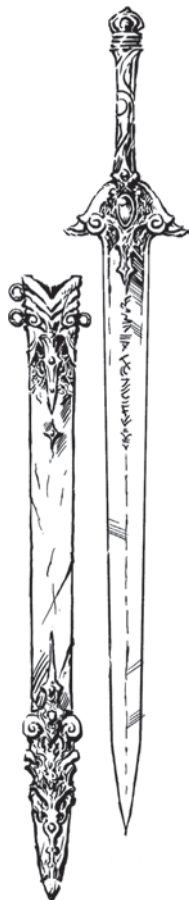


THE MALIGARN SWORD

In days past, the bloodthirsty giant Scrame ravaged the land. The stories tell of how the shieldmaiden Viridia slew him with the sword Maligarn – the Giant Slayer. She received help from Scrome, the giant's brother, whose reward was to be appointed guardian of the gate where the deceased enter the underworld. But Viridia sustained such grave wounds during the battle against Scrame that she died soon after. The emerald that had made up her heart was set into the crown, Stanengist, but is later said to have been moved to the sword Maligarn. The weapon has been lost for a long time.

Scrome and Scrame are actually the same giant and has by no means been slain; he guards the Vale of the Dead (see page 231 in the *Game-master's Guide*).

- ❖ SUGGESTED LOCATION: Stoneloom Mines
- ❖ ELVEN GEMSTONE: Viridia
- ❖ PERSONALITY: Rage, cruelty, impatience, greed



APPEARANCE

The longsword Maligarn is significantly more agile in one's hands than it appears – almost as if it swings itself and strives to exist in perpetual motion, a fervor that one can sense like a vibration through the copper-twined grip. The cross-guard set with a single emerald is made from gold, which from the ricasso melds seamlessly into a silver-white blade of an unknown alloy. The forging technique of the alloy is no longer known.

EFFECTS

Maligarn is a masterly forged longsword with Weapon Bonus +3 and Weapon Damage 2. The emerald Gall-Eye gives a D8 Artifact Die to all attacks in close combat (not PARRIES). The Artifact Die increases to a D10 if the wielder has two enemies within ARM'S LENGTH distance, and to a D12 if four or more enemies are inside the same range. Furthermore, Gall-Eye detects enemies within NEAR distance, and glows green in proportion to proximity and hostility.

DRAWBACKS

Gall-Eye infuses the wielder with fervor and bloodlust, causing them to have –2 at any attempt to PARRY or DODGE. If the wielder Breaks an enemy with the sword, she must roll for INSIGHT. If the roll fails, she goes berserk according to the rules on page 73 in the *Player's Handbook*. Gall-Eye siphons power from the vicinity – every time the wielder rolls a Resource Die for FOOD or WATER (page 38 in the *Player's Handbook*), she must roll it twice.



THE NEKHAKA SCEPTER

It is said that Algared, the first king of Alderland, was so wise and good that the gods turned his heart into a ruby after his death. Algadan, son of Algared, had his craftsmen carve the scepter Nekhaka with three pendants from the golden alder trees of the royal palace and set his



father's ruby into the scepter. Nekhaka was carried by the Algarian dynasty for generations, but was lost in Ravenland when the last regent, Algarod, was slain with all his men by the demonic hordes of the sorcerer Zygofer. The elven elders instead claim that Algard was an elf disguised as a human and that his ruby heart was one of the six stones in the crown, Stanengist.

In reality, the elf Algard created the scepter himself and remained in it as a ruby to aid his descendants.

- ❖ SUGGESTED LOCATION: Weatherstone
- ❖ ELVEN GEMSTONE: Algard
- ❖ PERSONALITY: Sorrow, dejection, fear of failure



APPEARANCE

The scepter Nekhaka is a shepherd's crook carved from dark iron alderwood into the shape of a temple roof ornated with elder pendants. The ruby Algard is placed as the roof's eye. This shape symbolizes the king's strength and vigilance in his role as the people's protector. The foot of the scepter is made of iron twisted into a spiral so that the scepter can be placed standing on the ground, from where it is said to spread the power of the king across the land.

EFFECTS

The ruby Algard in Nekhaka gives a D12 Artifact Die to MANIPULATION and INSIGHT. Once every Quarter Day, the scepter can release a shock wave when thrust into the ground. This counts like the EARTHQUAKE spell (page 136 in the *Player's Handbook*) with a Power Level of D6+2. No Willpower points are required for this effect. Furthermore, Algard's Artifact Dice can be used for all rolls for upkeep and the building of new functions in your stronghold (see Chapter 8 in the *Player's Handbook*), provided that the wielder of the ruby is located in the stronghold (she doesn't have to take part in the actual construction though).

DRAWBACKS

Algard drains power from its wielder, who thus suffers 1 point of damage to Agility and Wits every Quarter Day she is awake.



THE BLOOD STAR CLOAK CLASP

The story goes that the elven princess Iridne fell in love with the orc chieftain Horena, but that her father and his high council were appalled, for the elves saw the orcs as an impure and inferior kin. Iridne was forbidden all contact with Horena, stripped from her flesh, and her burning heart was set into the crown Stanengist to cool off. When the princess defied her father in the name of love and re-assumed flesh, he equipped a ship to carry his daughter across the oceans to keep her away from Ravenland until Horena had passed away. When Iridne heard her father's decision, she chose to take her own life rather than be separated from her love. She had her ruby heart set into the cloak clasp Hemella – the Blood Star – which, in secret, was brought to Horena by her faithful handmaiden. Iridne's father was furious and went to war against the orcs to reclaim Iridne's heart, but the power of love within the Blood Star strengthened Horena so that the war became long and bloody. It is said that Iridne's cruel father had the orc chieftain whipped to death after defeating him, but the cloak clasp Blood Star has been lost ever since.

The entire story about Horena is a fabrication. Iridne felt that the elves' treatment of the orcs was shameful, and assumed the form of the cloak clasp to help them.

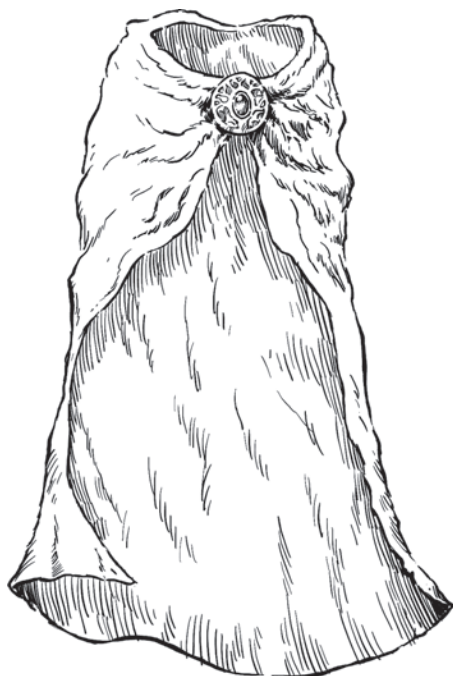
- ❖ SUGGESTED LOCATION: Eye of the Rose
- ❖ ELVEN GEMSTONE: Iridne
- ❖ PERSONALITY: Soul-searching, caring, self-sacrificing

APPEARANCE

The cloak clasp Blood Star is old but relatively simple, in which a golden tree has been laid on a round copper base. In the middle of the clasp, where the tree trunk starts to become canopy, the ruby Iridne sits.

EFFECTS

Blood Star gives the wearer a D12 Artifact Die to SCOUTING, LORE and PERFORMANCE, thanks to the aid of Iridne. Furthermore, the wearer can levitate through the air (at the same speed as when moving on the ground) if a cloak is attached to the clasp. The wearer must land after one round. Finally, Blood Star grants Defense Rating +1 to a stronghold if the wearer is located inside it (see Chapter 8 in the *Player's Handbook*).





DRAWBACKS

Iridne despises violence, and Blood Star therefore inflicts 1 point of damage to EMPATHY to the wearer each time she Breaks an enemy in battle, regardless of whether it occurs in close combat, at range or through magic.



THE STANENGIST CROWN

It is said that the first six elves of the Forbidden Lands – the ones who planted the trees, drew the furrows of the rivers and gave the animals their home – after completing their mission, had their rubies gathered in the royal crown, Stanengist, the name of which means “The Hanging Stones.” In the crown they rested deservedly, but at the same time, kept watch over their creation and gave advice to their descendants. For a long time, the crown was worn by the kings of the land and granted them the power to keep the kingdom intact, but sometime right before the humans arrived in Ravenland, the thief Merigall stole three of the stones from Stanengist, and the land has been sundered ever since. Whoever re-assembles the stones in the crown and places it on her head shall according to legend gain the power to rally all kin and rule over the Forbidden Lands. The stonemonger Brander of Bynd is said to have received a vision from the god Huga in which he saw the lost stones set into the scepter of a king, the jewelry of a queen, and a sword that slays giants.

In reality, the missing jewels of the crown

SETTING THE STONES

Detaching a gem from another artifact and setting it into Stanengist demands a successful roll for CRAFTING. Failure doesn't damage the stones, but the same person can never try again. When a stone has been detached from an artifact, the artifact immediately loses all its magical effects. Maligarn, for example, becomes a regular longsword.

chose not to sit in it. Merigall did steal the crown though.

- ❖ SUGGESTED LOCATION: Vale of the Dead
- ❖ ELVEN GEMSTONES: Gemelda, Neyd, Nebulos as well as three empty sockets
- ❖ PERSONALITY: Reflection, tranquility, creativity, superiority

APPEARANCE

The crown Stanengist is made of ancient, dwarf-forged gold with some kind of alloying element which makes the metal as hard as steel. The shape resembles that of winding greenery with the rubies as fruits, five in a row and one above. Only a jeweler can safely fit the stones into the sockets or remove them without risking damaging them.



EFFECTS


The crown Stanengist gives its wearer different effects depending on what stones are set into the crown. Take note that some of the elfstones have conflicting effects – a result of their different personalities.

- ❖ **GEMELDA, NEYD, NEBULOS:** This trio of rubies neutralizes magic. Every time a spell is cast within NEAR distance, or against the wearer, it automatically triggers a **DISPEL MAGIC** (see page 121 in the *Player's Handbook*) with Power Level D6. This **DISPEL MAGIC** requires no Willpower. Note that this effect also affects non-hostile sorcerers. If any of these three stones are detached from Stanengist, the crown lacks any magic effect at all.
- ❖ **GALL-EYE:** The wearer gains all effects and drawbacks described under the sword Maligarn, except for the sword's Weapon Bonus and Weapon Damage.
- ❖ **ALGARED:** The wearer gains all effects and drawbacks described under the scepter Nekhaka, except for the ability to release a shock wave.
- ❖ **IRIDNE:** The wearer gains all effects and drawbacks described under the cloak clasp Blood Star, except for the ability to levitate.
- ❖ **DEMONIC INSANITY:** In addition to the individual effects above, Stanengist has a powerful negative influence on the psyche of demons and demon-tainted creatures. If such a creature dons the crown, it will immediately suffer damage to Wits. To determine the amount of damage, roll a number of D6 equal to

the number of stones in the crown beyond the first three – i.e. D6 if there are four stones in the crown, 2D6 if there are five stones in the crown and 3D6 if all six stones are present.

If the victim's Wits drops to zero, the creature becomes permanently insane – it will lash out at everyone around it for one round before storming off into the wilderness or throwing itself to its death in the Protonexus. If the creature's Wits doesn't drop to zero, it will recover all lost Wits after resting for a Quarter Day.

This effect is an exception to demons' normal immunity to attacks that affect Wits. The effect is known by Merigall, Kalman Rodenfell and the elves of the crown – but not by Zytera, Krasylla or Kartorda.



SEALING THE PROTONEXUS

In addition to the effects described next to this box, Stanengist can be used to close Zytera's Protonexus. If the crown is set with at least four stones and thrown into the portal (page 209), the Protonexus will be sealed permanently. The crown will be destroyed, however.



KEY PLAYERS

"Teach me the magic of fire!" Zertorme whispered in Brinbel-da's ear as they lay panting from their lovemaking, bathing in the being's cold flames. "I'll give you anything in return."

The fire demon smiled, and stroked her lover's chin with a lustrous finger.

"I like your face," she whispered. "Give it to me!"



This chapter describes the key players of this campaign – individuals with a strong interest in Stanengist and a desire to use the crown to further their own goals.

ZYTERA

Zytera is a creature composed of the old sorcerer Zygofer and his daughter, Therania. They are joined back-to-back through the demonic substance mog on the back of the body of a giant spider. This solution was put forward by the bard Merigall, with the purpose of keeping the aging Zygofer and his knowledge alive.

Merigall had promised Therania dominance in the conjoined being, but things didn't turn out that way. The parts are equal, usually at odds with one another, irrational and probably mentally ill, but very powerful and danger-

ous. The Rust Brothers in Alderstone propagate the belief that Zytera protects humanity from invading demons as the prophet of the god Rust, a feat that demands human sacrifices.

There is truth in their claims, but it was Zygofer who opened the passage to the demonic worlds when he was about to lose the war against King Algarod's army. The force had come from Alderland to end the Spellbinder's reign. You can read more about this in the *Gamemaster's Guide*

Zytera is essentially offended by the ingratitude of the people, but feels that "someone has to do the dirty work so that the rabble can rest easy." At the same time its hatred of and contempt towards the Alderlanders beyond the wall grows and Zytera plans to conquer adjacent countries in the long term.

At times, when the father is asleep, Therania's ethereal body goes off to be on its own.



THE KEY NPCS

The table below sums up the most important factions and key NPCs of the campaign, also providing their goals and specifying where the adventurers are most likely to encounter them.

KEY PLAYER	TYPE	GOAL	LOCATION
Zytera	Demon-Tainted Sorcerer	To conquer the crown, Stanengist, and to gain the power to rule all of the Forbidden Lands.	The Mogarium in Vond
Merigall	Demon	To be free from Zytera's control and resurrect its beloved Viridia.	Vond, or anywhere in the Forbidden Lands
Krasylla	Demon	To kill Zytera and use Stanengist to seal the Protonexus in Vond.	His chamber in Vond
Virelda Bloodbeak	Raven Sister	To use Teramalda to destroy the Rust Church. To collect Stanengist so as to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands.	Traveling in the Forbidden Lands
Zertorme	Zygofer's Son	To take revenge on his father and take all of the Forbidden Lands for himself.	Amber's Peak
Arvia of Crombe	Dwarf of the Crombe Clan	To reclaim the dwarven holdfast of Vond from Zytera. To use the stones in Stanengist for experiments in stone magic.	Stonegarden or during a journey
Empress Soria	Orc of the Urhur Clan	To use Stanengist to close the Protonexus in Vond so that no more demonic armies can threaten the Forbidden Lands.	Eye of the Rose
Kalman Rodenfell	Elven Leader of the Redrunners	To collect Stanengist to return the elfstones to the Stillmist. If necessary to sacrifice the crown to close the Protonexus in Vond.	Traveling in the Forbidden Lands
Rust Prince Kartorda	Leader of the Rust Church	Dreams of wearing the crown, Stanengist, and becoming emperor of the Forbidden Lands.	Haggler's House or Vond



The ethereal body, in the form of a barely distinguishable female shape, can appear at different locations in the Forbidden Lands. It can't act, but it can sense what is happening and also talk.

LEGEND

They say that the sorcerer Zygofer, during the final battle of the Fourth Alder War, summoned

a demonic horde that slaughtered King Algarod and the Alderlander army. To consolidate the alliance, Zygofer and his daughter, Therania, agreed to being merged with a demon prince to form the man-spider Zytera, whom the Rust



Brothers still venerate as the prophet of the god Rust. Allegedly, Zytera still rules the holdfast of Vond, from which the monstrosity sends out the unnatural demonic creatures that haunt the Forbidden Lands.

APPEARANCE

Zytera gives an impression as strange as it is sickening of a large spider on the back of which rides a shapeless, many-faced human. The creature is draped in rich clothing, tinted in shades of rusty yellow, brown and red, adorned with gold, brass and gems, none of which mitigates the appalling impression. At a closer look, the body of the spider has ten, not eight, hairy legs. It has a compact build, taller at the fore where two human bodies tower from the hip and upwards: an old, bearded man and a middle-aged woman, Zygofer and Therania, joined back to back, neck to neck. They are turned facing a side each, but the seam between them is soft enough for both of them to face forward at the same time. The woman is majestic, while the old man gives a grotesque and sickly impression. An unpleasant smell, like that of rotting fungi, fouls the air around the creature, unsuccessfully masked by heavy perfumes.

Hidden under the sheets of clothing at the front of the spider is a maw with tiny tentacles. The body lacks intelligence, but reflexively devours anything that comes within reach of the tentacles, and must be fed raw strips of meat since it has a digestive system separate from its human parts. On Zygofer's rear hip is the crying face of an infant, embedded there to give the dying man a semblance of emotional life. It mostly screams when it isn't being bribed with sweets.

The arachnid body of Zytera can move slowly in any direction with precision or run as fast as a horse, but lacking direct control. It can easily cross uneven terrain and is even able to climb sheer cliffs.

Zytera has a contract signed in Krasylla's blood hidden in Zygofer's clothing. The contract prevents Krasylla from harming Zytera.

OVERT GOALS

Zytera is, at the moment, allied with the Rust Brothers, Krasylla and Merigall, but the alliances are fragile. Zytera mainly strives to master the demonic substance mog so as to become immortal and to create armies of demon warriors. It wants to conquer all of the Forbidden Lands, eradicate all other kin, and then conquer Alderland. Zytera has created a primitive portal between worlds, the so called Protonexus, to eventually be able to summon more allies.

Zytera wants to control the crown Stanengist, since the creature believes that the crown will grant the wisdom and power needed to rule the Forbidden Lands.

SECRET GOALS

Zytera has two wills: Zygofer and Therania. Zygofer has tired of his daughter's contempt and wants to get rid of her once he's mastered mog and the Protonexus and no longer has any need for her life force. Zygofer wants to wear Stanengist alone: "a crown only holds one head". If Zygofer suspects that everything is lost, he may choose to turn his Protonexus into an open and uncontrolled nexus, by us-



MEETING THE KEY PLAYERS

During the course of the campaign it is important that the adventurers get the chance to meet most of the key players of the campaign and learn of their intentions – true or false. The adventurers will need the help of one or more of the key players for the showdown in Vond.

The description of each key player specifies their overt and more hidden goals – designs that the key player may try to use the adventurers to achieve. The description also describes where and how the adventurers can meet and interact with the key player. The information is summarized in the table on page 30.

ing a ritual in which a being of royal breed is sacrificed to the portal. It would mean that demons could pass unchecked into the Forbidden Lands, just as it was during the Demon Flood in 874 AS, possibly heralding the doom of the land. No other key player wants this, but Zygofer can begin the ritual without revealing its purpose. The nexus can only be sealed with the crown, Stanengist. Zygofer will attempt to crush Merigall if he becomes aware that the demon helped his wife, Martea, and his second daughter, Marga, escape from him.

Therania is utterly bored by her father and only tolerates him for his knowledge is still needed to control mog and the Protonexus. She plans to sever him from the demon body and to sacrifice a woman to take her lower body as her own to become whole again, free from the arachnid form. Therania wants to wear Stanengist, alone. If Zytera dies, there is a risk that the Protonexus will run amok and turn into an uncontrolled portal for demonic invasion.

MEETING ZYTERA

Zytera mainly devotes its time to horrendous demonological and necromantic studies in its so-called Mogarium at the top of Mount Ora in Vond (see page 205), often accompanied by Merigall. The adventurers can also encounter Zytera in Haggler's House (see page 160).

STRENGTH 24, AGILITY 4, WITS 5, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Lore 5, Insight 5, Manipulation 5

TALENTS: Path of Death 3, Path of Blood 3

ARMOR RATING: 12 (demon skin)

REPUTATION: 4

GEAR: In the partially decomposed cloak worn by the old man, Zygofer, is the parchment that holds the contract that binds Krasylla to Zytera.

MONSTER: Zytera counts as a monster in combat, see page 73 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

D6 MONSTER ATTACKS

1. **CHILLING SCREAM!** Zytera stands on its four hind legs and utters an unnatural, chilling scream. All adventurers within NEAR distance suffer a fear attack with ten dice.



2. **BITE ATTACK!** The demonic creature throws itself over an adventurer within NEAR distance and bites down with its poisonous fangs. Perform an attack with eleven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (stab wound). The unfortunate adventurer then suffers a lethal poison attack with a Potency of 9.

3. **HAND OF DOOM!** Zytera casts the spell HAND OF DOOM on an adventurer within SHORT distance with a Power Level of D6+1. The spell damage to the victim's Strength is equal to the Power Level.

4. **IMMOLATE!** The monster chooses an adventurer within NEAR distance and casts the spell IMMOLATE with a Power Level of D6+2. The victim senses how her blood begins to boil and how she is devoured from within by the magical attack.

5. **TERROR!** Zytera releases its horrible magic and causes all adventurers within SHORT distance to be afflicted by the spell TERROR with a Power Level of D6+2 (roll for every afflicted adventurer).

6. **LIFE DRAIN!** The monster chooses an adventurer within NEAR distance and casts the spell WEIGHT OF AGES on her with a Power Level of D6. The afflicted adventurer then drops to the ground.

SPELLS: Several of Zytera's monster attacks are spells. The GM's pool of Willpower is not used to power these, and Zytera runs no risk of suffering a magical mishap.

WEAKNESSES: Zytera is a powerful being, but has several weaknesses that the adventurers can exploit:

- ❖ Zygofer and Therania can be severed from Zytera's body with the magical sword Asina (see page 130 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*). This demands a single hit that inflicts 4 points of damage or more. See below for stats for the half-bodies, both of which will die in D6 hours unless reattached through magical means.
- ❖ The wife, Martea, in the Stoneloom Mines (see page 157) has a lock of Zygofer's hair. If the lock is thrown into the Protonexus, demons will swarm through the portal from the world of Churmog to end the sorcerer for having the audacity to disturb them. Read more on page 213.
- ❖ Zygofer will go insane if he dons the crown Stanengist. Read more on page 28.

ZYGOFER, SEVERED FROM ZYTERA

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Lore 4, Insight 2, Manipulation 2

TALENTS: Path of Death 3, Path of Blood 3

GEAR: In the partially decomposed cloak worn by the old man, Zygofer, is the parchment that holds the contract that binds Krasylla to Zytera.

THERANIA, SEVERED FROM ZYTERA

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Lore 2, Insight 4, Manipulation 4

TALENTS: Path of Blood 3, Path of Death 2



MERIGALL

The bard Merigall is a sexless being whose charm is as dangerous as it is attractive to both genders, especially for half-elves. Many claim to have had relations of a more intimate nature with Merigall, yet none can even divulge the gender of the creature since it is able to change its shape. Merigall appears to have the ability to coax music from any instrument that'll bring its audience to tears, though the lute is its favorite.

Officially, Merigall is Zytera's closest ally and the driving force behind the merging of father and daughter. Together, they perform many horrific experiments in Zytera's laboratories. Merigall enjoys travelling among the villages and has twelve offspring in the countryside to whose side the demon can teleport (see the boxed text on the next page).

Merigall is a demon from the world of Churmog. The creature's existence in the Forbidden Lands is bound to Zygofer's life, which is one of the reasons that the old man must be kept alive. Merigall feeds off of and can sense the emotions of others, but is a connoisseur that seeks to bring forth feelings that are as complex, strong and discordant as possible.

The emotions and feelings of its surroundings are to the bard a delectable meal to enjoy in order of convenience, with spices and accompanying wine. It is especially fond of stirring emotions in those who oppose it or are of shifting emotional states by, for example, gaining someone's trust and love only to betray the person in question, completely out of the blue, in the harshest way possible. It is just as likely to aid someone who least expects it. Zytera is unaware of it, but Merigall aided Zygofer's wife, Martea, in her escape.

LEGEND

The name Merigall soars like a vague shadow with yellow eyes across the Forbidden Lands. No one knows who the creature is or even if it is a woman or a man. Maybe there are several Merigalls, for the creature has been spotted in places far and wide from one day to the next. The young are seduced in castles as well as cottages so that the yellow-eyed offspring of Merigall can be found in the most distant regions and among all kin. Some believe the creature to be a demon, others revere it as a god, for the truth is that it is as likely to help those who encounter it as it is to destroy them.

APPEARANCE

Most of the time Merigall appears as a slender, androgynous Elvenspring with ash blonde hair, but its appearance is hard to define and describe even by those who intimately know the creature. Merigall's eyes are always yellow, however, as are the eyes of its offspring. An image of Merigall can be seen on page 11 of this book.

OVERT GOALS

Officially, Merigall helps Zytera to research mog so that through the aid of Rust Brothers and demonic creatures they may conquer the Forbidden Lands.

SECRET GOALS

Merigall's highest priority is to get hold of and drink its life essence, which resides in one of the statues in the guardian chamber of the Mogarium, thus freeing itself from Zytera.



MERIGALL'S OFFSPRING

Merigall has twelve offspring in different locations in the Forbidden Lands, and can teleport directly to them. This is a version of the **PORTAL** spell, but requires no roll of the dice and carries no risk for a magical mishap. The exact locations of Merigall's offspring are not set – you can decide during the course of the game to allow Merigall to appear when it suits you. Once an offspring has been placed you should make a note of it, however. If an offspring is killed, Merigall can no longer teleport there. Merigall loves all of its offspring and will hate anyone who kills them.

Merigall is uninterested in ruling the Forbidden Lands alone, but wants to support someone suitable to the task. Merigall can ally with any one of the other key players, as well as the adventurers themselves, if it serves the demon's designs. Merigall loved the elven woman, Viridia, and hopes to resurrect her from the emerald Gall-Eye set into the sword, Maligarn. To that end, it may look for a suitable body of an elven woman to raise its beloved in.

Merigall may tolerate an alliance with Krasyl-la but dislikes and distrusts the demon.

MEETING MERIGALL

Owing to its ability to teleport (see the boxed text to the left), Merigall can appear anywhere in the Forbidden Lands, for example, in Weatherstone (page 215 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*). You can allow the demon to act as a travelling bard that offers to travel with the adventurers to document their deeds in poems and songs. Merigall is very intelligent, with great knowledge of the world, and the demons who dwell in it.

When Merigall isn't traveling the land, the demon can be found in its pavilion on the slope of Mount Ora (read more on page 198 in the chapter on Vond).

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 5, WITS 5, EMPATHY 6

SKILLS: Lore 5, Insight 5, Manipulation 5, Performance 5

TALENTS: Path of Shifting Shapes 3, Path of Signs 3, Path of Blood 3, Path of Death 3

REPUTATION: 5

GEAR: Colorful clothes, flute, lute, drum

IMMORTAL: Merigall consists of mog and can therefore not die in the normal sense of the word. If the body is killed, Merigall will regenerate at the side of one of its offspring, as long as there are any of them left alive.

SHAPESHIFTING: Merigall has the ability to assume any humanoid form it desires and may even imitate specific individuals with great precision. Shifting shapes is a long action for Merigall but demands no roll of the dice or expenditure of Willpower. No matter what form Merigall takes, the demon's yellow eyes remain.



WEAKNESS: Merigall's life essence is kept in a container in the last surviving statue in the guardian chamber of Zytera's Mogarium (page 207). The demon will die if the essence is poured into the ocean or if it is dissolved with acid and then mixed with lye. Only Zygofer and Kalman Rodenfell know of this. If the essence is poured into a lake the demon will live on, dissolved in water.



KRASYLLA

Krasylla is one of the demon princes that Zytera summoned to Ravenland in the year 74 AS that ravaged Aslene. When the way home had been blocked, he signed a contract with Zytera and settled down in the holdfast of Vond to guard Shadowgate Pass. Pursuant to the contract, the Rust Brothers regularly deliver human sacrifices to the creature. Krasylla was powerful during the wars, but after settling in Vond he has melted down to a gigantic, shapeless mass. The Rust Brothers loathe and despise the demon but fear him. Krasylla is actually in a transitory phase to becoming sarmog – a more powerful kind of demon.

LEGEND

At the end of the Alder Wars the demon prince Krasylla stood bereft of a way home to his native world of Churmog. They say that Zytera made a deal with the terrible creature then, giving it sanctuary in Vond in return for guarding Shadowgate Pass against the Aslene that Krasylla himself had ravaged. It is whispered that the human sacrifices that the villages are forced to provide to

the Rust Brothers become sustenance for Krasylla and that the demon nowadays lies fat and immobile in the interior of the castle.

APPEARANCE

In his chamber in Vond (page 189), Krasylla is a shapeless, veined, disgusting mass roughly the size of an elephant taking a vaguely humanoid shape resembling the last victim he devoured. He can fight with tentacles that pull victims into his body and suffocate them to digest them. Inside the chamber, hidden by Krasylla's mass, is the doorway to an adjoining tower. This tower is also filled with his tissue, and this is where the demon is building his sarmog form.

If the precursor phase is injured, it will appear to shrink, but is actually being drawn into the tower. When Krasylla awakens as sarmog, for example, if the precursor phase is badly injured, the tower beyond the chamber will erupt, but the stones won't fall to the ground, instead forming the armor of the sarmog which is terrible, a ten-meter-tall humanoid with multiple limbs.

OVERT GOALS

Krasylla is officially Zytera's ally and general. The Rust Brothers worship and fear him.

SECRET GOALS

Krasylla wants to collect Stanengist to seal the Protonexus in Vond so that no competing demon prince can enter the Forbidden Lands. The demon also wants to get hold of the contract that binds him to Zytera's service and



then kill Zytera, whom he despises and detests. Krasylla suspects that Merigall was complicit in trapping him in the Forbidden Lands.

Krasylla wants to replace Zytera as ruler of the Forbidden Lands. He can ally himself with the adventurers, if they help him get hold of the contract with Zytera.

MEETING KRASYLLA

Krasylla never leaves his chamber in Vond (page 189) – at least not until he turns into sarmog.

KRASYLLA IN PRECURSOR PHASE

STRENGTH 22, AGILITY 2, WITS 6, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Lore 3, Insight 3, Manipulation 3

ARMOR RATING: 6 (demon skin)

REPUTATION: 4

UNDER TRANSFORMATION: In this phase, Krasylla is transforming into a sarmog, a more powerful demon. If Krasylla is slain it will only hasten the process (see page 197).

MONSTER: Krasylla counts like a monster in combat.



D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **TENTACLE WHIP!** A powerful tentacle swipes at an adventurer within NEAR distance. Perform an attack with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the victim becomes prone.

2. **TENTACLE EMBRACE!** The monster tries to squeeze the life out of an adventurer within NEAR distance. Perform an attack with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1. If the attack succeeds, the adventurer is GRAPPLED and will suffer the same attack in every subsequent round until the adventurer breaks free.

3. **CHOKING ATTACK!** The demon embraces an adventurer within NEAR distance and attempts to choke her by pressing her against his enormous bulk. Perform an attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the adventurer is GRAPPLED and suffers a choking attack that does 1 damage each round until the adventurer breaks free.

4. **THROWING ATTACK!** Krasylla grabs an adventurer within NEAR distance with his tentacles and throws her against a wall. Perform an attack with twelve Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the adventurer will additionally become prone and land at SHORT distance.

5. **ADVENTURER MASH!** The demon lifts up two adventurers within NEAR distance with his tentacles and smashes them together with great force. Perform an attack with eleven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If either one of the adventurers is wearing a metal helmet the damage to the other increases by 1.

6. **SWEEPING ATTACK!** The demon uses his long tentacles to perform a sweeping attack that hits all adventurers within NEAR distance. Perform an attack with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). Victims hit by the attack become prone.

KRASYLLA AS SARMOG

STRENGTH 60, AGILITY 2, WITS 6, EMPATHY 3

ARMOR RATING: 12 (stone armor)

D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **STOMP ATTACK!** The sarmog attempts to stomp two adventurers, like insects, within NEAR distance to death. Perform an attack against each adventurer with twelve Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the adventurers are thrown to the ground.

2. **BOULDER THROW!** Krasylla picks up a giant boulder from the ground and throws it at an adventurer within SHORT distance. Perform an attack with twelve Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force).

3. **DEMONIC ROAR!** The demon opens his enormous jaws and lets out a demonic roar that echoes across the land. All adventurers within SHORT distance suffers a fear attack with eleven Base Dice.

4. **SWEEPING BLOW!** Krasylla lets his giant fists sweep across the ground. All adventurers within NEAR distance suffer an attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the adventurers are thrown to SHORT distance and falls prone.



5. **ADVENTURER THROW!** The demon has had enough of an adventurer within NEAR distance, grabs her and attempts to throw her away. Perform an attack with twelve Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the victim is thrown to SHORT distance and falls prone.
6. **DEMONIC SKELETONS!** Krasylla spews forth from his body D6 grotesque creatures made from the skeletons of his devoured victims. The skeletons have normal stats (page 122 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*) and blindly follow Krasylla's orders.

WEAKNESSES: Perhaps the only way to kill Krasylla is to mark him with one of the Arrows of the Fire Wyrms from Aslene (see page 128 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*). Krasylla was one of the destroyers of Aslene and the volcano god Horn seeks to exact vengeance upon him. If Krasylla is marked by the arrow, the Fire Wyrms Erynia will know where he is and chase him from below the ground. When the wyrm finds the demon, the ground will begin to glow and dissolve into lava at which time the gigantic wyrm will devour the demon with one bite in a spectacular fashion. If Krasylla is fed with one of Merigall's offspring, he will obtain the features of his victim. If Merigall sees this, it will want to kill Krasylla and may give one of the Arrows of the Fire Wyrms to the adventurers or to Zertorme.



VIRELDA BLOODBEEK

As opposed to most Raven Sisters, Virelda Bloodbeak is impatient and violent towards her

enemies, among which are counted Zytera's demons, the members of the Rust Church and the sect of the Blackwings. Virelda was, in her youth, one of the Sisters of Heme in the Rust Church. Rebellious of mind, she broke into the forbidden library of the temple and found historical documents there pertaining to the origin of the Rust Church, which she thereafter viewed as heretical. She was brutally punished, fled, and sought out the Raven Sisters, to whom she revealed what she knew of the Rust Church: that it had sprung from the Raven Sisters who stayed in Alderland and made agonizing amends.

LEGEND

The Ailander Raven Sisters are known as a peaceful sisterhood. They discreetly help the villagers with the art of healing and spells for the harvest, but are hunted relentlessly by the servants of the Rust Church. Sister Virelda Bloodbeak is not like other Raven Sisters. With her bushy white hair she is supposed to have started out as one of the goddess Heme's Sisters, but is said to have changed sides after an epiphany. She is said to have slain tens of the Iron Guard and their demons, and some even claim that she has faced Teramalda's burning armor in battle.

APPEARANCE

Virelda is characterized by her wild, white hair which appears to have a life of its own, billowing like seaweed in the wind even though she tries to restrain it in braids. The cursed hair is a legacy from her time in the Rust Church as are her tattoos, the origins of which she has tried to hide by adding to them. She can't cut



her hair since it bleeds and can feel. Virelda dresses in dark grey and red clothes and often travels in the guise of a flock of magical ravens.

Virelda is depicted on the cover of this book.

OVERT GOALS

Virelda Bloodbeak fights the Rust Church by any means necessary.

SECRET GOALS

Virelda hunts Teramalda's burning armor (see page 160 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*), since it is a symbol of the power of the Rust Church. The Raven Sister knows that Teramalda is kept alive by a magical iron spike that has been driven through the Ferrale's chest inside the armor. The plan is to lure the suit of armor to a magnetic rock and tear out the iron spike while the beast is stuck to the cliff, an act that would kill Teramalda. Virelda knows that the sight of the unscrewed head of the armor would sow doubt among the Iron Guards and Rust Brothers in Vond, who view Teramalda as a holy champion of the god Rust.

Virelda knows of Stanengist, and wants to collect the crown to keep it from falling into the wrong hands, and instead use it to restore the land.

MEETING VIRELDA

The adventurers can meet Virelda while journeying through the Forbidden Lands. She is hunting Teramalda and can ask the adventurers for help in finding the Ferrale. Virelda can tell them the legends of the Rust Prince Kartorda and of Zytera.

If the adventurers have already met Teramalda as a random encounter, and tell Virelda of this, she will become very interested. The Raven Sister knows that lightning has struck an iron outcrop nearby and turned it into a powerful magnet for the coming day. She wants the adventurers to help her lure the beast there.

The adventurers can also encounter Virelda in Haggler's House (see page 160) and during the showdown in Vond (see page 175).

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 6, WITS 5, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 4, Stealth 4, Move 5, Scouting 5, Lore 4, Survival 4, Insight 3, Manipulation 3, Performance 3, Healing 4, Animal Handling 5

TALENTS: Path of Healing 2, Path of Shifting Shapes 3, Path of Sight 3, Fearless 2, Pain Resistant 2

REPUTATION: 3

GEAR: Magical staff with a D10 Artifact Die

DEMONIC HAIR: Virelda's hated cursed hair gives her power. If she loses it, she will also become significantly weaker (maximum Strength and Agility is decreased to 3) until it grows back.



ZERTORME

Zertorme is Zygofer and Martea's son, a powerful magician and leader of the eastern regions, Margelda and Yendra, of the Forbidden Lands. He fled towards Wailer's Hold with his mother, Martea, and his sister, Marga, but left the others when he discovered that Marga was possessed by a demon. Zertorme sought out the Elvenspring





in the east, allied with them and won the trust of the Aslenes in Margelda, since he proved to have the ability to talk to people and horses alike.

In the beginning, Zertorme was vengeful and participated in the battles against his father's forces to free Margelda, but when the mission was completed, the demons invaded Ravenland, the Alderlanders built their wall and his sister and father merged into the creature Zytera, and he became increasingly heavy-hearted. He was tormented by how he had abandoned his mother Martea and his sister Marga at the Stoneloom Mines and lost his appetite for the company of others; during the Blood Mist, he retreated to Amber's Peak (page 75). It is rumored that Merigall sometimes visits him and that the two of them have a secret love affair.

Since the Blood Mist lifted, Zertorme has desperately started to experiment with a form of fire magic to use against his father. Zertorme has sacrificed his face to the fire demon Brinhelda for her aid. He has tried to cultivate a new one from demon flesh, but it looks grotesque and terrifying, and therefore he always wears a mask when he appears in public. Both of the rider clans of Aslene look up to him as their leader.

LEGEND

Zertorme is said to be the sorcerer Zygofer's very own son. When the father caught Zertorme snooping about in his demonic grimoires he is supposed to have torn the face off his son, as beautiful as he was skilled in magic, as punishment. Zertorme then fled east to ally with his father's enemies. From the plains, he is said to lead his armies with a masked visage and to have gathered the

horse clans from Aslene, who believe him to be the prophet of the volcano god Horn and the future savior of Aslene, under his banner.

APPEARANCE

Zertorme has no face. He is several hundred years old, but has the appearance of being forty, athletic and intense since he is a half-elf, as were his parents. In place of his face, he wears a mask and a frivolous uniform inspired by traditional Aslene folk costumes. Zertorme is depicted on the cover of the *Forbidden Lands* core game set.

OVERT GOALS

Zertorme leads the force of Aslene refugees and soldiers from Margelda against the Rust Brothers and Zytera's demonic hordes. He is allied with the Raven Sisters, and is on good terms with the Elvenspring and the elves.

SECRET GOALS

Zertorme is actually playing a double-cross game to take power over the Forbidden Lands for himself. He is secretly allied with his sister, Therania, whom he plans to betray as well, as soon as he achieves his goals. As a suggestion, we recommend that you don't reveal his duplicity until the final stage of the campaign.

Zertorme also wants to wear the completed crown, Stanengist, and can help the adventurers collect the rubies under the pretense of wanting to use the crown against Zytera.

Zertorme's greatest personal dream is to tame a dragon to ride in battle. To this



end, he may try to free Scarne from under Stonegarden.

Zertorme would love to have his face back, but this will enrage Brinhelda since she considers it to be hers.

MEETING ZERTORME

The adventurers will most likely meet Zertorme during a visit to Amber's Peak (page 75). He may also appear in Vond in the final battle.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 5, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 4, Move 2, Insight 3, Manipulation 4

TALENTS: Psychic Power, Path of Blood 2, Fire Magic

REPUTATION: 5

GEAR: Longsword, chainmail, closed helmet, the riding lizard Pyravias (see page 87)

WEAKNESSES: If Zertorme dons the crown Stanengist he will go insane, like his father. Read more about this on page 28.



FIRE MAGIC

Zertorme has, with the help of the demon Brinhelda, delved into the secrets of fire. His work consists in part of various more or less painful experiments on animals and other living creatures, but also the exploration of magic bound to fire. Zertorme can cast the following spells:

- ❖ **PILLAR OF FIRE:** A pillar of fire is created within **SHORT** distance, as if the air itself has caught on

fire. The spell does damage to Strength equal to the Power Level. The victim is also set on fire.

- ❖ **CONFLAGRATION:** The entire area within **NEAR** distance of Zertorme (same zone) flares up into a conflagration. A number of people up to the Power Level take 1 point of damage to Strength. All victims are set on fire.

Victims that are set on fire take 1 point of damage each round, until the victim succeeds in putting out the fire with a successful roll for **MOVE** (long action).

Armor does not protect against these spells. The GM's pool of Willpower is used to cast these spells.



ARVIA OF CROMBE

Princess Arvia of the Crombe dwarf clan is very proud and ambitious, but stands outside the royal lineage since her mother promised the child to the god Huge if it survived, since she had suffered hemorrhaging during the pregnancy. Arvia has instead become obsessed with the thought of a great feat: reclaiming the lost holdfast of Vond for the clan, which includes slaying Krasylla and Zytera.

She leads a group of religiously fanatic dwarves who have allied with an equally fanatic group of Aslene rider warriors from the Galdane clan who wish to slay the demon prince Krasylla as revenge for the ravaging of Aslene.



The group includes the dwarf Peyraman and the horse woman Viseria, both of them now prisoners in Vond. Arvia can impart that the two were part of a group equipped with an Arrow of the Fire Wyrn, said to be able to slay Krasylla, but she doesn't know what has happened to them.

LEGEND

The dwarven princess Arvia stands outside the kinship of the clan, for it is told that she was born after her childless mother fornicated with a stone statue and thereafter promised all of her offspring to the god Huga. They say that Huga marked Arvia for feats of war and sacrifice for his own glory at her birth. Dwarves fear and are terrified of the woman, but respect her all the same as one chosen by the gods.



APPEARANCE

Arvia is fair-skinned with jet black, braided hair and dark eyes. The contrasts almost make it seem as if she shimmers when she gets fired up. She's a muscular and able warrior with a scarred face, armor and axe.

OVERT GOALS

Arvia belongs to the Crombe clan who despise other dwarves and who in turn are despised by them as being arrogant. Her only wish is to conquer Vond and kill Zytera and Krasylla at any cost – including the betrayal and the sacrifice of her friends.

SECRET GOALS

Arvia of Crombe also wants the stones of Stanengist to secretly use them as raw material for experiments in stone magic, but she knows that the elves would go to war if they found out.

Arvia is reluctantly, and secretly, in love with Peyraman, and is jealous and wants to see Viseria dead. Her jealousy has awakened an aversion to humans in general and an unreasonable hatred of love across the borders of kin, including contempt for all half-elves.

MEETING ARVIA

Arvia is constantly travelling. The adventurers can encounter her during a visit to Stonegarden, to Pelagia, or as a random encounter while journeying through the Forbidden Lands. Arvia can tell the adventurers of Castle Vond, which the Alderlanders deceitfully stole from the Crombe clan when they invaded, and of Zytera, Merigall and Krasylla who now rule the fortress.

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 5, Crafting 3, Scouting 3, Lore 2, Insight 1, Manipulation 2

TALENTS: True Grit, Path of The Blade 3, Path of The Shield 2, Melee Charge 2



REPUTATION: 6

GEAR: Battle axe, chainmail, covered helmet, large shield, VALUABLE find

WEAKNESS: At best, Arvia has a tenuous grasp of reality in her dreams, and could lead her forces to ruin. Zytera can use Arvia for his ritual to open the Protonexus.



EMPRESS SORIA OF URHUR

Soria is wife to the orc emperor Hroka the First and the Greatest in the fortress of Eye of the Rose. She is the leader of the Viraga – a coalition of orc females who, behind the scenes, are the real wielders of power among the orcs.

LEGEND

It is whispered among the Isir and the drifters that the orc empress Soria is actually a learned human female who has nestled herself in with the Urbur clan in the fortress of Eye of the Rose to undermine their war-like manhood. With fair words and elegant seduction she has ensnared Emperor Hroka completely, whose warriors have even been made to eat leavened bread! The emperor is said to have given his spouse an invaluable cloak clasp in which is set a living elven ruby.

APPEARANCE

Soria radiates power and intelligence, and could be mistaken for a human female of the

sturdier kind with a hint of fangs. She is dark, with olive skin and green eyes.

OVERT GOALS

To unite the orcs of the Forbidden Lands alongside her husband and to create an orc kingdom to restore the kin's belief in itself. She loves her husband until death.

SECRET GOALS

Soria strongly dislikes that the elven woman, Iridne, in the cloak clasp Blood Star (see page 26) speaks to her husband in his sleep and will initially want to get rid of the ruby. However, at some point during the game, Iridne will speak to Soria and tell her of Zytera's Protonexus, and that the orcs must unite and march on Vond to seal the threatening gate to the demon worlds with the crown, Stanengist.

Soria will then urge her husband to unite the orcs and to gather an army. Through the Viraga she will also search for Stanengist, without revealing why. When the adventurers arrive at Eye of the Rose (see page 92) and perhaps attempt to steal Iridne, Soria might have just received Iridne's message and is mulling it over. She will then want the stone returned.

MEETING SORIA

Soria spends most of her time in the fortress of Eye of the Rose (see page 92), and the adventurers are most likely to encounter her there.



STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 4, WITS 5, EMPATHY 5

SKILLS: Melee 3, Lore 4, Insight 3, Manipulation 4

TALENTS: Poisoner

REPUTATION: 7

GEAR: Dagger, colorful and richly embroidered clothes, three gold rings (worth 4D6 silver coins each), the Blood Star cloak clasp with the ruby Iridne (see page 26)

WEAKNESSES: After a number of betrayals, Soria has poor faith in others and tends to keep information to herself, even when it would be more beneficial to share it. Zytera can use Soria in his ritual to open the Protonexus.



KALMAN RODENFELL

The elf Kalman Rodenfell is one of the commanders of the Redrunners, and the superior officer to Ulmaya and Alsurso, whom the adventurers meet in the adventure site Eye of the Rose (see page 92). Kalman is old and tired of battles, but if he gets hold of one of the stones from Stanengist, it will inform him of Zytera's Protonexus and that Stanengist must be gathered and brought to Vond to fight the threat and seal the passage.

Kalman will then order the Redrunners to search for Stanengist and the missing stones, giving it their highest priority. An elven adventurer can be a part of this mission. If necessary, Kalman himself will journey into the Forbidden Lands even if "his stone is heavy with age" and would like nothing more than to retreat to the Stillmist, where he often goes to confer with older elven rubies. He is very well-informed, thanks to his scouts.

LEGEND

Almost all of the ancient and learned elves are said to live deep in northern forests of the Forbidden Lands or even to have retreated into the





mysterious Stillmist as rubies, but Kalman “The Aurochs” Rodenfell is supposed to have kept his interest for the living world to this point. As one of the commanders of the Redrunners, he is said to lead the fight against demons, humans and other intruders in the land. They say that his feet are rooted like trees and that he sleeps standing in the blood of his enemies so as to draw nourishment and knowledge from them.



MEETING KALMAN

Kalman Rodenfell, strategist that he is, spends most of his time in Dankwood, but may partake in field missions if the need arises. Kalman can seek out the adventurers after their visit to the Eye of the Rose, and he may take part in the final battle in Vond.

APPEARANCE

Kalman has assumed a minimalistic appearance, with features just barely hinted at and floating, light hair – a little bit like a beautiful statue. The impression he makes may appear frightening, since it looks so unreal.

OVERT GOALS

Kalman is sworn to the elves’ overarching mission from the Red Wanderer: to protect life in the Forbidden Lands, mainly against unbridled magic, undead and demons. The name Rodenfell means “He who fell from the red one”.

SECRET GOALS

Kalman Rodenfell wants to claim Stanengist to save the old elfstones to the Stillmist. If necessary, the crown must be sacrificed to protect the land and seal the Protonexus in Vond. This latter goal is disliked by the Redrunners, who’d rather see the crown worn by the commander of the elves to reinstate their kin as a power-broker in the Forbidden Lands and to drive away the humans.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 6, WITS 5, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 5, Crafting 5, Stealth 4, Marksmanship 5, Move 5, Scouting 5, Lore 4, Insight 4, Manipulation 2

TALENTS: Inner Peace, Path of Sight 3, Path of The Blade 3, Lightning Fast 3, Fast Footwork 2, Fast Shooter 3

REPUTATION: 6

GEAR: Longsword (Weapon Bonus +3), longbow (Weapon Bonus +3), leather armor

SELF-DESTRUCT: In a critical situation, Kalman can choose to detonate himself and his ruby in a powerful explosion. Everyone within NEAR distance then suffers an attack with nine Base Dice (Weapon Damage 2). Of course, this means that Kalman is annihilated.

WEAKNESS: If Kalman meets Merigall they will fall head over heels in love with one another, which may muddy other goals, even if Kalman tries to resist the passion.



RUST PRINCE KARTORDA

Kartorda is the religious leader of the Rust Brothers. General Manderel, who leads the Iron Guard (see page 191), is his confidante.

LEGEND

The leader of the Rust Church is said to live in Vond or Haggler's House, and is feared across the Forbidden Lands. His two faces, which are said to see all and know all, mirror the dual nature of the prophet Zytera. Some whisper that the Rust Prince is the old god Guard incarnate – the all-seeing guardian of all change, of all that comes and goes, the guide for travel between sleep and waking, between life and death. It is through the agency of Kartorda that the dead are said to live on, and the Rust Brothers have become something betwixt humans and demons.

APPEARANCE

Kartorda is a somewhat obese man in his sixties, dressed in ochre clothes with draped, rusted chains when he isn't walking around ritually naked. His face is often painted in patterns of rust.

He would actually be quite handsome if it wasn't for an additional face on the back of his head, put there to mimic his master, Zytera. Kartorda's rather slack extra face has, however, suffered a blood clot and drools down the collar of the Rust Prince, something that he strongly dislikes.



OVERT GOALS

Kartorda wants to subjugate all of the Forbidden Lands under the rule of the Rust Brothers in the name of the gods Rust and Heme. All other kin than humans must be exterminated, and humankind will be transformed into a superior kin through demonic misgrowth. Zytera is the prophet of Rust and Krasylla is his general.

SECRET GOALS

Kartorda and Manderel, together with a couple of other trusted higher up officers, began to doubt that Zytera and Krasylla really are the chosen of the god Rust and would prefer to be rid of them. The Rust Prince harbors dreams of wearing the crown, Stanengist, himself to become emperor of the Forbidden Lands.

The Rust Brothers may scheme with the adventurers or Zertorme to get rid of Zytera and Krasylla, and to make the Forbidden Lands into an all-human kingdom. Half-elves may be tolerated.

MEETING KARTORDA

The Rust Prince Kartorda can be found most of the time in Haggler's House (see page 160) or in Vond (see page 175).

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 4, Lore 3, Insight 5, Manipulation 4

TALENTS: Path of Blood 3, Path of Death 3, Firm Grip 3, Cold Blooded 3, Pain Resistant 2, Steady Feet 2, Sixth Sense 2

REPUTATION: 7

GEAR: Longsword (Weapon Bonus +3), chainmail



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Village (by a river)

The forest suddenly opens up onto a lovely view, and from the edge of the forest you see a village, beautifully built on a hill next to a river. Downstream from the village, a mill is ponderously paddling its wheels in the river, grating and creaking unceasingly as if struggling to escape. But neither the mill nor the wretched cadavers nailed to its wooden walls or bound to the paddle wheels are ever going to leave Grindbone. There is a din from the village behind the palisade. Shouts. Songs mingle with wails and moans. The site would have been sweet but for the sounds.

BACKGROUND

Grindbone has existed since the Alder Wars, when scores of prisoners of war and plunder

changed hands. Through the years, the Slaver's Guild has – along with the Thieves' Guild – become the village's stewards, bankers and marshals, while the actual operation is handled by freelancing slavers and robbers. Approved merchants receive slave certificates from the guild, agreeing to pay part of their profits to the village.

The tension between the slaver's and the thieves' guilds has been intensifying as of late. Undar "The Duke" Alderman and the Thieves' Guild have amassed increasing power and are the leaders in the village in all but name. Naturally, this has not been looked upon favorably by Misela Ferrumar, leader of the Slaver's Guild. The threat of violence grows ever stronger, and this in a place that could hardly be called peaceful as it were. The only thing stopping the guilds from coming to blows in the open is Captain



Kratullos and his comrades, the closest thing to a militia in Grindbone, and so far, neutral in the power struggle over the village.

Grindbone is a cruel and dangerous place where contacts, strength and bribes are needed to survive. Unfamiliar faces are seldom welcome unless they are clients or merchandise. Smugglers and other trustworthy vagrants use the village as a meeting point. Aside from the slave trade, there are several pastimes for the wealthy, among them a tavern, a fighting arena and a theater. Grindbone is one of few places where both orcs and humans are accepted.

Slaves from the village are mostly sold as labor, pleasure slaves, sacrificial slaves, food or raw material for demonification. From time to time, pleasure hunts are held in which a couple of slaves are set free with a head start, after which the hunt begins and concludes with a banquet and the punishment of the captured slaves.



GETTING HERE

There are many different ways in which the adventurers can find Grindbone. They may have found a map that leads here, heard the stories of the place, or encountered one of the events below.

WELCOME TO GRINDBONE

One of the adventurers, a companion, or even the entire party are kidnapped by the Bone Ferrets and whisked away to Grindbone to be sold on the slave market. To free their friend, the adventurers need to resort to cunning or

persuasion, as violence won't get them far in a brutal place like Grindbone.

KRATULLOS'S COMRADES

Captain Kratullos has a problem. He's lost several men in bloody disputes lately, and the conflict between the thieves' and slaver's guilds is just getting worse. He fears that Grindbone will go under if he can't strengthen his force. One way or another he hears of the adventurers and rides out to meet them. Being capable warriors, he extends an offer of employment: serve in his guard for one silver coin per day each, food and lodging included.



LEGEND

Hunters whisper of Grindbone, the village of slaves and thieves that lies beyond the forest. Many have heard the cry of the village's mill from the river but few have dared to approach. It is said that the millstones grind the souls of the enslaved to dust since slaves have no use for spirituality. Some come to Grindbone through compulsion, others in exultation. There, those captured by the cruel arrive. From there, those sold by the greedy leave.



LOCATIONS

Below are sites in and around Grindbone that the adventurers can visit.



1. GATE

The road to Grindbone runs straight through a tall old building – if you get that far: a handful of guards with the countenance of villains but the bodies of soldiers screen everyone passing in or out in a harsh manner. The stench and buzz of flies from a number of severed hands nailed to the timber of the old building floats like a living cloud over the entrance. “A price and a place for everyone” is carved into an adjacent high beam.

Grindbone is surrounded by a sturdy palisade equipped with sharpened stakes pointing both inwards and outwards as the palisade is intended to keep slaves from escaping as much as it is for protection against attacks and rescue attempts from the outside. The lumber gate is open when it is light out, otherwise it is closed.

The commander of the garrison, Captain Kratullo, an officer of supposed Alderlander descent, lives in the gatehouse which used to be an old granary. His thirty odd guards are veteran soldiers, some of whom are clanless orcs. The soldiers are quartered in the adjoining barracks, where one can buy a bench to sleep on as long as space allows.

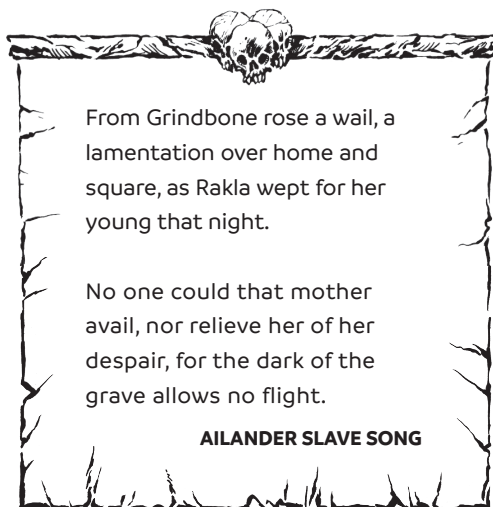
❖ CREATURES: Three soldiers.

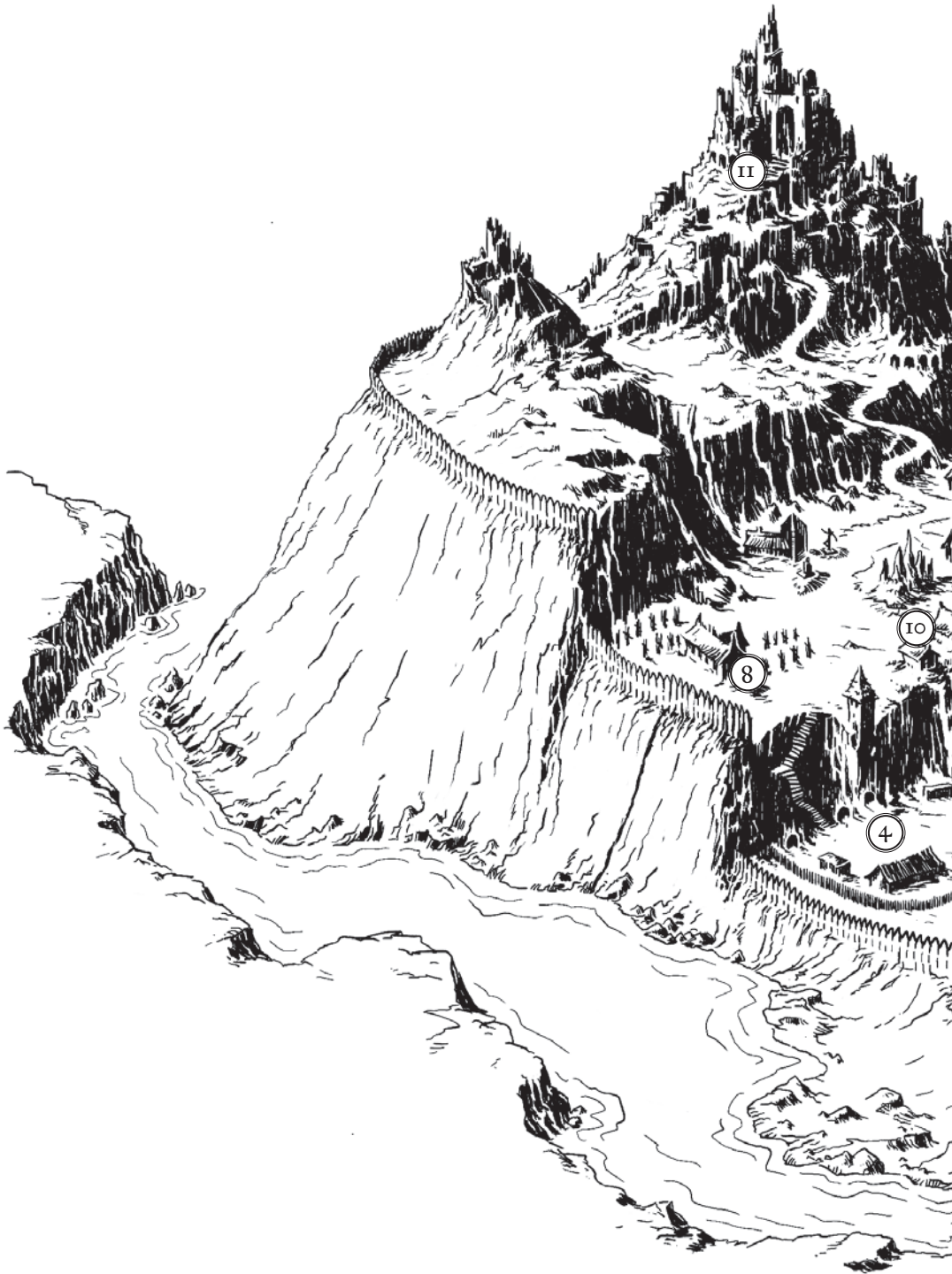
2. THE SCREAMING MILL

The old mill screams its torment, day and night. Its voice comingles with those of the victims. The hill around the mill that once shone white with spilled flour is now dark with dried blood.

The old grain mill is mostly used for torture, punishments and executions. To “go millin” is not something displeasing slaves want to hear. The Slaver’s Guild excels in finding ways to torment people with it. They tie victims to the paddle wheels, leaving them to be crushed by the millstones or torn to shreds by the machinery, after which their parts are nailed to the wooden walls. The village slaves are often forced to attend since the deterrence is at least as important as the amusement of the slavers. The machinery of the mill creaks and moans loudly around the clock, and it is deliberately kept in this tortured state. The farms surrounding the village sometimes grind their grains here, but the flour acquires an unmistakable tinge of blood. It is used for baking blood bread – the village’s only culinary specialty. The mill is inhabited by Hargan, the torture master, and his two apprentices. The mill pond is teeming with fish.

❖ CREATURES: Master Hargan.







GRINDBONE





3. SLAVE SQUARE

The theater with seating built into the hillside could be a place for classical dramas if it wasn't for the three stakes on the stage, whose chains mournfully jangle in the wind.

The slave square is an open area where seating has been built into the hillside like an amphitheatre. Common spectators have to stand on the flatlands at the south side. In the middle of the square is a raised surface where slaves are auctioned off. Fighting bouts for betting spectators are also held here and on such occasions the stakes are taken down.

4. SLAVE STABLES

Misery drapes flesh behind double fences where a score of dirty, half-naked prisoners linger in apathy, each left to his or her own devices, unless they've been chained to stakes or confined behind bars in the caverns of the cliffside. A couple of furious, dog-like beasts bay incessantly with unpleasant, sniveling barks.

The slaves are treated and lodged by their value. The precious ones are kept in filthy barracks, while the more expendable ones are confined to cages or holes carved into the hillside. Two swinehounds patrol the area between the fences at night. A watchtower at the top of the hill has a clear view of the grounds. It's not unusual to capture travelers, and not just slaves, and sell them back to their kin for ransom.

The five swinehounds are demon-tainted crossbreeds. At night, two of them are let loose between the fences. Kratullos has

bought them from the Rust Brothers for a hefty sum and they are his darlings. For everyone else, except the mute animal handler, they are veritable monsters used for guarding and herding slaves as well as tracking escapees. From time to time they are allowed to tear some displeasing unfortunate to shreds to "keep them alert" and they are regularly given human flesh.

❖ CREATURES: Swinehounds.

5. GUILD HALL

The house is relatively well kept, and the only one in the village to have been painted. The color scheme consists of equal parts red lead, black tar and oiled whitewash. Maybe the homeowner only managed to secure one keg of each shade or maybe he's just ostentatious. Two guards stand outside the door.

The house is inhabited by Master Undar "The Duke" Alderman of the Thieves' Guild, who is to be regarded as the mayor of the village. In an excavated cave underneath the house is the substantial coffer of the Thieves' Guild. A swinehound guards the cellar at night.

❖ CREATURES: Undar "The Duke" Alderman, 2D6 thieves, a swinehound (night).

❖ TREASURES: In the chest locked in the cellar are 5D6 gold coins, 10D6 silver coins and two rolls on the table for PRECIOUS finds (see page 191 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*). The chest is equipped with a poison trap (lethal poison, Potency 8) and requires a difficult roll for SLEIGHT OF HAND to be picked without triggering it.



6. ALDERHOME TAVERN

The largest building in the village blares and blazes even at a distance. The repurposed barn is packed with drunk and disorderly soldiers and merchants. The air is heavy with smoke, sweat and the smell of frying. Here, you can glut, booze and laugh, throw knives at a terrified slave, argue, arm wrestle and fondle the staff.

The tavern is owned by Undar but, like the nearby theatre, is run by the bard Mahinniver. The atmosphere is savage. The waiting is partially performed by badly treated slaves. If a fight ensues, tradition dictates that it is taken to the Slave Square to be settled in front of an audience. Visitors can rent beds in the adjacent building where a couple of prostitutes also perform their services.

Behind Alderhome is the infirmary of the three wise Somaya sisters. They take care of the healthcare needs of the village with traditional as well as more mystical methods. Everybody is a little bit afraid of them. The big orc, Charna, from the garrison, acts as their bodyguard.

❖ CREATURES: Charna and the Somaya sisters.

7. PARAXA THEATER

Torches have been lit for the night around an outdoor theatre. It endeavors to be grander than the farce being enacted on stage. The audience have brought food from the tavern and chuck it at the actors if they displease them.

Theatre Paraxa is an outdoor stage with bleachers built on three sides. Here, anything from

farces to folksy theatre and the occasional duel are performed. Mahinniver likes to view himself as a great artist and performs poetry of high gravitas during interludes. The good-natured fool, carpenter and village idiot, Mat Zeker, takes care of maintenance here as well as at the tavern.

❖ CREATURES: The bard Mahinniver, Mat Zeker.

8. HOPS SHED

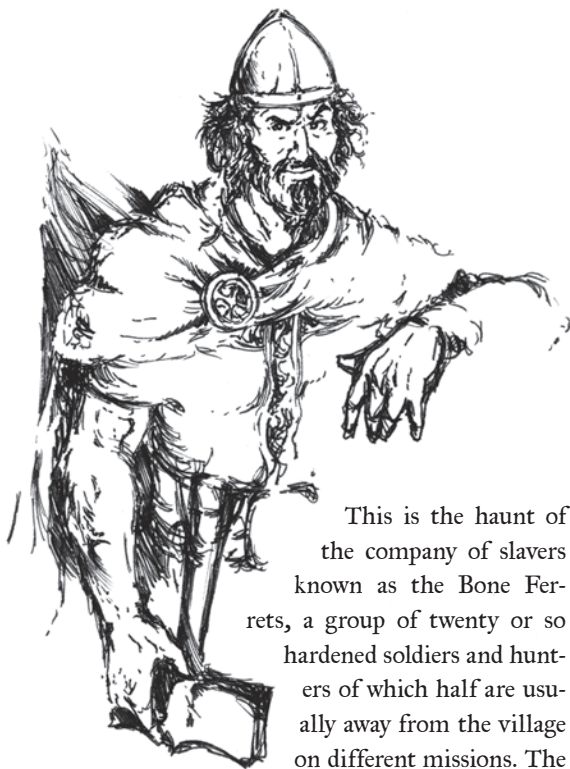
A rich mist of malting and mashing surrounds the village brewery. Hop poles stand at attention outside. Next to the house are shimmering copper pans as well as stacks of lumber and kegs.

Water for the brewery uses a pulley system that takes it from the river through a track that runs along the hillside. The beer is brewed to middling quality, but in great quantity, and is consumed locally. Hops are cultivated around the brewery and grains for malting are taken from the farms surrounding the village. The brewer is commonly referred to as "The Boar."

❖ CREATURES: "The Boar."

9. FERRET HALL

A couple of scarred soldiers and rangers mill about the well-timbered house. They grease chained shackles and weapons that are then packed into satchels. They act professionally severe, keeping an eye on you with a look that is more appraising than welcoming.



This is the haunt of the company of slavers known as the Bone Ferrets, a group of twenty or so hardened soldiers and hunters of which half are usually away from the village on different missions. The company is run by Misela Ferrumar from whom it got its name. She is rumored to have contacts among the wolfkin in the Fangwoods, who lend their tracking skills to her soldiers. The Ferrets also keep their own hounds, used for hunting humans.

- ❖ CREATURES: Misela Ferrumar, half a dozen slave hunters and a dozen swinehounds.

10. CHAPEL OF THE RUST BROTHERS

A simple temple, bearing the typical, cloven facade of the Rust Church. Standing outside the

temple are blood stained idols of the gods Rust and Heme.

The chapel of the Rust Brothers is the only visible religious operation in the village. "The Duke" Alderman regularly donates or gifts slaves for human sacrifice at the fairly crudely shaped idols outside the chapel. The Ferale Hamedas is gravely alcoholic and this has landed him the not-so-glamorous post of village priest in Grindbone. He frequently sleeps it off inside the temple. The soldiers avoid the building.

- ❖ CREATURES: Rust Brother Hamedas.

11. STONEFANG

A castle ruin as impressive as it is dilapidated and ominous towers over Grindbone. Rumor has it that it is haunted and devours its visitors, so most people avoid talking about or even looking at it. Water with a crimson tinge flows down the eastern wall of the ruin, while the west side is pale as if covered with frost.

The ruin of the keep of Stonefang was the original structure on the hill, a fortification in times of unrest. The keep is now a ruin of ill repute. Wagons loaded with beer are hauled from the brewery to the ruin, where the beer is stored under guard in the cool, lower vaults. The ruin is haunted twofold, in part by the ghost of Arbia Mundo, the last mistress of the castle, but also by a bloodling who has taken residence on the east side and causes red mountain water to flow down the hill. The frost of the west side is actually stone mold. The near-



by ruin of a watchtower is used by the soldiers as a lookout in the daytime.

- ❖ CREATURES: The ghost of Arbia Mundo, bloodling.
- ❖ TREASURES: None, but a great deal of cool beer.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

The most important monsters and non-player characters in Grindbone are described below. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same stats as in the Bestiary or the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

UNDAR "THE DUKE" ALDERMAN

Guildmaster of the Thieves' Guild in Grindbone and self-appointed duke. A thug originally, the years have made him haughty and lazy and he believes himself secure in his bustling town. The Duke is mostly interested in devot-



ing himself to his indulgences and counting coins with his treasurer. If pressured, he may become unexpectedly decisive and violent.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 3, Sleight of Hand 2, Marksmanship 3, Lore 2, Insight 3, Manipulation 2

TALENTS: Path of Poison 2, Fast Footwork 2

REPUTATION: 3

GEAR: Warhammer, three throwing knives, studded leather armor, D6 gold coins

MISELA FERRUMAR

Misela Ferrumar is a down-to-earth slave trader whose house looks like a filthy workshop filled with traps, weapons, branding irons, slave fodder and the like. A steady stream of slavers, slaves, large hunting hounds and customers move about and in the house. The workers lack all refinement, but are skilled in their trade and fastidious about their reputation. Besides hunting and capturing and delivering slaves, the Bone Ferrets take on other missions: finding missing persons, hauling and hunting criminals, acting as bodyguards and even carrying out assassinations for money. The adventurers can meet their members all over The Forbidden Lands.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 3, Marksmanship 4, Move 3, Scouting 4, Survival 2, Insight 2, Animal Handling 2

REPUTATION: 1

GEAR: Flail, crossbow, chainmail, riding horse, 2D6 silver coins



CAPTAIN KRATULLOS

Kratullos is the village bailiff and claims to hail from an old Alderlander warrior family despite his Aslene name. He gladly recounts anecdotes of his relatives' heroic deeds during the Alder Wars and attempts to keep a semblance of military discipline among his men. They let him boss them around since his ambition usually runs out. Most of all, the captain dreams of war and leading his soldiers into battle. His dearest treasure is the heirloom sword Limb-Plough, which has been part of ever grander feats in his stories. Kratullos is respected by his soldiers and appreciated by the guilds as a cohesive force among the miscreants in the village.



STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 2, Melee 4, Marksmanship 2, Survival 2, Insight 2

TALENTS: Path of the Enemy 2, Executioner 2

GEAR: Longsword, dagger, chainmail, covered helmet, riding horse, D6 silver coins

MASTER HARGAN

The torturer Hargan is an unscrupulous scientist, interested in anatomy and the functions of the human body. He also serves as dentist, surgeon and executioner in the village. His two assistants don't share his fervor for knowledge, but are more enthusiastic about hurting others.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Lore 2, Healing 4

GEAR: Knife

MAHINNIVER

The bard who runs the village tavern is secretly an acolyte of the Nightwalker, whom he associates with decay, filth and mortality. He believes that art should never shy away from the dirty, the crude and the violent, something that all things considered would be an almost impossible feat in Grindbone. The bard's ambition is to offer the humans the most base and filthy entertainment possible, the kind that all humans deep down want and deserve. He writes sickening poems that he performs in the interludes between acts of a more burlesque nature. In these moments, he feels transient and truly alive.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Lore 1, Insight 2, Manipulation 2, Performance 3

GEAR: Lute, quill and paper, dagger, D6 silver coins



MAT ZEKER

The good-natured carpenter and village idiot, Mat Zeker is a rotund, constantly smiling craftsman who handles repairs for Undar “The Duke” Alderman. It is almost impossible to gain any sensible information from him unless it’s connected to the purely practical. To help him with his work, he has two unevenly sized sons but no wife. The sons appear to be almost copies of their father.



STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 1, EMPATHY 1

SKILLS: Might 3, Crafting 3

GEAR: Tools

THE SOMAYA SISTERS

The sisters Erla, Marla and Karla Somaya are the healer witches of the village. There is something almost predatory and thrilling about them. They are actually viraga, female orcs from the Urhur clan, posing as humans. They provide the clan with craftsmen and learned slaves whom they abduct from the vil-

lage. Usually, the intended victim is told that it has a disease that they can cure. To make the medicine they need a herb from the nearby forest, but the patient has to be the one to harvest it for it to work, maybe under a full moon. The orc Charna is their bodyguard and accomplice. He and one of the sisters accompany the victim out into the forest as “bodyguards”, where they drug and tie up the hapless victim and deliver them to the waiting orc patrol. Undar “The Duke” Alderman and Hamedas know about the operation and are paid in bribes, wares and other slaves from the orcs in exchange for their silence and support.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 3, Move 2, Insight 3, Manipulation 3, Healing 4

GEAR: Dagger, healing herbs (worth 2D6 silver coins)

THE FERRALE HAMEDAS

Hamedas is an alcoholic, elder Rust Brother who’s been posted in Grindbone mostly because the church wants to be rid of him. He is insufferably lecturing, lecherous and wordy. Usually some adept is forced to stay with him during their internship. Hamedas accepts “gifts” from the guild and, in return, he blesses the slave trade. The guild still runs at a profit since they deliver sacrificial slaves to the church in other places. Now and then Hamedas is given a slave to sacrifice to the gods Rust and Heme. On such occasions he will dress in the full regalia of the church, with a mask of iron and rusty clothes and demands that everyone attends. Sometimes he gets into a drunken stupor, speaking in



tongues, and raves about an intimate connection to the gods. He is then brought to one of the village's outlying farms to dry out and calm down.

STRENGTH 1, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Lore 2

GEAR: Dagger

THE GHOST OF ARBIA MUNDO

It is rumored that the last mistress of Stonefang, Arbia Mundo, turned down a suitor

skilled in the ways of magic. In anger he cursed her, turning her into a specter. She appears as a translucent, fashionably dressed middle-aged lady. Arbia Mundo isn't the bloodthirsty sort, but longs for love and warmth which she siphons from visitors who, at worst, might die from feebleness. Arbia keeps to the western part of the castle ruin since a bloodling has taken to hiding in the eastern part. The ghost strongly dislikes the intruder and could reveal the cache of her hidden jewelry to anyone who gets rid of it. The mold covering the western parts of the castle is an effect resembling frost that the ma-

OTHER NPCS

NAME	PROFESSION	ATTRIBUTES	SKILLS	GEAR
The Duke's Thieves	Thieves	Strength 2 Agility 4 Wits 2 Empathy 2	Melee 2, Move 3, Sleight of Hand 3, Stealth 3	Shortsword, dagger, leather armor
The Bone Ferrets	Slave hunters	Strength 3 Agility 3 Wits 2 Empathy 2	Melee 3, Marksmanship 2	Broadsword, short-bow, studded leather armor, riding horse
Kratullos's Comrades	Soldiers	Strength 4 Agility 3 Wits 2 Empathy 2	Melee 3	Long spear, broadsword, studded leather armor, covered helmet
"The Boar"	Brewer	Strength 4 Agility 2 Wits 2 Empathy 3	Crafting 3	Wooden club, leather apron
Swine-hound	Demonic creature	Strength 5 Agility 3	Melee 4, Scouting 3	DEMONIC BITE: Weapon Damage 2 (slash damage), Virulence rating 5 (see page 114 in the <i>Player's Handbook</i>)



gician suitor added to emphasize the lady's cold insensitivity.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

ARMOR: None. Ghosts are undead creatures, but immaterial and can only be injured by fire or magic. Even if the ghost is defeated, it will only be banished for a Quarter Day before it returns. The only way to permanently banish the ghost is the spell *PURGE UNDEAD* (see page 124 in the *Player's Handbook*).

For monster attacks, see page 95 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

THE BLOODLING

A bloodling has taken residence in the eastern part of the castle. It only assumes physical form at night and to attack living creatures so as to devour them.

If the adventurers have read the ledger from the Council of Whispers at the "Hag-gler's House" adventure site, they can attempt to contact the bloodling.

For game stats, see page 78 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.



EVENTS

Below are suggestions for events that you can subject the adventurers to in Grindbone.

THE SLAVE TRADER'S QUANDARY

The slave trader, Misela Ferrumar, wants a word with the adventurers. She orders her

slave hunters to abduct one of them or delivers a mysterious invitation for a secret meeting. She has begun to ponder why she should be playing second fiddle to Undar and the Thieves' Guild when the Bone Ferrets are actually doing all the hard work. It would be great if Alderman could just disappear, allowing her to take control of the village, perhaps with the help of some outsiders so that she can remain blameless. Interested? Misela can sweeten the deal with a part of Alderman's fortune, a percentage of future profits and a safe haven in Grindbone. The strangers may even be given the ruins on the Stonefang mountain to construct a fort there, but they will have to chase away the ghosts on their own.

The adventurers can choose to rat her out to "The Duke" Alderman and receive an equivalent reward from him.

SHOWDOWN AT ALDERHOME

The slave hunter Vulm has, after a bout of heavy drinking at the tavern, slain the thief Sile in the center of the village. He has now returned to the tavern to carry on drinking with his friends. To Captain Kratullos, this is a step too far and he knows that if he doesn't act the Thieves' Guild will retaliate in double measure, and the situation will spin out of control. Thus, Kratullos gathers his men to go to Alderhome to confront and arrest the murderer. Preferably, this happens when the adventurers are visiting the tavern to quench their thirst. Soon after, "The Duke" himself shows up with his thieves and demands his bloody revenge, and shortly after that, Misela Ferrumar



arrives with additional slave hunters, prepared to assist their brother. The entire situation is extremely delicate.

THE WHITE FEATHER

The blood in Grindbone attracts many ravens and other carrion-eating birds, but only one of them can speak. Sister Zagere is a shapeshifting Raven Sister who has undertaken the dangerous assignment of infiltrating the village. The adventurers can take note of her because of her white feather, intelligent gaze and the fact that she doesn't feast on the corpses. Zagere contacts the adventurers when they are alone, inside or outside the village. She may also write simple signs in the dirt with her beak to direct them to a more solitary location where they can talk. Zagere wants their help to free White Sun, a druid from Vivend, who has fallen into the hands of the slavers. She doesn't know what he looks like, but he is supposed to wear a tattoo of his name in the Maha language on the nape of his neck. She is unable to approach the slaves herself since the swinehounds can recognize her human scent. If they want to help Zagere, she will ask the adventurers to pull out her white feather. If dissolved in alcohol, it will drape the village in a fog for two hours. A horse is waiting down the road to carry the prisoner to safety.



THE SECRET OF THE SISTERS

If anyone in the adventurers' party openly displays their intellectual prowess or skills as a craftsman, the Soraya sisters may try to kidnap the individual as a resource for the Urhur clan. If they succeed this person may appear as a prisoner at the Eye of the Rose adventure site (see page 92).

CLAN TROUBLE

The young orc, Eranda of the Isir clan, has been beaten by a warrior from the Urhur clan in the clan games, a defeat he won't concede, attributing it to cheating. Now he shows up with eight armed Isir thugs outside Grindbone, loudly demanding that any dealings in the village between orcs and the "pale-guts" cease. They clamor and wave their weapons about, even going so far as beating up a merchant on his way to the village, screaming that they want to meet the Urhur bitches. No one understands what they mean, but everyone starts wondering why Undar won't sick his soldiers on them when the theatre is half-heartedly set on fire in the middle of the night.

In the morning, Alderman seeks out the adventurers, asking if he could pay them to take care of the rabble discreetly and in a suitable manner. Eranda is related to the Isir chieftain Eldag the Ravager, a person the village would rather not risk offending. Undar is actually more scared of the Somaya sisters being exposed as orc females and envisions how he earns the enmity of both the Urhur and the Isir clans.



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Village

You brave the fear and the noise and carefully look down into the quarry, where huge fires have roared ever since dusk fell. The ogres seem small from the vantage of the rim, but you count more than five dozen, each one as tall as a man and a half, at the very least. Goblins race on the backs of wolves along the quarry's carriageway, spurred on by the howls and rocks hurled after them by their larger friends. On the cliff terraces musicians beat their kettle-drums warm and claw sheets of metal into song. Topsy louts already bounce around on the stone floor, chests bumping each other with meaty thuds, though a rhythm has yet to be found.

BACKGROUND

The ogres have taken over the dwarves' aban-

doned marble quarry, where they throw wild and raucous parties every full moon. Seasoned adventurers are welcome to join in and participate, perhaps challenging one of the brutes to determine who is the strongest in all of the Forbidden Lands or to win back something that has been stolen. The ogres don't mind the company and brazen orcs and goblins are known to frequent the site by choice. However, these great louts are notorious cheaters, well-known for their savagery and their brutal sense of humor, resulting in lesser creatures seldom leaving the party with all of their limbs, or even their lives, intact. Ogres are not attracted to wealth and aren't deterred by threats or pain. All they want is to have fun, and every challenge posed wins the approval of the mob, making it impossible for the one challenged



RECOMMENDED READING

Before playing this adventure site, please read the section on ogres and their connection to the dwarves on page 60 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

to refuse. They view human flesh as any other meat – filling, but not necessarily better. The ogres of Ravenhole are not on their guard. They have poor eyesight and are hard of hearing, but they can pick up the scent of humans and dwarves unless masked by filth.



LEGEND

It is said that the dwarves mined all the blue marble to be found in the Ravenhole quarry and then left the site, at which time the ogres moved in. One thing is certain: every full moon, a din rises from the immense stone cauldron, a noise that causes animals to stampede for miles around. No one in their right mind approaches Ravenhole while the ogres hold their wild feasts.



GETTING HERE

Of course, the adventurers can happen upon Ravenhole as a consequence of their travels

across the Forbidden Lands, but they can also be introduced to the site via the event below.

THE DECEITFUL OGRE

The adventurers can encounter the dwarves Murble and Thulman in dire circumstances a couple of miles from Ravenhole: one of them is trapped under an overturned wagon, the other is bound to a tree trunk. The latter is banging his head against the tree in anger and resignation. It appears that the two were enroute to a local lord with a shipment of sword billets. They hired an ogre named Paltry to escort them, but he overpowered them and rolled the wagon with the shipment towards his kin in Ravenhole. Furthermore, their dwarven companion, the smith Elderyd, was captured and is now being held prisoner in the camp of the ogres. Murble and Thulman prattle on about being robbed of great treasures, about betrayal and the terrible fact that the ogres can now arm themselves with dwarven steel. If the adventurers can reclaim the sword billets, they will be rewarded with ample amounts of gold and weapons. However, the dwarves seem to be in some kind of disagreement and one can surmise that they aren't telling the whole story.



LOCATIONS

The most important sites in Ravenhole are described below. Ogres are milling about in Ravenhole both day and night.





I. THE DANCE FLOOR

The marble floor of the quarry would probably twinkle like freshly fallen snow had it not been sullied by scraps of food, the remains of broken benches, sleeping revelers and miscellaneous filth. Ogres leap about, dancing and fighting, but frequently slip on the slick slab in their drunken state, shaking the mountain as they tumble to the ground.

Anywhere there is room, there is dancing, drinking and grubbing. Three large fires light up the area of the festivities. Somewhat improvised tables have been banged together from sturdy logs. Here, the ogres hold their head cheese hangouts. They eat, arm wrestle, brag, drink or just sleep with their faces buried in the stew. The epic belching contests are popular – trying to drown out your neighbors with burps, belches and farts. Food scraps and vomit are summarily swept to the floor, much to the enjoyment of a pack of half feral dogs. Right below the stage are large tubs of beer next to piles of firewood. The ogres fetch their drink in tankards or drink directly from the tubs. Occasionally someone will bathe in the beer or even bellyflop into it from the stage, a seldom popular move due to the spilling of the brew.

An upside-down wagon lies close to the tables, resting on a pile of sword billets. An equal number has been carried up on stage. A mule is currently being roasted on a spit. This carriage originally came from the dwarven caravan and has been dragged to the site by Paltry the ogre. The dwarves' cash box is still lying underneath the wagon, but the goblins have stolen some of the jewelry.

- ❖ CREATURES: A score of ogres in different stages of intoxication.
- ❖ TREASURES: The dwarves' cash box. Locked (the dwarves have the key, else a Hard (-2) roll on SLEIGHT OF HAND must be made to open the chest. It contains 2D6 gold coins, 4D6 silver coins and 5D6 copper coins as well as a dwarven signet ring worth 2D6 silver coins.

2. THE STAGE

The lowest tier of the quarry serves as a stage where particularly possessed ogres produce what supposedly is meant to be music by means of man-handling various constructs. On the front edge of the stage, someone has scrawled the words: "Livv baad! Day ugli!" in blood.

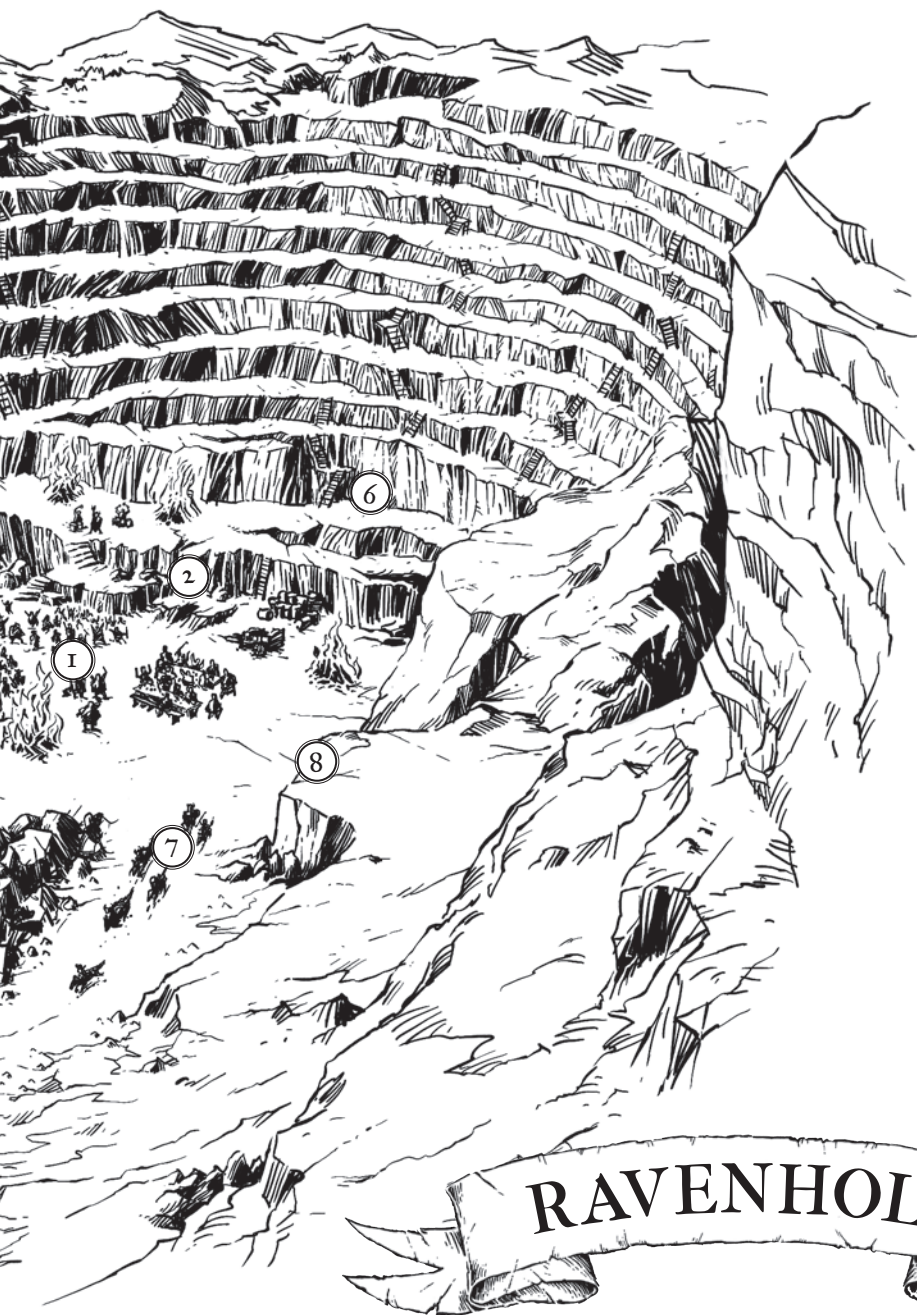
A crude staircase made of boulders lead up to the stage. The instruments mainly consist of primitive kettle-drums, hollow logs and metal objects to pound on, a couple of bellows and the new plonker that is being constructed. Later in the night, one can see both accomplished singers and amateurs performing. They often get off the stage by throwing themselves into the tubs of beer or by “thumpin’,” i.e. throwing oneself off the stage in an effort to land on some puny creature in the audience.

- ❖ **CREATURES:** A handful of ogres on stage banging on drums, dulcimers and howling their lungs out.

3. FIGHTING RING AND LATRINE

The stench from the latrine is mixed with the







spatters (and odor) of blood and the smells of fear and anger around an elevated slab of stone where sweaty colossi clash. The audience enthusiastically approves of every successful nose-book or ball tap, but reserve their greatest applause for a gigantic female ogre.

Wrestling and boxing are constantly in progress on the marble slab, but there also displays of odd prisoners and other kinds of entertainment. The revelers relieve themselves off the sharp rock edge facing the lake, provided they make it there in time. One can compete at balancing on the two logs perched above the excrement further out in the water. In the rapids upstream of the lake, the water is clear and potable.

- ❖ CREATURES: A dozen ogres engaged in fights or competitions, among them Thumba.

4. IRON CAGES

Animals for slaughter and humanoid beings share the same huge iron cages, all of them resigned to their fates. Occasionally, someone will be chosen, summarily beaten over the head and skewered on a spit for food, or thrown into some hopeless and degrading contest.

The cages are dwarven wrought and sized for the trolls that the dwarves used in their mining operations. The locks are gone, and now the doors are locked by heavy iron crossbars, that require an ogre or three men to be dislodged (A Hard (-2) MIGHT roll is required to succeed).

- ❖ CREATURES: Elderyd the dwarf.

5. THE DWARVES' WORKSHOP

You see two doorways and windows cut directly out of the rock, perfectly sized for dwarves. A drunk female ogre has fallen asleep with her head in the entrance to the right door. Her snores make the rock shake.

The rooms of the dwarves are too cramped for ogres. Inside the workshop, to the right, there are still some stone carving tools as well as some lamp oil, acid to etch marble and pry-cury – a variant of mercury that is poured into cracks and which expands substantially when a certain kind of chromium salt is added to the mix. The salt can be found in some jars inside the workshop.

A successful LORE roll reveals that the chromium salt also works well as a soporific (Sleeping poison with Potency 7, see the *Player's Handbook*, page 113).

- ❖ CREATURES: A colony of bats has settled here. If frightened, they will leave this area on their leathery wings, an event that will naturally draw some attention.
- ❖ TREASURES: Well-wrought tools worth D6 silver coins. Acid and chromium salts in jars worth D6 copper coins each.

6. THE QUARRY LEDGES

The quarry is like an amphitheater for giants, carved in tiers down towards the stone floor. Partially broken ladders and stairs run between the landings.

It's easy to walk along the stone ledges of the landings, but they get slippery when it rains



and can be very narrow in places. The wooden climbing ladders set into the stone walls are sized for dwarves, but have fallen into disrepair, and are missing rungs here and there. They will collapse if an ogre tries to scale them and are therefore an asset for smaller visitors wanting to keep their distance. Cubical blocks varying in size from the height of a human's knee to the top of a human's head are littered here and there on the ledges. Some are situated above the stage and could probably be toppled through Stone Song or a concerted effort.

❖ CREATURES: A dozen ogres.

7. THE CARRIAGEWAY

A well maintained, if somewhat cracked, road runs from the quarry to the southwest, past a half-finished, gigantic stone statue that lies dormant, ignoring any and all intruders with a stern face. Every now and then, goblins riding wolves will race down the road, cheered on by ogres.

The Wolf Wailers have been hired for the purpose of racing and the accompanying betting. They start on the dance floor, ride out from the stone cauldron, round an obelisk by the entrance, and then return.

The partially complete statue depicts the dwarven hero, Skarda. The statue fractured and was never finished. Ogres usually come here to make out. The mouth of the statue is a drilled hole. Writing an instruction, rolling it up and placing it in the statue's mouth will cause the statue to temporarily come to life and attempt to execute the command. A dwarven Stone Singer may know of this. Since the statue is broken in

half, only the upper body will awaken and slowly drag itself forwards, creaking loudly. The statue will become inanimate once more after half an hour and cannot be woken again after that.

❖ CREATURES: The goblin riders Hulmar, Kradd and Grynne race along the road.

8. THE CARRIAGEWAY

Rumbling, guttural sounds and scratchings noises rise with an acrid stench of wild beast from a barred cave close to the entrance to the quarry. The lattice appears to capable of being raised with a wheel found on the ledge above, but the mechanism is built for ogres.

Inside the cave, the gray bear Chew-Chew is kept behind a wooden lattice. He is hungry and riled, and will strike blindly around him if set free. If given something to eat he usually settles down, since he knows the drill.

❖ CREATURES: The gray bear, Chew-Chew.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

Described below are the monsters and non-player characters that the adventurers can encounter in Ravenhole.

MURBLE TRIBBLETWINE

Murble the dwarf is an elderly diplomat of the



Meromannian clan. He has fallen into disfavor after a couple of less than successful negotiations where he, among other things, threw up in the soup bowl of a clan leader at a banquet.

Murble's beard is elaborately braided and he's dressed in fashionable, if worn, clothes. He is very eloquent, professionally sympathetic and good at negotiating, but he has a weak spot for booze and his memory isn't what it used to be.

To shore up his strained finances, Murble came up with the idea to sell a wagonload of sword billets to the self-appointed lord, Prince Brand, a human with whom he still has ties. Since the sale is illegal, it must be handled discreetly. Now the ogres have stolen the wagon and that's why he and the other dwarves are sneaking about near Ravenhole.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Lore 3, Insight 3, Manipulation 2, Performance 3

REPUTATION: 1

GEAR: Shortsword, leather armor, D6 gold coins, 4D6 silver coins

ELDERYD HAMMERFALL

The smith, Elderyd, is brawny, scarred by white-hot sparks of metal, and quite passable at swinging a great hammer in battle even though he lacks finesse. Elderyd is a contrary misanthrope with a general dislike for most everybody else, summarily labeling everyone other than himself as "morons."

He's neither particularly well-informed or intelligent, a fact that doesn't stop him from being dead certain about everything and he snaps at any protest. For the past year, he's been smuggling away the sword billets that they are now on their way to sell. He is furious with Murble, whom he holds responsible for this fiasco.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 4, Melee 4, Survival 2

GEAR: -

THULMAN TRIBBLETWINE

Thulman is Murble's younger brother, a stone merchant and councilor among the Meromannians; he's a posh and haughty dwarf who is hardly used to dwelling in caves or quarries. He is accustomed to a staff of servants and can't understand why he himself would have to stoop to performing menial labor. Now, he bitterly regrets joining his brother's racket. Thulman is trying to convince himself that he wanted to help his brother, but takes every opportunity he gets to point out how successful he is by comparison. As a former stone mason, Thulman has mastered the simpler forms of Stone Singing and knows Ravenhole well. Neither Thulman nor Murble can fight in any capacity beyond self-defense.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 2, Crafting 4, Lore 2, Insight 2

GEAR: Axe, leather armor, 2D6 silver coins





PALTRY

Paltry is an ogre youngling of the weaker kind, pale and feeble in comparison to his kin, but still a head taller and considerably stronger than any man or dwarf. He has fine, gray-blond hair that he is ashamed of in addition to his slim nose.

Paltry is the grandson of the dwarf, Murble. He has been living among the dwarves since he hasn't been able to hold his own or find his place among the ogres as is their custom at reaching adulthood. This is his greatest shame. To gain favor and rank among the ogres, he betrayed his grandfather and his friends and hauled the sword billets they were carrying to the ogres' wild feast at Ravenhole. Human weapons are too flimsy for ogres, but the pure metal can be used to construct a "plonker," a musical instrument upon which the blades are attached and played on. Paltry hopes to win the larger ogres' approval through his gift.

STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 1

SKILLS: Might 3, Melee 2

GEAR: Large wooden club, a dead rat tucked in his belt

STRENGTH 9, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 3, Insight 2, Manipulation 3, Performance 3

GEAR: Two-handed sword, leather armor



THUMBA

Murge is the highly ranked ogre who leads the feasts in Ravenhole. He is large, well-spoken and intelligent, with a flair for drama and devilish "pranks," that frequently costs their victims limbs or lives. Murge likes to dress in boldly cut leathers, braids his hair and perms his hairdo with animal blood. Murge wants to appear as a leader, but is actually subordinate to a group of taciturn elder ogres who have the real power.

The strongest ogre in the circle is called Thumba. She is a head taller and twice as strong as any of the rest and often appears in bouts where she takes on several wrestlers at a time. Thumba is downright stupid. She wraps a swath of raw skin around her torso like a sumo wrestler, stinks and is grimy and dirty and as such hard to grab. Her signature move is to wrap her arms around her opponent and suffocate him senseless against her voluptuous bust.



STRENGTH 11, AGILITY 2, WITS 1, EMPATHY 1

SKILLS: Might 3, Melee 3

GEAR: Stylish loincloth

MOLENDER

Molender is a howler, the ogre equivalent of a singer, with long, wispy black hair and dressed in black leather and silver chains – something of an idol among the ogres, with many supporters. They want him to spit in their hair as a kind of autograph. He is tall and lithe, but not as strong as the others. Since he is intelligent, his advice is also held in high regard. Molender had a tragic childhood in which his father beat his mother and a couple of his siblings to death in a drunken rage and then drowned himself in the river. Because of this, Molender has sworn off alcohol and keeps his wits about him when the others get drunk. He can sympathize with Paltry and his grandfather and tries to help them.

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 1, Stealth 2, Performance 4

GEAR: Wooden club, leather armor

BALDERDASH

Molender's main rival is called Balderdash, an aggressive troublemaker who screams and growls as he sings. Balderdash has a shaved head and sports bushy sideburns, metal scrap embedded in his face and has carvings all over his body. His primary goal is to awaken bloodlust and berserker rage with his art. Balderdash hates Molender and would love the opportunity to get at him on- as well as off-stage.

STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 2, WITS 2, EMPATHY 1

SKILLS: Melee 2, Performance 1

GEAR: Large wooden club

CHEW-CHEW

A gray bear called Chew-Chew is held in a cave in the quarry. It is released during feasts in the quarry to chase about after the attendees, an event similar to a bull run. Chew-Chew has learned his part in the show well and seems pretty happy with it.

STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 2

ARMOR RATING: 4 (fur)

FERAL RAGE: When the Strength of a gray bear is halved, it is overcome by a deadly rage and will attack anything surrounding it with sweeping paws, at the same time letting out a deafening roar. All targets within ARM'S LENGTH each suffer an attack using seven Base Dice, with a Weapon Damage of 1 (slash wound). This attack is triggered immediately, outside the regular turn order, and does not count toward the bear's actions during the turn.

For monster attacks, see page 100 in the *Player's Handbook*.

THE WOLF WAILERS

The three swift-riding goblins, Hulmar, Kradd and Gynne, call themselves the Wolf Wailers. They have a habit of racing for money at the feasts and other events. They have a wholly professional attitude towards ogres and anyone else who wants to pay, and try to keep their distance from any types of disagreements. If attacked or dragged into a fight they



will try to escape, but in an emergency, both they and their wolves will fight. One can bribe them to get them on one's side, but it will be expensive since they will have to keep away from the ogres after that. The Wolf Wailers are frequently hired as trackers or messengers. Hulmar carries a beautiful necklace around his neck. It comes from the wagon of the dwarves: a gift to Prince Brand's wife.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 4, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 2, Stealth 3, Sleight of hand 2, Move 3, Marksmanship 2, Scouting 2, Animal handling 4

GEAR: Shortword, shortbow, leather armor



EVENTS

Described below are several events that can occur in Ravenhole.

FAMILY IS THE WORST

If the adventurers won't help the dwarves reclaim the wagon, or if the dwarves start to quarrel amongst themselves, these tidbits can slip out:

- ❖ Paltry is the grandson of Murble. Thulman is furious over the shameful betrayal of the youngling, and blames Murble for not raising him properly. Murble is crying, and wants to save his grandchild. He doesn't care about the sword billets.
- ❖ The sale of the sword billets is illegal and can under no circumstances come to the attention of the Meromannians.

KING FOR A NIGHT

Paltry has arrived at Ravenhole with "his" wagon and Murge declares him Feast-King for the night, naming him "Giant." Everyone cheers and laughs and Paltry is immensely proud and pretty scared, both at the same time. He doesn't understand that they are all making fun of him. Murge explains that the king will be given anything he wants during the night. After that, everyone will try to get him drunk, challenge him to wrestling bouts in which they pretend to lose, or drag him into savage capers. Women strut shamelessly in front of him, which terrifies Paltry. At the same time, some craftsmen start to construct a plonker on the stage from the dwarven sword billets.

Later in the night, Murge proclaims that Paltry the Giant and other guests will soon have to prove their royal worthiness by facing Chew-Chew in mortal combat. By now, Paltry is so drunk that he doesn't realize that the bear is going to kill him, but Murble understands this, and starts to cry.

WELCOME TO RAVENHOLE

If the adventurers brazenly step into the quarry, they will be merrily welcomed with fake civility. They will then be treated similarly to Paltry (see above), and are not expected to survive the night. The best way to buy some time and survive for at least a little while longer is probably to go on the offensive and challenge an ogre.

Ogres love amusing challenges and will gladly shove Paltry forward to join in. It is risky, but possible, to challenge someone in any of these events.





- ❖ Creating the greatest splash in the lake. If one doesn't want to participate, one will still be thrown in.
- ❖ Balancing on a log above the pit of excrement.
- ❖ Headbutting each other to see who will sit down first.
- ❖ Getting prisoners and animals to participate in the loudest and most original way in the musical events with their screams by yanking them, charring their feet over fire, and so forth. To "Play small-song" means that the ogres try to perform a piece of music solely using the sounds of tormented prisoners.
- ❖ Letting two prisoners "race" after breaking a leg of each, and promising that the victor will be allowed to live.

DISGRUNTLED WOLF WAILERS

The goblins who call themselves the Wolf Wailers get into a violent argument with Murge over their payment, but dare not insist when threatened with being beaten or worse. This might be a good opportunity to approach them with a counter-offer to double-cross the ogres.

THE MEROMANNIANS ARRIVE

A patrol of twenty Meromannian dwarven warriors approach Ravenhole. They have tracked the thieves on the order of Tormund Halfhand and want the sword billets back. The dwarves can't take on the ogres in battle, but can grudgingly agree to let justice wait and help the thieves reclaim the stolen goods (for stats see page 59 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

IT STINKS!

Someone shouts, claiming that it stinks of dwarf or human (or whatever kin the adventurers belong to) and demands that the Wolf Wailers track down the vermin.

LOAD OF BOOZE

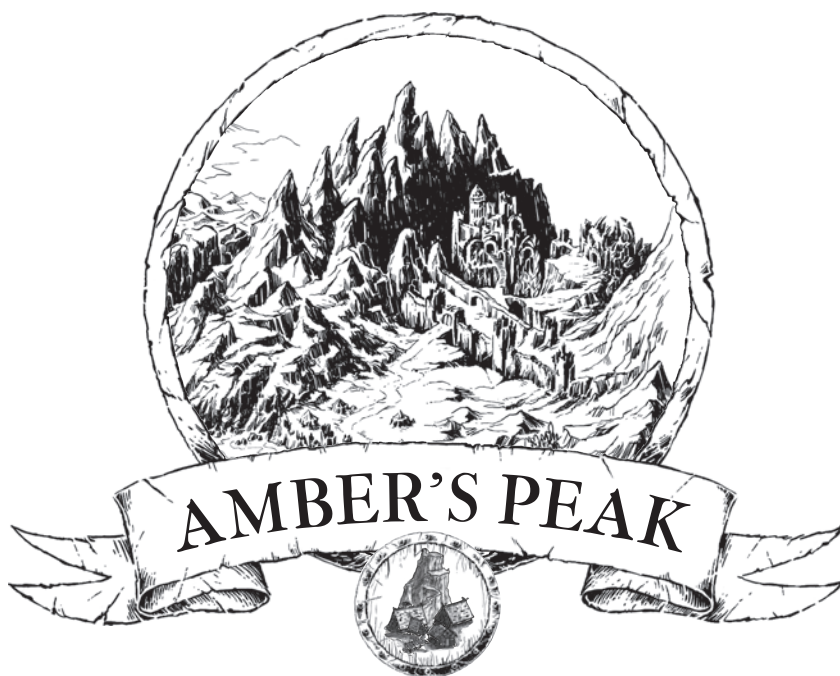
Two ogres are hauling a wagon loaded with barrels of booze to the festival close to the quarry. It is well known that ogres don't drink in moderation. If one can seize the barrels and openly roll them into the throng of ogres in the quarry, it is in all likelihood only a matter of time before most of them have drunk themselves senseless.

THE GREAT BARBEQUE

Early in the evening, a number of animals, a farmer and an elf are brought forward to be slaughtered and grilled on spits. The poor victims scream and promise rewards to anyone who will help them. While waiting for the embers to reach the right temperature, they are put in the iron cages (see above).

THE LOST SWORDS OF PRINCE BRAND

Prince Brand wonders where the dwarven goods he has been bragging about have disappeared to, and leads a mounted patrol of twenty men in searching for them. A horse has been injured and both horse and rider are carried into the quarry as a buffet. The prince attempts a charge, but is forced to turn back when he comes under a hail of rocks. One can find the patrol at the site they retreated to.



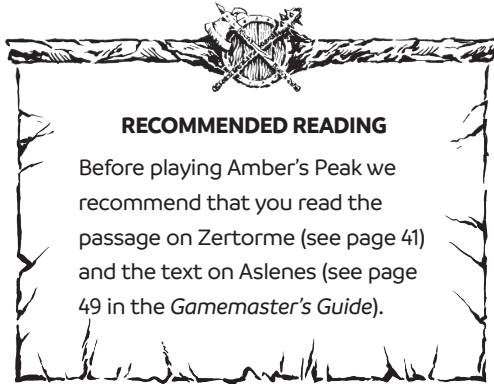
TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Castle (by a river)

The mist around the village on the plain is accentuated by the smell of the horses in the large corrals nearby. Some of the animals neigh restlessly as the stench of charred meat reaches their nostrils. The mist lazily lifts as if the smell has aroused its curiosity. An incinerated man lies where the village street ends. Early birds out for a walk rush to his aid, and manage to catch the man's last words about how a fire-breathing boar has attacked his farm. He is hastily removed so as not to disturb the mood of the market.

The mist lifts further, and a river becomes visible along with the long stone bridge. On the other side of the water, the honor camp of the Galdanes, set up in front of the ruined fortress known as Amber's Peak, wakes up. Flickering firelight and smoke already coat the cracked stone walls.

BACKGROUND

Zertorme is Zygofer's sorcerous son. His goal in life is to gather an army strong enough to defeat Zytera, the demonic being created from his father and sister, by any means necessary. This ambition has flared like a fever since the Blood Mist lifted from the land – soon, his armies will be able to finally march. When a fire demon named Brinhelda became Zertorme's guest he took up the abhorrent demonic arts of his father to, with the help of the demon's bodily fluids, create fire-breathing beasts to be used in the war. Merigall is assisting him in this endeavor. Zertorme and the minstrel secretly release their experiments on the plains to gauge their strength. To them, a couple of dead farmers is a reasonable price to pay for a good cause.



To the Quards, one of the clans of riders from Aslene, Amber's Peak has become a place of pilgrimage since a prophet proclaimed that Zertorme is the chosen savior of the fire god, Horn, who will slay Zytera and reclaim Aslene. The other clan of riders, the Galdanes, does not relish the arrival of the Quards since their clans were sworn enemies in Aslene. Now fire-breathing beasts have begun to show up, and the Galdanes blame the Quards for having attracted demons to the area through their religious jabber. Since Zertorme depends on both the Quards and Galdanes to fight in his war, he is anxious that the clans get along and has forbidden any fighting. He doesn't mind being regarded as the god Horn's chosen by the Quards,

however, even if it upsets the Galdanes. Tensions in the area are rising.



GETTING HERE

There are many ways in which the adventurers can find Amber's Peak. They may have found a map that leads here, heard the legends of this place, or encountered one of the events below.

THE BLOOD FEUD

The adventurers happen upon two Aslene riders who silently and slowly ride in circles around each other, their hands on their hilts. As the adventurers approach, they will stop and direct their attention to the party. It turns out that the two warriors, the Quard Gav and the Aslene Serval, had quarreled over a horse at the market at Amber's Peak, and now see no other recourse than a duel to the death. However, they will consider solving the dispute by selling the horse to the adventurers to save face. If the adventurers agree to this, and accompany them to Amber's Peak, they will be thankful and sell the horse for a cheap price.

THE DYING WANDERER

The adventurers find a severely burnt farmer who is close to death. It turns out that Aug, as he is called, has been assaulted by one of Zertorme's beasts and is fatally wounded. He has asked his brother to go the nearby Amber's Peak to get help, but the brother has not returned. With his



last breath he asks the adventurers to go there and make sure that his brother survives.

THE FIRE DEMON

As the adventurers have set up camp and darkness has fallen, they notice something weird around the campfire. The flames reach ever higher towards the sky and eventually dance out towards the sides, almost as if the fire was trying to break free from the burning logs. In the next instant, the campfire transforms into a burning creature that clumsily tumbles about in the camp and sets fire to everything in its path before scurrying away. It is, of course, one of Zertorme's demons that has manifested in the fire. The sooty black trail runs straight towards Amber's Peak.



LEGEND

It is whispered that the half-elf Zertorme was one of the first generals of the monster Zygofer, but that he was disgusted by the villain's tyrannical rule and joined the Elvenspring of the eastern Forbidden Lands to fight his former master. When the fleeing horse-people arrived during the wars, Zertorme allowed them to stay on the plains in exchange for their submitting to his commands during the wars, and because of this, the riders hold him in the highest regard.

A melancholy has fallen over Zertorme ever since the Blood Mist lifted. He is said to have retreated to the old ruined fortress of Amber's Peak, where magical flames burn ever stronger. People say that the sorcerous Zertorme is trying to tame fire itself in order to turn it against Zytera, but

many villagers are terrified as the number of fires around Amber's Peak have increased. On the few occasions when Zertorme has appeared publicly, he has been wearing a mask that is said to hide a burn that he incurred during his studies of the fire.



LOCATIONS

Below are sites in and around Amber's Peak that the adventurers can visit.

1. QUARD CAMP

The scent of horses lies heavy where the riders have raised their round tents. The scene appears very authentic until you notice beds and other amenities that you don't usually associate with a nomadic life. The inhabitants' clothes are traditionally motley, but appear newly sewn.

The settlement of the Aslene Quards has only been in place since Palakus of Horn declared Zertorme to be the chosen champion of the god Horn a couple of years ago. Most of them have been living on farms and are unaccustomed to a nomadic life, even if they are trying to be traditional.

❖ CREATURES: Miridia and about forty Quard riders.

2. GALDANE CAMP

On the opposite side of the village, you find yet another camp of riders. Everything here appears more worn, but also more genuine.



AMBER'S PEAK







The Galdanes submitted to Zertorme's leadership as early as the Fourth Alder Wars, and have viewed themselves as his household cavalry ever since. Some priests of Horn have recently started to whisper that the sorcerer in Amber's Peak might not actually be the hero Zertorme, but an imposter.

- ❖ CREATURES: Some one hundred Galdanes, Skylia of Horn, Skunsa, Gutharm.

3. AGURVILLE

The aged farm constitutes the center of the village. It consists of several stone houses thatched with rushes. The remains of a wall circles around a courtyard where people mill about.

The original farm at Amber's Peak serves as an inn as well as a little bit of everything. Quards are not allowed.

- ❖ CREATURES: Agur Seventh-Cousin.

4. HORSE MARKET

Paddocks with horses line an arena, surrounded by a gallery where animals are trained or displayed. As long as it's light out, there is no lack of the curious and the knowledgeable.

Amber's Peak is traditionally a nexus for trading and displaying horses where the riders run a market. At the arena, provided with a gallery, the horses are displayed for the speculators. North of the arena, stables and feed barns can be found while horse paddocks line it in the other directions. Races, mock battles and oth-

er stunts are mostly kept to the plains around the village.

5. FORGE

The smell of coal fires harmonizes with the song of hammer blows on iron anvils. Judging by the sounds, there are at least half a dozen blacksmiths working in these buildings.

Agur's forge is one of the largest and greatest in the eastern part of the Forbidden Lands, especially when it comes to horseshoes, wagons, harnesses, bits, lances and the like. Independent weapon smiths often rent a spot in the forge during the markets.

6. FISHING VILLAGE

Between the village and the fortress proper runs a wide river where you see fishes leaping from the water. Small fishing boats and wooden platforms lie anchored to a handful of bridges with sheds.

Aside from the fish, there are also freshwater pearl mussels to harvest in the river. The platforms are used as a base of operations for the descent to the mussels on the riverbed.

7. RAUKWAYE BRIDGE

A very old stone bridge spans across the river. A couple of children are standing on it, angling.

The bridge, which is built on sturdy stone arches, was erected before the time of the Blood Mist. The wooden section in the middle can be removed in times of war. There is also



a drawbridge on the eastern side, although its gears have rusted through. There was previously a wall with a couple of watchtowers here, one of which still stands and is passably functional.

8. HONOR GUARD OF THE QUARDS

Additional nomadic tents have been erected on the fortress side of the river, as well as a couple of houses. You see guards by the bridge and on the walls farther up on land. They look more ceremonial than functional.

Some ten Quards are camped as an honor guard in traditional yurts. They won't let anyone pass into the fortress without an invitation. Every day, Palakus conducts religious fire ceremonies in the area. The houses are inhabited by a few trustworthy servants who are admitted into the fortress. Zertorme's guests are also lodged in the houses.

- ❖ CREATURES: Quard guards, Palakus of Horn.

9. FORTRESS COURTYARD AND GATE

Amber's Peak was once protected by a moat and two walls, but everything is now dilapidated and no longer particularly functional. Past the walls, however, the strangely constructed stronghold still looms, an imposing shape. Flames and smoke rises here and there from the walls.

The drawbridge works and is raised every night. Six Quard honor guards patrol the strip of land between the two walls. They never en-

ter the stronghold, however, since they fear it greatly. Three partially collapsed watchtowers can be found in the area.

The inner wall lacks a gate, but two burly pyrotaurs (see below) guard the opening and let no one in unless they are in the company of Zertorme or Merigall. They stand on the stone ledge inside the gate with fire dancing across their feet from the rocks, not fazed in the slightest.

The actual stronghold of Amber's Peak is built on three ledges with ravines in between, across which stone bridges run. The bridges and the stone walls in the stronghold are lapped by flames of different colors, as if the stone itself was slowly burning. Some flames burn cold while others inflict harm. The buildings are dilapidated and of a strange, slender architecture with high arches and narrow stone bridges between the rock ledges. Zertorme has placed illusions on the stone bridges, making them appear to run a couple of feet to the side of where they actually are. Anyone who carelessly runs across them will plummet into the ravine. To maintain the illusion, visitors are provided with blindfolds before they are led to any of the buildings on the plateaus.

- ❖ CREATURES: Half a dozen Quard honor guards, two pyrotaurs.

10. RUINS AND STABLES OF THE PYROTAURS

On the southern platform stands a greatly decayed building that presumably was beautiful once. Naked arches now grasp for the sky like claws. The beauty is marred further by the scattered piles



of animal droppings outside. Odd ululations are heard from inside.

Six pyrotaurs live in the severely decayed southern building. Further into the ruins are cages with some of the fire-breathing animals that have ravaged the area, but Zertorme is careful to hide them. Through a cave passage with a staircase entering the cliff, the adventurers reach Zertorme's study, where he experiments on the animals. In the passage are a couple of hidden hornets' nests, whose demonic hornets burst into flames if they sting. An intruder is thus likely to face a burning inferno.

❖ CREATURES: Pyrotaurs, demonic hornets.

11. GRAVEYARD

Close to the river are a couple of earth mounds. Thrust into the top of each mound is one or several weapons.

Here lie the heroes of the Galdanes from the Fourth Alder Wars, each buried under a mound of earth (a so-called kurgan). With a week or so of digging, the adventurers can find some equipment, weapons and coins. The weapons that mark the graves are rusty and unusable.

12. THE BURNING PALACE

Against the mountain wall on the northern plateau stands a very tumble-down palace made of a strange architecture. Here and there, fire of different colors inexplicably runs down the stone walls. The tops of the two towers blaze more brightly.

A – HALLWAY AND HALL, ENTRY LEVEL:

Through the porch you reach a larger, partially collapsed banquet hall with the remains of long tables and oak benches in it. Everything appears desolate and burnt tapestries hang from the walls. A colonnade seems to have run along the outside of the hall's south wall once, but it has tumbled into the ravine along with the ledge it once rested upon.

What remains of the southwest corner of the hall can be reached via the





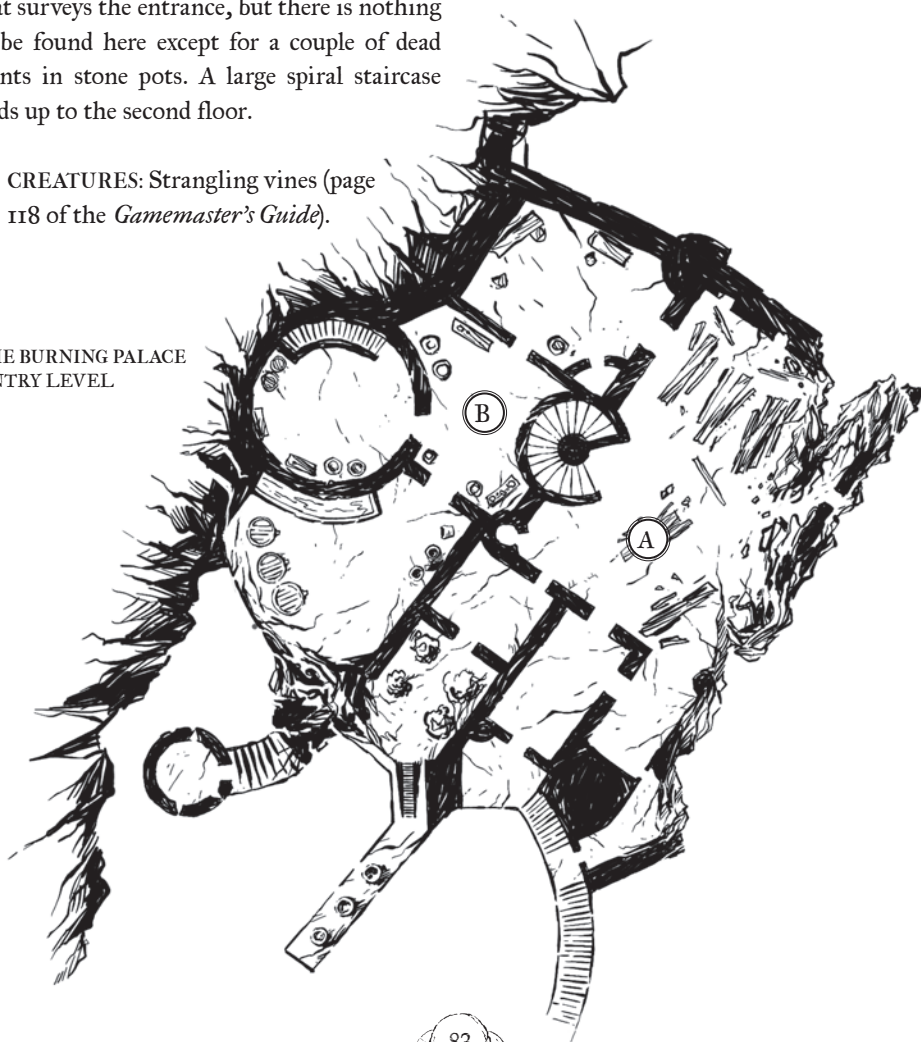
narrow ledge that remains of the colonnade, but a distance of just over two meters is missing completely. Inside the door, towards the chasm, is a smashed cupboard with silver cutlery of some value. Through adjoining rooms, visitors can reach an open area between the round tower and the main house. Here, there are unnaturally twisting plants, the result of a demonic experiment. Strangling vines attack all living beings who enter this area. Beyond the vines, narrow staircases lead up to the wall that surveys the entrance, but there is nothing to be found here except for a couple of dead plants in stone pots. A large spiral staircase leads up to the second floor.

❖ TREASURES: Ancient silver cutlery, worth 2D6 silver coins.

B – KITCHEN AREA, ENTRY LEVEL: *Fluids of different colors gathered in vats and pots burn quietly here. The flames slither unnaturally in patterns across the fluids, as if they were alive. Some are cold fires while others sear hotly, building steam in the rooms. The walls are singed but dripping with moisture.*

❖ CREATURES: Strangling vines (page 118 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

THE BURNING PALACE ENTRY LEVEL





The two chambers used to be a kitchen and the servant quarters. Zertorme is storing different fractions of Brinhelda's fluid in the vats, and is attempting to condense and prepare them. On the patio below the round tower are larger oaken vats fitted with taps. The fluid from these spontaneously catches fire when tapped. Empty tinplated buckets stand in stacks. At the base of the round tower is an empty fish pond. This is where the fluids are collected after being washed from Brinhelda's body at the top of the tower. The top of the round tower can be reached by climbing the tower's staircases.

C – BRINHELDA'S SUITE, SECOND FLOOR:

The stairs end in a hallway with three doors. There is a burnt smell here, and you can hear plaintive sounds. Firelight of different shades flickers through the cracks in the wood.

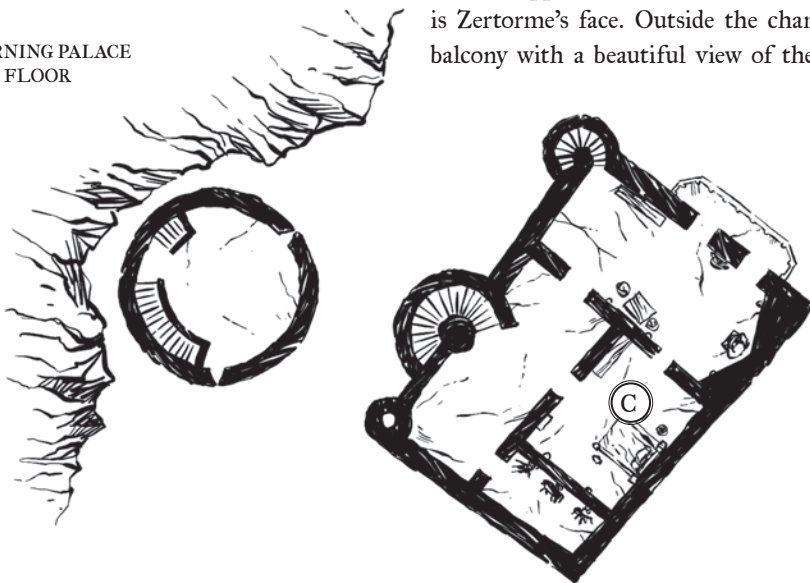
In the smaller chamber to the right is a human, a goat and a pig, all chained to the wall in

irons. They are all badly burnt, but still alive. Brinhelda has tortured them, a pleasure that causes her to secrete certain valuable fluids of a specific nature. Zertorme reluctantly allows this, since these components can't be acquired by other means. The victims are discreetly disposed of once they've been used up.

The center chamber contains a single big iron bed on scorched rugs. Brinhelda may be found here, asleep or making love to Merigall or Zertorme, producing other valuable fire fluids. Tinplated buckets with sponges and an oily substance stand by the bed as well as bundles of fire-proof cloth. If Brinhelda is alone, she will try to tempt the visitors with the offer of an amorous tryst. Gender or kin matters little to her. Her passion will, however, burn the one who gives in, eventually turning him or her to ash.

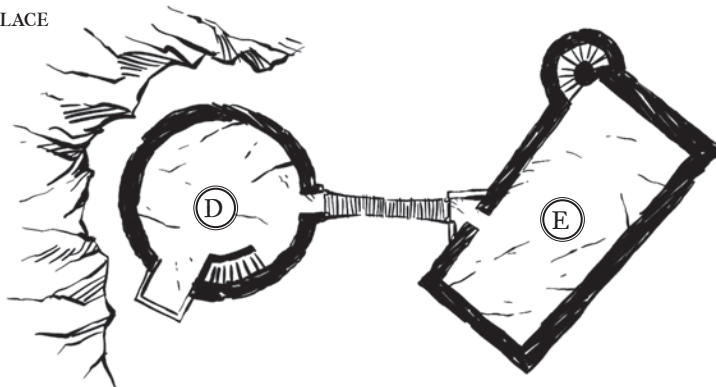
In the leftmost, larger chamber are the charred remains of furniture and a marble statue wearing a mask. Upon closer inspection, the mask turns out to be the living face of a man, strapped to the statue with hooks. This is Zertorme's face. Outside the chamber is a balcony with a beautiful view of the western

THE BURNING PALACE
SECOND FLOOR





THE BURNING PALACE THIRD FLOOR



countryside below the stronghold. A smaller, spiral staircase runs up to the crest of the square tower.

- ❖ CREATURES: The demon Brinhelda.
- ❖ TREASURES: Zertorme's face (invaluable to Zertorme).

D – CREST OF THE TOWER, THIRD FLOOR: *The crests of the palace's two towers blaze intensely with fires of different colors. A narrow suspension bridge runs from the square tower to the round one. On the mountainside above the round tower is what looks to be a more recently built water cistern made of wood.*

The crest of the square tower is empty, save for the flames. If it amuses her, Brinhelda may lie sleeping among the flames, pretending to be imprisoned. By examining the different fires down in the kitchen, the visitors can figure out which ones burn and which ones don't, and reach the woman "in need."

The crenellations of the round tower have been torn down in the east and an addition has been built there. This is where Brinhelda goes to

rinse off her bodily fluids with the water from the cistern, which accumulates in the fish pond below and is collected by Zertorme's pyrotours for the sorcerer's continued experiments.

E – OBSERVATORY AND STAIRCASE: *A narrow ledge leads out to a small, lonely, round tower on a cliff. You see a metal tube pointing skywards through the roof.*

The stargazer's lenses are broken but are still of tolerable use. By a staircase, the adventurers reach an exit towards the plains in the east. From here, Zertorme transports demon-grown animals across the plains, where he releases them to gauge how dangerous they are.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

The most important monsters and non-player characters in Amber's Peak are described below. Monsters and creatures not described here



have the same stats as in the Bestiary or the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide* in the core game box.

QUARD GUARDS

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 3

GEAR: Long spear, broadsword, leather armor

STRANGLING VINES

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 1

For monster attacks, see page 118 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

PALAKUS OF HORN

Palakus is a high Horn priest in the hierarchy of the Quard clan. He has started a cult at Amber's Peak with the belief that Zertorme is the god Horn's chosen, who will liberate the Forbidden Lands and reclaim Aslene. He supports the build-up of the army and is Zertorme's confidant. Palakus has a horse-like countenance that even other riders may laugh at.



STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 1, Lore 3, Insight 2, Manipulation 2, Animal Handling 3

REPUTATION: 1

GEAR: Dagger, bronze medallion with the symbol of Horn (worth 2D6 silver coins), riding horse

MIRIDIA

The scarred Miridia is the commander of the local Quards and a capable warrior. She isn't religious, but despises the Galdanes, and insists on her clan's right to dwell at Amber's Peak. After all, they came to the Forbidden Lands first while the Galdanes are vermin and intruders.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 3, Endurance 2, Melee 3, Animal Handling 2

REPUTATION: 1

GEAR: Warhammer, large shield, studded leather armor, closed helmet, riding horse

SKYLIA OF HORN

Skylia is local high priestess of the Galdanes. She suspects that Zertorme is actually Zygofer, who pretends to be his son so as to stage horrible plans and lay waste to the Forbidden Lands, just like he devastated her homeland, Aslene.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 2, Lore 3, Insight 3, Manipulation 3, Performance 3, Healing 4

GEAR: Broadsword



SKUNSA

The warrior Skunsa, local leader of the Galdanes, is above all a patriot who dreams of the day when the clans can unite to reclaim Aslene. He is old, tired and disillusioned and tries to keep the clan hotheads in check. Like Palakus, he is Zertorme's confidant, and deems that the build-up of the army warrants sacrifices. Skunsa dislikes both Palakus and Skylia.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 2, Lore 1, Insight 2, Manipulation 3

REPUTATION: 2

GEAR: Broadsword, chainmail, riding horse

GUTHARM

The very battle worthy and loud, but not too intelligent, Galdane warrior Gutharm is obsessed with freeing Brinhelda, who he has heard singing and believes is a vulkryie – one of the shieldmaidens of the god Horn.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 4, Stealth 3, Move 3, Marksmanship 3, Scouting 3, Animal Handling 1

GEAR: Long spear, broadsword, short bow, leather armor, open helmet, riding horse

AGUR SEVENTH-COUSIN

Agur is a descendant of the eighth generation of Agur First-Cousin, who was the very first to settle Amber's Peak when the Galdane clan came to the Forbidden Lands. Agur considers that the site belongs to him, more or less. He

tolerates the Quards since they are great costumers, but despises and denigrates them when they are not around. Above all, Agur wants to maintain the peace and his business.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 2, Lore 2, Insight 2, Manipulation 1, Animal Handling 2

GEAR: Knife, D6 silver coins

ZERTORME

Zertorme is a long-lived half-elf, and the son of Zygofer and Martea. Ever since his escape, he has opposed his father with an almost fanatical fervor and he may act ruthlessly if it serves his cause. Zertorme has sacrificed his face to the fire demon Brinhelda in exchange for her aid. He has attempted to grow a new one made from demon flesh, but it looks grotesque and appalling and therefore he always wears a mask when he shows himself. Both Aslene rider clans look up to him as a leader.

Zertorme is one of the key players in the *Raven's Purge* campaign, and you read more about him on page 41.

PYRAVIA

Zertorme's mount is a demonized wyvern whom the sorcerer is attempting to reshape into a dragon. Progress is only so-so. Pyravias can't fly but is, however, able to quickly get around everywhere and can effortlessly climb vertical mountainsides. The reptile isn't able to breathe fire either, but can spit hot plasma and ignite its teeth so that its bite inflicts greater



damage. Pyravias is semi-intelligent and jealous of anyone who receives its master's favor. Zertorme usually makes the carriage invisible when he is outside the stronghold.

STRENGTH 14, AGILITY 5

ARMOR RATING: 6 (scales)

D6 MONSTER ATTACKS:

1. **SMOLDERING BITE!** The reptile takes a forceful bite out of the strongest, closest adventurer. Perform an attack with nine Base dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound). Additionally, the damage ignores all armor due to the white-hot teeth.

2. **FIRE-SPIT!** A missile of burning saliva hits an adventurer within NEAR distance. Perform an attack with seven Base dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). Additionally, the damage ignores all armor.
3. **TERRIBLE SLASH ATTACK!** The reptile slashes an adventurer with razor sharp claws. The adventurer is attacked with nine Base dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound).
4. **CHARGING ATTACK!** Snorting, the beast barrels towards an adventurer to crush them with its full bodyweight. Roll for the attack with ten Base dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force).
5. **TAIL ATTACK!** The reptile swings its tail in a sweeping attack and strikes two adventurers with separate attacks with six Base dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound). The victim becomes prone if the attack succeeds.
6. **REARING ATTACK!** The beast rears up in front of an adventurer and makes a series of quick slashes intended to tear the victim to shreds. Roll for three attacks in direct succession with seven Base Dice for each and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound) each. The attacks can be **PARRIED** separately.

MERIGALL

Merigall is a demon, but appears at Amber's Peak as a wandering, androgynous human minstrel. It is a close acquaintance of both Zertorme (whom it helped escape the father) and Zytera (whom it took part in creating) without either of them being aware of it. At Amber's Peak, Merigall supports Zertorme amassing an army since it looks forward to exciting bat-



tles. Merigall also assists Zertorme in his experiments to create fire-breathing beasts with Brinhelda's secretions. It is the lover of the fire demon, and many others, and a renowned singer among the Aslene.

Merigall is one of the key players in the *Raven's Purge* campaign, and you read more about the demon on page 35.

BRINHELDA, FIRE DEMON

Brinhelda is a female fire demon who has agreed to help Zertorme create fire-creatures by allowing him to collect the essences of passion from her bodily fluids. The greater the passion, the stronger the fire-fluid, the character of which also varies with the nature of the passion. The price she has demanded is the face of the sorcerer, which is strapped to a statue in her chambers and that she often talks to and cuddles with. Brinhelda is quite content with her stay at Amber's Peak. Normally she appears as a young woman and sometimes pretends to be a prisoner or in love just to amuse herself. She has a fiery temper, but her fire only inflicts damage if she wants it to. She has no connection to the god Horn, and is not a vulyrie. The essences of her passions are rinsed or scraped off her body. Some of the unrefined demonic fire essence is poured on the cliffs and walls for the sake of effect, making them burn.

STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 5, WITS 4, EMPATHY 5

ARMOR RATING: Can only be hurt by magic

FIRE BREATH: The attack is can reach up to NEAR distance, and is rolled with ten Base dice (Weapon Damage 1). The victim may DODGE, but not PARRY.

PYROTAURS

Zertorme has created large humanoid creatures with the heads of bulls during his studies. These are related to minotaurs (see page 112 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*) but are also able to breathe fire and cannot be hurt by it themselves. They wield axes. They are semi-intelligent, and completely loyal to Zertorme.





STRENGTH 9,AGILITY 4

ARMOR RATING: 2 (fur)

For monster attacks, see page 112 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*. Pyrotaurs are also able to breathe fire. The attack is can reach up to NEAR distance, and is rolled with ten Base dice (Weapon Damage 1). The victim may DODGE, but not PARRY.

CALYDONES AND OTHER FIRE-BREATHING ANIMALS

Ordinary animals that aggressively breathe fire ravage the countryside around Amber's Peak, among them Calydones – fire-breathing boars.

STRENGTH 6,AGILITY 4

ARMOR RATING: 3 (hide)

BITE (Weapon Damage 2)

CLAWS (Weapon Damage 1)

FIRE ATTACK: Roll for the attack with ten Base dice, range NEAR

DRAGON

A younger she-dragon lives in the mountains near Amber's Peak. Zertorme has stolen one of her eggs, and mommy may show up to reclaim it.

STRENGTH 20,AGILITY 4

ARMOR RATING: 10 (scales)

For monster attacks, see page 89 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

EVENTS

Below are suggestions for events that you can subject the adventurers to in Amber's Peak.

THE BEAST

Desperate farmers arrive at Agurville, where they announce a reward to anyone who can slay a fire-breathing boar that has burned down their outhouse and killed one of the laborers at their farm. They have an old treasure map which they offer as reward. The map may be authentic or a fake. The GM can use it to lead the adventurers to another adventure site.

THE MINSTREL

The adventurers meet Merigall at the inn in Agurville. It introduces itself as a travelling minstrel. Now that the Forbidden Lands are free from the Blood Mist, the land thirsts for new songs and legends. Merigall claims to have heard of the adventurers and asks if it may document their deeds and maybe even travel with them? If allowed to come along, the demon minstrel will discreetly aid them as well as complicating their lives since it thrives on rocking the boat and making life “interesting.” If the adventurers have met Merigall in the shape of Dalb in Weatherstone (see page 225 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*), they won't recognize it since it has taken a new form and presents itself with its true name.

THE FALSE GOD

The Galdane priestess Skylia of Horn falsely suspects that Zertorme is an imposter who



has taken the place of the true Zertorme. She thinks it might even be Zygofer, Zertorme's father, having fled the demons during the Fourth Alder Wars. The ravaging fire-breathing creatures are the imposter's first steps in pillaging the land as he pillaged Aslene. Skylia has an old coin with Zygofer's likeness on it and a hero portrait of Zertorme and asks the adventurers to try to get a glimpse of his face to determine the sorcerer's identity. Alternatively, find proof linking Zertorme to the beasts.

GUTHARM'S DILEMMA

The impassioned Galdane warrior Gutharm is convinced that Zertorme has imprisoned a vulkyrie – a holy shield-maiden of the god Horn – and that the sorcerer is using her blood to produce fire-breathing monsters. He asks the adventurers to aid him in freeing her. Reward? I beg your pardon? Does honor not demand that every hero heeds the call of a lady in distress?



FAVOR OF THE RIVER GODS

The priest Palakus wants to assign the adventurers a mission: the river is due its annual thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest of pearls, but because of the delicate situation between the rider clans, Zertorme has decided that this year's thanksgiving ritual must be performed by out-of-town strangers or not at all.

The rite consists of rolling a holy stone

orb, symbolizing a giant pearl, to the riverside and then lighting fires around it. After being heated up, the orb must be laved with water from the river three times, with a hymn being sung between each laving. Palakus is very anxious to keep the river gods happy. As a reward, the adventurers will receive the friendship of the Quards as well as coin and a good horse, but only if they perform the ceremony discreetly, without the Galdanes noticing.

The stone orb is a dragon egg that Zertorme has managed to acquire. After being fired and then watered it will hatch. Zertorme will be watching from a distance, and plans on placing a spell of invisibility on the hatchling once it has

hatched to imprint it on himself. He has no greater desire than a tame dragon, and has orchestrated the hatching attempt but dares not perform it himself.

The problem is that the dragon hatchling will let out an earsplitting scream as soon as a crack appears, calling its mother to the site. She is on the hunt and in a foul mood since her egg went missing. Possible complications are that the dragon hatchling is imprinted on one of the adventurers, that the dragon mother chases away Zertorme and then flies off with the hatchling in her claws, or that Pyravias kills it with a smoldering bite before someone manages to stop her. It is possible that the dragon mother will burn down part of the village in retaliation. If the adventurers ask others of the ceremony beforehand, they will have never heard of it.



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Castle

The old elven city looks alive from a distance. Smoke rises from fires and creatures are moving among the houses. As you get closer, you notice how all of the once beautiful houses are dilapidated, the gardens have been cut down or left to grow wild and the populace isn't elven but multitudes of orcs instead. The fortress of the Eye of the Rose looks down upon the city from the cliff above, from which the self-appointed emperor of the orcish clans, Hroka the First and the Greatest, is said to rule.

BACKGROUND

The ambition of Hroka, leader of the Urhur clan, is to build an orcish nation and he wants to appear as a wise and strong ruler, but he

is hard pressed by more traditionally violent groups of orcs. Hroka has installed himself as emperor in the ruin of the elven fortress of the Eye of the Rose – one of several constructions given to the elves as a gift of friendship by the dwarves.

As a symbol of his greatness, the emperor has given his spouse Soria the magical cloak clasp called the Blood Star (see page 26), in which the elven ruby Iridne is set. Iridne is an elven woman, something the orcs are unaware of. The elven Redrunners have sent a group of rangers to rescue her. Should they succeed, Hroka will most likely fall politically. The adventurers can attempt to retrieve the stone peacefully during the night, maybe on their own behalf, or take part in the attack at dawn. Iridne's life



partner, Klotinda, is part of the elven force, and has taken the shape of an Ent.



GETTING HERE

There are many ways in which the adventurers can find the Eye of the Rose. They may have found a map that leads here, heard the legends about this place or encountered one of the events below.

MERGOLENE'S PLEA

The elven druid Mergolene is desperately trying to find a peaceful solution to the conflict between the Redrunners and the orcs of the Eye of the Rose. The strange elf will appear when the adventurers have set up camp for the night, asking them to help the elves by stealing Emperor Hroka's elven ruby and, in so doing, avoiding further bloodshed. Mergolene has no money to pay them with, but offers to let them keep anything they find in the fortress if they carry out this mission. Mergolene knows of the secret passage between the Chapel of the Gods and the library inside the Eye of the Rose fortress. See the False Ruby event on page 105.

THE LOST PEDDLER

The adventurers are sought out by the peddler Jorg, who desperately tells them of his partner, Valom, who has been kidnapped by orcs in the vicinity of the Eye of the Rose. Jorg is prepared to pay the adventurers to save his associate and promises five silver coins

RECOMMENDED READING

Before running Eye of the Rose, it is suggested that you read the section on orcs and especially the Urhur clan (see page 64 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*), as well as the texts on elves and the Redrunners (see page 56 in *Gamemaster's Guide*).

as soon as the deal is struck and two whole gold coins if they return Valom to their camp some distance away.

THE MAP

The adventurers find a map in their travels across the Forbidden Lands. It can, for example, be found on the corpse of an orc, elf, or another adventurer. The map shows the location of the Eye of the Rose as well as a rough sketch of the Chapel of the Gods, and contains a poem that shows the way through the secret passage from the chapel to the fortress (see Mergolene's poem on page 99).



LEGEND

The orcs of the Forbidden Lands have sought their place in the world ever since they were sent to war against the humans and were then aban-



done by the elves and dwarves. Many of them live bitter lives as miscreants and robbers in the forests, but word is now spreading that an orc leader is holding court in the abandoned elven fortress of the Eye of the Rose. He is said to call himself Emperor Hroka the First and the Greatest. Merchants who've visited the place whisper that the emperor has bought a priceless ruby that he intends to bestow upon his spouse so as to prove his worthiness as emperor.



LOCATIONS

The ruin of the fortress the Eye of the Rose is situated on the top of a cliff with the ruined city below. A couple of hundred orcs from the Urhur clan live in the ruins from which the smoke of fires rises. The steep eastern face of the acropolis oversees the wild city park where the group of Redrunners are hiding.

1. THE FORTRESS GATES

The gates of the Eye of the Rose gape towards you like a maw lined with iron teeth. A couple of stout orcs stand guard. You spot an alarm bell just inside the raised portcullis. Outside are a couple of dozen orcs who have gathered to trade goods and services.

The guards will ring the alarm bell if anything happens, whereupon more of them will come running. Like most orcs performing their duty in the fortress, the guards are peculiarly dressed in hats and details of clothing stolen from humans. It is Hranga Gala who dictates the fashion as it amuses him.

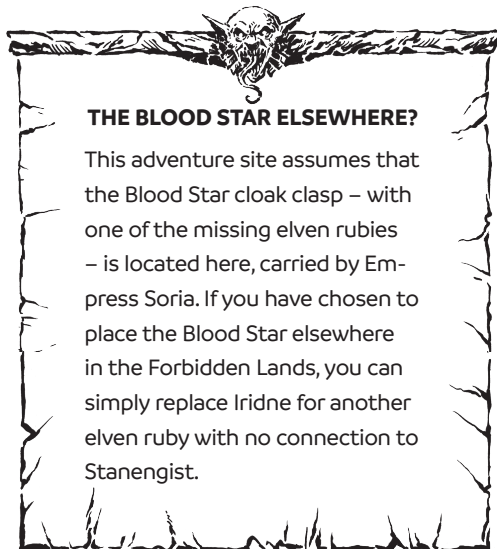
The occasional merchants of other kin can be found in the city since Emperor Hroka seeks to promote trade.

- ❖ CREATURES: Three orc guards. Half a dozen orc servants.

2. LIBRARY

At the pupil of the eye-shaped fortress stands a withered, round tower. It appears to have burned, for the walls are blackened by soot.

In the time of the elves, the tower was furnished with a well-stocked library, which is now mainly burnt or decomposed. The remains of instruments of astronomy and a larger telescope can be found among the debris. These used to stand on the roof that has long since caved in. The confused master, Anselm,



THE BLOOD STAR ELSEWHERE?

This adventure site assumes that the Blood Star cloak clasp – with one of the missing elven rubies – is located here, carried by Empress Soria. If you have chosen to place the Blood Star elsewhere in the Forbidden Lands, you can simply replace Iridne for another elven ruby with no connection to Stanengist.



pokes about in the debris and deciphers knowledge he considers himself to have interpreted for the emperor. He has a couple of orc helpers and apprentices.

The library could be a good location for the GM to place leads to other adventure sites.

In the southern wall of the library, there is a hidden door to a secret passage leading to the Chapel of the Gods outside the walls of the fortress (see location #9 on the map). The secret door can only be opened from the other side.

- ❖ CREATURES: Master Anselm, D6 orcs.
- ❖ TREASURES: Elven instruments of astronomy (worth D6 gold coins in total), a telescope of elven construction (worth 3D6 gold coins).

3. THE BANQUET HALL

The smell of sweat, roast meat, beer and vomit lies as thick as the din in a large stone hall without a ceiling. A couple of muscled orc warriors blow off some steam between the last watch and

the next. The guests slice servings of pork from a whole pig being roasted above a fire in one of the corners.

The off-duty orcs of the Imperial Guard are almost constantly partying in this location, when they aren't arm wrestling or boasting. The entrance to the workshops and the commandant's tower are accessible from the hall.

- ❖ CREATURES: 2D6 orc guards.
- ❖ TREASURES: A captured, frayed Alderlander tapestry (worth D6 silver coins).

4. WORKSHOPS AND PRISON

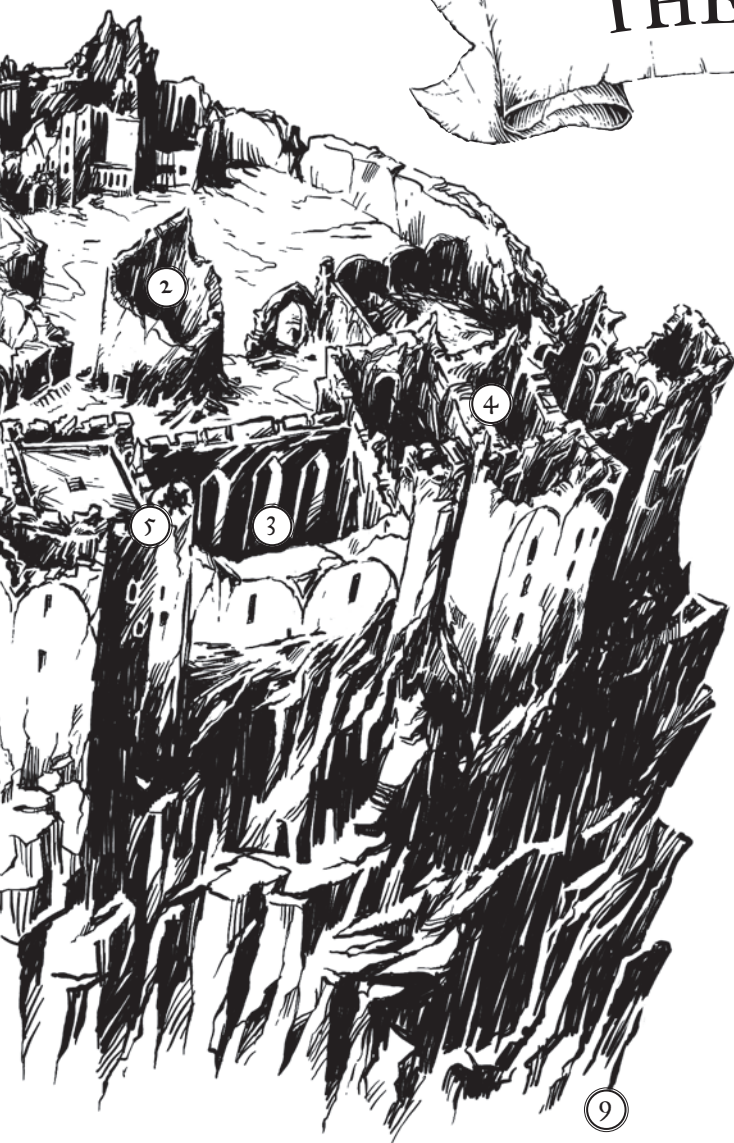
The stone buildings beyond the banquet hall once had several stories but the floors have carved in, leaving very high-ceilinged stone rooms. The improvised workshops are filled with a clattering noise and the sound of fires roaring. Dwarves and humans work with younger orcs, guarded and heavily monitored by larger warriors.







EYE OF THE ROSE





The craftsmen who have been kidnapped or lured to the city by the Viraga work here. About twenty younger orcs are supposed to be training to increase the knowledge of the orc nation. The progress is so-so, enraging the orcs and causing them to slap around their teachers. The tower in the back has a covered roof and barred gate behind which the craftsmen are imprisoned when resting.

This is a suitable location for the GM to place NPCs who can either lead the adventurers to other adventure sites or be rescued for a reward, or because they are previous acquaintances. An agile person can climb on the remains of the storeys above floor level.

- ❖ CREATURES: A dozen prisoners (dwarves and humans, use suitable stats from the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

5. THE TOWER OF THE COMMANDER

Next to the banquet hall stands a rather well-kept tower, three floors high. The entrance from the banquet hall is guarded by two seemingly sober warriors.

The commander of the fortress, a powerful, beast-like orc named Ullt, lives in the tower. He has the keys to cells in the workshop and supervises the defense of the fortress.

- ❖ CREATURES: Two orc guards and Ullt, the orc commander.
- ❖ TREASURES: Elven skull fashioned into a drinking horn (worth 2D6 silver coins to a



necromancer, if a Redrunner catches sight of it he will immediately attack the owner).

6. GUARD STATION

In an open area of cobbled stone burns a large bonfire around which half a dozen heavily armed orcs crouch or sit.

The guards watch the entrance to the court of audience.

- ❖ CREATURES: Half a dozen orc guards.



7. COURT OF AUDIENCE

A large open courtyard with a roof over the far, raised end. On a throne sits a huge orc draped in knick-knacks and garish fabrics surrounded by other older and more distinguished orcs as well as a human. Many people mill about in the courtyard: high-ranked orcs being entertained by a couple of human jesters who don't seem to be enjoying themselves.

At night, Emperor Hroka holds court here with his knights. The emperor himself sits on a throne under the roof with the empress, his commander-in-chief and his court chancellor. The courtyard closest to the gates has no roof. Here one eats and drinks and discusses matters of state, judges in civil proceedings and is entertained by duels or human jesters who have been kidnapped and brought here. The empress' two ladies-in-waiting may seem harmless, but they are actually Viraga who have been trained as assassins and also serve as her bodyguards.

- ❖ CREATURES: Emperor Hroka, Empress Soria, two Viraga ladies-in-waiting, a score of orc guards, nobles and dignitaries and the two miserable jesters, Reft and Logas.

8. CASTLE

A largely intact castle towers over the court of audience. Banners proudly flap in the wind.

In the castle, the private suites of the emperor and the empress can be found, as well as accommodations for bodyguards and servants. Hrang Gala lives here as well in his own room, with a couple of orc mistresses.

- ❖ CREATURES: Hrang Gala.
- ❖ TREASURES: In the basement is a treasure chest. Hrang Gala has the key. To determine the contents of the chest, roll twice on the table for VALUABLE finds, and once on the table for PRECIOUS finds (pages 189 and 191 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

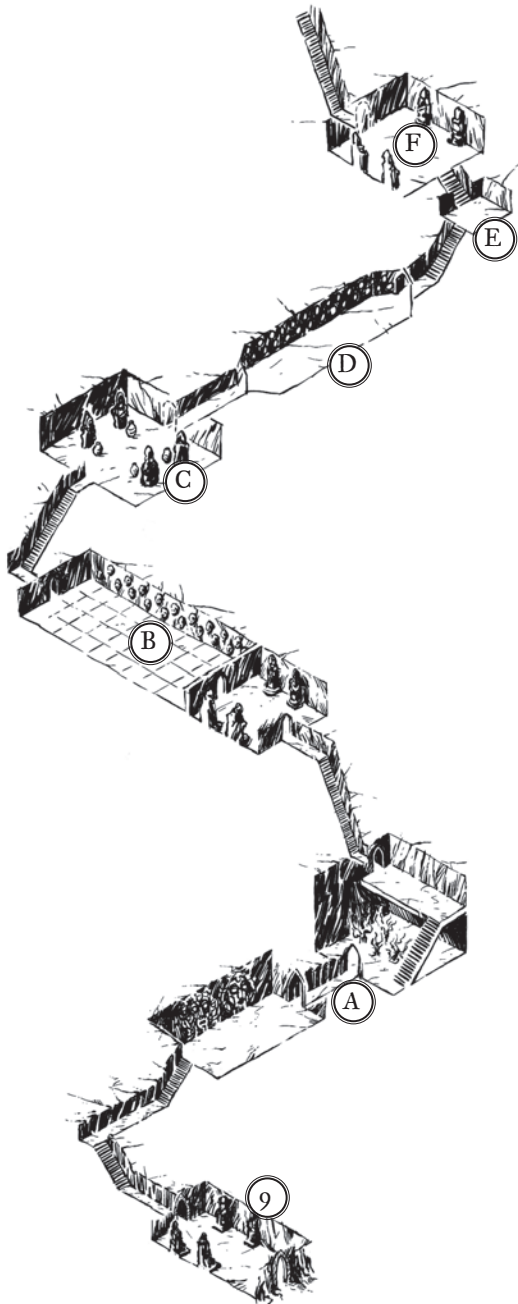
9. CHAPEL OF THE GODS

In the overgrown old city park below the Eye of the Rose fortress, you find the ruins of a small decayed chapel dedicated to the gods of nature. Its inner chamber, an alcove hewn into the mountainside, is intact although vines have taken root in here. Four stone statues stand in the chamber, their mouths gaping.

The gods depicted are Flow, Wail, Clay and the Nightwalker. If someone blows into their half-open mouths, the tones of a diminished chord are heard, i.e., four tones separated by two semi-tones between each tone. The head on the

MERGOLENE'S POEM

*Four divine kisses echo hazily
Flow, speak!
Quiet, Wail!
The god of Clay the vessel shapes
The walker of Night the serpent
escapes
The fortress is entered through the
yield of the tree*



third stone has cracked, however, producing no sound. If someone sings the missing tone while the others blow into the three remaining statues mouths, a hidden door will swing open. The adventurers can figure out the cipher with the help of Mergolene's poem (see the boxed text). The elves created this choral lock since orcs and other beasts don't understand such music.

The hidden door will reveal a secret passage from the chapel all the way to the library inside the Eye of the Rose castle (location #2 on the main map). The adventurers will need to pass several dangerous traps on the way, however. See the detailed map to the left. The traps are described below.

A – HALL OF STARES: On the walls next to a closed door are bas reliefs of the faces of the four gods. Inside the mouth of Flow is a pressure plate that can be pushed aside causing a few hundred liters of water to gush from her mouth in a couple of minutes. If the tank of water is emptied, it is possible to safely open the door. If the tank isn't drained, the water will flow into the corridor beyond when the door is opened. The water will cause a species of rapid-growth barbed vines to sprout from the wooden floor. The door will be completely blocked by vegetation within five minutes; within fifteen minutes it will have spread into the upper passage, sealing it off.

B – HALL OF STATUES: In the passage are the statues of the four gods and beyond a portal, multiple versions of their faces are set into the wall. Before proceeding through, the adventurers have to block the mouth of the statue of Wail, or else spores will pour from



all of her faces as they step on the pressure plates in the middle of the corridor. The spores are hallucinogenic and count as a poison with Potency 7. Anyone affected by the spores will become confused and may be subjected to visions of the statues coming alive. This is only an illusion.

C – HALL OF URNS: The statues of the four gods stand inside the room, and in front of each of them is an urn. If the adventurers turn Clay's urn, a hidden passage opens.

D – HALL OF DARKNESS: A corridor with a large number of the gaping faces of the gods must be traversed in darkness, else serpents will slither from the mouths and attack.

❖ **CREATURES:** 4D6 poisonous snakes (see page 127 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*). Their poison is lethal and has a Potency of 5.

E – HALL OF THE TREE: Yet another room with the statues of the four gods, as well as bas reliefs of a landscape on all four walls. There is one single tree in the reliefs and if the adventurers press on its only fruit, the last door will open up, leading to the library of the fortress (location #2 on the map).

F – THE CHAMBER OF KNOWLEDGE: A small side chamber to the room with statues of the gods contains the so-called Book of Knowledge resting on a stone lectern, written in an unknown language that still feels familiar to everyone. The book gives Gear Bonus +2 and a D8 Artifact Die to all LORE rolls. The

book cannot be repaired. If its Gear Bonus reaches zero, it falls apart and is permanently destroyed.

❖ **TREASURES:** The Book of Knowledge.



MONSTERS AND NPCS

The most important monsters and NPCs in Eye of the Rose are described below. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same stats as in the Bestiary or the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

HROKA THE FIRST AND THE GREATEST

The orc emperor of the Urhur clan is a very big and a strong warrior, but the good life has added a couple of inches to his waist. His princely attire, with details and illustrations mostly seen on children and women among humans, may impart a humorous impression of the emperor.

He does his best to be a just and strong leader, but like all male orcs, he suffers from a violent temper. Hroka also has a weakness for flattery and can't stand being criticized in front of an audience. He implicitly trusts and relies on Soria and Hrangga Gala as his advisors. However, he gets most of his ideas from his dreams and prefers to sleep on all difficult decisions. He is unaware of it, but it is Iridne who councils him in his sleep.



STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 4, Lore 2, Insight 2, Manipulation 3

REPUTATION: 9

GEAR: Gold-plated scimitar, plate armor

EMPRESS SORIA

Hroka's spouse exudes power and intelligence, and is a capable orc female with powerful contacts among the Viraga. Just like her sisters, she could pass for human. Soria truly loves Hroka and tries to support him in the building of his orc nation. She is no stranger to less orthodox solutions, including unholy alliances with other kin, when it comes to achieving her goals. Soria and Hrange Gala dislike each other. Soria has recently received the Blood Star cloak clasp (see page 26) with the ruby Iridne from her husband and carries it at all times, except for when she sleeps.

Empress Soria is one of the key players of the *Raven's Purge* campaign. You can read more about her in Chapter 2. There, you will also find her stats and an image of her.

BODYGUARDS OF THE EMPRESS

The two Viraga orcs who guard Empress Soria do so with their lives.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 5, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 4, Stealth 4, Move 3, Marksmanship 3, Scouting 3

TALENTS: Path of the Killer 2

GEAR: Scimitar, short bow, studded leather armor

HRANGA GALA

Hrange Gala, a human and a trickster, is tall, dark and lanky, excessively draped in knick-knacks, which in combination with a sinister smile, reveals his true nature more than it provides the intended noble impression. He escaped pursuers and ended up as advisor to the orc emperor through strange circumstances. Gala has assumed the role of imparting how a world ruler should act and behave, knowledge he makes up as the need arises. Therefore, the customs at the court of the Eye of the Rose are quite odd. Gala is very anxious about his unlimited access to food, protection, wealth, servants and bedfellows, and will view every human as a threat to his position. He was actually born with another name, but changed it so that the orcs would be able to pronounce it. During the course of the adventure, he will try to reveal the potential tricks, lies and secrets of the adventurers.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Sleight of Hand 3, Lore 2, Insight 3, Manipulation 4, Performance 2

GEAR: Dagger, vial of poison (Lethal, Potency 7), key to the basement, rings and jewelry (worth 2D6 silver coins in all).

MASTER ANSELM

Anselm is human, a learned old-timer from near Vivend, who had been lured here by the Viraga. He claims to be able to read the remains of the documents in the library to stay alive, but makes things up as he goes along. Most of all, he wants to be rescued from the orcs.



STRENGTH 1, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Lore 4

ULLT

The commandant of the Eye of the Rose is a towering orc with a scarred visage that bears witness to several bloody battles. Ullt believes that Emperor Hroka has become much too gentle over the years, and views himself as a future replacement.

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 3, Melee 3, Insight 2

TALENTS: Path of the Enemy 2

REPUTATION: 3

GEAR: Two-handed sword, chainmail

ORC GUARD

The guards and soldiers of the Eye of the Rose all belong to the Urhur clan and have pledged their lives to Emperor Hroka.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 1

SKILLS: Melee 2

TALENTS: Threatening 1, Melee Charge 2

GEAR: Scimitar, large shield, studded leather armor

ORC SERVANT

In the Eye of the Rose are some one hundred orcs who belong to the court or perform other services for the clan. These orcs are servants and take care of the daily chores.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 2, WITS 2, EMPATHY 1

ULMAYA

The elven officer Ulmaya is very old, which shows in her skin that resembles aged, polished wood even if she shows no other signs of age. She leads the group of the Redrunners with the mission of rescuing Iridne's ruby in Blood Star. She's a dutiful and honorable soldier and will attempt to fulfill her duty according to plan. She is no warmonger, however.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 4, WITS 5, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 4, Stealth 3, Move 3, Marksmanship 3, Lore 3, Insight 2, Healing 3

TALENTS: Path of the Blade 2, Lightning Fast 1, Sword Fighter 1

REPUTATION: 3

GEAR: Longsword, four throwing knives, studded leather armor

ALSURSO

The silver-haired, but gnarly and wiry Alsur-



so makes an openly unpleasant impression with his very sharply cut features and a gaze of overt contempt. The elf is second-in-command in the Redrunner force, and Ulmaya's partner and lover for several hundred years – they are old partners in crime in their occupation. Unlike Ulmaya, Alsurso loves war and is a deep-seated racist with aristocratic manners. He despises all other kin and wouldn't mind a full-out war against the orcs, whom he believes to be deceitful and uneducated trash. When it comes to other elves he is friendly and proper. Alsurso is a feared archer.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 3, Stealth 3, Move 4, Marksman 5, Manipulation 2

TALENTS: Fast Shooter 3, Path of the Arrow 2, Executioner 2, Cold Blooded 1

GEAR: Magical longbow (D8 Artifact Die), broadsword, studded leather armor

MERGOLENE

Sexless and hairless, Mergolene is an elven druid who appears older than is usual among elves. The druid has clothes made from living plants and has the ability to make the plants in the park perform or form things like ropes after their own fashion. Mergolene is subservient to Ulmaya, but would prefer a diplomatic solution. Mergolene understands that the rule of the orc emperor Hroka will be compromised if the Blood Star cloak clasp with the elven ruby is taken by force or subterfuge, and would rather see the orc nation thrive. Alsurso deems such talk as treason, but Ulmaya has agreed to stay her blade until dawn.x

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 6, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Lore 4, Insight 3, Manipulation 3, Performance 3, Healing 3

TALENTS: Path of Shifting Shapes 3, Path of Healing 2

GEAR: Staff

KLOTINDA

Klotinda is an elven ruby in the wooden shape of an Ent. Her trunk body, ten meters tall, is tilted with a head at the top, entangled in the plaited canopy that serves as hair. Supported beneath the trunk by a dozen sturdy branches, the creature mostly resembles a many-legged and many-armed giant gorilla walking on its knuckles. The back and the branches are draped in foliage of the barbed fashion of iron oak. With the help of her many arms, Klotinda can scale the cliff face to the fortress of the Eye of the Rose like a giant spider, carrying about ten humanoids among her branches.

STRENGTH 14, AGILITY 3

ARMOR RATING: 6 (bark)

For monster attacks, see page 93 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

IRIDNE

Iridne is an old, large and precious elven ruby that is currently set into Empress Soria's cloak clasp Blood Star. She willingly left Klotinda, who seemed to her too dominant and returned to her ruby shape, but she can appear as the talking shadow of an elf woman or speak through dreams. Iridne feels sorry for the



orcs, the once faithful servants of the elves, and wants to atone for the betrayal of the elves by helping Hroka build an orc civilization. She also enjoys being admired, set into the cloak clasp. Iridne's view on the matter is preferably clarified at the end of the adventure and comes as a surprise to all of the elves. Mergolene will immediately support Iridne's stance.

Iridne can tell the adventurers most of the legend of the crown Stanengist (Chapter 2).

WITS 5, EMPATHY 5

SKILLS: Lore 5, Insight 4, Manipulation 5



EVENTS

Below are suggestions for events that you can subject the adventurers to in Eye of the Rose.

THE FALSE RUBY

Mergolene contacts the adventurers in one fashion or another, and if they accept offers them a task. The druid explains to them the dilemma of Emperor Hroka's position. A dummy of the ruby Iridne has been brought, a dead but valuable stone that can be switched with the original "as if nothing had happened," that will allow everyone to remain satisfied. Mergolene gives the stone to the adventurers if they declare themselves willing to perform the switch. If they steal both the dummy and the original ruby, they'll have a great treasure but enraged elves on their track for all time.

Mergolene knows of the hidden passage

from the Chapel of the Gods in the old city park (location #9 on the map) to the fortress and gives the adventurers the poem that can help them open the hidden door (see page 99). They'll have to decipher it themselves however, and since no elf can enter the chapel without ritually cleansing themselves for several months, they'll have to go alone. No such restrictions exist for non-elves.

Mergolene has three magical talismans in the shape of small copper humans that hang from a chain around her neck. The head on each talisman can be unscrewed. If blood from an orc, dwarf, elf, or human is poured into the talisman, the wearer will take the shape of the blood's owner for a Quarter Day. The owner has to be alive for the process to work. The wearer doesn't gain any additional knowledge or properties, except for the purely physical. If the adventurers are able to discreetly kidnap a couple of orcs, they can enter the fortress unnoticed in their shapes. Blood from the same orc can be poured into several talismans to make copies.

THE CONDESCENDING ELF

Alsurso blatantly insults one of the adventurers of a different kin, and will go as far as challenging them to a duel if the adventurer objects to this. At worst, Alsurso can brand the adventurers as inimical to the elven people and will view them as outright enemies.

DIPLOMATIC MISUNDERSTANDING

The adventurers are mistaken for ambassadors from another ruler by orcish guards and dig-



nitaries. If they assume the roles, they need to quickly figure out where they hail from and for what purpose they are visiting the great emperor. They will soon become aware that Emperor Hroka expects to be flattered excessively (i.e., every sentence) and as long as they keep it up, the emperor and the court will be satisfied with them. Hranga Gala will, however, be suspicious and try to expose and compromise them. It appears that an “ambassador” from another kin is already imprisoned in the fortress. The emperor wants to decide which kin is worthy of his favor by pitting the ambassadors against each other in trial by combat.

THE PEDDLER’S TALE

The peddler, Valom, who is imprisoned in the fortress, knows that Hranga Gala has hidden riches in his room in the castle, since he has been discreetly asked to appraise them. The find would compromise the advisor before the emperor.

PLEA OF THE LADY-IN-WAITING

One of Empress Soria’s ladies-in-waiting contacts the adventurers (if they are inside the fortress) for a secret meeting with the empress. Soria has tired of her husband talking to another woman in his sleep and suspects a connection to the ruby Iridne. She is open to suggestions, including switching the original gem for the copy. At the same time, she is very anxious not to compromise the emperor. To make matters more difficult, one of Hranga Gala’s spies may be privy to this conversation. The adventurers can

simply tell the empress of the elves and their plans, becoming the heroes of the Urhur clan as well as their friends. They will then receive Iridne, which the empress has discreetly switched out for the copy. The elves will most likely be slaughtered and the adventurers won’t be popular among those who eventually survive.

ATTACK OF THE ELVES

The elves and the Ent Klotinda will attack at dawn to take back the ruby Iridne if the adventurers haven’t retrieved it already. Mergolene will then conjure up a mist that hides the Ent as it scales the cliff as well as the Redrunners’ movements. The elves depend on the element of surprise – if the orcs are able to mobilize, the elves will be outnumbered.





TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Village (by the sea)

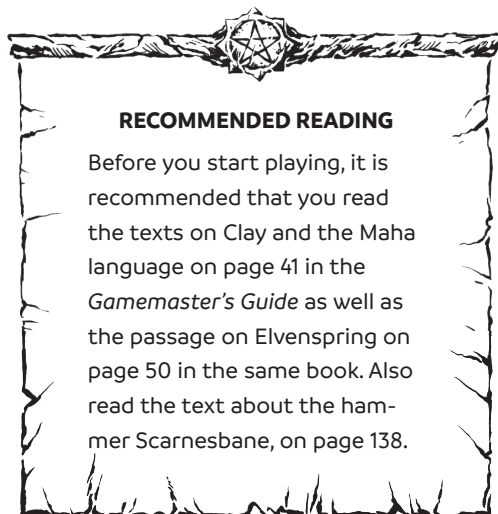
As the sun rises from the waves, four tall, monolithic cliffs are silhouetted against the great ocean in the east. The wind is brisk. It carries with it the scent of seaweed and a peculiar, wordless tune from the top of the tallest pillar. The cliffs are circled by razorbills, gulls and the stormriders, who are said to be missing legs since they are born, live and die in the sky. At the bottom of the cliffs the temple of the druids awakes to a new day along with the villagers: fishermen load their boats with nets, shepherds herd their flocks to the hills and the temple novices collect clay from the beach..

BACKGROUND

The druids of the Storm Temple are all Elvenspring – half-elves responsible for all of

creation, closely allied to the elves who raised them. Kritre the Caller, holy singer of the druids, converses daily with the sea and sky, and is believed to awaken the winds that are to rule the land for the day.

Legend has it that the sea has left gifts at the temple four times in the past. Now it has happened again. The gift is the legendary hammer Scarnesbane, that has been re-discovered and brought in secret to the temple by the druids (if the adventurers have already found the hammer at another location, you can replace it with another artifact from Chapter 6 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*). Now they want to legitimize their ownership by exploiting the legend of the gifts of the sea, otherwise the dwarves will demand they return the weapon since it's a relic to them. However, the plan has run into



RECOMMENDED READING

Before you start playing, it is recommended that you read the texts on Clay and the Maha language on page 41 in the *Gamemaster's Guide* as well as the passage on Elvenspring on page 50 in the same book. Also read the text about the hammer Scarnesbane, on page 138.

complications. The gift is in a locked chest in the Chamber of the Winds, and can only be opened by someone who succeeds at interpreting the instructions and can use the Maha language of Clay. Kritre has, however, declared that the druids themselves cannot lay claim to the gift, nor assist the so inclined to decipher the code or even teach them the Maha language. According to the faith of the druids, the cipher must be decoded in person so as not to lose its power. If the adventurers fail to solve the cipher, the GM may let Healing Knife or the dwarves interpret a moderate amount of the language or its structure.

The adventurers can thus claim the gift of the sea by solving the cipher in the Chamber of the Winds. Officially, the druids are helpful in this, but some attempt to secretly sabotage their endeavor. In total, there are 26 druids at the temple, but only the named ones carry Maha signs embroidered on their clothes.

GETTING HERE

There are many ways in which the adventurers can find Pelagia. They may have found a map that leads here, heard the legends of this place, or encountered one of the events below.

BYRNEL'S PLEA

The adventurers are approached by Master Snidra, a dwarf who serves Byrnel of the Crombe clan. He has heard of the adventurers' deeds and says that Byrnel has a prosperous proposal for them and awaits them in nearby Pelagia. If the adventurers follow Snidra to Pelagia, he will guide them to the barracks where Byrnel is waiting (see the event "The Family Heirloom," on page 120).

THE DEAD DRUID

One night, when the adventurers have made camp, several of them are afflicted by a strange dream. A figure appears and begs them to help its brothers and sisters in Pelagia. The figure has been slain by a man with a dark mind whose countenance and voice he then stole through magic most foul, seeking to steal the Gift of the Sea. The next day, a short distance from their camp, the adventurers find a druid, slain by a knife between the shoulder blades and then burned so as to be impossible to recognize. It is the blood magician Ravil who, through an ancient ritual, has enchanted himself and taken the identity of one of the druids (after having murdered them). It is up to you, as GM, to decide which one of the druids is actually the magician.



LEGEND

The humans are said to have first tread the soil of Ravenland at Pelagia. According to the druids, here the winds of the land are born between the four holy monoliths to be loaded with rain so that the clouds can carry water to the fields and forests. In these days, expectations are high at the temple of Pelagia. The temple is supposed to have been granted another gift, an occurrence that, according to legend, has only happened four times before, a gift that only the worthy can claim. What it contains or how it is claimed is difficult to say.



LOCATIONS

Below are sites in and around Pelagia that the adventurers can visit.

1. THE CLAY BEACH

As you approach the pillars, you see a couple of younger druids in earthen frocks working on the beach with pushcarts and shovels.

Novices gather shellfish, but their main task is to collect sand and clay for the pottery in their pushcarts. They are usually sociable and welcoming.

2. GRAZING PASTURES

In grazing pastures beneath the widest, southern pillar, some sheep, horses and oxen graze. You notice a piece of wood with some peculiar, painted signs on one of the gateposts.

THE GIFT AND THE CIPHER

A recurring theme in this adventure site is the hunt for what the druids call the Gift of the Sea. The powerful artifact has triggered greed in both druids and visitors to the temple area. To be able to open the stone chest containing the gift, the adventurers must first solve the cipher protecting it. The cipher is constructed with Maha signs (see page 41 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*) and can be solved using the signs found around Pelagia. Read more about this in the event called "The Cipher" on page 122. It is up to you as GM how important you want the cipher to be in your adventure, as some players enjoy a linguistic challenge while others do not.

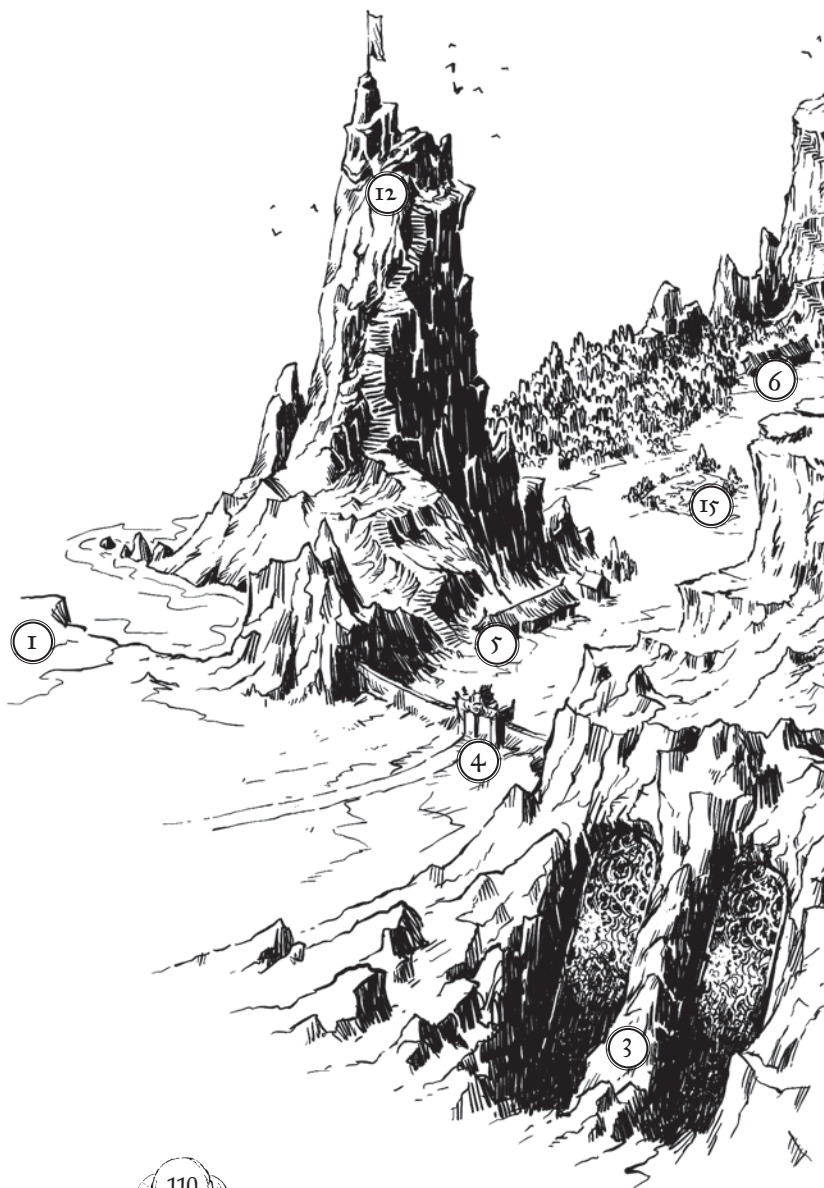
The horses belong to the druids, while the oxen and sheep belong to the villagers. They are usually tended by a couple of children.

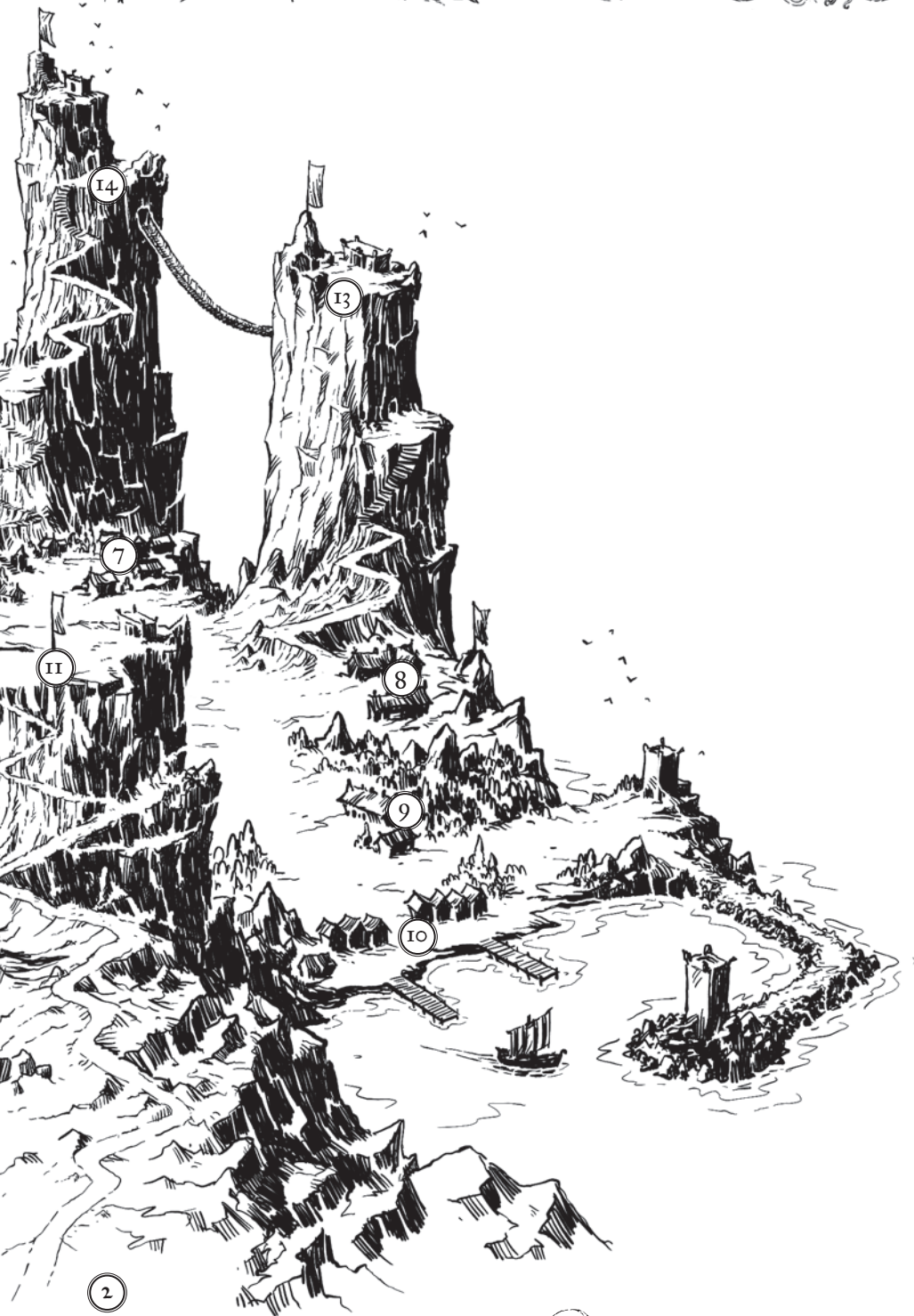
❖ **SIGNS:** The Maha signs on the piece of wood mean "Close the gate."





PELAGIA







3. WATCHERS' REST

In the base of the southern monolith are two gigantic, chiseled alcoves. They are tall as temple towers with a smooth surface of opaque, glassy rock. Next to each alcove is a blank slate of rock made of the same material, mounted on the cliffside.

The alcoves are thirty-meter-high portals that have been sealed with stone resembling obsidian. The material can be neither moved, scratched nor cracked. The druids may share that the alcoves are portals from which giants one day will appear to save the land.

The obsidian stone can only be cracked by the hammer Scarnesbane found in the Chamber of the Winds or alternately be scratched by the knife Scarnesclaw, which is carried by Kritre. Both are said to originate from Scarne, the mother of dragons, who according to legend was felled by the dwarven king Oramund. If an alcove is cracked, a stone titan made of black obsidian will emerge. It will perform whatever task has been written on the stone tablet in the Maha language. If no task has been specified, it will wander in a random direction, destroying everything in its path and stopping when it reaches the mountainous barriers of the Forbidden Lands or at most after 60 days. Having fulfilled its task, it will remain standing like a normal statue.

❖ CREATURES: Two slumbering stone titans.

4. THE TEMPLE GATE

A low stone wall demarcates the temple area on the landward side, but does not appear to serve as fortifications. A rope with a bell on the end hangs on the right side of the closed gate. Above

the gate are four Maha signs, and on a sign next to the rope are additional signs.

There is normally no one here, as the temple is open to everyone and has no guards to keep strangers away.

❖ SIGNS: By the rope: "Open door!" Above the gate are the Maha signs for the four winds: Eurus, Notus, Zephyrus, Boreas (you always start with Eurus, which brought the humans to Ravenland).



5. VISITOR BARRACKS

Inside the gate to the left is a barracks, where people who obviously aren't monks dwell.

Strangers in the village are housed in the barracks for a small donation. The alternatives are to pay for lodging at the inn (#9 on the map) or pitching ones own tents.

❖ CREATURES: Byrdel, along with Master Snidra, and a couple of other dwarves. The GM may add additional characters here as well.

6. INFIRMARY

A longhouse is beautifully situated against the



grove beyond. Outside sits a fisherman who has hurt his hand on a fishing spear and an old woman who is short of breath, cared for by a friend. On the door is a plate with Maba signs.

The druids are renowned healers who help the sick and wounded through magic as well as traditional herbal medicine. An open area by the grove is used for healing. Elves usually camp among the trees on their visits to Pelagia.

- ❖ CREATURES: Rain and Soil along with a couple of druids.
- ❖ SIGNS: “House of Healing.”



7. THE DWELLINGS OF THE DRUIDS

Below the tall northern monolith is a small collection of simple, stone houses surrounded by a low wall. Novices poke about in the herbal gardens. A larger building appears to house an auditorium.

In the auditorium are two paintings which the druids can reveal depict “The Great Hunt” and “Halgan is wounded and Merivin is slain,” respectively.

- ❖ CREATURES: Keldra the Deserving, Hunting Lynx, White Cloud’s Flight.
- ❖ SIGNS: The titles of the paintings.



8. POTTERY

Below the eastern cliff is a small angular building. Smoke billows out from the pottery kilns inside. Muddy novices place newly manufactured clay objects on wooden racks to dry. Above the door are pinned two Maba signs in the shape of clay tablets.

- ❖ CREATURES: Heaven’s White Fire.
- ❖ SIGNS: Above the door: “Pottery.” Inside, there is an assortment of Maha tablets – give the players the handout on page 124.



9. “THREE SMALL BLACK SNAKES” INN

Beautifully nestled in the greenery above the fishing village lies the “Three Small Black Snakes” inn. The sign with Maba signs swings in the ocean breeze.

This simple inn for strangers is run by the dropout novice Healing Knife. Visitors can pay for lodging in rooms available here.

- ❖ CREATURES: Healing Knife.
- ❖ SIGNS: The sign of the inn: “Three Small Black Snakes.”





10. FISHING HARBOR

Closest to the water lie a couple of sheds with the shops of the fishermen and cutters moored to a pier. The scent of the ocean assaults you as well as the less pleasant odor of fish guts.

A couple of the boats belong to the druids. The villagers are generally friendly. The pier has a small stone beacon which is only lit when it's foggy.

11. SOUTHERN CLIFF

The path up to the lower, but wider, Southern cliff runs along the grazing pastures outside the temple proper. At the top is a small building, a beacon and a banner that flaps in the wind.

The fire is never lit when Kritre sings on the cliff since it would disturb his communion with the winds. At the top of the Southern cliff, the adventurers will find a sundial – a stone pillar as tall as a man with indentations in the cliff along an arc for the hours of the day. Two flat clay tablets, engraved with the Maha signs for the sun as well as the half-moon respectively, mark where the sun and the moon rise. The tablets are moved every day. The druid who moves the tablets will explain if asked, but is not allowed to say what the signs represent.

- ❖ SIGNS: Sun, Moon by the sundial, the moon is turned in different directions depending on whether the moon is waxing or waning. The banner shows the sign of Notus.



12. WESTERN CLIFF

The Western cliff drops off sharply. The top, which is missing a plateau, is reached via steep stairs.

The cliff is rarely used, since the wind only blows from the west on rare occasions. There is a small chapel nestled at the top of the cliff.

- ❖ SIGNS: The banner shows the sign of Zephyrus.



13. EASTERN CLIFF AND CHAMBER OF THE WINDS

Terns, razorbills and other marine birds perpetually swarm around the Eastern monolith towards the sea, shrieking fiercely if anyone comes too close. Cave openings are seen at a semi-plateau a small distance from the top. From there, you can continue your ascent via ladders. A crank suspension bridge to the Northern cliff swings in the wind.

On the cliff's highest plateau is a small chapel and cleats for fastening ropes, to allow the collection of the seabirds' eggs from the exterior edges of the cliff. The banner shows the sign of Estus.



From the semi-plateau, ten meters below the top, caves open up in the directions of the four



winds. The caves lead to a circular chamber, the Chamber of the Winds, in the center of the cliff. The winds appear to be amplified in the caves, and the occasional visitor has been known to be blown from the caves to fall to their death, but the wind comes in gusts, much like someone breathing, and the adventurers can take shelter in alcoves along the wall. Inside the Chamber of the Winds the winds cancel each other out, creating stillness.

Inside the Chamber of the Winds is the stone chest containing the Gift of the Sea. There are also racks on the walls with five blunted simple swords and five blunted knives. There are also racks containing all the Maha signs that can be found at the temple. Theses are summarized in a handout on page 124, that you can give to the players. The signs are mounted on long, differently shaped rods. They function as keys when placed in the right combination in the holes in the chest. See the event called “The Cipher.”

14. NORTHERN CLIFF

The Northern cliff is the tallest and most visited. The druids hold daily devotions on the lower shelf, where the elderly are hoisted with the help of a winched basket next to the bridgehead. Here, too, are many birds.

Kritre the Caller lives in the caves with his novices and is found here most of the time, unless he is visiting one of the other cliffs to welcome the prevailing wind. The chapel is larger than on the other cliffs. On the cliff are cleats for fastening ropes, to allow the collection of seabird eggs from the outside edge of the cliff.

Every morning, Kritre places a clay tablet with the sign of the wind chosen to rule in a circle of Maha signs on the plateau. The adventurers can alter the wind by switching the sign and cause a storm by adding the sign for “huge” above the wind, but such antics won’t be popular.

- ❖ CREATURES: Kritre the Caller.
- ❖ SIGNS: The banner at the top shows the sign of Boreas.



15. MAP OF THE LAND

What you first assumed to be a farming plot among various others, appears on closer examination to be a map made from clay tablets, stones and plants.

The plot on the hill is a rather inaccurate map of the Forbidden Lands made up of stones, ponds and plants. The biggest locations and areas are featured, each with its own individual Maha sign. The druids daily place about twenty signs on the map with the winds, rain, fire, clouds and so on that control the local weather.

- ❖ SIGNS: The signs of the locations can be used to direct the titans from Watcher’s Rest to the location. A location sign combined with Go, House and Kill would, for example, cause a titan to walk to the location and raze the entire settlement. If the signs are placed in reverse order, the



titan will instead raze Pelagia and then go to the specified location.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

The most important monsters and non-player characters in Pelagia are described below. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same stats as those found in the Bestiary or the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide* in the core boxed set.

MAHA SIGNS: All druids at the temple have their names in the form of maha signs embroidered on their clothes.



KRITRE THE CALLER

The current Caller of the temple, Kritre is a middle-aged Elvenspring with a shaved head and trimmed beard. It is almost impossible to communicate with him since he seems to dwell in the world of the winds and usually is maniacally busy singing or carving incomprehensible nothings in the cliff walls. For this purpose, he uses the curved knife Scarnesclaw, which is said

to be a claw from the ancient dragon Scarne. In battle it cuts through all armor without hindrance. Kritre may suddenly rush up the stairs towards another cliff and his helpers have their work cut out for them just trying to keep up. When the Gift of the Sea was delivered to the temple, it was Kritre who declared that neither elves nor Elvenspring may lay claim to it, a deed that has ruffled many feathers.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Lore 3, Healing 2

TALENTS: Path of Sight 3

REPUTATION: 3

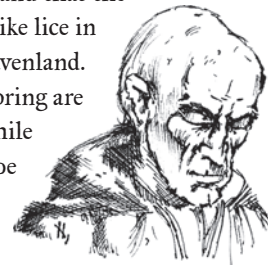
GEAR: The knife Scarnesclaw (ignores armor)

- ❖ **SIGNS:** Scarnesclaw has the sign for “knife” carved into its handle.



KELDRA THE DESERVING

Keldra is a blind druid woman several hundred years old who loudly touts how much better everything used to be and that the invading humans are like lice in the lush forests of Ravenland. Only elves and Elvenspring are Clay's creations, while dwarves and orcs can be tolerated as their ser-





vants. She openly implies that Kritre has gone mad and should be replaced as Caller. Keldra has a fierce temper. She can't do much on her own, but some listen to her. At times she raves in prophetic tirades.

STRENGTH 1, AGILITY 1, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Lore 2, Insight 2, Healing 4

TALENTS: Path of Healing 3,
Path of Shifting Shapes 2

GEAR: Staff, amulet with Maha signs (worth D6 silver coins)



HUNTING LYNX

Hunting Lynx quiet and introvert, but very competent and dutiful druid. He practically makes most of the decisions in the temple where no formal leader exists. Hunting Lynx truly believes that the sea has left a gift and is determined to let the process run its course. He often conducts magical rituals, and is considered to hold the highest degree of knowledge. Hunting Lynx is a skilled druid magician who, among other things, can occupy wild animals to make use of their eyes and call living creatures to come to his aid. A group of wolves in the nearby forest will come to his aid if there is a fight, and in case of emergency even the Pegasus Velakia will show up.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 3, Move 2, Stealth 3

TALENTS: Path of Shifting Shapes 2

GEAR: Short spear, knife



WHITE CLOUD'S FLIGHT

White Cloud's Flight is a very sociable and pleasant Elvenspring, and the grandchild of Keldra, whom she also cares for. She often tries to jokingly take the edge off her grandmother's harsh words. As part of her daily routine, she takes care of the gardens filled with spices and magical herbs.



White Cloud's Flight secretly shares her grandmother's opinions and refuses to accept that the sea's gift should escape the grasp of the Elvenspring. She is allied with Heaven's White Fire, but strives to get to know all strangers in an attempt to explore their intentions and hinder them.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 2, Crafting 2, Insight 2,
Manipulation 2, Healing 2



TALENTS: Path of Healing 2

GEAR: Knife



HEAVEN'S WHITE FIRE

The far-travelled pottery merchant of the temple, who often visits the elven settlements and other places, is a silver-haired and impressive figure, knowledgeable about ceramics. He is diplomatic, but secretly despises humans and looks down on anyone lacking the blood of the elves. By chance, he managed to secure the lost godhammer of the Crombe dwarves, Scarnesbane, in a village during one of his travels. Heaven's White Fire realized that the dwarves would demand its return, and had the idea to place it in the stone chest as a Gift of the Sea and in so doing legitimizing the Elvenspring to keep it. In the end, he suspects that the hammer can open Watcher's Rest and dreams of ridding the Forbidden Lands of humans once and for all through the help of the watchers. To his disappointment, Kritre decreed that neither elves nor Elvenspring could lay claim to the Gift of the Sea this time. Heaven's White Fire now strives to delay the opening of the chest and conspires against Kritre's life, in the hopes that a new Caller could change the decree. He doesn't dare to act openly.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 2, Crafting 3, Insight 3, Manipulation 3

GEAR: Shortsword, 2D6 silver coins



RAIN AND SOIL

The rotund healer of the temple is called Rain and Soil. She is a master of both traditional healing and its magical counterpart in concert with Hunting Lynx, who is openly also her lover. Rain and Soil has a slightly superior attitude and she loves to show off her arts, but is on the whole sympathetic to all things living.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Crafting 2, Healing 3

TALENTS: Path of Healing 3

GEAR: -



SNAKE'S JOY

The younger druid Snake's Joy is a jovial fellow who is bolder and more limber than most. He loves to fish during storms or climb the ropes out on the cliffs to collect bird eggs. In his day-to-day role, he is a skilled singer who is apprenticed to Kritre and also acts as his aide. Heaven's White Fire seeks to convince Snake's Joy to get rid of Kritre and replace him.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 2, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 3, Move 2, Sleight of Hand 2, Performance 2

GEAR: Short spear, knife



HEALING KNIFE

The dropout novice Healing Knife runs the “Three Little Black Snakes” inn. He has mastered the Maha language, and isn’t as fastidious with the rules as the druids. The GM can thus use Healing Knife to help the players with the cipher, but he is well aware of how much his aid is worth and charges accordingly.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 1, Crafting 2, Insight 2, Manipulation 2

GEAR: Knife, 2D6 copper coins

BYRNEL OF THE WATCHER CLAN

Old Byrnel is a noble, elder magistrate and diplomat of the dwarven Crombe clan. He is officially at the temple to pay his respects and perhaps try to claim the Gift of the Sea. In reality, he has become aware that the druids have found Scarnesbane, and is tasked to return the hammer to Scarneshall by any means necessary. This entire business is politically delicate and Byrnel would prefer to maintain good relations with the Elvenspring. He has brought a servant and a dwarven bodyguard with him who tend to keep to themselves.

Byrnel’s bodyguard is the Crombe princess Arvia Hugeheld, who uses the alias Hugefury. Byrnel is aware of the princess’ true identity but is not aware of the fact that she wants the hammer Scarnesbane for her own.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 2, Lore 3, Insight 3, Manipulation 3

REPUTATION: 2

GEAR: Warhammer

HUGEFURY

Byrnel’s bodyguard Hugefury is in fact the Crombe princess Arvia. Read more about Arvia on page 43.

MASTER SNIDRA

The dwarf Snidra works for Byrnel, but is from the Canide clan. He is short of stature and alert, observing and appraising anyone he deals with. Officially he is a scholar, interested in the rock formations at the temple, but in reality, he is a skilled thief and assassin whom the Crombes have hired as a fail-safe.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 3, Marksmanship 3, Move 2

TALENTS: Path of the Killer 2

GEAR: Battleaxe, crossbow, studded leather armor

RAVIL

A wandering Blood Mage who seeks revenge on the Rust Brothers who slew his brother and torched his farm. Ravil has heard of the treasure at Pelagia, and realizes that it could be the key to granting him the power he needs to exact vengeance. He will stop at nothing to achieve his goals, and can murder druids





as well as assuming their form through the BIND SOUL spell.



STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 2, Lore 2, Insight 3, Manipulation 4

TALENTS: Path of Blood 3

GEAR: Dagger, vial of lethal poison (Potency 8)

SOLEMMA THE SYLPH

Solemma the Sylph is a normally invisible sprite who loves Kritre's song and with whom the Caller converses on a daily basis. Solemma will take her revenge on anyone who harms or kills Kritre, and can be sent out to hunt if the Caller directs her to do so in his confused state.

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 6

SYLPH: Immune to physical harm. Can only be harmed by magical weapons.

Has the same monster attacks as a ghost, see page 94 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

THE PEGASUS VELAKIA

The white flying horse Velakia lives wild in the area, and can sometimes be seen near the temple. She is familiar with Hunting Lynx and can sometimes be found conversing with him. The druid has a couple of favors to claim from her, but is loathe to do so.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 5

KICK: Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force)

BITE: Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound)

THE TITANS

The two stone titans are twelve meters tall and carved from massive slabs of black obsidian. They lack the ability of higher thought and can't be manipulated or reasoned with in any way.

STRENGTH 40, AGILITY 3

For monster attacks, see page 96 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

EVENTS

Below are suggestions for events that you can subject the adventurers to in Pelagia.

THE FAMILY HEIRLOOM

The dwarf Byrnel asks to speak to the adventurers. He explains that he in no way believes that the ocean has placed a mysterious gift in a stone chest high up in a cliff. Instead, he is convinced that the Elvenspring have found an heirloom of the Crombe clan that has been lost for a long



time. Now they are trying to make it theirs through religious rituals and nonsense. The druids will then claim the heirloom as theirs, since it has been given to them by the goddess of the sea. The entire business is politically delicate since the Crombes would prefer to maintain good relations with both elves and Elvenspring. Byrnel offers the adventurers a hefty sum if they can claim the Gift of the Sea and deliver it to him. If the adventurers ask which heirloom it concerns, he replies that he'd rather not say.

Byrnel is old and stiff and won't ascend the cliffs. The dwarf Snidra is considerably more limber, and often climbs the stone walls under the pretense of performing geological surveys. If the adventurers turn Byrnel down, Snidra will sabotage both their and any other attempts at claiming the Gift of the Sea. He is more determined than the Elvenspring in this regard. Byrnel will try to steal Scarnesbane if anyone else claims the hammer.

THE HAMMER OF VENGEANCE

Byrnel's bodyguard Hugefury is actually the fanatically religious princess Arvia Hugeheld of Crombe. She wants to use the hammer Scarnesbane in her oath-sworn struggle to reclaim Vond, the lost stronghold of the Crombes. In public, Arvia acts as Byrnel's loyal bodyguard, but the adventurers may observe a quarrel between her and Byrnel, ending with Byrnel bowing to her, saying that he can't agree to her demands since the Crombes have given him explicit orders.

If the hammer is found, Arvia will demand it given to her as her rightful heirloom, at the same time revealing who she is. She won't

deign to steal it, but if someone else does, she will hunt the thief relentlessly. If the adventurers aid her in the hunt, or give her the hammer, she will swear them "friendship in blood and stone" and offer them a position in her holy mission regardless of their kin.

SABOTAGE

The adventurers' attempt to solve the cipher is anonymously sabotaged by White Cloud's Flight, Heaven's White Fire or one of their adepts. They may, for example, leave misleading information or sabotage ladders. If they become desperate, they may resort to outright magical or physical attempts to harm or kill the adventurers. They may, for example, set traps with Maha signs.

THE THIEF

Snidra will aid the adventurers if they are working for Byrnel. The thief plans to cheat both the adventurers and Byrnel after retrieving the hammer, however, since he has a buyer among the Meromannians – Tormund Half-hand himself, who wants to make use of the hammer in the wars to come.

THE FALSE DRUID

One of the druids is actually the Blood Mage Ravil, who through a magical ritual has taken his or her body. It is nothing immediately noticeable, but the GM can point out that someone is acting a bit odd or seems somewhat unfamiliar with the rituals that the druids perform at the temple. If Ravil realizes that someone



is on to him, he will either try to poison that someone or steal another druid's soul so as to change identities yet again. This may develop into a paranoid hunt for an intruder and murderer that no one can identify. Ravi's goal is to steal the Gift of the Sea and then escape to plot his revenge on the Rust Brothers.

ATTEMPTED MURDER

Snake's Joy or someone else tries to murder Kritre the Caller, most likely by pushing him off a cliff. If the attempt is successful, the sylph Solemma will exact vengeance, unconcerned if a couple of innocents become collateral damage. She may also happen to be in the vicinity and catch Kritre in the air, upon which she and the Caller will become more active in the conspiracies surrounding the Gift of the Sea. If it is the adventurers who save Kritre instead, he and the sylph will be thankful towards them and the Caller will give them the knife Scarnesclaw as a reward.

THE CIPHER

Sooner or later, the adventurers will probably become interested in the so-called Gift of the Sea that has affected so many in Pelagia. If they ask around, they will be directed to visit Kritre the Caller and state their intentions. The druid will stare at them in a moment of lucidity and proclaim: "The answer you seek is: the sword kills a white cat" – before returning to his holy deed.

The stone chest in the Chamber of the Winds has several hidden stone mechanisms, and must be opened in three steps. It is up to

the adventurers (or a kind GM) to figure out that the riddle is the key to open the first lock of the stone chest.

- ❖ **FIRST STEP:** The lid of the chest has five slots, into which Maha sign tablets can be inserted. All the signs that the adventurers have seen in the temple as well as some additional ones are found in the chamber. If the Maha signs for "Large Knife Kills White Cat" are inserted into the slots, a hatch will open, revealing the second step.
- ❖ **SECOND STEP:** Underneath the hatch, there are twelve stone circles painted in four colors (blue, red, green, yellow), with three circles in each color. In each circle, there is a slit in which a knife or a sword can be inserted. The entire circle can be turned like a lock, using a knife or sword as a key. Next to the circles, the following Maha signs are engraved: "Three Knives Wound." If three knives (not swords) are inserted into the three red circles, another hatch opens to the third step.
- ❖ **THIRD STEP:** Again, there are five slots for Maha sign tablets. A text is engraved next to them: "Huge sun chases little new moon." If the Maha signs for "Large Sun Chases Little Moon" are placed in the slots, a hatch with a handle will open, allowing the stone chest to be opened. Note that the moon crescent tile must be placed with the points to the left to represent a "new moon."

THE EMPTY CHEST

When the adventurers succeed in opening the chest, it turns out to be empty. At the sight of



the empty chest, the paranoia among the various groups will spread like wildfire. Someone has stolen its contents, but who? Emotions will soon run high and it is entirely possible that it all escalates into open conflict. It will soon be revealed, however, that a fisherman has been struck down and robbed of his cutter over at the harbor. It is Heaven's White Fire who has absconded with the hammer, rather than let it escape the grasp of the Elvenspring. The merchant has fled northward with his prize in a cutter.

Hunting Lynx is both ashamed and furious, and wants to see the hammer returned. He can't leave the temple area himself, but he can equip the adventurers with the magical aid of the druids, perhaps a boat or even letting the Pegasus Velakia carry one of them to the thief's vessel. The adventurers can also conjure up a storm with the assistance of Kritre's magical circle on top of the North Cliff, that blows the thief back.

THE TITANS AWAKE

The adventurers or someone else can release one or both of the stone titans by shattering the alcoves in Watcher's Rest with the hammer, Scarnesbane. Unless instructions have been written on the obsidian tablets with the knife Scarnesclaw, the titans will walk in a random direction, destroying everything in their path.





HANDOUT





TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Dungeon

The path up to Stonegarden winds along an almost vertical mountainside. Here and there, you see parapets and mobile masonry from which appraising eyes observe your arduous ascent. As soon as you pass through the massive stone gates of Stonegarden, in the attendance of stern dwarven warriors, you are dazzled by the splendor of the Stone Gardens. Still you are told that these are just the guest quarters, for only dwarves are allowed to enter the inner halls of the Canides and even amongst dwarves it's a rare honor.

BACKGROUND

The mountain of Stonegarden with its high impregnable fortress has been the home of

the Canides, the clan of the Iron Hounds, since time immemorial. From here, King Karonax and Queen Sulma rule over the proud dwarven clan and guard the descent to the deeps under the mountain, from whence the dwarves are said to have risen at the command of the god Huga.

On some occasions, the noble dwarves celebrate *Veneration of the Earth* in the Stone Gardens of Stonegarden, since the grottoes underneath the fortress are said to lead down to the dwarves' place of origin in the older layers of the world – *the deep structures* – where the clans are no longer allowed to tread.

The celebration is particularly remarkable this year, for all the children of King Turik of Belderan have congregated here to discreetly discuss the succession after their



RECOMMENDED READING

Before the adventurers arrive at Stonegarden, it is recommended that you read the section on dwarves on page 56 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

aging father dies. In addition, the princess Arvia of Crombe, under a holy oath to reclaim the holdfast of Vond, has come to the location with her death-sworn warriors. As the feast is being prepared, two *dwellers* – the pale and peculiar ancestors of the dwarves – have surfaced from the underground to ask for assistance. They can't speak, but sign that the fetters of "the Beast" are about to shatter and that the elder structures where they live have already been evacuated. All of the world is at risk, for the Beast will strike towards the surface if it is freed.

What manner of beast it concerns is unclear, but the messengers require swift aid to carry materials for reparation from the surface – the amount of material needed is of such a quantity that they have need of helpers, even though no one has ever been allowed to accompany them before. King Karonax declares that an expedition will be equipped to be sent into the depths. Since dwarves are not allowed to enter the underground without becoming clanless, the adventurers are asked to assist. Arvia shows great interest and wants to accompany them.

GETTING HERE

There are many ways for the adventurers to find their way to Stonegarden. They may have found a map, heard the legends about the place, or maybe they came across and had to deal with one of the events below.

THE MESSENGER

The dwarf Drur of Belderan finds the adventurers at their camp. He explains that Rigalda Raven of Belderan, daughter of King Turik and feared warrior of the clan of Belderan, seeks their services. Rigalda may have heard of the adventurers' exploits or she may simply have been so desperate that she asked Drur to pick the first group he finds without clan affiliation, and as such may consider descending into the depths (see the event called "The Lost Prince").

THE DECEASED

The adventurers find the corpse of a dwarven merchant, recently slain by brigands. With the exception of the precious clothes, all of his valuables have been stolen, save for a letter tucked inside the tunic. The letter is an invitation to celebrate *Veneration of the Earth* at Stonegarden and is written by the "petron" Berwyld – one of the foremost Stone Singers and high priests in Belderan – and is addressed to the deceased, master Mertyld. Attached is a simple map, showing the way to Stonegarden. If the adventurers bring the remains of Mertyld to Stonegarden they will be rewarded with a gold coin by Berwyld who will look favorably on them from now on.



LEGEND

It is said that the moon, stunned by the beauty of Stonegarden, will stay a while in its course above Stonegarden. At some time in their lives, most dwarves go on a pilgrimage there as the site is considered by all except the Crombe dwarves to be the dwarves' place of origin in the world. This year's Veneration of the Earth in the impregnable fortress of the Iron Hounds looks to be the most extraordinary event in years. It is said that the royal children of Belderan have come to privately discuss their father's succession. Their mute ancestors have risen from the depths, for below Stonegarden lie the forbidden grottoes leading to the elder layers of the world.



LOCATIONS

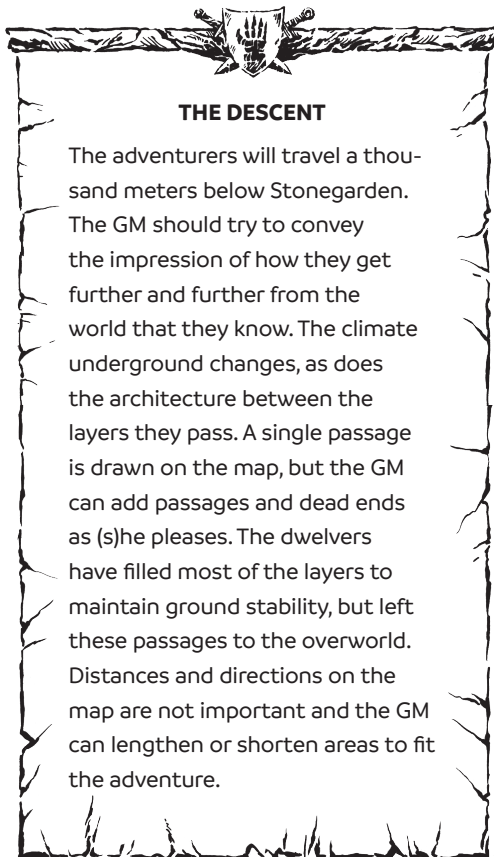
Below are locations inside and underneath Stonegarden.

1. THE STONE GARDENS

The vaults of the Stone Gardens are covered by sparkling gems set into the patterns of the starry sky so that the flames of the braziers are reflected a thousandfold. The promenades are lined by mineral beds where crystals cut like flowers stand on tourmaline stems in greenery bewn from dark green malachite. Here and there clearings with benches open up among the brilliance, intended for private encounters.

The fortress of the Iron Hounds, Stonegarden lies on a mountain with a hundred-meter high, almost vertical, walls. One gets there along a

winding path on the mountainside or by being hoisted up in cars. No stranger is allowed in the fortress itself, so the adventurers and other guests are confined to the beautiful Stone Gardens, the marketplace and the catacombs. The caves of the gardens look like a cathedral with large halls in the middle and smaller, very comfortable rooms with stuffed chairs for meetings and prayers along the sides. Many dwarves and several other guests are here for the celebration of Veneration of the Earth, celebrated through prayer, feasts and songs, as



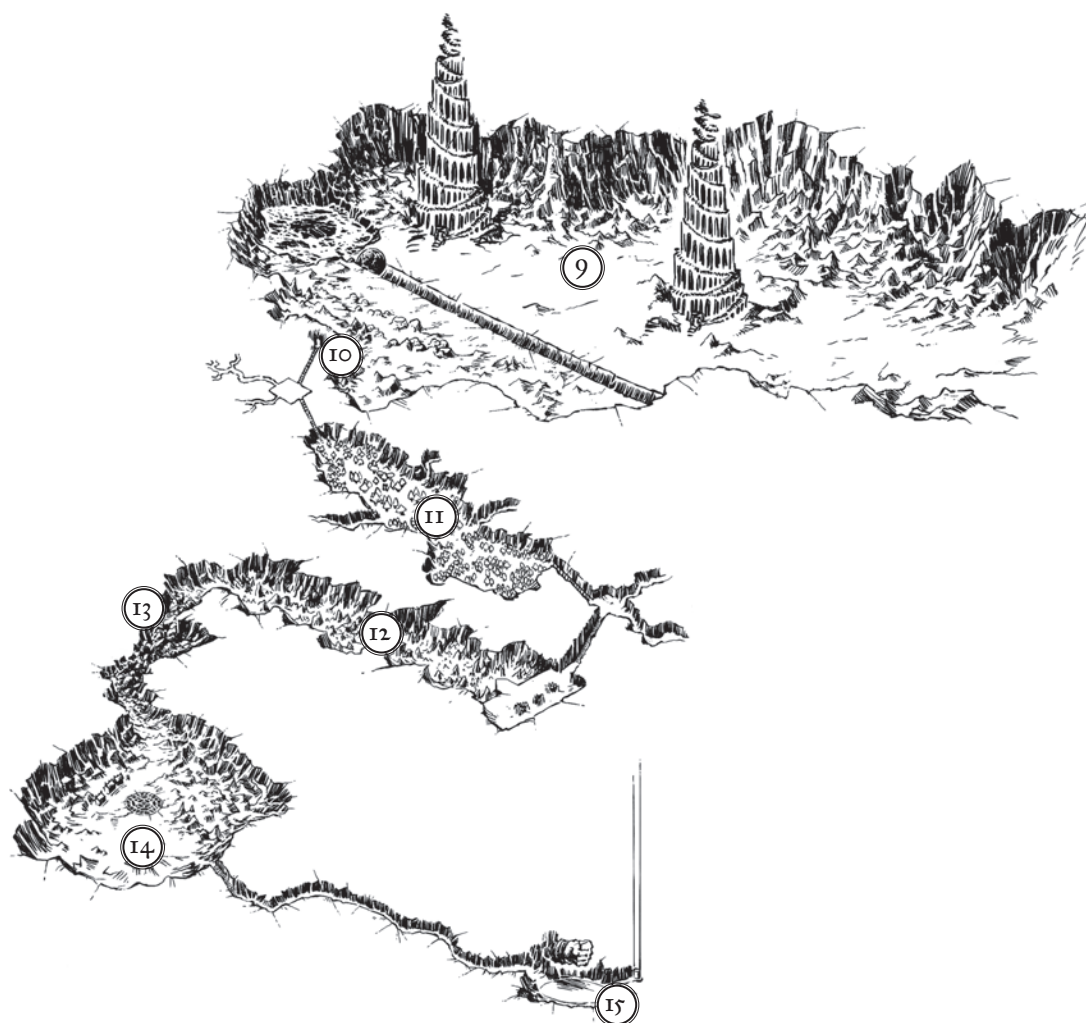
THE DESCENT

The adventurers will travel a thousand meters below Stonegarden. The GM should try to convey the impression of how they get further and further from the world that they know. The climate underground changes, as does the architecture between the layers they pass. A single passage is drawn on the map, but the GM can add passages and dead ends as (s)he pleases. The dwellers have filled most of the layers to maintain ground stability, but left these passages to the overworld. Distances and directions on the map are not important and the GM can lengthen or shorten areas to fit the adventure.





STONEGARDEN





well as competitions among clan combatants below the mountain.

- ❖ CREATURES: Half a dozen dwarven guardians, as well as a score of dwarven dignitaries, merchants and miscellaneous guests from the Forbidden Lands, among them someone from the royal family of Belder as well as Arvia of Crombe.

2. MARKETPLACE

Broad stairs lead down to large cavernous spaces in the mountain where the smells of spices, beasts of burden, food and embers tickle the senses among other, more odd scents. There are many people milling about. Most deals seem to involve large quantities of goods, as bins, barrels and bales of cloth are moved to and fro while valuables change hands. A wide passage leads out to large gates that open to the outside world.

Way in the back, a passage leads down into water. This is the passage into Stonegarden, where three stone hatches are closed as long as the gates are open. The first hatch is in a waterlogged depression that can be emptied and flooded from the inside. Smaller stairs lead down into the mountain, and there is also an elevator shaft with a winch-operated car.

- ❖ CREATURES: Several scores of dwarves, humans and halflings trade at the marketplace.

3. THE CATACOMBS AND THE GATES TO THE DEEP

The spacious catacombs are covered in white

marble and beautifully lit. Sarcophagi and other graves en masse fill the spaces as well as sculptures depicting dead nobles. Armored honor guards stand in attendance.

In an alcove in the furthest reaches of the catacombs lies the ancient gate to the depths, guarded by four dwarven warriors. King Karonax alone has the key to the complex and very old lock. Above the door is inscribed the following text:

"Ye who pass through here, pass away from the world"

No one is admitted who does not belong to the world below. When dwellers wish to visit the world above, they rap on the door from the inside, after which the king welcomes them with great honor.

Right before the catacombs is a discreet staircase that leads down to a secret passage out from the mountain. The staircase is behind a locked, barred gate.

The adventurers are not allowed to roam deeper, unless they accept the mission from the depths. Dwarves who pass the gates to the depths must set aside their clan bonds forever, as serious a business to a dwarf as cutting off their beards.


- ❖ CREATURES: A few dwarven guardians.

4. THE HAND-LIFT OF THE ANCESTORS

When the stone gates close behind you, the silence is complete. It is as if the mountain itself is observing your intrusion. The air that has lain undisturbed for millennia only unwillingly allows you to draw



ENCOUNTERS IN THE DEEP

Roll a D6 for every quarter of an hour. If you roll a , a chance encounter occurs. Roll on the table below.

D6	WHAT	INFORMATION
1	Orcs	Alarag Elding and his companions.
2	Cave Creatures	D6+2 cave creatures (see page 133) hunting for food.
3	Preying Bats	A flock of preying bats are drawn towards the sound of the adventurers.
4	Clanless Dwarf	Blind Brengnar, a very old and very eccentric clanless dwarf, encounters the adventurers.
5	Giant Spider	Thick spider webs are blocking the passage ahead. Soon, a giant spider descends from the ceiling to get a long-awaited meal.
6	Troll	A stone troll is awoken from its slumber by the approaching adventurers and is in a very foul mood.

it into your throats. Dust-covered stone steps continue down into the mountain.

Below the stairs, the adventurers find an ancient, bronze lift operated by a wheel inside the lift. On the shelf next to it is a stone tub with boulders the size of a head. If the visitors push a boulder into a hole in the mountain, something the dwellers might do just for the fun of it, it will roll with a rumbling noise in a spiral track all the way down to a corresponding tub at the bottom of the shaft. The purpose of the boulders is to balance the weight of the two connected lifts. The air thickens significantly as the lift descends. From the bottom of the shaft and further down into the caves, the air is so thick that the dwellers can now speak and hear unimpeded, something they are delighted to do.





5. THE BEAM LAYER

Beyond further flights of stairs down a vast cave opens up, supported by immense pillars of a dull metallic material. The pillars don't run perpendicular but branch out, are slanted and laid like beams across the ceiling. Their glowing blue veins give off a guiding light. Large faces are molded into the metal.

The dwellers can reveal that the mountain at this shallow level was so frail that it had to be reinforced, but they are horrified by the crude

craft that shows how their descendants have degenerated. In the cave are half a dozen wild wandering trolls who welcome fresh meat.

❖ CREATURES: Trolls.

6. THE PASSAGE

Beyond a gate in the mountain and several flights of stairs, you suddenly come upon an expansive subterranean lake. The ceiling is supported by pillars that have glowing veins here as well, and

FINDS IN THE DEPTHS

Adventurers who spend a quarter of an hour searching for treasures may roll once on the table below.

D6	FIND	INFORMATION
1	Cup	Some kind of cup made of gray rock ("It bestows wondrous power," says Arvi). It is actually a dwarven piss-cup, a fact that jolly dwellers can point out to any adventurer who uses the cup for drinking. Worth 1 copper coin.
2	A keg of beer	Very, very old. Anyone who drinks it must roll on the Eating the Mushroom table, below. The effect is similar. Can be sold to a shifty barkeep for D6 copper coins.
3	Corpse	An almost mummified corpse of a human adventurer who perished in the depths. Around the corpse's neck is a bronze medallion with the simple inscription "Agne." Worth D6 copper coins.
4	Warhammer	A well-forged warhammer. Worth 18 silver coins.
5	Copper shield	A scarred and beaten but very beautifully engraved small copper shield. Worth 10 silver coins.
6	Helmet	An ornamented great helm of the finest quality. Once belonged to Kerg of Belderan, a long-lost ancestor of the current royal family. To the right dwarf in Stonegarden, the helmet is worth 5 gold coins or more. To King Turik, the helmet is invaluable, and the adventurers will earn the gratitude of the clan if it is returned.



rests only three meters above the black, still surface of the water. It smells musty and the sound of lazy drops falling echoes in the silence. Bronze rings hang from the ceiling everywhere. On the docks are a few wooden rafts.

The rafts are made from a light type of wood and float quite nicely. To traverse the lake, the adventurers should use the rings in the ceiling to pull their way forward. Paddling is not advisable, as beasts live in the water and these are attracted to the splashing. The dwellers ask everyone to be quiet and to make as careful movements as possible. This might be the first occasion where they take a shortcut through the cracks of the mountain, saying that they'll meet the adventurers below the lake. If so, make sure that they leave water bombs that may come in handy.

In the water lives a giant squid that ravenously attacks if it notices the intruders. This happens automatically if the adventurers paddle or splash in the water. If they traverse the water using the rings in the ceiling, they can avoid being detected by a STEALTH roll.

✦ CREATURES: Giant squid.

7. THE DRY DITCH

Beyond a ledge with other rafts was presumably another lake, but you can see how the mountain wall has ruptured further on, causing the water to drain away. The glowing pillars continue down into a foggy trench, but are covered with algae and lack their luster down there, revealing nothing. There are steps dug into the wall so you can climb down, but something large moves at the bottom of the abyss.

The dry ditch is approximately 80 meters across. The adventurers can cross it by climbing the rings in the ceiling. About halfway across, they will disturb a colony of aggressive bats from the crack in the mountain, which they must then fight while hanging from the ceiling (only one-handed weapons can be used, and even these with a -2 penalty). The adventurers can also climb down and trudge across the ditch or push down one of the rafts and paddle, but in both cases they will have to deal with a giant squid that lives in the sludge.

❖ CREATURES: Bats and giant squid.

8. THE CITY OF STONE

After descending even more stairs and wading through waterlogged caverns, you arrive at a fairly steeply sloping cave filled with ruins made up of primitive stone houses. About a dozen of humanoid lizard creatures with pale scales and large eyes hiss and move among the ruins. They are little bit larger than halflings.

The ancestors of the dwellers once lived here but then abandoned the city, and it stood forlorn before the lizard-people settled the site.

- ❖ **CREATURES:** The cave creatures are predators and can attack, but scare easily. They have stats like Saurians (see page 69 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*), but Strength 2.

9. THE SUN CAVE

Already on the spiral staircases under the city of stone, you unexpectedly pick up the scent of flow-





ers, fresh and warm, rising towards you and when the stairs suddenly open up, you stand before a surreal, subterranean valley filled with greenery. You emerge at the top of a 150-meter high pyramidal pillar, one of many that supports the rock ceiling. Spiral stairs around the gorgeously ornamented pillar continue downwards to the floor of the valley. Along the right lip of the valley lava burbles in a volcanic gulch. A 30-meter wide scorched furrow runs across the valley from the volcanic gulch to a steaming precipice. A large fireball slowly rolls along the furrow – like a miniature sun. Behind the ball, the furrow smolders.

Every eighth hour a new, 60-meter wide fireball wells up from the volcanic gulch, and then slowly and thunderously rolls along the slightly inclined furrow for four hours to fall over the cliff into the water far below, causing billowing clouds of steam to rise up. And so the valley alternates between four hours of night and day. It is tropically warm and humid. In the jungle, on both sides of the furrow, live tribes of the cave creatures the adventurers encountered in the city of stone above. The tribes of the different sides hate each other and throw rocks and feces across the furrow, but can't cross it and are only out at night since they fear the sun. The cave creatures are also afraid of heights. Consequently, they never go near the precipice or up the spiral staircases of the towers. The adventurers can, however, hear them hiss during the daytime if they pass them in the bushes. If the cave creatures on the far side of the furrow see the adventurers fight and defeat their enemies on the near side they will treat the strangers like demi-gods, throwing themselves to the ground, carrying forth food and so on. The only one who isn't pleased is the large cave

creature who calls itself "The Lizard-King" and wants all the worship for himself.

The main obstacle is to cross the furrow. The dwellers usually avoid this path, and don't know how to traverse the valley. If the adventurers push down one of the sleds (see the event "The Expedition"), it will go all the way up to the opposite edge at which point they can hop off. However, the furrow is only sufficiently cold for passage one hour before a rolling sun passes anew – at other times, the runners of the sled will melt and barrels of oil will catch on fire. If the sleds get stuck in the furrow they will glide towards the precipice but may melt and get stuck. Closest to the cliff, the furrow's edge is so uneven that it is possible to climb up or down from the near side. Anyone climbing down can use the soft tin ladder of the dwellers to ascend the other side without being bothered by the cave creatures.

- ❖ CREATURES: Several hundred cave creatures, divided into two tribes. The Lizard-King has Strength 7.

10. THE LOVING STATUE

At the farthest edge of the sun valley is a closed stone gate with a hole in what looks like a metal heart. Next to the gate, a statue of a dwarf kindly stretches its hands towards you. Above the gate is inscribed:

*"Let hands unite
May warmth of love
open the heart's door."*

One of the statue's hands can be turned and removed. It's forged from a memory metal that resumes its original shape when heated. If the adventurers warm the hand of the statue



in their own or over an open flame, the fingers will twist so that the hand fits like a key in the heart-lock. Since the lizard-people of the cave are cold-blooded and afraid of fire, they couldn't use the key, which is the reason why the dwellers once put it there.

11. THE MUSHROOM CAVE

A rich, but not unpleasant, smell greets you in an oblong cave that stretches as far as the eye can see. Large mushrooms grow like a forest on the floor.

The mushrooms that were once cultivated here have mutated and grown as large as sunshades. The adventurers can eat them, but

some of them are narcotic and cause hallucinations for a couple of hours. A few red ones are poisonous, and a couple of black ones explode into spore clouds if touched, clouds that cause fits of coughing. Blind giant spiders live amongst the mushrooms, feeding from them, but they'd enjoy some meat for a change. They have excellent hearing, smell and touch, but no sight. They have trouble locating creatures smeared in lamp oil or other strong scents.

❖ CREATURES: D6 Giant spiders.

12. THE METAL PLAINS

After yet another stretch of stairs you reach a stone plateau. Here are even more spiders, large as elephants, but to your relief you notice that they appear to be sculpted. Beyond the plateau a very irregular, sloping valley begins that is filled with natural rock obelisks and metal formations. The entire valley seems to be moving as if filled with overgrown barnacles and coelenterates. Crystals of different colors light up the half light here and there.

The peculiar sculptures are spider striders – magical stone skeletons in the shape of spiders. On the back of each is a gondola that seats four people. A spider strider moves on its own down the sloping valley once it has been set into motion. Its long legs are able to navigate almost any kind of terrain. From the gondola, the spider strider can be steered sideways or brought to a halt through the use of a steering lever. The magical vehicle appears heavy but is remarkably light, allowing two people to lug it forward on level ground using a towing harness. Before disembarking, the dwellers fill the tanks on the spider legs with the

EATING THE MUSHROOM	
D6	RESULT
1	It's a bitter taste... Poison with Potency 5 (lethal poison).
2	Your tongue goes numb... Poison with Potency 6 (sleeping poison).
3	It feels like fairies are dancing in my mouth! Poison with Potency 7 (hallucinogenic poison).
4	It tastes nothing at all.
5	Refreshing! Today's need for WATER is covered, and 1 point of Agility is restored.
6	Not bad at all... Today's need for FOOD is covered, and 1 point of Strength is restored.



glue and tar (see the event “The Expedition”). The sticky liquids are funneled into the feet of the spider strider and provide traction.

In the mineral-laden valley live ore-wellers, creatures about the shape and size of seals who devour raw materials and convert them into new forms. The dwarves use ore-wellers to produce the rare metals they need for their alloys. Unfortunately, ore-wellers are dangerous as they are drawn to the metals in the tissues and bloodstreams of humanoids, which they can dissolve with their acids. That is the reason why spider striders are being used to move around the area, but the legs of the vehicle should be greased with a slimy mixture of mashed slugs to be left alone.

❖ CREATURES: 2D6 Ore-Wellers.

13. THE LANDSLIDE

The stone dust is still clogging the air around a shaft that recently collapsed due to the movements of the settling mountain. You can see the remains of broken staircases along the edges, but the rest of the descent is choked with large slabs of rock.

The adventurers must climb down as well as they are able with ropes and other aids (they must succeed with a roll of MOVE to make it down without incident). Luckily enough, the landslide consists mostly of large slabs with spaces in between, but they are not always completely stable and at times one must squeeze through or even dig. With a successful roll of CRAFTING, one can detach the sticky feet of the spider striders and tie them under one’s shoes for excellent purchase during the climb (the adventurers automatically succeed).

14. THE DRAGON’S LAIR

You arrive at a larger cave where rumbling sounds and acrid odors indicate that something huge and living is nearby. In the middle of the cave are a couple of abandoned stone structures built around a circular stone grill, 30 meters in diameter. In the middle of the grill is a stone platform with some elevation where a burst of glistening metal threads sprout as if from a fountain.

The people in the village have been evacuated to deeper layers in the mountain since the shackles of the dragon have begun to weaken. If anyone steps out onto the stone grill, the big eye of Scarne the dragon will appear under the grill to inspect the newcomer.

❖ CREATURES: The dragon Scarne.

15. THE SILVER SPEAR

Past a cave with a circular, 50-meter wide metal plate for a floor is a small chamber encased in





a cylinder that continues up into the rock ceiling. From the roof over the metal plate hangs a gigantic, sculpted metal fist.

This is the Silver Spear, an experimental emergency lift that the dwellers have constructed and are dying to try, though preferably not on themselves. The travelers take their place in the chamber that is sealed from within and then buckle down. When the mechanism is triggered, the fist drops with tremendous force and pressurizes a tank full of mercury underneath the metal plate. Through reverse hydraulics, the mercury shoots up into the thinner tube, pushing the lift upwards, accelerating with incredible speed for five seconds. A couple of seconds later a deafening, jarring noise is heard, and the lift decelerates with the same force, stopping 80 meters below the surface. When the top hatch is opened hot mercury rushes in, having leaked up past the sides, and the entire lift is very hot. Shifts in the shaft have caused the lift to get stuck and stop. One has to climb to the surface on rungs set into the wall of the shaft, all the while the mountain starts quaking. One surfaces a couple of kilometers or more from the cliff of Stonegarden.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

Below are described the most important monsters and NPCs in Stonegarden. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same

stats as in the Bestiary or the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

DWARVEN GUARDIANS

Heavily armored guardians, loyal to death from the clan of the Iron Hounds, who serve King Karonax and Queen Sulma.

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 2, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 3, Melee 4

GEAR: Heavy warhammer, large shield, plate armor, bascinet



RANGMAR AND ARVI

Rangmar and Arvi are two ancient dwarves – dwellers – from the underground who have journeyed to the surface to ask for help, the former clad in a white robe and the latter clad in furs. They mostly resemble chalky, white halflings of considerable but indefinable age. The



DWARF NOBLES IN STONEGARDEN

NAME	INFORMATION
King Karonax and Queen Sulma of the Canide Clan	The royal couple of the dwarven clan of the Canides are dark of hair and skin, proud, markedly beautiful and actually quite similar to one another, a fact that has birthed malicious rumors about Karonax's father, Kurme "The Hornbearer's," escapades among the Canidian noble-women. None can, however, question the royal couple's proficiency in battle, where they swing two-handed battleaxes clad in gilded armor of black steel. Karonax and Sulma endeavor to be exemplary in all things: wisdom, integrity and physique. Their goody two-shoe ways can be tiresome in the long run, much like their vanity.
Turik of Belderan, King of the Belderan Clan	The Belderan King Turik, with the moniker "The Shield Louse", has been a careful ruler ever since he ascended the throne, keeping the gates to the kingdom closed and never unnecessarily sticking his nose into the dangerous surroundings. Many are highly critical of his caution, since it has given the Rust Brothers, orcs, demon beasts and other villains free reign. Now the king is dying and so overweight that it requires four strong dwarves to lift him. Several of his children are eyeing the throne.
Rigalda, Raven of Belderan, of the Belderan Clan	Rigalda is King Turik's eldest daughter, an intelligent professional soldier who's seen active duty against the invading humans. She advocates for the dwarves to unite in massive counter-attacks to reclaim what has been lost. Rigalda Raven is supported by more radical, aggressive forces and the Meromannians. She has been given the nickname the Raven for her sharp tongue and axe.
Berwyld, petron of the Belderan Clan	Turik's eldest son, Berwyld, is a petron, i.e., one of the foremost Stone Singers in Belderand. He considers the human invasion and the wars to be a distraction staged by the gods to test the dwarves' focus on their god-given task, and wants to continue his father's more moderate policies. He is supported by more conservative forces and the Crombe clan in Vivend.
Trondeval of Belderan, of the Belderan Clan	Missing (see Events). Dreamy dwarven prince far down the line of succession, who dreams of recapturing the Forbidden Lands through an alliance with the Aesir orc clan. Trondeval has a soft spot for the elven culture and often travels to Dankwood to visit the allied people of the woods. He dreams of a renewed and equal unity among elves, dwarves and orcs.



taboos of the dwellers dictate that they can neither see the sun nor touch the land above and their cold, clammy skin does not agree with sunlight or wind. They can't speak at surface level and their hearing isn't very good in the world above due to the thin air. As soon as they reach 200 meters or more below ground, they start talking incessantly and without hindrance, to everyone's surprise. They are both skilled Stone Singers, metallurgists and engineers who look at their descendants above with disdain, and they seldom miss a chance to mock the world above and all the troubles that its denizens have wrought. They are very eccentric and bizarre with a sense of humor that is difficult to understand. Dwellers are able to partially or completely soften their skeletons at will, allowing them to press through inch wide cracks in the mountain where no one can follow them. They can teach this skill to Stone Singers who gain their trust.

They are troubled by the way the world above is developing, and in secret they are contemplating whether it wouldn't be a good idea to release the fettered dragon, Scarne, to stir the pot and usher in a new beginning among the incompetent fools. While travelling through the depths, they will interrogate the adventurers about life up there and make their decision on the dragon issue dependent on how their companions answer and act.

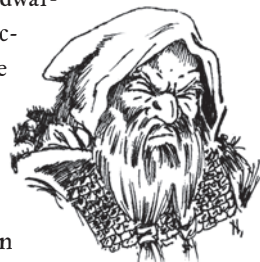
STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 5, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Endurance 3, Crafting 3, Stealth 3, Sleight of Hand 2, Move 3, Lore 2, Survival 3, Manipulation 2

GEAR: Battleaxe

LUPENDUS FIRM

Lupendus is a Meromannian dwarven officer who volunteers to accompany the expedition to the depths. The undertaking honors him, but he is stripped of his bonds to his clan and is no longer welcome amongst clan dwarves if he manages to return to the surface. Among other things, he is branded across his cheeks so that he is streaked with blood for the duration of the adventure. Adventurers who are dwarves are threatened with the same treatment.



Lupendus Firm is a serious and formidable warrior whose family died in a tragic accident for which he blames himself. He is haunted by nightmares and is incapable of letting anyone down ever again. He's probably not counting on surviving the mission, but if he does he may accompany the adventurers as a loyal warrior in their future endeavors. Lupendus considers Arvia of Crombe to be an overzealous, religious maniac without ties to any dwarven traditions.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 3, Endurance 2, Melee 3, Survival 2, Healing 2

GEAR: Warhammer, large shield, chain mail, closed helmet

TROLL

The depths below Stonegarden are home to a small colony of mountain trolls. These big, stinking creatures subsist on a diet of preying bats and the occasional cave creature, but



would really love to stuff their gullets with something fatter and tastier, like adventurers.

STRENGTH 14, AGILITY 2

REGENERATE: The troll regains one point of Strength each turn.

STENCH: All enemies within ARM'S LENGTH distance suffer one point of exhaustion each turn due to the terrible stench of the troll.

MONSTER ATTACKS: See page 121 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

GIANT SQUID

Where the giant squids in the underground actually come from is a mystery. Maybe they were brought here by a whimsical dwarven lord for protection from the threats of the world above.

STRENGTH 15, AGILITY 3

For the giant squid's monster attacks, see page 99 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

PREYING BATS

The preying bats attacks in swarms, thus their value for Strength is for the entire swarm. If the value drops to half, the remaining preying bats will retreat.

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 2

SKILLS: Melee 2

BITE (Weapon Damage 1)

ALARAG ELDING

Alarag Elding is the son of the leader of the

Aesir orc clan, Eldag the Ravager. He desperately wants to make a name for himself among the orcs, has a terrible temper and is good at fighting, but he's not very bright. Alarag and his crew have snuck close to Stonegarden in the hopes of killing some dwarves and then bragging about the deed.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 4, WITS 1, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 2, Melee 4, Stealth 2, Move 2, Scouting 2

REPUTATION: 3

GEAR: Two-handed sword, studded leather armor, open helmet, D6 copper coins

SCARNE THE DRAGON

The gigantic female dragon Scarne has been trapped beyond a stone grill a thousand meters beneath Stonegarden for fifteen hundred years. Her prison does not consist of the stone grill alone, but more importantly, of an elastic, metallic net that covers the entirety of the dragon's body. The net is about to break and that is what the dwellers claim to want to repair.

Scarne speaks all of the languages of the Forbidden Lands and is highly intelligent. She's completely devoid of humor, however, interprets all jokes and attempts at irony literally and remembers every perceived slight. The dragon is furious with the dwarves, especially the Crombe clan, but is wise enough to temper her rage until she is set free. If she wins her freedom, she intends to demolish Dragon's Tooth – the main stronghold of the Crombes – and find the hammer Scarnesbane to drop



it in the ocean, far from land. After that, she wants to settle in the mountains north of the Forbidden Lands to be a matron dragon to her younger kin.

If the adventurers tread on the stone grill in the dragon's lair, Scarne will implore them to free her. She tells them of the falsehoods of the dwarven myths and how she was imprisoned by their villainous god. (See the section on Scarnesbane, page of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.) If they help her, she promises to spare the friends and lands of her liberators as well as granting them a favor of their own choosing in the world above.

STRENGTH 48, AGILITY 4, WITS 6, EMPATHY 2

For the dragon's monster attacks, see page 89 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

ORE-WELLERS

Ore-wellers aren't living beings but fusiforms, mobile clumps of mineral mass that assault metals, engulf them, break them down and reshape them. They have no organs and can only be killed by being completely dispersed, for example, through an explosion. They will cause weapons to rust if one attacks them. The best means of luring them away is by distracting them with a handful of gold coins, their all-time favourite snack.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2

INVULNERABLE: An ore-weller can't be harmed by common weaponry. Every attack with a metallic weapon will decrease the bonus of the weapon by one.

EVENTS

Below are suggested events that you can expose the adventurers to in Stonegarden.

THE EXPEDITION

The dwellers Rangmar and Arvi request help with an expedition deep underground. A beast that they have kept imprisoned since the dawn of time is about to break free, and they need to transport materials from the surface to repair the prison. The matter is clumsily explained through sign language since dwellers are unable to speak in the surface world. King Karonax makes a big deal about him understanding the ancestors and being their friend. Since dwarves who'd follow them to the depths would lose their clan bonds forever, strangers are sought to escort them. The death-seeking Lupendus Firm, however, demands to lead the journey.

The dwellers will be unaware of certain parts of the journey or how certain obstacles may be bypassed, since they regularly take shortcuts through cracks in the mountain to avoid said obstacles. The GM can allow them to accompany the adventurers or take shortcuts here and there to meet them further down. The tendency to tag along increases if they have become friends with the adventurers.

The equipment of the expedition, aside from the belongings of the adventurers, consists of:

- ❖ Two sleds whose runners are coated with a metal that glides completely without friction. They must be braked in downhill



slopes so as to not run off and are fitted with brake levers that lower spikes for that purpose.

- ❖ Two kegs each of glue, tar, lamp oil, fat, drinking water and a lubricant made from mashed slugs.
- ❖ Provisions (the adventurers are supplied with the highest value of provision dice).
- ❖ Any trade goods they require and can carry from the table on page 182 in the *Player's Handbook*, but no items costing more than 1 gold. The players cannot add to the list of gear after entering the underground.
- ❖ No mounts can be brought along.

The dwellers carry some additional special equipment:

- ❖ A case of rare mineral samples that King Karonax has entrusted to them with great hesitation, as it is incredibly valuable. The dwellers intend to use the minerals as diffundants, i.e., substances that immediately alter the attributes of a large, cohesive metal body.
- ❖ A coffer of gold coins that Karonax has given just as unwillingly. The coins are meant as food for the ore-wellers in the metal plains.
- ❖ Twenty-meter-long rope ladders made from soft tin. These are as flexible as fabric, but if they are treated with the proper diffundant, they immediately solidify and become as hard as steel along their entire length. The effect lasts for half an hour, at which time the metal once again softens. The process can be repeated.

TO HONOR THE FOREBEARS

Arvia of Crombe is very eager to accompany the dwellers to the underground when the matter of the expedition is brought up; she tries to persuade Karonax to let her do so. Officially, she sees it as her duty to help the ancestors and since she has already broken her bonds to her clan anyway, that particular detail won't be a problem. Karonax agrees to her request, but insists that Lupendus Firm joins the expedition and that no more Crombes may come along.

Arvia truly believes that it is her duty to aid the dwellers, but she also has secret reasons to join the expedition, reasons that Karonax wouldn't approve of:

- ❖ She knows that the Crombes once buried the remains of the dragon Scarne underneath Stonegarden, and suspects that the beast in the depths is either Scarne's undead corpse or one of the giant dragon's offspring that she wishes to slay to win fame.
- ❖ She hopes that the hammer Scarnesbane was buried with the dragon, and covets the legendary weapon to win fame and fortune in the coming struggle for Vond.

During the journey into the underground, Arvia can reveal the legends of her clan:

- ❖ The dragon mother Scarne was defeated by her ancestor, Oramund, who wielded Scarnesbane at the dawn of time. This legend (described further on page 59 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) is false – more on that below. Back then, the Canides were vassals to the Crombes. Many Crombes still believe that Canides should show their betters due respect.



- ❖ The Alderlander humans deceitfully seized the mighty dwarven castle of Vond from the Crombes when they invaded Ravenland. Vond is now occupied by the vile sorcerer Zytera (page 29) and its demonic servants, Merigall and Krasylla. (This can be a good time to mark Vond on your map of the Forbidden Lands.)
- ❖ Arvia's holy mission is to reclaim Vond and chase away demons and humans in the name of the god Huge, all to the crunching sound of her hammer.

When Arvia realizes that it is the dragon mother Scarne herself that dwells in the depths and that the entire story of how Oramund slew her is a fabrication, she will suffer a crisis of faith and gain a great deal of contempt for her own clan. The dwarven princess may reappear at the showdown in Vond.

THE MISSING PRINCE

Rigalda Raven of Belderan pulls aside one of the adventurers in Stonegarden. She wants the person in question to discreetly find her little brother, Trondeval, who has gone missing during the succession talks. She pays one gold coin, as well as promising three more if the prince is returned. Rigalda is afraid that he has done something stupid and that he might even have gone as far as heading into the underground on his own since he wants to be a hero.

THE UPSTARTS' DILEMMA

The dwarf Trondeval of Belderan and the orc Alarag Elding both want to assert themselves

among their respective kin. Alarag wants to seize Stonegarden by himself or secondarily kill as many dwarves as possible to win glory, while Trondeval wants to establish an alliance between the dwarves and orcs. Alarag has tricked Trondeval into believing that they are friends. When the adventurers pass from the Stone Gardens to the catacombs, they hear voices from a side passage. Trondeval and a dozen angry orcs stand outside the barred gate of the secret passage, which can only be opened by a mechanism on the inside. Trondeval asks them to open the gate so that dwarves and orcs can parley. If they refuse, Alarag becomes furious, takes the dwarven prince as hostage and threatens to kill him. If the orcs reach the marketplace, they will randomly attack the visitors and then run away unless they are killed or captured first.

THE SECRET

If the adventurers decide to accompany the expedition to the underground, Rigalda Raven as well as the petron Berwyld will take them aside and demand that, for a discreet fee, they report back to them and them alone when they return. Berwyld also gives them a posion to use in an emergency, "if anything in the depths seems to threaten the surface world" (lethal poison with Potency 8).

THE CHOICE

The ancient dwarves need to take the path across the metal plains to find the red metal that they call rose silver. They need the metal as a component to affect Scarne's shackles in the



depths. The dwellers will debate if they want to fetter Scarne more firmly or instead loosen her bonds as they journey downwards – they can reach an impasse where the choice falls to the adventurers on whom they are relying for support. Both actions are performed by smearing the ends of the threads of the dragon's metal prison with the proper substance, which can be produced in a couple of hours at the site. The dwellers have grown tired of the dragon, who wasn't their problem to begin with, who shakes the underground apart, and has begun to be regarded as a god by some of their kin.

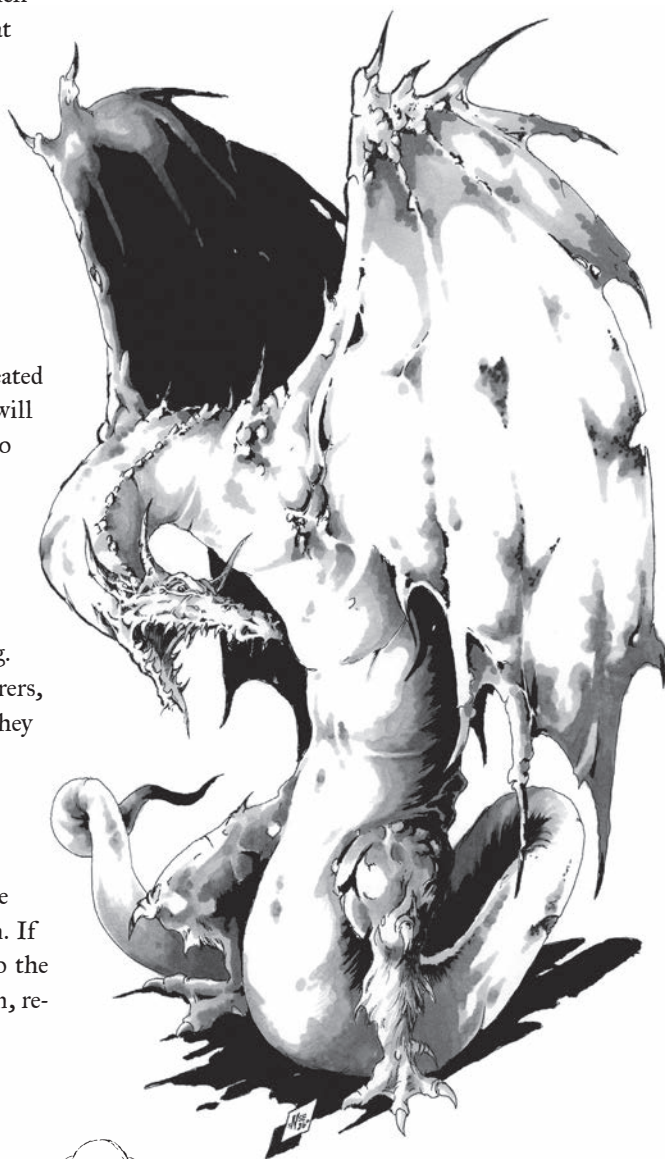
THE SILVER SPEAR

Once the dragon's prison has been treated one way or the other, the mountain will begin to quake and debris will start to rain down. The dwellers explain that they will head for safety in the lower layers through cracks through which the adventurers are unable to follow. They offer to send the stranded souls up with the Silver Spear before leaving. If that is not agreeable to the adventurers, they may try to head back the way they came as best they can.

For effect, the dwellers will say that the Silver Spear is unable to carry everyone to the surface. Lupendus Firm offers to stay behind. Maybe he will be able to make it back on his own. If they insist on squeezing everyone into the lift, it will grind to a halt further down, resulting in a longer climb.

THE DRAGON'S RETURN

As a finale, if the adventurers freed Scarne, they will see the gigantic beast break free from its earthen confines, creating a huge crater. The Forbidden Lands now has a new force to reckon with. Place the sticker with the crater on the map in a hex adjacent to Stonegarden.





TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Dungeon

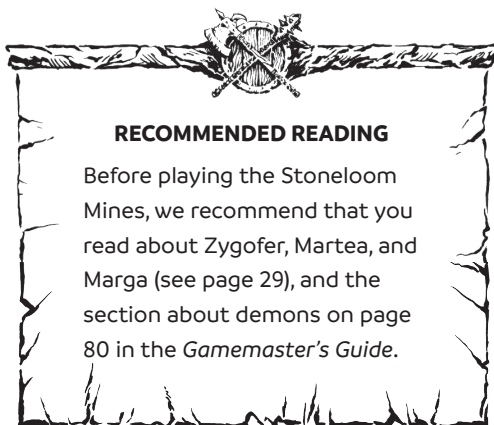
Warm fumes, reeking of blood and rot like the breath of a predator, rise from the broken gates of Stoneloom Mines in the mountainside. You know that many have died only twenty paces closer to the cavern mouth. Every fiber of your being twitches, urging you to run.

BACKGROUND

Zygofer's and Martea's demonic daughter, Marga, haunts Stoneloom Mines. She feeds on anything warm-blooded that comes near her and the adventurers should be equipped with some form of magical protection, preferably something like the emerald Gall-Eye or the face of the sorcerer Zertorme from the Amber's Peak adventure

site. Marga will believe the adventurers are her brother. Zertorme can even have given the group the mission to find out what happened to his mother Martea and perhaps retrieve an artifact to use against Zytera, such as Martea's lock of his father's hair. Another option is that the adventurers are going into the mines to search for the dwarf, Milva, and her party, to simply seek to plunder the mines, or see if it is possible to open the mines again.

Apart from Marga and her mother Martea, the mines are home to several minor demons who draw nourishment from Marga, as well as several more or less demonified reptilian creatures and insects that Marga has left alone since she does not feed on cold-blooded creatures.



RECOMMENDED READING

Before playing the Stoneloom Mines, we recommend that you read about Zygofer, Martea, and Marga (see page 29), and the section about demons on page 80 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

GETTING HERE

There are many different ways in which the adventurers can find their way to the Stoneloom mines. They may have found a map that leads here, heard the legends about this place, or encountered one of the events below.

THE DWARVEN SCOUT

The adventurer's encounter Ulm, a dwarven scout from the Meromannian clan desperately looking for his lost brethren. He knows that the warrior, Milva, and her fellow dwarves traveled to Stoneloom to investigate if the mine was still usable after all these years. They never returned. It has fallen on Ulm to scout the area around the mines and report back any findings. He knows the legend of the mine, and can offer to join the adventurers to explore the place.

THE LITTLE PLAYMATE

Darja the Aslene and her daughter, Lumi, are traveling the land on horseback. They will

meet the adventurers and ask them to join them for supper around their campfire. During the night, Darja will tell tales of the plains of Aslene, home to her proud ancestors, and of the demons that eventually ravaged the lands. Before bedtime, the daughter, Lumi, wants to tell the adventurers about her new playmate but is immediately hushed by the protective mother. It turns out that the pair camped outside of the Stoneloom Mines recently, and Lumi was awakened in the middle of the night by a strange girl claiming to be called Marga and wanting to play. Darja knows the legend of Stoneloom and will tell it to the adventurers, but does not believe that the girl her daughter saw is the Marga of the tale.

LEGEND

Some say the Meromannian dwarves abandoned the Stoneloom Mines after the Third Alder Wars, but the truth is that they were eaten by something that moved into their home. Rumors whisper that the mad wizard Zygofer cursed his family as they fled his ever more frightening presence. Tainted by a demonic infection, his daughter, Marga, sought shelter among the dwarves in the Stoneloom Mines, where she turned into a monster and consumed her hosts. None have dared enter the caves since.



LOCATIONS

The most important locations in the Stoneloom Mines are described below. If the



adventurers get their hands on a map of the mines (the one Milva is carrying, for example), you can give the players the player version of the map. It can be found at the end of this book and for download on the Free League website.

1. MINE ENTRANCE

The Mines' entrance gapes like a toothless mouth. One half of the gate is missing, while the other, made of sturdy oak, hangs askew on a massive hinge. The smell of corpses and less identifiable things flows up from the depths.

2. STAIRWELL

Below a ramp of steps, an eight-meter-wide circular shaft opens, plunging down into the darkness. Spiral stairs worm their way down the sides. Odd whimpering and munching sounds rise from the deep. Thick rusty chains hang from a huge winch, all of which are rusted together.

The ravine once had a wooden structure covering it, but only shattered remains are left. The spiral stairs continue down some 50 meters into the darkness.

3. ANTECHAMBER

The shaft plunges deeper into the mountain, but the stairs end at a sloped tunnel with slotted tracks in the floor. You can see a faint light at the top of the slope.

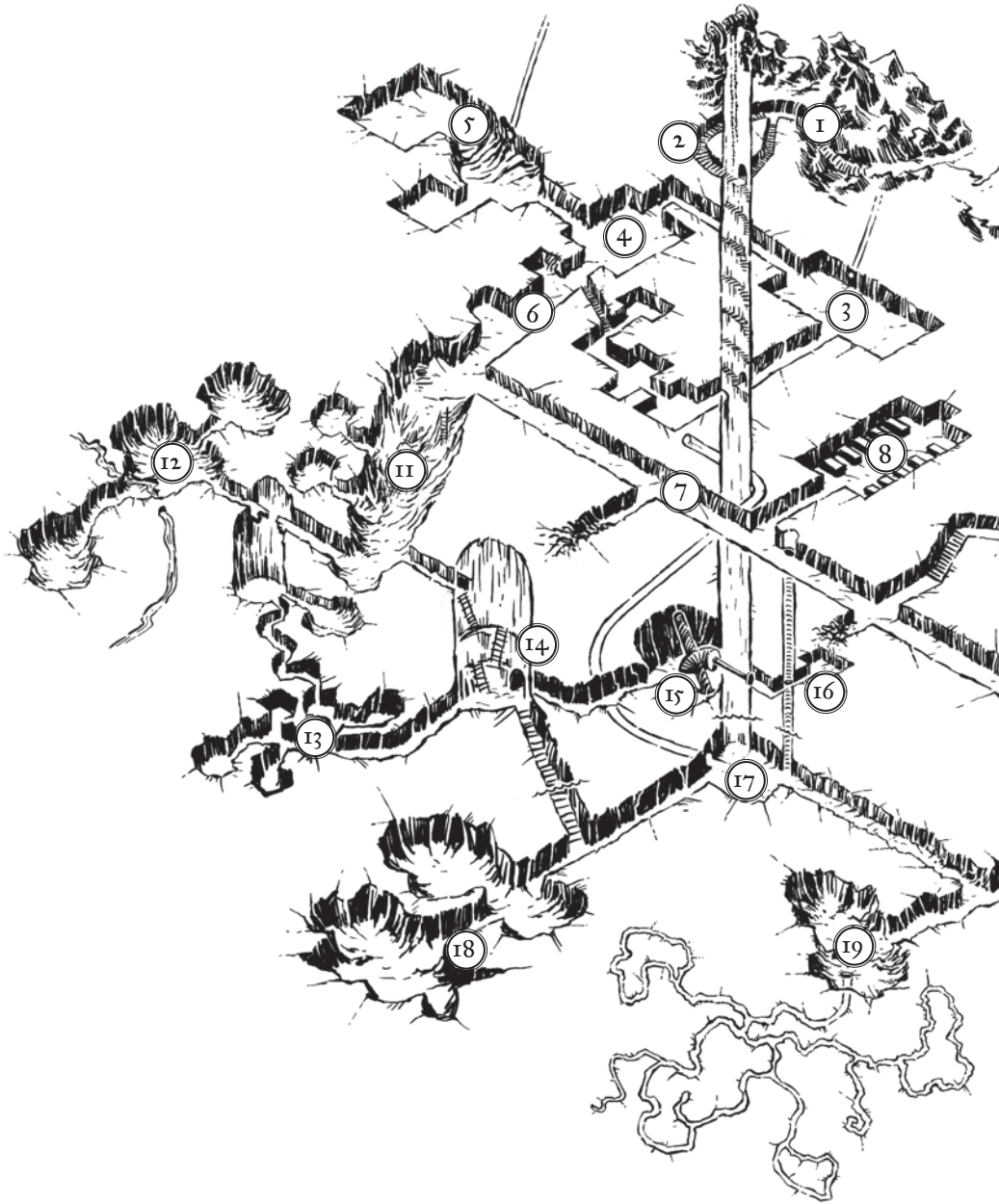
The mine shaft leads to the oldest cave in the mines. All the shafts in the mine have slot-

THE ENVIRONS OF THE MINES

The Stoneloom Mines are characterized by the following:

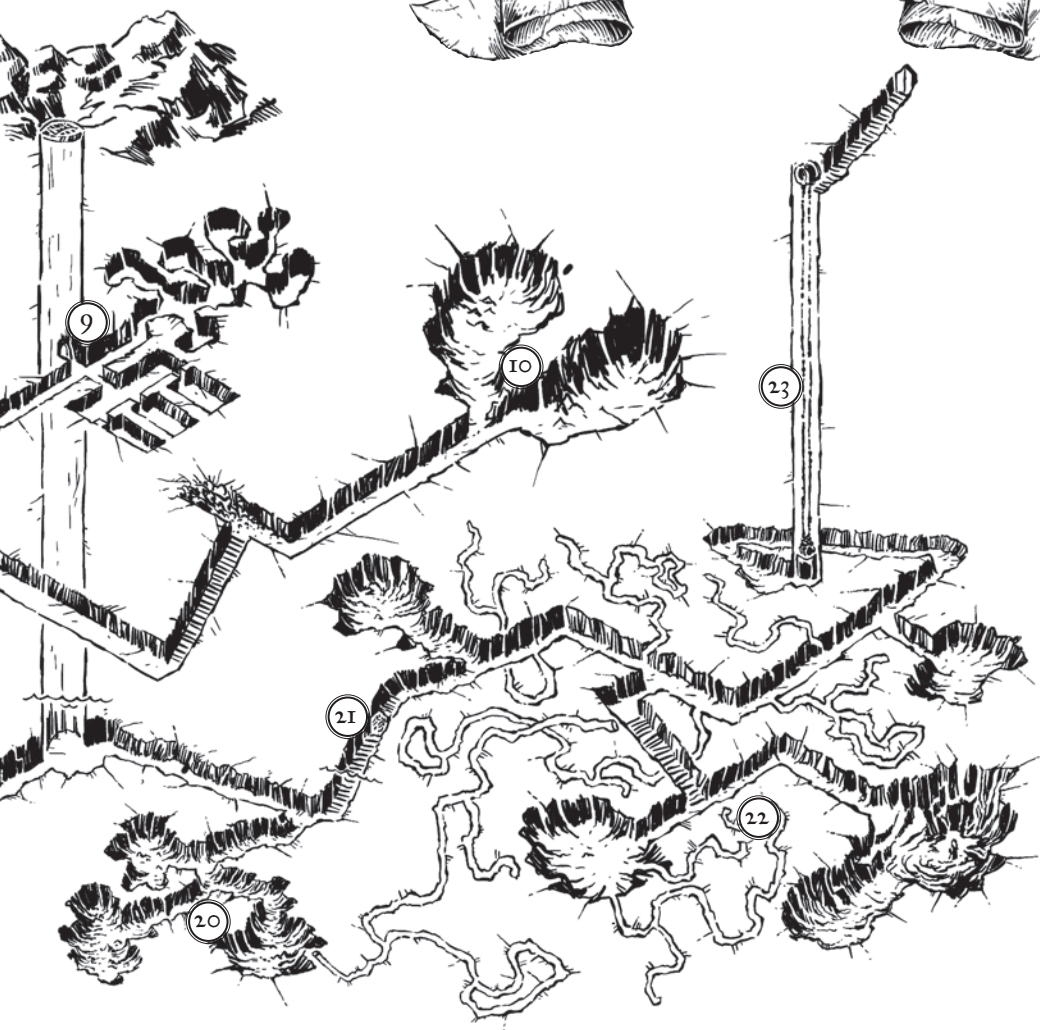
- ❖ It is consistently damp and humid.
- ❖ The temperature is only a few degrees above freezing, except where creatures dwell and where Marga has passed through during the last few hours, since her massive and steaming form quickly heats the tunnels.
- ❖ There is a stench of mostly unpleasant and somewhat noxious fumes from the different creatures inhabiting the mines.
- ❖ Darkness reigns, except where fluorescent algae grow on the walls.
- ❖ Brass bells hang in many places throughout the mines, once used as a signaling system. Ringing them now only attracts monsters.
- ❖ Marga can appear anywhere. See Events below.

ted tracks in the floor. The mining carts were hoisted up using a winch mechanism in the tracks. The weak light is coming from a ventilation shaft that leads up to the surface. There are broken wooden crates spread throughout the cave, plundered a long time ago.





THE STONE- LOOM MINES





4. CHAPEL

Crystals glimmer in the ceiling of this beautiful cave, reflected from fluorescent algae. There are parts of stone benches and sculptures on the walls, but everything is collapsed and decayed. Bone fragments and large shells are strewn across the floor.

A cave with glimmering salt crystals in the ceiling has been decorated as a chapel to the god Huga. The walls were beautifully carved, but have been broken down and fallen apart. A demonic mass clings to the ceiling here, half-heartedly sending down the occasional tentacle towards anything living. It can be easily avoided if discovered. Broken bones and chitinous shells from large insects are scattered beneath it.

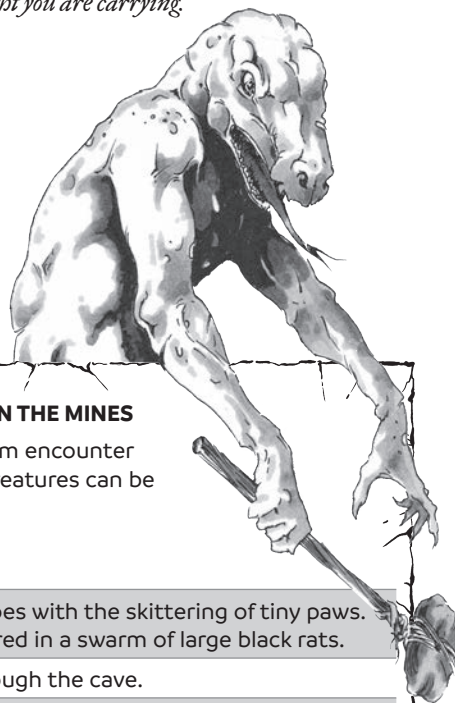
The sloping passage from the cave has two alcoves housing dilapidated wheelbarrows, carts, tools and barrels of grease. A staircase leading down to the cart depot (see area #6 on

the map) can be found behind a small side door by the shaft.

❖ CREATURES: Demonic mass.

5. THE LAIR OF THE SAURIANS

An almost overpowering stench of filth and decay drifts in from a side tunnel. Two Saurians armed with spears hiss and cluck when they notice the light you are carrying.



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN THE MINES

Roll D6 every Quarter Hour. If you roll ☠, a random encounter occurs. Roll on the table below. Stats for these creatures can be found in the Bestiary in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

D6	ENCOUNTER	INFORMATION
1	Rats	The tunnel ahead echoes with the skittering of tiny paws. Soon, the floor is covered in a swarm of large black rats.
2	Saurians	D6 Saurians move through the cave.
3	Insectoid	D6 human-sized Insectoids.
4	Ghouls	D6 gargling and white-eyed dwarf ghouls.
5	Lesser Demons	D6 minor demons, sniffing hungrily.
6	Abyss Worm	The floor shakes and the stone tiling bulges from the floor. They shatter, and soon the floor is transformed into a giant maw!



Three connected caves have been claimed by a small tribe of Saurians, sixteen creatures in total. Since they are cold-blooded, Marga does not attack them. They can also be encountered as they are moving up through the mine, since they hunt in the area around it. They have no valuables and carry very primitive weapons. The Saurians worship Marga as the Goddess of the Mines. She sees them as her pets, and sometimes gives them animals or people she has caught, so that they may feed on them. The Saurians usually let their prey ferment in a pool once used for tanning before they eat them, which explains the horrible smell.

- ❖ CREATURES: Two Saurians (for stats, see page 68 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). Another D6 Saurians are close by.

6. CART DEPOT

A row of empty carts, some of which have fallen apart and some of which are whole, stand in a row. Their wheels are slotted into shallow furrows in the floor, leading towards a gate opening into a narrow tunnel that slopes downwards.

Grease can be found nearby in sealed jugs. If a cart is greased and pushed into the sloping tunnel, it races down the tunnel at a dizzying speed and does not stop until it reaches the water-filled loading area (see area #17 on the map). Any passenger might drown there unless they quickly swim to the surface in the shaft, up the ladder to the maintenance chamber (#16), or possibly along the shaft to the cavern (#14). It is possible to crawl back up the cart shaft even if some parts are almost vertical,

and if someone sends a new cart down the tunnel, you will be in serious trouble.

7. THE LOG DRIFT

A straight and wide tunnel, lined with timber pillars, disappears into the darkness as far as the eye can see.

The mountain is unstable in the northernmost part of the tunnel, and several small cave-ins have occurred there.





8. TOMB

Blue flickering light shines out of a side chamber. Something appears to be moving in there.

Miners who have died over the years have been placed in ten sarcophagi in a beautifully carved out cave. Three fresh dwarven corpses have been invaded by demonic flesh and awakened as ghouls. There are a few valuables in the sarcophagi, but also high quality dwarven weapons and tools. An alcove contains oil lamps and small barrels of lamp oil. Fluorescent blue moon rocks are embedded in the walls.

- ❖ CREATURES: Three dwarven ghouls (for stats, see page 122 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*).
- ❖ TREASURE: An old keg filled with dark dwarven ale. One gold piece. D6 copper.

9. THE INSECT SHAFT

A soft draft emanates from a rising mining shaft. It carries a vague scent reminiscent of a grain silo. You hear distant scraping noises.

Several plain, empty living quarters can be found along a slope. The tunnel ends in a ventilation shaft with plain, smooth walls with no steps or any kind of winch. Large insectile creatures flutter noisily down the shaft if they are disturbed. If you throw a stone down the shaft, a splash can be heard after almost five seconds. Human-sized insectoids have colonized the closest living quarters beyond the chasm. They fly up and out during the night to hunt, but never venture further into the mines.

- ❖ CREATURES: D6 + 3 Insectoids.

10. CAVES

You find two large caves, their floors covered with the scattered bones of dwarves. The silence is so oppressive that it almost feels alive.

The caves are so large it takes two Quarter Hours to explore them.

- ❖ TREASURES: D6 silver, a whistle made from bone and a rusty closed helmet (Armor Rating 3) can be found among the bones.

11. THE ESCARPMENT

You find a steeply sloped cave. Wooden ladders that are partly rotted through follow trickles of water down the withered rockface.

If you slide down you risk triggering a rock slide (if the adventurers want to risk it, roll MOVE, a failure triggers a slide making it impossible to go back the same way). This is a great opportunity for the GM to cut off the way back behind the adventurers and force them to find another way out. There are two small breaches in the slope.

12. MINING SHAFT

The smell of mushrooms emanates from below the escarpment, not moldy but fresh. You see what appears to be large caves through passages to the north and to the south. The southern tunnel opens up into another shaft. You see the remains of a wooden bridge leading to a massive wooden door on the other side. There are strange scratches on the door.



The mine's mushroom patches are behind the door, where Milva and her dwarves have barricaded themselves. An underground stream with potable water that tastes of metal runs through the room. The mushrooms are edible. If the adventurers spend a turn (15 minutes) on collecting them, they receive 2D6 units of FOOD. The scratches on the door are from small demons that live in the breached vugs (see below). They regularly try to breach the door and reach the dwarves, so they can eat them.

- ❖ CREATURES: None right now, but roll once for random encounters.

13. BREACHED VUGS

Strange sounds fill several small hollows where a few violet crystals sparkle on the walls.

The hollows are so called vugs, natural crystal cavities into which the dwarves have carved their way in so as to harvest amethysts. Four lesser demons have settled in the area. They are always hungry. The adventurers can squeeze themselves down to the vugs from the shaft through cracks (this takes an additional quarter of an hour) or get there through room #14 (see the map). A couple of amethysts remain.

- ❖ CREATURES: Four lesser demons have their lair here. They are either on site or moving about close by, often harassing the dwarves by the mushroom patches.
- ❖ TREASURES: D6 amethysts (worth D6 silver coins each).

14. CAVERN

Half-rotted stairs lead almost forty meters down into a perpendicular rock shaft.

15. PUMPING STATION

You arrive at a chamber containing a large, but dormant, mechanism. A large, diagonally aligned screw continues up into the ceiling of the room and down through the floor. Two large cogwheels appear to power it. A thick axle runs out into and straight across a round shaft. You hear water slosh some ten meters below the axle.

The lower parts of the mine are submerged, but the so-called Archimedean screw pumps it away when active. If the pump is activated on the other side of the shaft, the cogwheels will start to spin, causing the screw to turn and lift the water out to the mountainside. The machinery is surprisingly quiet, and the water drains away below the level of the map in eight hours. The mechanism, which is very powerful, is probably powered by steam pressure from deeper in the mountain, but no one knows any longer for sure. All of the mechanisms here are made from an unknown metal that appears to neither rust nor oxidize.

16. MAINTENANCE CHAMBER

Below a vertical passage with ladders is a small, cramped chamber with machinery. The ladders continue down, but end in water. A lever is set into the wall. Troughs with grease sit on the floor. A thick axle leads into the shaft beyond.

If the lever is pulled down, the machinery will



start working and the axle will slowly begin to revolve. Since the pumping station is steam-powered, curtains of steam will impair vision in the proximity of the machinery and rise through the shaft. The machinery will break down sixteen hours after being activated unless the axle and the cogwheels have been greased. If the adventurers are farther down into the mine by then, it will slowly begin to fill with water again, so that they have to slosh onwards and eventually may find themselves in a real bind. In addition, a steam explosion occurs an hour after the breakdown, possibly causing cave-ins.

17. LOADING AREA (AFTER THE WATER HAS BEEN PUMPED AWAY)

A heavy chain that ends in an iron-shod basket lies in a large heap beneath the shaft. Wreckage of carts is nearby, partially filled with slime.

From here rocks and ore were lifted to the surface with the winch. The empty carts were sent down to the cart depot (see #6 on the map) along the tracks.

18. ABANDONED CAVERNS

19. SEALED CAVERN

A stout log gate with iron chains has rotted and rusted here. At floor level, it is pierced by a hole a meter wide. You glimpse a large cavern with rusted, empty, iron cages through the gate remains.

The cavern once held the dwarves' Abyss Worms, creatures that were used to drill and

pull carts through smaller shafts. When the water rose in the cavern, the worms broke free and they have drilled passages in the area large enough for the adventurers to crawl through. A few remain, and they are hungry.

❖ CREATURES: Two Abyss Worms.

20. GROWTH OF PHOSPHORUS ALGAE

As you pass beneath a shaft, you can discern daylight as a tiny roundel some 150 meters higher up. Some distance into the next passage, a blue light appears around a bend to the right. The voices of children can be heard from the same direction.

In these caverns the dwarves grew fluorescent algae that they carried into the mine to light it. In the shimmering halls, twenty dwarven children can be found who call for help when they sense visitors. Upon a closer look, they are revealed to be identical and they all shout with the same voice. A demon has entered into symbiosis with the algae and attempts to attract prey. "The children" here are rooted to the rock with the algae, and the demon depends on being able to lure its prey closer.

❖ CREATURES: Demon. Use stats for Marga and the demonic mass on page 156.

21. IRON GATE

A sturdy iron gate blocks the passage. The wheel that levers it up appears to be jammed by rust.

A gate reinforced with iron may have been low-



ered into the passage, if it pleases the GM. The door won't budge, as the mechanism is jammed with rust. Unless the adventurers can remove it through magical means, the only way forward is through the tunnel worm passages that lead from the growths (#20 on the map) to Marga's burrow (#22 on the map).

22. MARGA'S BURROW

It is hot and stifling and smells strange in a mountain riddled with narrow labyrinths. Flickering bluish shadows seem to radiate from phosphorus algae, activated by your presence. A haunting song echoes with no apparent source, as well as laughter, as if from a girl.

The area is riddled with tunnels created by Abyss Worms, roughly one meter in diameter each. Here, there are tendrils from Marga's demonic body, with the large mass gathered in the innermost chamber.

In the innermost cavern, the adventurers see an eleven-year-old girl standing on a pulsating and living mass that fills the larger part of the chamber. The mass also belongs to Marga, and she has formed her original body from it. The body of the girl contains her heart, and if it is impaled, the Marga creature dies.

23. LIFT APPARATUS

You come to an apparatus that is attached to a rack that runs upwards along a shaft.

The visitors can slowly raise the cart to the surface by turning a wheel. It takes at least a couple of hours. The chain with its coun-

terweight runs over a wheel at surface level. There, stairs lead up to one of the emergency exits of the mine, which can only be opened from within and is not even visible from the outside when closed.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

The most important monsters and non-player characters in the Stoneloom Mines are described below. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same stats as in the Bestiary or the chapter on Kin in the *Game-master's Guide* in core game box.

MILVA AND THE DWARVES

Milva is a robust dwarven warrior from the clan of the Meromannians. An apothecary in Stonegarden believed himself to have found an ointment that made dwarves invisible to the monster in the mine. Milva offered to try it out to gauge the state of the mines. The ointment was effective at first, but proved to be unstable. After an incident where one of Milva's comrades was killed, the dwarves fled and shut themselves inside the mushroom patches, where they have barricaded themselves for the past two months and lived off of mushrooms and water from the stream. Milva has gathered knowledge about the mine and has created a not entirely accurate map of the place. She knows of the emergency lift apparatus in the the mine. One of Milva's four men has a serious leg injury



and must be carried. He implores the party to leave him behind and save themselves.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Crafting 2, Scouting 2, Melee 3, Survival 2

GEAR: Battleaxe, chainmail, D6 silver coins

venturers carry something that protects them, Marga will believe them to be her brother, Zertorme, who has come to visit her and play. If the party attacks her, she will become angry and act overall like a spoiled, willful and violent child. The parts of the creature can be attacked, but it can only be killed by piercing the girl's original heart in the innermost cavern. Marga can appear anywhere in the mines, since her mass wells forth through cracks in the mountain.

LESSER DEMONS



A group of lesser demons have settled close to the breach. They live by feeding off the strange minerals but due to their nature, they are always looking for blood to vary their diet. The little cherub-like demons have black, hungry eyes and sharp, cold teeth.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4

SKILLS: Melee 2

WEAPONS: Bite, Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound)

STRENGTH 24, AGILITY 1, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

TOUGH: The demonic mass is very difficult to damage, and will suffer a maximum of 1 point of damage from a physical attack, regardless of the result.

THE AVATAR: The avatar that wears the appearance of Marga as a girl (see area 22 above) has Strength 3. If the adventurers defeat it and give it a **COUP DE GRACE**, the creature will die. The demonic mass will, however, do anything to stop the adventurers from attacking the avatar.

IMMUNITY: It is possible to use **MANIPULATION** on Marga, but she is immune to damage to Wits and Empathy.

MARGA – THE DEMONIC MASS

Marga is Zygofer's and Martea's demonified daughter. She is an immense, gray-green-brown, shapeless mass that can form tentacles, distorted parts of the girl, or grotesque copies of the adventurers, as she pleases. The creature's personality still has traits of an eleven-year-old, disturbed girl. Marga attacks anything warm-blooded so as to assimilate it. If the ad-

D6 MONSTER ATTACKS

- 1. MARGA'S LULLABY.** An unpleasant and unnatural song wells forth from the demonic mass. Perform an attack on all the adventurers within **SHORT** distance. This is a fear attack rolled with seven Base Dice.
- 2. TENTACLE ATTACK!** A number of tentacles (equal to half the number of adventurers, round up) swoop down from the mass in the ceiling and attempt to squeeze the life out of one adventurer each. Perform an attack against each of them with seven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force).



3. **DEMONIC SHRIEK!** The little girl in the middle of the demonic mass shrieks, and the next second it is as if the scream is amplified by the very mountain walls. All adventurers within NEAR distance suffer a fear attack with eight Base Dice.

4. **SLIME ATTACK!** One of the adventurers within NEAR distance is covered by slime from the demonic mass. This counts as a fear attack with six Base Dice, and the adventurer gets a -2 penalty to MOVE for the remainder of the battle.

5. **NIGHTMARE ATTACK!** A part of the demonic mass assumes the shape of one the adventurers' worst nightmares (make something up from previous adventures or ask the player to describe what the adventurer's greatest fear is). The demonic creature attacks the adventurer with twelve Base Dice (Weapon Damage 1). On a hit, the adventurer is thrown to NEAR distance and falls PRONE.

6. **DEVOURING ATTACK!** An unfortunate adventurer is assaulted by several tentacles that attempt to lift her up to the demonic mass in the ceiling, where a hole is forming. The victim suffers an attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). On a hit, the adventurer is GRAPPLED and drawn into the demonic mass. The victim must roll for ENDURANCE every round, with failure meaning 1 point of damage to Agility. If the victim becomes broken, she will die from suffocation after D6 rounds. The only way to save the victim is to deal 10 points of damage to the cocoon that surrounds her.



MARTEA

Martea was Zygofer's wife and Marga's mother. Both creatures still see each other that way. Through demonic influence, Martea has fused with a large Abyss Worm. At the front of the worm is a slit from which it can pass



Martea's disfigured face when she wishes to speak. Along the body are similar slits with faces from creatures whom she has "saved" throughout the years. These are all terrified and scream for help if revealed. Close to Martea's face on the worm is a lock of human hair from Zygofer and she speaks to it as if it were her husband. If it is taken, it can be magically used against Zytera.

Martea sees herself as a good mother, who looks after her daughter. She tries to save her daughter's victims by tearing their bodies apart, chewing off their faces and preserving them on her body, where they possess a kind of life. The adventurers can talk to her but won't be able to make much sense of her ravings. According to Martea, Marga is "a child that none can judge." If she senses anyone bleeding, the nature of the worm will overpower her and she will attempt to eat the wounded person. Martea remembers nothing of this afterwards. If anyone kills or threatens either mother or daughter, the other will become openly hostile.

Martea may have acquired the sword Maligarn from someone who previously ventured into the mines. She views it as a threat to her family, and may either use it or just store it. The adventurers can obtain Maligarn either by killing Martea or by gaining her trust. She may also have one of the other artifacts presented in Chapter 6 the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

STRENGTH 18, AGILITY 1, WITS 4, EMPATHY 2

Martea can perform monster attacks like an Abyss Worm (see page 76 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

EVENTS

Below are suggestions for events that you can subject the adventurers to in the Stoneloom Mines.

MARGA'S SONG

A girl's voice is heard singing strange lullabies from the cracks in the mountain's structure or a tentacle that hangs from the rock ceiling, for example:

"Sister, brother, how we wax. Mother, father sharpens the axe."

This can be repeated when it suits the atmosphere.

THE PLAYFUL DEMON

Marga wants to play. A tentacle attempts to steal something or brusquely throws someone from the party to the ground as the voice of a girl calls, "You're it!" and giggles. Overall, the GM should let the adventurers interact with Marga without it necessarily leading to an outright battle.

THE DEMONIC MASS

Marga's tissue fills a passage completely. She won't retract until the adventurers have answered a riddle or given her a kiss.

THE FRIGHTENED DWARF

The adventurers run into a lost and terrified dwarf from Milva's group. The dwarf doesn't



know where the others are, but a friend who was with him has been captured by monsters nearby and is probably still alive (which isn't necessarily true). It is a possibility that the dwarf acts and talks funny due to being possessed by a demon who only wants to accompany the party to the surface and live.

THE BELL TOLLS

The nearest signal bell tolls. When the adventurers get to where the bell is located, they just see a shadow disappearing in the gloom. Only the swinging bell remains. Monsters close by may also have become intrigued.

WHITE MUSHROOMS

While the adventurers are resting, they suddenly notice how a wide-meshed web of white, mushroom-like strands have grown from cracks in the mountain, and quickly cover one or more members of the party. They seem to emit a low, soft tune like a lullaby. What the threads are or what their purpose is, the adventurers will never know. They are easily torn off.

CAVE-IN

A sudden cave-in occurs, or a cavity ruptures, causing large amounts of mud to flood the area and could be hazardous to the adventurers. Roll for an attack with six Base Dice (Weapon Damage 1) against each of the adventurers. It is possible to DODGE the attack, but it can't be PARRIED.

GAS LEAK

Someone picks up the scent of methane. If the party doesn't immediately put out all fires, there will be an explosion within a minute or two. If so, roll for an attack with eight Base Dice (Weapon Damage 1) against each adventurer. It is not possible to DODGE or PARRY the attack.

MARGA'S FURY

Eventually the demonic creature that has assimilated Marga will run out of patience with the adventurers. If they don't quickly appease it, the demonic mass will furiously attack the party to assimilate them. What Marga wants most of all is playmates, and preferably her own age. If the adventurers can trick her into believing that they are children who have come to entertain her, her anger will subside.

A MOTHER'S LAMENT

The demonic creature that was once Martea becomes intrigued by the adventurers, and surprises them when they least expect it. It can, for example, happen by her emerging from the floor or through a wall with her immense worm-body. She will ask them where they come from, if Zygofer or Zertorme has sent them, and say that their lives are in grave danger. She claims that there is only one way to escape Marga's wrath: to be saved by Martea herself. In a way she is right. Anyone whose face is assimilated into Martea's body will live for a long, long time. But maybe not in the way they had imagined.



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Castle

The stench of fear and blood drifts toward you on the wind as you approach the temple of Hagglar's House. Crowds of humans camp outside the walls, inexplicably silent, like a flock afraid to attract the attention of predators. The screams of those who have abandoned hope can be heard all the clearer, mixing with song and music the like of which you have never heard. It's easy to want to turn around even at this distance, but the scouts of the Iron Guard are watching you and would test your faith at the slightest sign of hesitation. All that remains is to walk on, into the domain of the blood-drinking gods Rust and Heme.

BACKGROUND

The annual harvest feast draws near at Hagglar's House. Rust Prince Kartorda will travel there for the feast, as will the herald of the gods, the terrible Zytera. In the fields around the temple, large numbers of villagers have come to gather in tents: the faithful, the coerced, the curious and the commandeered. Because of rumors of wicked deeds in the making, scores of seasoned Iron Guards search the camps for heretics.

Many of the temple's priests dream of new days of glory. The Whispering Council, however, long attempting to summon the Blood Mist back to the land, has fallen strangely silent without its task fulfilled. The demon bard,



Merigall, has silenced them, as he does not wish the mist to return.

An attack on Zytera is in the air. According to rumors, the demon prince Krasylla is behind these plans himself, as he wants to assume control over the western part of the Forbidden Lands.



GETTING HERE

There are several different ways in which the adventurers may find Haggler's House. They may have come across a map at some time, heard a story or the legend about the place, or encountered one of the events below.

THE SACRIFICE

The adventurers are sought out by a local farmer with a grave problem. The Rust Brothers have chosen his eldest son, Robund, as a sacrifice in honor of the gods Rust and Heme. Normally, this would be a great honor for the family; in this case, Robund is betrothed and about to become a father. The farmer simply wants to change places with his son, and asks for the adventurers' help to make the exchange. As thanks, he offers them a family ring worth 2D6 silver coins.

THE RAVEN

A cawing raven follows the adventurers on their journey across the land. It becomes more and more forward, even landing on one of the adventurers' shoulder for a moment. The yel-



RECOMMENDED READING

Before you play, it's a good idea to read the texts about the gods Rust and Heme (page 38 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*), about the creature Zytera (page 29), and about the Rust Prince Kartorda (page 48).

low-eyed raven is, in fact, the demon bard Merigall in disguise, attempting to lure the adventurers to Haggler's House in order to stir up some more action. After a while, the raven will circle around the group several times and then head toward Haggler's House in the distance.



LEGEND

One does not like to mention Haggler's House, the goddess Heme's greatest temple in the Forbidden Lands, for many have lost their loved ones in its domain. Yet people go on pilgrimage at the yearly harvest feast to honor the bloody mother, for those whose idols have not been blessed by the priests can expect failed crops, disease and famine in the coming year. Survival in the harsh west is paid with sacrifice: crops, silver, young blood and the bodies of dead kin. This particular year, the 300th anniversary of the birth of Zytera and the Rust Brothers, is celebrated with an even more lavish sacrifice. It is rumored that the messenger of the gods will visit the temple in person and speak to the people about the country's future.



LOCATIONS

Below are locations in and around Haggler's House that the adventurers can visit.

1. CAMP

Outside the circular temple area, a few scores of tents have been set up. They stand unnecessarily close, as if seeking protection from each other. The atmosphere among the farmers is oppressive. You sense anger as well as watchfulness in the movements of people checking the laden carts they've brought from their home villages.

More than a hundred people, from villages near and far, are camped at the foot of the temple mound. Many are weeping over family members given away as sacrifices. Groups of Iron Guards move among the tents.

❖ CREATURES: Iron Guards.

2. THE IRON HOUSES

Humans gather with their bowls by a couple of barracks that have been fortified with metal, where great pots of barley gruel and meat stew simmer. Off to the side, rust priests chant and swing their censers among a group of listeners.

Guests who have fulfilled their commitments are served with food here, that they themselves have delivered to the temple. The sick can find aid from healing herbs other villagers have gathered, or through demonological methods that often have terrifying side effects.

3. WASHING STAIRS

On an elevated platform by the entrance to the temple area, visitors wash their feet and have signs painted on their faces before entering barefoot into the gods' domain.

Blood signs on the visitors' foreheads prove that they have been cleansed for their visit. All guests walk barefoot on the fairly sharp gravel in the yard; this symbolizes the thorns of existence. Priests and Iron Guards all wear shoes.

4. BARRACK TOWERS

Tough soldiers in iron masks move between a pair of buildings. Each structure has a tower. Almost-naked treetops protrude from the tops of the tower; these are not common trees, for the branches slowly move as if grasping for something, prey perhaps?

These buildings belong to the order of the Iron Guard, which is responsible for the Rust Brothers' security. The Guard also hunts heretics and conducts punitive expeditions. The four round towers of the temple are each constructed around a demon-tainted tree; this explains the moving branches. The trees are not aggressive, but will scream if cut. Chopped off branches can be laid on the ground as an alarm system around a night camp, for example.

❖ CREATURES: Iron Guards.

5. TEMPLE-COURT

The circular temple-court teems with villagers and strange characters. Masked priests swing rusty censers of incense; soldiers parade in lavish iron ar-



mor; misgrown humans sprout weird protrusions. There are ardent worshipers praying to the idols and flagellating themselves; there are white-painted dancers, restless dead, demon-tainted animals. Sunk into the middle of the yard is an arena where humans have been strapped to posts.

The court is guarded by the Iron Guard and Corpse Herders. The latter are dressed in odd costumes adorned with strings and plates made of various metals. Their fingers bristle with feelers, with which they can deal shocks to guide demonic beasts and walking dead; they can also use them to punish and warn negligent visitors.

Armor parts are stacked next to the low wall to display the brotherhood's smithing skills and military power. Next to them hang torture cages with dead or dying criminals. One can buy suitable objects from temple servants to throw at the criminals.

- ❖ CREATURES: Iron Guards, Corpse Herders.
- ❖ TREASURES: Finely wrought armor parts (worth 2D6 silver coins per piece).

6. THE BLOOD CAULDRON AND THE BLESSING TABLES

Twelve poles rise out of the mosaic that covers the sunken place of sacrifice located in the middle of the temple-court. Bleeding humans are fettered to the poles with rusty chains. Dancers painted in white move among them to a strange tune. Around the arena, the spectators are either apathetic, weeping, or praying fervently. At stone tables near the arena, priests ritually paint idols with blood.

The appointed sacrifices are kept in chains for a day and a night before they are killed. The spectators are supplicants and next of kin. The dancers are the so-called Death-Shadows of the temple: shaven, painted white and claw-tipped, their movements are grotesque. They stalk the sacrifices, caressing them one moment, scratching them bloody in the next. By the north stairs, the musician Ferelde plays his plectron. The floor of the Blood Cauldron is edged with six earth-beasts: cow heads wrought from rusty iron, lowing against the sky, mouths open like fledgling birds. Now and then priests pour blood from the sacrifices into their open maws.

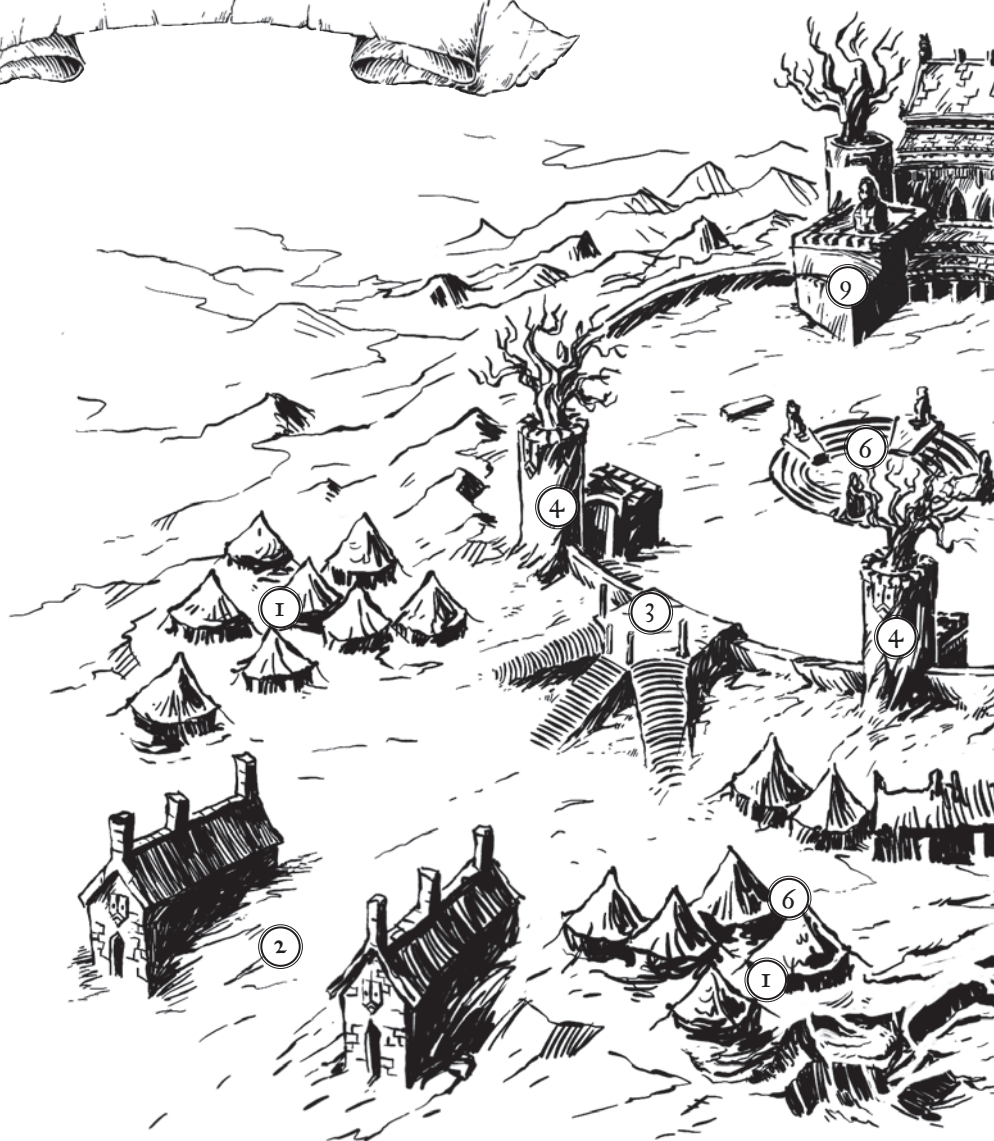
Each delegation of farmers carries their village's effigy to the blessing tables near the Blood Cauldron. These are heavy, grotesque sculptures of Rust and Heme that stand three feet high. If a village has fulfilled its obligations, their effigy is painted with sacrificial blood, anointed with holy balm and ceremonially blessed by the Rust Brothers. Their blessing will secure the crops for the coming year. Particularly fine tributes, as well as humans chosen for sacrifice, are brought to the tables. The restless dead, too, are brought here to be "given the honor of serving the gods beyond this life."

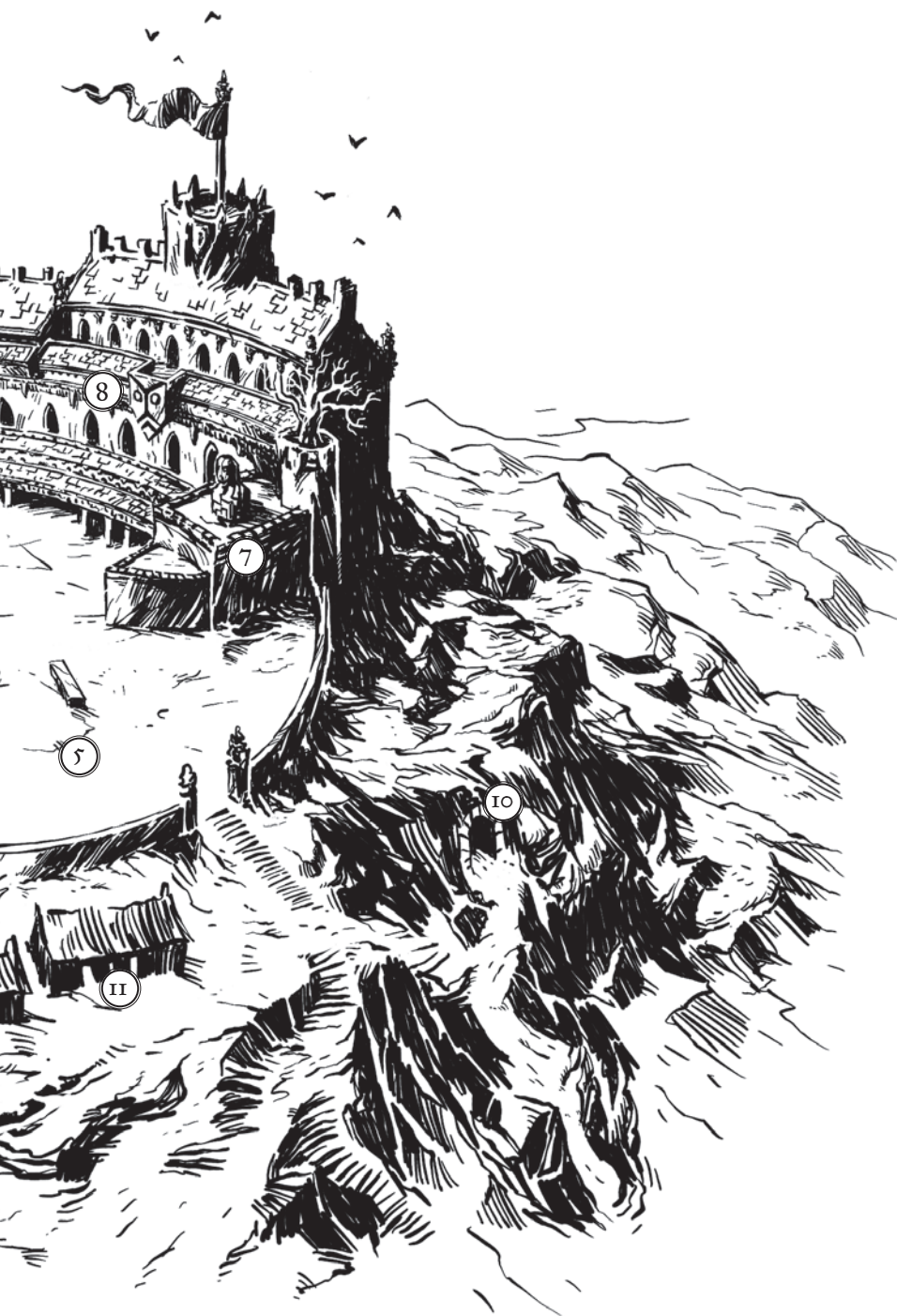
The balm is an ointment that keeps the effigies' demonic inhabitants calm during the coming year. Without the ointment, the demon will seek out crops and living creatures, which it will cause to rot. The earth-beasts' mouths end in pipes that lead to the catacombs. The lowing noises are made by Bloodlings.

- ❖ CREATURES: Death-Shadows, Rust Brothers.



HAGGLER'S HOUSE







- ❖ TREASURES: Four effigies, very heavy (worth 3D6 silver coins each), D6 offerings (roll on the table for VALUABLE finds on page 189 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

7. PREPARATION PAVILION

Priests lead unhappy humans into a pavilion, which is crowned by the grotesque wooden idol of a dancing woman covered in blood. The unfortunate emerge again shaven and covered in oil.

In the house of the sacrificial priests, human sacrifices are prepared for Heme. They are shaved and anointed, then fettered to the posts in the Blood Cauldron. The house stores pots with the balm used to anoint the effigies at the sacrificial tables. On the roof, sits a wooden idol of Heme which is anointed with fresh blood every day.

- ❖ CREATURES: Half a dozen Rust Brothers.

8. MAIN BUILDING

The temple building's deceptively beautiful façade is terraced with colonnades. On the landing immediately in front of the entrance, priests move, their skin gleaming with rusty oil. They chant incessantly to the people in the yard. The building is crowned by a tower with thick iron chains.

The priests on the landing are the so-called Rust Witnesses. These priests, anointed with rusty brown oil, speak to the people in an unending litany, quoting religious scripture and preaching obedience. They praise the gods and their messenger, Zytera, speaking of how Zytera

resisted humans, elves, orcs, dwarves and demons, and turned the latter's power against them. They urge the people to go to war, and testify to the faithful's glorious future, when despicable kin and heretics will have been driven out of the Forbidden Lands. As the Rust Witnesses on the platform exhaust their power, they are replaced by new, fresh ones. On the balcony above the Rust Witnesses, Zytera, the Rust Prince and other dignitaries appear when present to hold speeches or supervise rituals.

At the top of the temple, the Tower of the Fettered Sky is adorned with rusty chains that symbolize the god Rust's grasp on the world. It flies a banner painted with the symbol of the church.

- ❖ CREATURES: A dozen Rust Witnesses (game stats like Rust Brothers).

9. THE HOUSE OF CHAINS

A metallic rustling can be heard from the left pavilion. A rough cast iron image sits on the roof.

This pavilion contains an auditorium. The statue of Rust on the roof is its ceiling. Many chains hang from the ceiling to the floor. Priests move among the hanging chains in a ceremonial dance, clattering them in rhythm, entwining with them, hanging objects from them and anointing them with blood and balm. The very devout spend a moment suspended from the chains in hooks threaded through their own flesh.

- ❖ CREATURES: A score of dancing Rust Brothers.



10. CATACOMBS

On the slope north of the temple stands a simple gate, from which wafts the unpleasant smell of carrion. The gate isn't exactly watched, but some Iron Guards and priests move through the area. A group of metal laden temple servants use their metal feelers to herd some restless dead through the opening.

The temple's catacombs below the main building consist of an upper and lower level. Crypts that house the dead from the temple occupy the upper level. There are also a couple of chambers that store the restless dead that have been taken or stolen from the villages, but aren't immediately needed. The bodies hang from the ceiling, tightly packed like meat in a slaughterhouse, with hooks threaded through their Achilles' tendons. The restless dead can't feel pain, but the sight of a room packed with dead, writhing and flailing human bodies hanging from their heels is very unpleasant for those not used to it.

On the lower level, a central chamber is surrounded by empty passages and caverns. In the middle of the chamber stands a stone tub that collects the blood from the earth-beasts in the Blood Cauldron. Six niches each hide a Bloodling – creatures that once ruled the Forbidden Lands in the form of Blood Mist, but are now rare. They feed on the blood from the tub. The Whispering Council tried to understand why the Bloodlings were weakened, but the council members have now died or disappeared, and their ledger is gone.

There is a hidden passage between the temple and the lower level.

❖ CREATURES: Six Bloodlings.

11. THE TRIBUTE HOUSES

Villagers deliver tributes near a couple of houses, where two priests and their subordinates receive them. Everything is handled with business-like pedantry. Down the slope from the houses, four humans work on a man-sized statue of iron and wood. It is both strange and terrifying: it looks like a man, but its lower body is shaped like a spider.

The bulkier tributes from the villages such as grain, iron, bundles of cloth and barrels of dried fruits are recorded, catalogued and stored in the barracks. The houses are supervised by "The Singing Merchants," members of the Rust Guild that alone could ply their trade when the Blood Mist covered the land. The wrecks of a couple of their gigantic iron carts stand next to the houses.

In the group by the statue are the smith, Dimir, and the carpenter, Estaga. They are village craftsmen, performing their task with great gravity, as this means that their village won't have to send human sacrifices to the temple this year. The work is supervised by the sculptor and slave called "The Hare," who is kept on an iron leash by the slave trader Punzo. Punzo's plan is to sell the artist when the statue is finished. Punzo is a cheerful brute who can tell the adventurers that the priests await a visit from the prophet Zytera. The statue, which is an image of this distinguished guest, will be presented when he arrives. No-one really knows, however, when Zytera will come.

❖ CREATURES: Dimir, Estaga, "The Hare," Punzo.

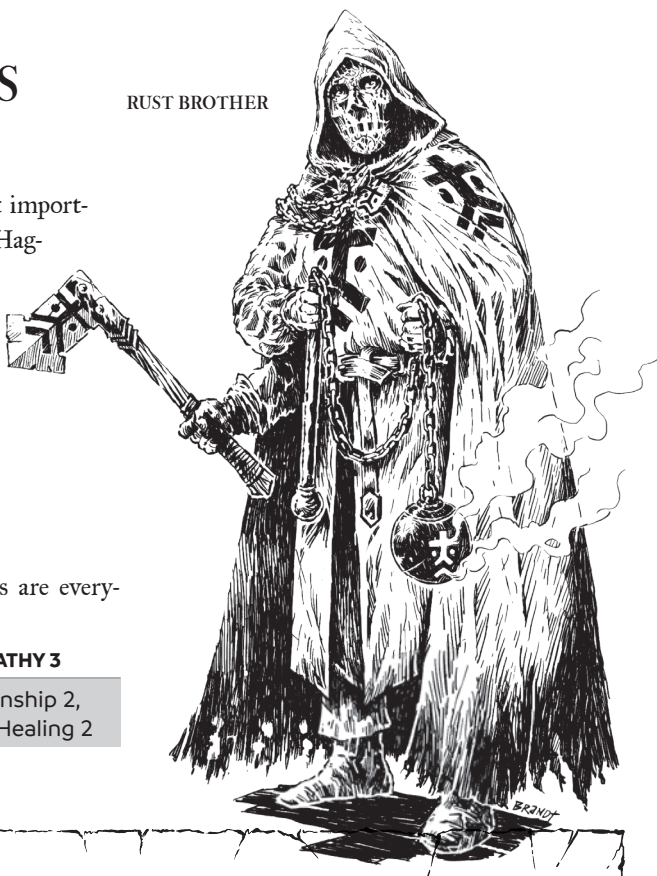
❖ TREASURES: Mostly baubles; make three rolls on the table for SIMPLE finds.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

RUST BROTHER

Below are descriptions of the most important monsters and individuals in Haggler's House. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same game data as in the Bestiary, or in the Kin chapter in the *Gamemaster's Guide* in the base game box.



RUST BROTHERS

Rust Brothers in metal-clad robes are everywhere in Haggler's House.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 2, Move 1, Marksmanship 2, Lore 3, Insight 2, Manipulation 1, Healing 2

MISGROWN ABILITIES

D8	ABILITY	EFFECT
1	Four Arms	Can perform one additional slow or fast action every round with the extra pair of arms.
2	Multiple Eyes	Gets a +2 bonus to all attempts to spot a sneak attack or an ambush.
3	Fangs	Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound) and lethal poison (Potency 6).
4	Claws	Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).
5	Tentacles	Bonus +2 to all GRAPPLE attempts.
6	Sores	Touch is contagious, Virulence 6.
7	Wings	Can fly. Movement Rate 2.
8	Roll Twice	—



TALENTS: Path of Healing 2, Path of Shifting Shapes 2, or Path of Sight 2

GEAR: Staff, dagger, D6 copper

MISGROWN: Many Rust Brothers are misgrown. In most cases the effects are cosmetic, but you can give some of the Rust Brothers unique abilities. Roll on the table on the previous page.

IRON GUARD

Haggler's House is defended by the armed division of the Rust Brothers, The Iron Guard. Their warriors are heavily armed and armored, with full iron masks, and are loyal unto death.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 2, Endurance 2, Melee 4, Move 2, Marksmanship 3, Scouting 2

TALENTS: Path of the Blade or Path of the Enemy 2, Threatening 1, Cold Blooded 1

GEAR: Longsword or flail, heavy crossbow, chainmail or plate armor, great helm, large shield, combat trained horse, one VALUABLE find

CORPSE HERDERS

These are Rust Brothers with a very specific task. Dressed in strange garb adorned with strings and plates made of various metals. Their fingers are tipped with feelers, with which they can deliver shocks designed to direct demonic animals and walking dead, but also to punish and warn negligent visitors. A skilled Corpse Herder can use their feelers to cause excruciating cramps in a human or even kill them.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 2

ARMOR RATING: 6 (plate armor)

GEAR: Shock feelers (Weapon Bonus +1, Weapon Damage 2, damages Agility instead of Strength)

RESTLESS DEAD

The corpses of local farmers that haven't found peace, brought as sacrifice by their kin. They are demented, feel no pain and are very confused.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 2, WITS 1, EMPATHY 1

SKILLS: Melee 2

REMBREDO

The prior of the temple, Rembreto is an ambitious priest who sees himself as the next obvious Rust Prince. He is a stickler for laws and formalities, but wouldn't grieve about his predecessor's immediate demise. Rembreto is a wiry human, but his eyes and antlered pate come from a deer. He is secretly communicating with the demon prince Krasylla, but fears Zytera at the same time. In secret, he dislikes the fact that the creature is half-woman. How could a woman ever be the goddess Heme's lover?

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Close Combat 3, Lore 4, Insight 3, Manipulation 2, Healing 3

REPUTATION: 3

GEAR: Flail, chainmail



RUST PRINCE KARTORDA

The Rust Prince himself is here at the Hag-gler's House to celebrate the yearly harvest feast and the 300th anniversary of the Rust Brothers. Kartorda dislikes Rembreddo and would love to degrade the upstart during his visit. The Rust Prince is constantly accompa-nied by at least six heavily armed Iron Guards.

Kartorda is one of the key players of the

Raven's Purge campaign, and is described in detail on page 48.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 2, Lore 3, Insight 3, Manipulation 4

TALENTS: Path of Blood 3, Path of Dead 3, Cold Blooded 3, Sixth Sense 2

GEAR: Broadsword, plate armor

OTHER NPCS

NAME	PROFESSION	ATTRIBUTES	SKILLS	TALENTS	OTHER
Dimir	Smith	Strength 4 Agility 2 Wits 2 Empathy 2	Melee 2, Crafting 3	Hammer Fighter	Hammer
Estaga	Carpenter	Strength 3 Agility 2 Wits 3 Empathy 2	Crafting 2	–	Saw
"The Hare"	Sculptor	Strength 2 Agility 3 Wits 2 Empathy 3	Crafting 3, Sneak 3	–	Pickaxe
Punzo	Slave Trader	Strength 3 Agility 2 Wits 3 Empathy 2	Insight 2, Manipulate 2	–	Knife
Centaurs	Prisoners	Strength 4 Agility 4 Wits 3 Empathy 2	Melee 3	–	Acquired spears
Death Shadows	Dancers	Strength 2 Agility 4 Wits 2 Empathy 2	Melee 2, Agility 4	–	Dagger



FERELDE

Ferelde is a beautiful musician playing their plectron next to the Blood Cauldron. Ferelde is of ambiguous gender, smeared with rust-colored oil and painted with symbols; their face and upper body are covered in sacrificial scratches. Ferelde often speaks in unintelligible tongues, and is considered a sacred creature in communion with the gods Rust and Heme. The plectron is a complex musical instrument with metal tongues, built-in drums and mouthpieces.

Ferelde is, in fact, the demon Merigall, who enjoys being at the temple where it can receive sex and admiration, play music and take part in interesting spectacles. The demon is immortal and can assume any shape.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 5, WITS 6, EMPATHY 6

SKILLS: Performance 6

GEAR: Plectron

TARNA THE RAVEN SISTER

Tarna is at Haggler's House in the guise of a peasant woman, here to witness the atrocities and, if possible, put a stop to them. She is a rotund woman posing as a weaver, weaving a beautiful tapestry of Zytera in front of the temple. Tarna can possess animals and see through their eyes.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 2, Sneak 3, Sleight of Hand 3, Lore 3, Insight 4, Manipulation 3, Healing 4

TALENTS: Path of Shifting Shapes 3

GEAR: Dagger, magical nut (see Events)

THE BLOODLINGS

Six Bloodlings haunt the catacombs. These red, misty creatures are a few of what remains of the magnificent Blood Mist that once held the entire country in its grasp. They are voracious but timid, and will not attack.

For game stats, see page 78 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.



EVENTS

Here follow some suggestions for events that you can expose the adventurers to in Haggler's House.

ZERTORME'S GIFT

During the ceremonies, a large crock of wine bursts among the sacrificial gifts. Swarms of burning bees stream out. The raging insects sting and explode among running and screaming spectators and priests, killing at least a dozen. A clay tablet can be found in the crock, with the inscription, "Enjoy your last birthday, father dear!", signed "Zertorme."

THE PATROL

A tough Iron Guard patrol demands to interrogate the adventurers, by order of Rust Prince Kartorda. They subject the adventures to a rough inspection and go through their belongings.



A HAPPY REUNION

Demon-tainted Rust Brothers put on a display of their naked bodies in the temple yard. They compare their new body modifications: protruding tentacles, living animal faces for shoulders, extra eyes and other grotesqueries. Someone recognizes the tattoo on an extra arm and screams, “My son! What have you done to him?” and throws themselves at the wearer. The priests and the Iron Guard attempt to quiet the whole thing down.

THE WHISPERER AND THE MIST

A novice discreetly calls upon the adventurers to arrange a meeting with his brother Karuptus, a member of the Council of Whisperers. Karuptus is afraid to trust anyone at the temple and has hidden himself because his fellow councilors have all disappeared or suffered a mysterious death. He explains that the Council strove to reawaken the Blood Mist in the land. Of the once-mighty mist, only a few wisps linger in the catacombs under the temple. Some advances were recently made and recorded in the ledger supposedly hidden at the temple. Could the adventurers retrieve it for a reward? The only clue to the ledger’s location is that “it supports the many”.

Merigall is the one who removed the council members, as it does not wish to see the Blood Mist cover the land again. The ledger is hidden on top of the hook filled scaffolding that suspends the restless dead in the catacombs. In the ledger, one can read about how the Council of Whisperers succeeded: they spoke to the terrified remaining Bloodlings in

order to bolster their confidence, so that they would dare venture into the world and disperse once again. If Karuptus obtains the ledger, he will in time make the Blood Mist grow around the temple again. Merigall will not approve of this venture.

ZYTERA’S VISIT

Booming drums reverberate from the road to Haggler’s House, and a strange procession approaches the temple: Iron Guards, Rust Brothers and misgrown horses. In their midst, on a platform carried by a score of Rust Brothers, can be seen the spider-creature Zytera. What is possibly the mightiest creature in the Forbidden Lands has come to bless the temple and partake in the ceremonies. Zytera is constantly monitored by a dozen Iron Guards and will make itself at home in the main building. This will not stop the adventurers from having a closer look at this nearly mythic entity. With Zytera’s visit, the scheming at Haggler’s House will come to a head.

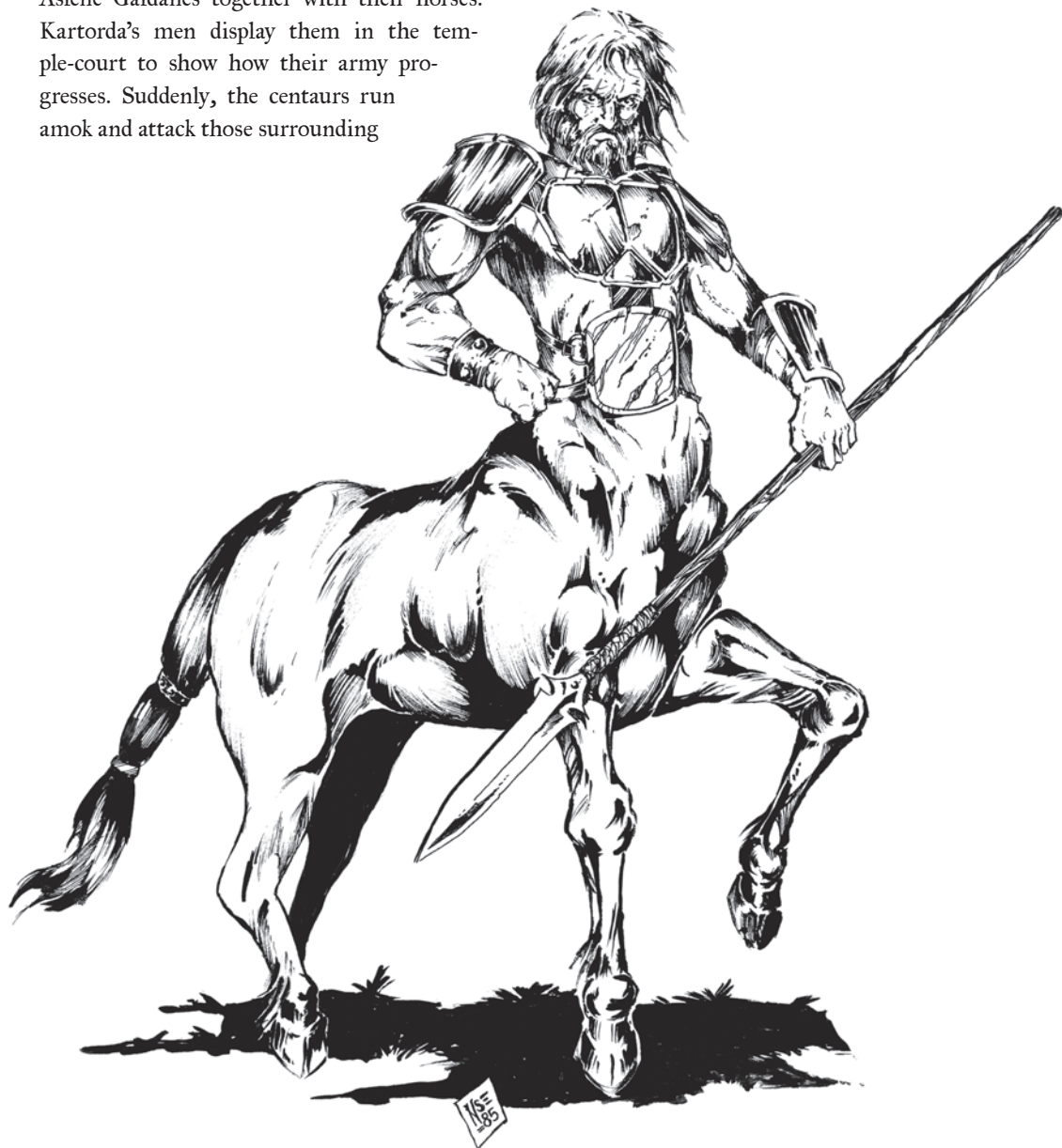
THE SACRIFICE

The peasant’s son, Robund, is fettered in the Blood Cauldron in order to be sacrificed to the gods. If the adventurers previously encountered his father (see *The Road Here*, above), the father will ask for help in changing places with his son. This exchange isn’t exactly easy to perform, as Iron Guards and Rust Brothers move around in the vicinity. In the worst case, one or more of the adventurers may be chosen as sacrifices, which will naturally make the situation even more precarious.



THE CENTAURS

Three centaurs have been created by melding Aslene Galdanes together with their horses. Kartorda's men display them in the temple-court to show how their army progresses. Suddenly, the centaurs run amok and attack those surrounding





them with their spears, shouting things like, “Remember Aslene! Death to the demon fornicators! Death to the tyrants!”

It is Rembreddo’s doing: in order to degrade Kartorda in front of Zytera, Rembreddo has given the centaurs a potion to clear their heads.

THE RAVEN

A woman fettered to a sacrificial pole in the Blood Cauldron suddenly changes into a raven and takes flight. The guards raise their bows to shoot her down. The adventurers may choose to shoot her down or distract the guards so that she can escape.

THE POT

Tarna discreetly asks the adventurers if they can steal something for her: a pot containing the balm used to anoint the villagers’ effigies. She has suspicions about what might be causing the failed crops, and wants to analyze the contents back in the Raven Sisters’ village to uncover the Rust Brothers’ fraud. The adventurers may choose to help her, decline her request or even expose her.

THE DAGGER

A quietly furious and very old man offers the adventurers an enchanted dagger with which one could kill Zytera. He wants to avenge several sacrificed family members, but doesn’t have the strength for the deed himself. All he asks in return is the sweet taste of revenge. The dagger is said to date back to the fourth

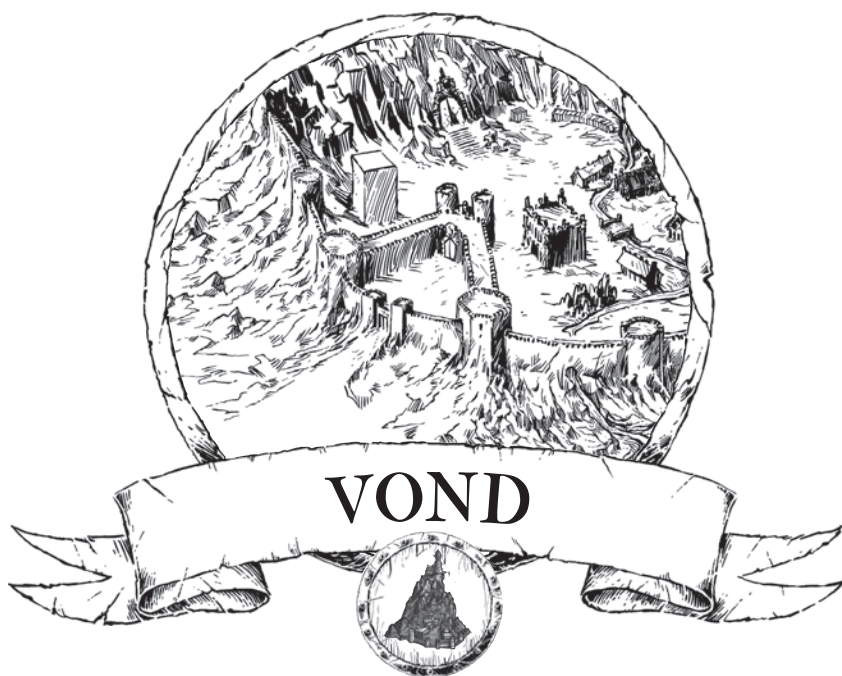
Alder Wars, and belonged to Zertorme, Zytera’s son.

The man is a retired Rust Priest, and his offer a provocation to see who will bite – in which case, the false visitors will be arrested. The GM may choose to insert more provocations of the same type, designed to test the visitors’ loyalty. Everyone who has previously visited the temple knows about these subtle loyalty tests and are suspicious in general. Someone the adventurers have previously aided may warn them as they are about to step into the trap.

TARNA’S NUT

Tarna (if the adventurers have gained her trust) or an anonymous avenger will give the adventurers a nut plugged with a cork. The giver explains that the nut has been blessed by the water goddess, Flow. If one removes the plug, a great stream of sweet water will inexplicably rush forth. The giver wants the adventurers to covertly climb up to the Rust statue above the House of Chains, pull the plug from the nut and put it in the statue’s mouth. The statue will then fill with water and become so heavy that it crashes down into the house, hopefully when important Rust Brothers are below. In any case, the event will be interpreted as a bad omen at the temple.

One of Katorda’s spies may give the adventurers the nut, with the plan to embarrass Rembreddo or even crush him as he performs a ritual dance in the House of Chains. If so, they will be blamed after the fact. The adventurers may choose to betray Tarna, and will then win the Rust Brothers’ trust.



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Castle

The old fallen dwarven fortress of Vond at the base of Mount Ora is the scene at which the finale of the *Raven's Purge* campaign plays out. The headquarters of the Iron Guard, with its large force of troops and the demon Krasylla – the Butcher of Aslene – is in Vond. Merigall lives higher up on the mountain, and at the top is where the mogarium of demonic creature, Zytera, dwells.

The *Raven's Purge* campaign is preferably concluded with the adventurers attacking or infiltrating Vond. The final battle doesn't necessarily have to be a wild slaughter, however, until you reach Zytera at the top of Mount Ora. Many key players have their own agendas and the campaign can end in quite a few different ways. The key players and their plans are described in detail in Chapter 4, and a large number of possible events are described later in this chapter.

The fortress of Vond should be placed in a hexagon on the map with the terrain type RUINS. The obvious choice for the location of Vond is Alderstone, in the southeastern corner of the Forbidden Lands, the ruins of the greatest city in Ravenland (read more on page 23 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*), but if it doesn't suit your campaign, it is okay to place Vond almost anywhere you want.

The actual adventure site of Vond is split into four parts:

- ❖ The City Ruins outside the fortress. This area isn't mapped in detail. Instead, it serves as a battlefield where the adventurers must have gathered enough troops and powerful allies to even reach the fortress. Read more below.
- ❖ The Fortress of Vond. See the map on



page 182. The adventurers have to find their way through the fortress of Vond so as to be able to travel further up the mountain. They may encounter the demon Krasylla, to fight him or to ally with him.

- ❖ Merigall's Lair. See the map on page 198. Here the adventurers may encounter Merigall for a final showdown or an alliance.
- ❖ Zytera's Mogarium. See the map on page 205. The adventurers will have the final showdown against Zytera here, where many different outcomes are possible.

LEGEND

The fortress of Vond was once the Crombe dwarves' strongest fortress in Ravenland. The largest part of the fortifications is supposed to have been situated below ground, but was razed by the dwarves when they were driven away. It is rumored that it is the Butcher of Aslene – the demon prince, Krasylla – that now rules over the fortress that guards the pass beneath the shimmering metal slopes of Mount Ora. The ruins of the city of Vond surround the area. The ruins, as well as the fortress, are most likely crawling with Zytera's troops, along with the fanatical worshippers of Rust and demonic creatures, but few who have been brought here have ever returned to testify. The peak of Mount Ora is crowned by Zytera's living palace, where even demons dare not venture. Lightning strikes incessantly between the tower steeples and the dark clouds that circle the area.

GETTING HERE

Rust Brothers and worshippers of demons are the only ones who'd want to visit Vond voluntarily. In all probability the adventurers will travel to the area to kill the tyrant Zytera or Krasylla (of their own volition, or on a mission for someone else), to free prisoners, or to seal the protonexus – the new demon portal that Zytera is creating.

You can let the adventurers visit Vond whenever you like, but as mentioned in the introduction of this book, there are several conditions that should be met first:

- ❖ The adventurers have acquired the elven crown Stanengist, and one or several of the other three artifacts set with elven rubies (see Chapter 3).
- ❖ The adventurers have met most of the key players of the campaign and have become their allies or enemies (see Chapter 4).
- ❖ The adventurers have heard the legends about Zytera, Krasylla and Vond.

Vond is too well fortified for the adventurers to have any likelihood of attacking the fortress on their own. Their best chance to get in is to coordinate a larger offense together with their allies. Read more below.

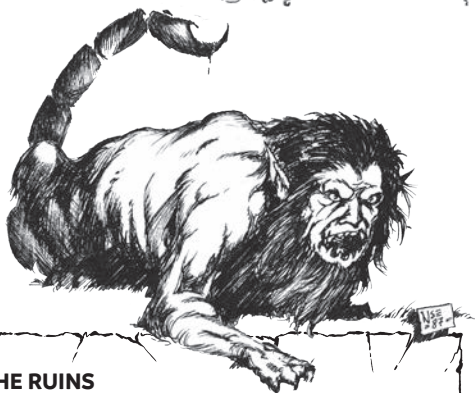


CITY RUINS

The fortress of Vond is surrounded by a dilapidated ruin of a city. The area, which covers the entire hexagon on the map in which Vond



is situated, is heavily guarded by Rust Brothers, Iron Guards and demon-tainted creatures and monsters. It is very dangerous for the adventurers to move about the area on their own. If they are traveling with a larger force sent by one of the key players, they are significantly safer.



EVENTS IN THE RUINS

D10 EVENTS

1-2 NOTHING HAPPENS. A dead calm reigns among the ruins, wreathed in an ominous fog. An oppressive feeling afflicts the adventurers, but everything seems quiet – for now.

3 HARPIES. A large murder of shrieking harpies (Strength 14) lives among the ruins. If they discover the adventurers they will immediately attack, in addition to shrieking so loudly that a patrol of Iron Guards (equal in number to the adventurers) comes running to investigate in D6 minutes.

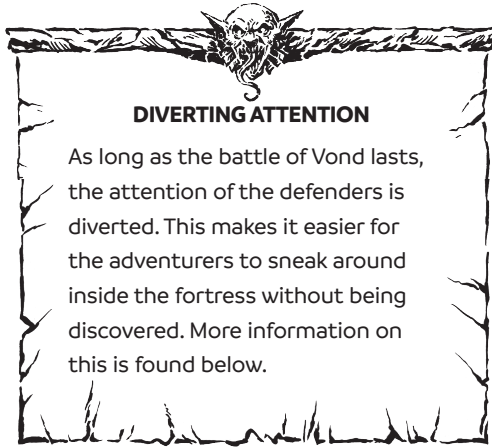
4-5 SLAVES. Twenty or so wretched prisoners bound together by chains are dragging themselves through the ruins, driven on by four Rust Brothers and two Iron Guards. If the prisoners catch sight of the adventurers, they will call out to them for help. The prisoners are slaves that were bought in Grindbone. They are now being taken to the fortress of Vond to be worked to death or to be subjected to demonological experiments.

6 MANTICORE. The adventurers unwittingly wander into the territory of a ravenous manticore. It immediately attacks if it discovers the adventurers. For stats, see page 110 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

7-8 IRON GUARDS. A group of grim Iron Guards patrol the ruins, hunting for intruders. There are twice as many guards as there are adventurers, and they are very watchful. If they catch sight of the adventurers, they will immediately attack and attempt to capture the intruders.

9 HYDRA. An ill-humored hydra, which has escaped from a demonological experiment inside Vond, is hunting for food among the ruins. The adventurers might become the feast of the week. For stats, see page 106 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

10 GRYPHON RIDERS. A special commando unit of Iron Guards, riding on gryphons (see page 102 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*), sweep over the ruins. There are half as many riders as there are adventurers. In battle, the gryphons and their riders act separately, but they share the same initiative.



Every hour, or whenever you want to build suspense, you can roll on or choose a random encounter from the table to the right. The adventurer **KEEPING WATCH** should make rolls for **SCOUTING** as usual to detect threats in time (see page 149 in the *Player's Handbook*). It takes about a Quarter Day to reach the fortress of Vond.



GETTING INSIDE

The fortress of Vond is heavily guarded and very difficult for the adventurers to enter. Still, there are many ways to get past the walls:

- ❖ **SIEGE.** If the adventurers have gained allies among the key players of the campaign, they can be recruited for a large-scale assault on Vond. If all goes well, this may even lead to the walls of the fortress coming down. Read more below.
- ❖ **SECRET PASSAGE.** A secret passage runs from a cave on the western side of Mount Ora (location 1 on the map), leading to

an opening below a floor tile inside the fortress's old bronze gates (location #5 on the map). The secret passage is known to Arvia of Crombe (page 43) and other Crombe dwarves, as well as to Peyraman, who is imprisoned in the dungeons (location #12 on the map).

- ❖ **SCALING THE WALLS.** Very difficult and very dangerous, but not impossible. See page 185.
- ❖ **MAGIC.** There are several spells that would allow the adventurers to infiltrate the fortress, for example, **PORTAL**, **WITHER**, **EARTHQUAKE** and **ANIMAL FORM** (if they were to transform into an animal that can fly or climb).
- ❖ **MERIGALL.** If the adventurers have formed a pact with Merigall, it can teleport them to its offspring, Hirena (see page 189).
- ❖ **THE DRAGON SCARNE.** If the adventurers have released the dragon Scarne (page 144), she can carry them to Vond and drop them off inside the walls.



THE BATTLE OF VOND

Getting through the city ruins and inside the fortress of Vond is very difficult and dangerous. The adventurers' chances increase substantially if they form an alliance with one or more of the key players in the campaign, and together with their allies, perform a large scale assault on Vond.



Even if such an assault fails to tear down the walls of the fortress it creates a diversion that makes it easier for the adventurers to sneak into the fortress and track down Zytera.

THE ASSAULT

The assault on Vond is way too extensive to be played out in detail. Rather, it sets a background for the players' infiltration of the fortress.

DEFENSE RATING

Basic defense	+12
Rust Prince Kartorda participates in the defense	+1
Corpse Herder Brenziga participates in the defense	+1
General Manderel participates in the defense	+1
Krasylla participates in the defense as sarmog*	+2

*Krasylla's effect is omitted in case of a thunderstorm

ATTACK RATING

Army of riders under Zertorme participates in the assault	+4
Army of dwarves participates in the assault	+3
Army of elven Redrunners participates in the assault	+2 (+3 with Ents)
Army of orcs participates in the assault	+3
King Algarod and his undead participate in the assault	+2
Virelda Bloodbeak joins the assault carrying Teramalda's head.	+2
A titan from Pelagia is ordered to destroy Vond*	+3 per titan
The dragon Scarne is ordered to assault the fortress*	+6
The giant Scrome participates in the assault in its evil form	+4
The adventurers themselves participate in the assault	+1
The adventurers use the Weathermaster spell to cause a storm	+1
The adventurers use the sword Maligarn during the assault	+1
The adventurers lead the assault with the scepter Nekhaka	+1
The adventurers wear the crown Stanengist with all its stones	+2
The adventurers release Blood Mist in Vond	+2
Krasylla as sarmog joins the adventurers' forces**	+2

*The dragon Scarne and the titans from Pelagia only participate in the first turn of the battle.

**Krasylla's effect is omitted in the case of a thunderstorm.



DEFENSE RATING	
REACHES	EFFECT
9	Small groups of attackers crest the walls, where desperate battles are fought against the defenders. The adventurers can accompany these attackers, but will have to scale the walls themselves.
6	Attackers have infiltrated the fortress in several places. The adventurers can climb the walls with the help of ladders or grappling hooks (Gear Bonus +2).
3	The Rust Gate or a part of the wall falls to the ground with an enormous bang. The attackers storm through the breach and go head to head with the defenders. The adventurers can now rush inside Vond, but risk being discovered and attacked.
0	The attackers storm the fortress of Vond. The defending forces flee or are struck down to the last man. The adventurers can move through Vond without risk.

Technically the battle is handled like an assault on a Stronghold (see page 175 in the *Player's Handbook*), but the players roll for the attackers and you, as GM, roll for the defenders. The Attack and Defense Ratings, however, are calculated in a different way.

Vond's Defense Rating starts at 12, modified by the adjacent table. The initial Attack Rating of the attackers depends on what forces they have been able to amass for the assault. Consult the tables on the previous page and total the modifiers for Defense and Attack.

LOSSES

The battle is played out in turns, just like battles at a Stronghold. However, you don't have to roll precisely every Quarter-hour – instead, roll for the battle when it is dramatically appropriate to increase pressure on the adventurers. Both attackers and defend-

ers take losses as per the rules for battles at a Stronghold – Attack and Defense Rating decrease one step respectively for every \times that the opponent rolls.

ATTACKERS: For the attackers, you are free to describe losses as you please, depending on who participates in the battle. Assume that the attackers will give up and flee when the total Attack Rating has been halved, unless the walls of Vond crumble during the same turn. When the attackers have fled, the attention of the defenders is no longer diverted, which makes it harder for the adventurers to move about in Vond (see below).

DEFENDERS: Losses for the defense of Vond have specific effects, as per the table above. Note that the description may need to be adjusted depending on who participates in the assault.



THE FORTRESS OF VOND

Beyond the ruins of the city lies the main fortress of Vond at the base of Mount Ora. Despite the impressive masonry, it is said that the Crombe dwarves demolished all of the underground passages that made up the heart of the fortifications before they fled. Just like the city ruins, the fortress is crawling with Iron Guards, demonic creatures and Rust Brothers. Whatever your intentions may be, your goals won't be easy to achieve.



BACKGROUND

The Crombe dwarves once guarded the Shadowgate Pass against Aslene from the fortress of Vond on Mount Ora, but during the Alder Wars the surrounding city was razed and the fortress was captured by the Alderlanders. Since the Alderlander army, in turn, was crushed, the Butcher of Aslene, the demon Krasylla, has settled in the fortress along with demon-tainted Rust Brothers and the Iron Guard – the Rust Church's order of warrior monks. Vond is the hub of cultivation of demon-tainted creatures. In the mogarium at the peak of Mount Ora, Zytera and Merigall conduct their research.



MOVING ABOUT IN THE FORTRESS

The fortress of Vond is very well guarded, and

it isn't easy for the adventurers to move about inside the walls without being discovered. Iron Guards patrol the area day and night.

Every time the adventurers move to a new location on the map, or every Quarter Hour that they remain still, they have to roll for STEALTH. Roll this as an opposed check against the Iron Guards. On a failure, the adventurers are discovered and are immediately attacked. Iron Guards usually patrol in pairs. If combat ensues, this will be discovered by other Iron Guards in D6 minutes. At that point, the alarm will sound and the adventurers will be chased by dozens of Iron Guards.

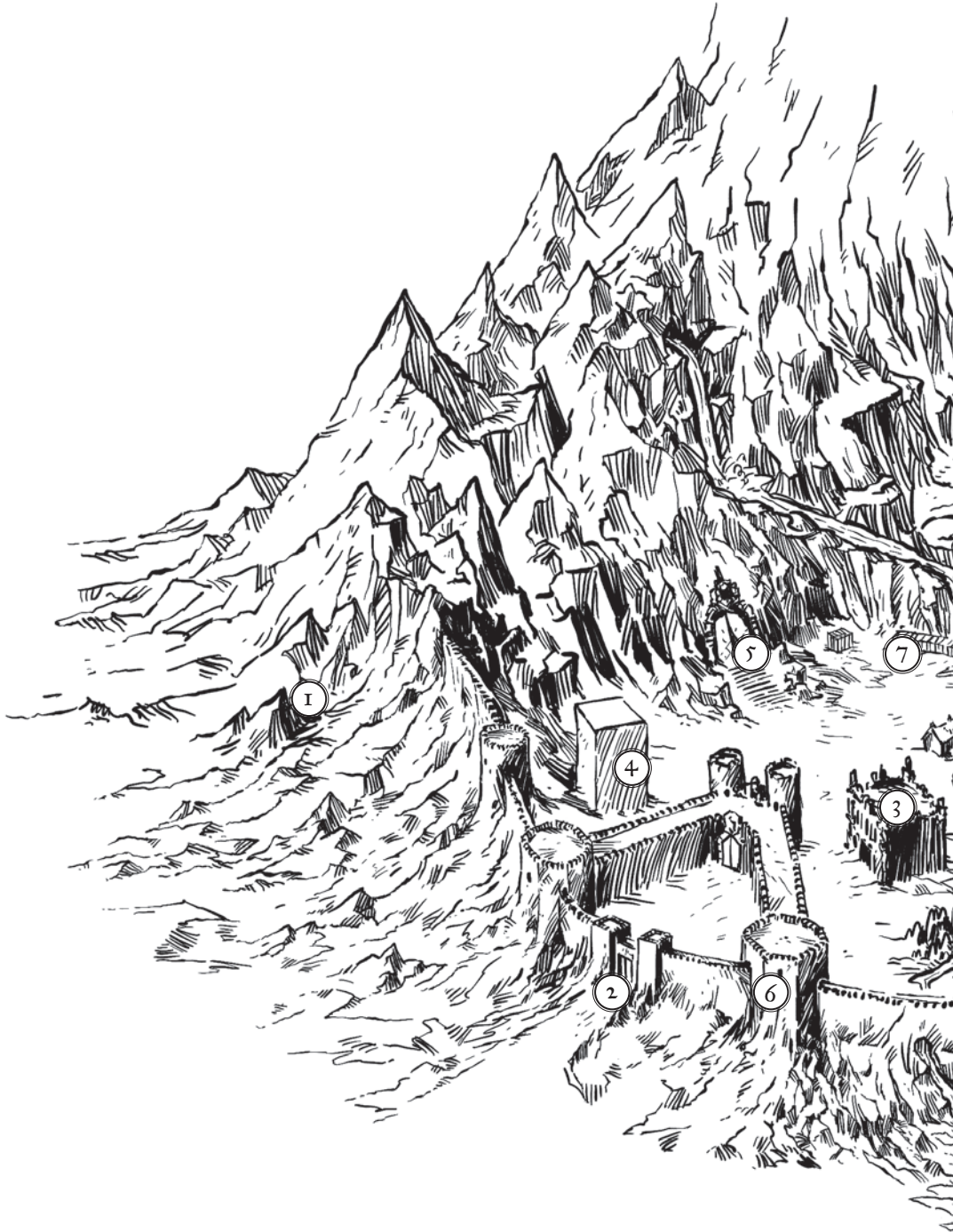
The adventurers must also make a STEALTH roll against the Rust Brothers if they enter buildings where any are present. Discovery has the same effect as above.

There are two ways for the adventurers to make it easier on themselves to avoid being discovered: they can disguise themselves or they can divert the attention of the Iron Guard with an attack on the walls. They can also do both.

DISGUISE

If the adventurers get their hands on the garb of the Rust Brothers, they can easily disguise themselves, which is made simpler by the fact that Rust Brothers often wear masks. If the adventurers are disguised, they only need to make STEALTH rolls if they do something out of the ordinary (like going somewhere Rust Brothers don't normally go) or when they run into Rust Brothers within NEAR distance.







VOND





EVENTS IN VOND

To spice up the adventurers' visit to Vond you can, when you want to, roll on or choose events from the table below.

D6 EVENT

- 1 **THE BELL TOLLS.** An alarm bell tolls in the fortress and patrols of soldiers run criss-cross patterns in search of intruders that have made their way inside. It doesn't necessarily mean that the adventurers have triggered the alarm or that there actually are any intruders.
- 2 **THE PRISONERS.** Ten miserable prisoners, bound by chains in a line, are led from the fortress up towards Zytera's mogarium to become parts in demonic creations.
- 3 **EXECUTION.** The deep sound of drums reverberates across the area. At a stone altar, a few Rust Brothers stand, next to Iron Guards lined up behind some ten prisoners in dirty clothes. The knights raise their swords and let them fall as one across the necks of the prisoners. The drums fall silent.
- 4 **EXPLOSION.** A massive boom is heard, and then the ground shakes as if from a powerful explosion. A pillar of smoke rises from one of the towers and a large, gaping hole is visible in the stone wall behind it. It is a Rust Brother sorcerer who has failed with an experiment, after which a violent explosion has destroyed two floors of a tower and killed a dozen Rust Brothers and servants.
- 5 **LESSER DEMONS.** A few lesser demons (roughly the size of squirrels) make life miserable for the adventurers. They crawl inside their clothes, climb into their hair and poke them in uncomfortable places, all the while laughing coarsely with their squeaky voices. One of the demons can become friends with an adventurer that doesn't mistreat it, the rest mainly live to cause trouble.
- 6 **THE MADMAN.** A man with bloodshot eyes and a bushy beard grabs hold of one of the adventurers and croaks warnings about the end of the world and "the spider in the tower." The man is the former commander of a unit of imprisoned Alderlander spies who has gone mad from torture and torment. Maybe he can regain his sanity for an instant?

DIVERTING MANEUVERS

If the walls of Vond are attacked by a large-scale assault (see above), the Iron Guard will be summoned to the walls instead of patrolling the area. This means that adventurers inside the fortress don't risk being discovered by them.

However, groups of anxious Rust Brothers (D₃ in number) will move about the fortress, and the adventurers must make STEALTH rolls as above against them instead. The Rust Brothers lack the skill SCOUTING and are significantly easier opponents in battle.



LOCATIONS

Listed below are the most important locations in the fortress of Vond.

1. THE SECRET PASSAGE

Halfway up the barren mountain you see a rocky crevice that leads to a cramped and dark cave. If you hadn't known what to look for, you would never have noticed it.

In a hidden crevice on the west face of Mount Ora is a secret tunnel, several hundred meters long, that ends under a floor tile inside the old bronze gates in the fortress (location #5 on the map). Read more about the secret passage on page 187.

2. THE RUST GATE

You stand in front of a rusty, but hideously immense, iron gate that appears to be the only way inside the fortress of Vond. On the top of the wall by the gate are several Iron Guards keeping watch. Two are riding on demonic creatures. The walls of the fortress are as tall as ten men and well maintained. The battlements and towers are manned by crossbowmen and war machines. Judging by the smell, you realize that they are ready with boiling oil to counter their enemies, but what army would dare to attack Vond?

The gate has an Armor Rating of 20 and can withstand 100 points of damage before shattering. To even approach the gate, the adventurers must succeed with a STEALTH roll, however. Failure means that they are discovered by the Iron Guards on the wall. They immediately

open fire with their crossbows, upon which the Iron Guards riding on the winged beasts descend. In addition, reinforcements are summoned to the gates.

- ❖ THE CATAPULT. There is also a catapult at the top of the wall that can hurl stones at attackers. It takes three people to fire the catapult, and it requires a slow action to reload. The range of the catapult is LONG. On a successful attack an area as large as a zone in battle is hit, meaning that a group of people within NEAR distance from each other are struck. Roll for each target with ten Base Dice (Weapon Damage 2, blunt trauma).
- ❖ CLIMBING. Climbing the walls is FORMIDABLY difficult (-3) and in addition to that, the climber will be discovered immediately and fired upon by the knights on the wall. It is not possible for the adventurers to use STEALTH at the same time as they are climbing (unless they've transformed into a small animal by using the ANIMAL FORM spell).
- ❖ BOILING OIL. As if that weren't enough, the Iron Guards on the battlements can release boiling oil over attackers at the base of the wall. It takes two people to perform the attack. The oil covers an area as large as a zone in battle, meaning that adventurers within NEAR distance from each other will be hit. Roll for each target with twelve Base Dice (Weapon Damage 2, non-typical damage). There is enough oil for three attacks.
- ❖ CREATURES: Seneschal Mordarga and twelve Iron Guards keep vigil on the



battlements. Additionally, an Iron Guard riding on a gryphon and another riding on a wyvern (see the Bestiary in the *Game-master's Guide* for stats) guard the gate. More Iron Guards will be summoned if the gate comes under attack.



IRON GUARD

3. ASSEMBLY HALL

Inside the inner gates stands a large, square structure with rusty iron pillars and marble walls.

The house was once a workshop for dwarven stonemasons, but now serves as the canteen and assembly hall for the Iron Guards in the fortress.

A large blood willow that weeps blood-like sap grows north of the assembly hall. The roots are exposed around the tree where dead or living prisoners are imprisoned by the tough outgrowths. Singular corvids caw among the branches, sometimes taking a bite out of the victims. Seneschal Mordarga is the only one who can command the tree's roots.

- ❖ CREATURES: The Raven Sister, Virnia, lies beneath the blood willow, and there are 4D6 Iron Guards inside the building (unless the alarm has been triggered, in which case the building is empty).

4. KYBOS

Flush to the mountain stands a massive, twenty-meter tall stone cube of red granite. Its single entrance is flanked by torches on both sides.

Kybos was a dwarven temple honoring the god Huga, especially dedicated to the world-building of the dwarves. Since it is shaped out of solid, hard rock it was impossible to tear down, so the Iron Guard use the amphitheater-like interior of the stone as an arena for particularly spectacular fights. A challenge to fight in Kybos can't be refused, according to the Iron Guards' Code of Honor.



5. THE GATES OF THE DWARVEN FORTRESS

Two large bronze gates are set into the mountainside, the leftmost of which is twisted so that a crack as wide as a man gapes open.

Inside the gates, a stone hallway continues some twenty meters into the mountain, beyond which the hallway is completely caved in. On the walls are drawn large numbers of doodles that mostly mock dwarves.

Beneath a floor tile inside the bronze gates is a secret passage that leads to a rocky crevice on the west face of Mount Ora (see above).

6. BARRACKS

A number of more recently constructed log barracks have been raised in the open space. Between them runs a stream of fresh water. Many Iron Guards mill about among the barracks. Beyond them is a passage to higher ground.

The members of the Iron Guard are housed in the barracks. The officers live in the houses by the training grounds. Drinking water is drawn from the stream that gushes down the mountain and runs through the barracks area. It escapes through a grating beneath the wall to the south.

- ❖ CREATURES: D66 Iron Guards (unless the alarm has been triggered, in which case this area is empty).

7. DEMONARIUM

From the northern end of the barracks area, one can hear peculiar snarls, howls and clicks. The scents

are strange and for the most part unpleasant. Here are cages with all sorts of demon-tainted creatures.

Demon-tainted animals are either used in battle on their own or as mounts for the Iron Guard. A couple of Corpse Herders are here to pacify ornery creatures with their jolts.

- ❖ CREATURES: Four Corpse Herders, 2D6 demon-tainted animals. If need be, you can randomize stats for the demon-tainted animals with the help of the tables on page 81 and beyond in the *Gamemaster's Guide*. However, all the animals have four legs or more in their basic form (for example, goat, lizard, wolf or spider) and all of them lack Wits and Empathy.





8. TRAINING GROUNDS

In an open, levelled area human-shaped wood and straw figures have been raised for combat training. There are also different targets for archery and a riding arena. A couple of fancier housing barracks, an armory and a larger stone building border the area. Stairs lead up towards a balustrade. In the south, there are gates into the mountain. The officers of the Iron Guard live in the barracks here. Grandmaster Manderel and his closest officers live on the top floor of the guardhouse, however. The gates to the south lead to Krasylla's lair. A couple of knights stand at the gates, but only Rust Brothers and those who are to be sacrificed to Krasylla ever go inside.

❖ CREATURES: Two Iron Guards keeping

watch. Unless the alarm has been triggered there are 2D6 Iron Guards practicing on the grounds.

9. THE GUARDHOUSE

An old and sturdy stone house with slanting walls stands flush to the mountain. Two knights in ceremonial garb with rusted plate armor stand outside the gates. The entire ground floor appears to be a large gymnasium filled from floor to ceiling with benches, dolls and primitive mechanisms on wooden axles. Water from the stream gushes along the west wall. Stone steps lead down there. Large spiral staircases lead up to the top floor at the far end of the room.

Controls in the wall over by the spiral staircase trigger the training mechanisms in the room, causing them to flail about with blades and cudgels, shoot spears and so forth. All of it is powered by hydraulics in the stream. If the adventurers are chasing someone, he can release all the controls at the same time, turning the room into a deathtrap. Every person in the room then suffers an attack with eight Base Dice (Weapon Damage 2, roll D3 to determine if the attack inflicts slash wounds, stab wounds or blunt force) every round. The attack can be DODGED or PARRIED.

An additional mechanism at the top of the stairs causes chains with sharpened weights to spin around the center of the staircase all the way up. Traditionally, officers must climb the stairs as proof of their abilities once appointed. If the mechanism is triggered, everyone on the stairs suffers an attack with ten Base Dice (Weapon Damage 2, slash wounds) every round. The attack can be DODGED but not PARRIED.

THE DEMON PRINCE'S WISH

Krasylla is allied to Zytera and worshipped by the order of the Rust Brothers as a demon god. But the demon isn't satisfied with the current state of affairs – he wants to be free and rule the Forbidden Lands alone. Krasylla views the adventurers as enterprising insects that can be used to create problems for Zytera, and would gladly make a bargain with them. His ulterior goal is to find the contract that binds him to Zytera and then once and for all slay the magical beast. Read more about this on page 37.



At the top of the stairs are the rooms of the higher officers, the command center and the drawing room. Grandmaster Manderel is usually here, unless the alarm has been triggered. From the drawing room, a staircase leads up the mountain to the wardroom and continues on to the shrine. A path also leads to the raised walkway above the Cauldron of Torment (see below). The knights usually gather at the training grounds each morning, at which time Grandmaster Manderel addresses them from the balcony.

- ❖ CREATURES: Two Iron Guards keep watch outside. Grandmaster Manderel and D6 other officers from the Iron Guard are on the top floor unless the alarm has been triggered. Merigall's daughter, Hirena, serves as steward in the wardroom.

10. KRASYLLA'S TOWER

The wide corridors in the mountain have partially caved in, but the dwarven craftsmanship is plain to see. Peculiar smells and other, some visible some not so much, substances drift along stagnant passages as if fear itself has manifested in want of other presences. The tower that has been built directly against the mountain has neither doors nor windows and doesn't appear to be otherwise connected to the fortress, either. Some sticky, organic fluid of indeterminable scent leaks out between the cracks at ground level.

Krasylla is rumored to be Zytera's demon prince confidant and a terror from the Alder Wars who is supposed to have single-handedly devastated Aslene. None but the selected and prepared priests enter the mountain. They keep to the

side room closest to the gate. Near the entrance to Krasylla's chamber is a prison cell for those who are to be delivered as food for the demon.

The entrance to the chamber is a rotating drum with a hidden time-lock set to between three and five minutes, that is driven by quicksilver. The one being rotated into the chamber is at the mercy of Krasylla, who occupies approximately half of the space in the form of a shapeless mass that wears the features of the last person the demon devoured. Beyond the chamber is a stone tower in which Krasylla builds himself up to sarmog – a higher form of demon.

- ❖ CREATURES: The demon prince Krasylla. D6 prisoners in the prison cell. Two Rust Brothers are usually stationed outside.

11. ARMORY

Several weaponsmiths work in a generously sized armory with two chimneys under the command of a blind dwarf. Outside the building are stacked raw materials. The building appears to not only be a workshop but also to be of religious significance – you see soldiers and priests praying outside.

Master Tyrser of Vond is a dwarf of the Crombe clan. He is a very skilled weaponsmith whose mind has been clouded by imprisonment with the Urhur orcs, who blinded him and sold him to Vond. He is now completely obsessed with his work, and harasses his smith apprentices relentlessly. He doesn't understand that he is working for the enemy, but lives in a world of his own. Iron Guards and Rust Brothers revere the armory as holy since iron is worked in the most exquisite way in the building.



In the caves inside the armory, large amounts of weapons of all kinds are stored. Behind a locked door are special weapons. Only Master Tyrser and Grandmaster Manderel have the keys to this room. As an example, Peyraman's Arrow of the Fire Wyrms is here (see Prisoner Cells and Merigall's Lair).

- ❖ CREATURES: The dwarven smith Tyrser of Vond. D3 Iron Guards and D6 Rust Brothers on a temporary visit.
- ❖ TREASURES: Outside the armory are D66 units of IRON ORE, D66 units of IRON, 2D6 units of WOOD and 2D6 units of LEATHER. In the caves behind the armory are D6 of all COMMON weapons, shields and suits of armor found in the *Player's Handbook*, D6-3 of all UNCOMMON items and D3-2 of all RARE ones. Locked in the chamber behind the armory (the door has Armor Rating 12 and can withstand 40 points of damage) are a number of well-forged weapons. Roll D6-4 each for broadsword, longsword, two-handed sword, morningstar, warhammer, battleaxe and two-handed axe. The Gear Bonus of the weapons is one step higher than normal, and each weapon is worth twice as much. In addition, there is an artifact here in the form of an Arrow of the Fire Wyrms (see page 128 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

12. THE DUNGEONS

Rust Brothers and Corpse Herders move in and out of a heavily guarded gate in the mountainside. Wretched cries and more desperate screams can be heard from the depths within.

The dungeons are used for three things: to keep the creatures that are going to be sacrificed to the gods Rust and Heme; for those that are to be delivered as food for Krasylla; and to keep prisoners of war for interrogation. The farthest back in the dungeons sits the Crombe dwarf Peyraman, who has come to Vond to slay Krasylla. If the adventurers talk to Peyraman, he will insist that they free his partner, the Aslene woman Viseria. Peyraman can reveal the function of the Arrow of the Fire Wyrms.

In addition to the narrow cells are two caverns. They serve as rooms for preparation and interrogation with instruments of torture.

- ❖ CREATURES: The dwarf Peyraman, D6 Rust Brothers, D6 Corpse Herders.

13. HOUSE OF CHAINS

A larger stone house seems to make a peculiar jangling noise and when you peek through the gates, you see chains hanging from the ceiling all over. Naked people, covered in rust, move among the chains in various forms of dance and prayer.

The House of Chains is the headquarters of the Rust Brothers in Vond. The entire ground floor is used for initiation and purification before misgrowth. Various batteries of chains can be lowered with control wheels set in the walls – most are just rusty iron chains, while others have sharp barbs, are coated in poison or charged with crackling energy from Zytera's mogarium at the peak of the mountain. Adepts are expected to endure or avoid the more unpleasant chains to prove themselves worthy of greater misgrowth.



At times, singing groups of adepts in robes move from the House of Chains up to the morgarium to gain Zytera's favor and be fitted with demonic limbs.

The higher priests dwell on the upper floor of the house. The prayer rooms and dormitories can be found here. Rust Prince Kartorda has a suite of his own for the occasions when he visits Vond.

- ❖ CREATURES: D66 Rust Brothers. Rust Prince Kartorda, unless alarm is triggered.

14. CAULDRON OF TORMENT

Stakes with cuffs have been raised from the bottom of a natural stone cauldron in the upper end of the fortress. Balustrades line the cauldron, from where priests look upon the people chained to the stakes to be lashed. Above the cauldron is a temple building flanked by statues of Rust and Heme.

The Aslene woman Viseria has been brought here from the dungeons. Just like her partner, Peyraman, she refuses to cooperate with adventurers unless they promise to free Peyraman.

- ❖ CREATURES: 3D6 Rust Brothers, Viseria.

15. CHAPEL OF THE GODS

A malodorous, smaller stone building with a single room appears to be mostly filled with blood, sawdust and iron filings sprinkled across various tools and weapons. The building is flanked by idols depicting Rust and Heme.

The building is a chapel dedicated to Rust and Heme. The Rust Brothers often perform blood

sacrifices over the holy metal to appease the gods.

- ❖ TREASURES: 2D6 VALUABLE finds.
- ❖ CREATURES: 2D6 Rust Brothers.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

Creatures and non-player characters that can be encountered in the fortress of Vond are described below.

GRANDMASTER MANDEREL

The commander of the Iron Guard is Grandmaster Manderel, a scarred war veteran as well as an ordained Rust Brother. Manderel is just as proficient at fighting with his two extra misgrown arms as he is with the ones he was born with. Additionally, he has an extra eye in the back of the neck and is capable of wielding magic. The silver veins that are inlaid in Manderel's face absorb magic and serve as a shield against it. You can see a picture of Manderel on page 197.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 5, Scouting 3, Lore 2, Insight 3, Manipulation 3

TALENTS: Path of the Blade 3, Firm Grip 2, Cold Blooded 2, Steady Feet 2, Sixth Sense 2

REPUTATION: 6

GEAR: Two-handed sword, plate armor, great helm, PRECIOUS find





MISGROWN: Manderel has four arms and an extra eye at the back of the neck. Because of this, he gets to draw three initiative cards at the start of combat, choose the best two, and perform actions on both.

MAGICAL SHIELD: The silver veins in Manderel's face act as the spell **DISPEL MAGIC** with Power Level D6. No Willpower Points are needed. The effect only affects magic directed at Manderel's person.

SENESCHAL MORDARGA

Mordarga was a priestess of the goddess Heme when she was touched by a vision, and instead picked up the sword to defend the fortress and became one of the highest officers of the Iron Guard. Mordarga cares for the blood willow that grows next to the assembly hall, since she claims that it is Heme sprung into wood. Mordarga ritually scratches her arms and face, keeps her head shaved clean of hair and eyebrows, but is free from demonic misgrowths. Aside from her skill in battle, she is able to call the roots of the blood willow from the soil to snare and attack enemies while within the vicinity of the tree.



STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 5, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 5, Lore 2, Insight 3, Manipulation 3

TALENTS: Path of Death 2, Path of the Blade 2, Firm Grip 2, Fast Footwork 2

REPUTATION: 2

GEAR: Longsword, plate armor, closed helmet

BLOOD WILLOW ROOTS: If Mordarga is within **SHORT** distance of the blood willow, she can perform an additional slow action every round. With the extra action Mordarga can cause the roots of the blood willow to attack an adventurer within **SHORT** distance of the blood willow with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the adventurer is **GRAPPLED**.

RUST BROTHERS

Vond is the headquarters of the Rust Brothers, and it shows. Rust Brothers in robes draped with metal move about all over the area. Generally they don't expect an outsider to even be able to enter the area and can therefore be surprised quite easily.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 2, Move 1, Marksmanship 2, Lore 3, Survival 1, Insight 2, Manipulation 1, Healing 2

TALENTS: Path of Healing, Path of Shifting Shapes or Path of Sight (rank 2)

GEAR: Staff, dagger, D6 copper

MISGROWN: Many Rust Brothers are misgrown. In most cases the effects are cosmetic, but you can give some of the Rust Brothers unique abilities. Roll on the table to the right.



IRON GUARDS

The order of the Iron Guard is the military branch of the Rust Church and answers directly to Rust Prince Kartorda. The knights generally do battle on foot. Some ride on demonified animals. Normally there are a total of about one hundred Iron Guards in Vond. More are patrolling the city ruins or out on punitive expeditions in the Forbidden Lands.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 2, Endurance 2, Melee 4, Move 2, Marksmanship 3, Scouting 2

TALENTS: Path of the Blade or Path of the Enemy 2, Threatening 1, Cold Blooded 1

GEAR: Longsword or flail, heavy crossbow, chainmail or plate armor, great helm, large shield, combat trained horse, one VALUABLE find

CORPSE HERDERS

Anywhere there are demons and undead in Vond there are also the Corpse Herders. They are dressed in their strange, metallic uniforms, marred by scars and wounds, and with their Rods of Ungrounding ready to strike anyone who shows the slightest hint of curiosity or independent will.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Might 3, Melee 2, Lore 2, Manipulation 2, Animal Handling 2

GEAR: Rod of Ungrounding (stats like a staff but with Weapon Damage 2), dagger, studded leather armor

KRASYYLLA

Entering Krasyylla's chamber, one is greeted

ABILITIES OF THE MISGROWN

D8	ABILITY	EFFECT
1	Four arms	May perform one additional slow or fast action each round with the extra pair of arms.
2	Eyes in the back of the neck	Bonus +2 to all attempts at detecting a sneak attack or an ambush.
3	Fangs	Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound) as well as Lethal poison with Potency 6.
4	Claws	Weapon Damage 2 (slash wounds).
5	Tentacles	Bonus +2 to all attempts to GRAPPLE.
6	Ulcerous	Contact is contagious, with a Virulence rating of 6.
7	Wings	Can fly, Movement Rate 2
8	Roll twice	—



by various smells that rise from a gigantic, pulsating and veined mass, the upper section of which vaguely resembles a humanoid form with shifting features. Among the scents are also inciting and inviting components which makes the impression even more disturbing. Organic, chomping sounds mingle with the creature's dark and warped voice. The arms that hang beside the too large head are mostly for decoration, since Krasylla can summon tentacles at will to ensnare his visitors.

You can find stats for Krasylla on page 38.

RAVEN SISTER VIRNIA

Sister Virnia lies naked, fatally mangled and imprisoned by the roots of the blood willow outside the assembly hall. The woman bears wounds from being whipped, and her hair is partially ripped off. She asks only to be given the feather of a raven (see the Events, below). If Virelda Bloodbeak (see page 40) is accompanying the adventurers, she will demand that they aid Virnia.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 2, Move 2, Lore 3, Survival 2, Healing 3

TALENTS: Path of Shifting Shapes 2

GEAR: None

HIRENA

The demon Merigall has a daughter in Vond, normally serving as steward in the wardroom or the guardhouse. Hirena resembles Merigall, with short, blonde hair and yellow eyes, and is tall and very beautiful. She doesn't understand

who she is, having only vague memories and being burdened with an inner existential darkness, and lacks friends. Raised as a soldier she is able to fight, but does so without conviction; most of all she hungers for a meaningful existence. Merigall can teleport to her and truly loves her as its daughter.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 3, Move 2

TALENTS: Knife Fighter 2

GEAR: Dagger, leather armor



PEYRAMAN

A group of dwarven Crombe warriors have sworn to reclaim Vond and slay the demon Krasylla, whom they see as the sworn enemy of their clan. The mission didn't go very well and the group has been all but wiped out and the leader, Peyraman, has been captured. He is in the dungeons. If you want, you can let the adventurers meet some other Crombe warriors in the vicinity of Vond. They may know more about the fortress and the secret passage to the old caves.



STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Might 2, Melee 4, Lore 2, Insight 3, Manipulation 1

TALENTS: Path of the Shield 2, Melee Charge 2, Axe Fighter 2

GEAR: –

VISERIA

The Galdanes of Aslene hate the demon Krasylla and call him the Butcher of Aslene. The horse-woman Viseria and her comrades were allied with Peyraman's Crombe warriors, but shared their fate. She is in the Cauldron of Torment. The two are in love, and their main goal is to free the other. Viseria brought a holy Arrow of the Fire Wyrn from the volcano Horn, but didn't have time to fire it at Krasylla before being captured. She knows that the arrow is stored in the weapon storage behind the armory.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 5, WITS 3, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 3, Marksmanship 4, Move 3, Insight 2, Healing 2, Animal Handling 4

TALENTS: Path of the Plains 2, Horseback Archer 2, Fast Shooter 2

GEAR: –



VIRDUR STONEBROW

Virdur is second-in-command in Peyraman's group, and may attempt a desperate rescue of his leader via the old dwarven gates. Virdur got his nickname after an injury to the head, in which his forehead was replaced with metal plates.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Might 4, Melee 3

TALENTS: Firm Grip 2, Unarmed Warrior 2

GEAR: Warhammer, large shield, plate armor, closed helmet



EVENTS

Below is a selection of events that may occur while the adventures are inside the fortress of Vond.

THE RAVEN SISTER

The Raven Sister Virnia, who lies fatally wounded and imprisoned by the blood willow, gets hold of the feather of a raven – either be-



cause the adventurers answered her plea, or because a feather floats down from the birds in the tree. She utters a prayer to the Raven god upon which the feather dissolves into black mist which disperses in the wind. Shortly thereafter, hundreds of ravens come flying. They fall upon Virnia and devour her piece by piece in a matter of minutes before taking off.

The event catches the attention of the Iron Guards or the Rust Brothers (if the Iron Guards are occupied at the wall), and may lead to the presence of the adventurers being revealed.

If the adventurers gave Virnia the feather, the three largest ravens will proclaim “Lead us in our vengeance” in unison, and obey the adventurers. If Virnia got hold of the feather on her own, the unkindness of ravens will attack anyone they come across in the fortress, including the adventurers, and mainly aim for the eyes.

The unkindness counts as a swarm and has the same stats as bats (see page 127 in the *Gamemaster’s Guide*) but have a Strength of 10.

DEMONIC BIRTH

A giant vat, roughly 15 meters in diameter and filled with a viscous, green fluid stands surrounded by scaffolds and ramps filled with Rust Brothers and Iron Guards. It appears as if they are waiting for something, and their attention is fixed on the fluid in the vat. Suddenly, something rises above the surface, a huge and strange body. An unnatural cry echoes across the landscape after which a demonic creature slowly rises from the sludge. The surrounding Rust Brothers hug each other and congratulate

their colleagues on a successful birth. Yet another guest from Churmog has been born into this world.

Randomize the demon’s abilities and stats with the help of the tables on page 81 and beyond in the *Gamemaster’s Guide*.

BOLTS OF LIGHTNING

The weather suddenly shifts with remarkable speed. The sky above Vond is filled with dark clouds and thundering flashes strike the peaks above the fortress. The energy of the thunderstorm can be seen dancing down the tower at the top of the mountain. Rust Brothers and knights don’t seem to pay any attention to the extreme weather.

THE COMMANDO UNIT

A suicide commando unit of twenty Crombe dwarves and Galdane warriors suddenly charge from the secret passage by the dwarven gates (location #5 on the map). Their main mission is to find and free Peyraman and Viseria, but as a secondary goal they want to kill as many officers of the Iron Guard as they can. The group is led by Virdur Stonebrow. If the adventurers were unaware of the secret passage, they may now discern its existence. The attack also serves as a distraction, which might help the adventurers if there isn’t a battle being fought at the walls (see above).

MANDEREL’S SPEECH

Grandmaster Manderel gathers a larger force on the training grounds to raise their morale



with a rousing speech. This may mean that the area is difficult to pass through, but may also be a distraction in which the guards are temporarily removed from their posts.

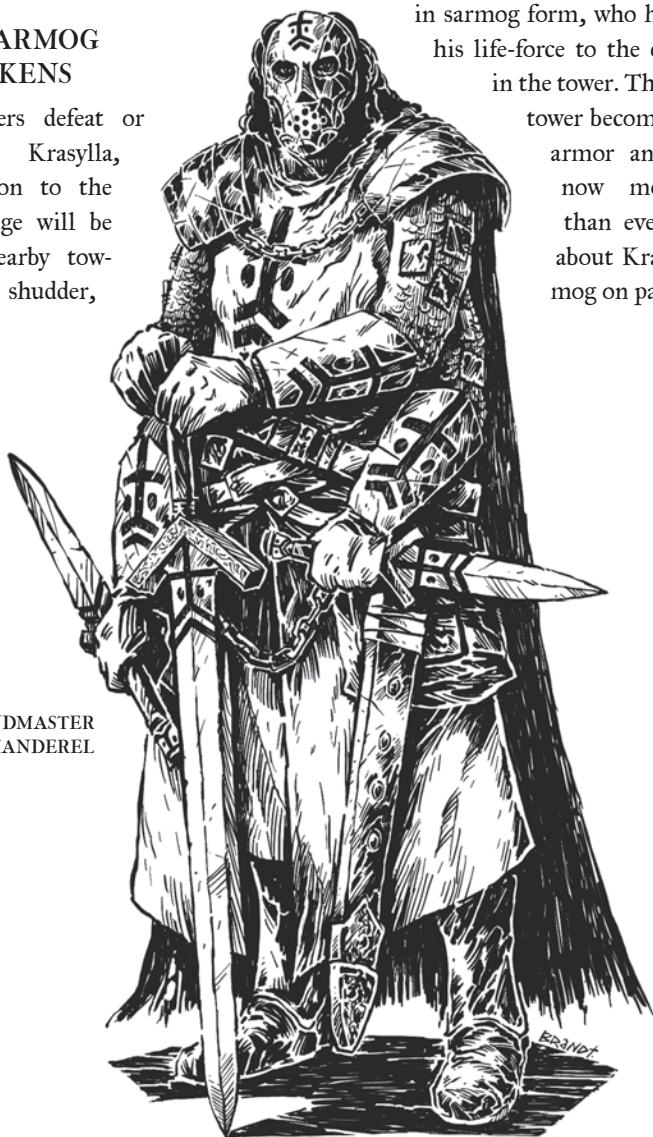
THE SARMOG AWAKENS

If the adventurers defeat or severely wound Krasylla, the transformation to the demon's next stage will be accelerated. A nearby tower will begin to shudder,

after which large blocks of stone fall to the ground and land with heavy thuds. In that moment, something incredible happens – the tower transforms into what appears to be an

immense living creature. It is Krasylla in sarmog form, who has transferred his life-force to the demonic mass in the tower. The stones of the tower become the demon's armor and Krasylla is now more powerful than ever. Read more about Krasylla and sarmog on page 37.

GRANDMASTER
MANDEREL






MERIGALL'S LAIR

Above the fortress of Vond, you reach a passage made of stone that continues up the southern slope of Mount Ora. It ends at a marble staircase that leads up to a partially ruined pavilion higher up on the mountainside. The building curves around the upper crest of the stairs, which are surrounded by the remains of gardens and fountains.

BACKGROUND

The exotic mountain pavilion was constructed in the elven style for the dwarven king Tandelon of Crombe about 650 AS, and oversees the fortress of Vond and its city from the southern slope of Mount Ora. King Alvagard of Alderland lived in the building for a short while during the war against the humans, at which time it was left deserted. The last couple of hundred years, the demon Merigall has used the remaining parts as its residence.



MOVING ABOUT IN MERIGALL'S LAIR

Merigall's lair is a secluded part of Vond. There are only a few guards up here, and few Iron Guards and Rust Brothers move about in the area. If the adventurers have come this far, they no longer risk being discovered by the Iron Guard.

LOCATIONS

Listed below are the most important places in and around Merigall's lair.

I. MARBLE STAIRCASE

A worn and cracked, almost one hundred meters long marble staircase leads up to the pavilion on the mountainside above the fortress of Vond. You notice how the steps are scored and notched by countless ironshod boots.

The staircase ends in a passage under the central structure of the pavilion. There was once a gate of which only the hinges remain. You pass directly on to the passage up towards Zytera's mogarium. There are doors to the guardroom and the studio, as well as a spiral staircase that leads up to Merigall's chambers.

On the staircase, twenty meters from the pavilion, a perceptive adventurer can divine a secret door in the wall to the left of the staircase. It is actually a forgotten defense mechanism. If the adventurers pry away the right stone, the whole wall will crumble and stone blocks will roll down the stairs.

If Merigall is in the pavilion, the demon is probably waiting for the guests on the balcony outside its chamber. Merigall will tell them that it has waited for them, and invites them to come inside for a simple meal.

❖ **CREATURES:** Merigall, if the demon isn't in its chambers.



2. THE ROAD TO ZYTERA'S MOGARIUM

Beyond the pavilion you see how the paved road sharply twists up the mountainside to an ominous castle, the contours of which are outlined against the thunderclouds beyond when the walls are lit by lightning.

3. GUARDROOM

The stone chamber was once beautiful, but the frescoes on the walls are flaky and bleached. A crack in the outer wall has been sealed with tar oakum and moss. There are a couple of bunks, tables and simple chairs in the room.

A couple of Rust Brothers live in this room,

mainly serving as errand boys to Merigall, since the demon doesn't need any protection.

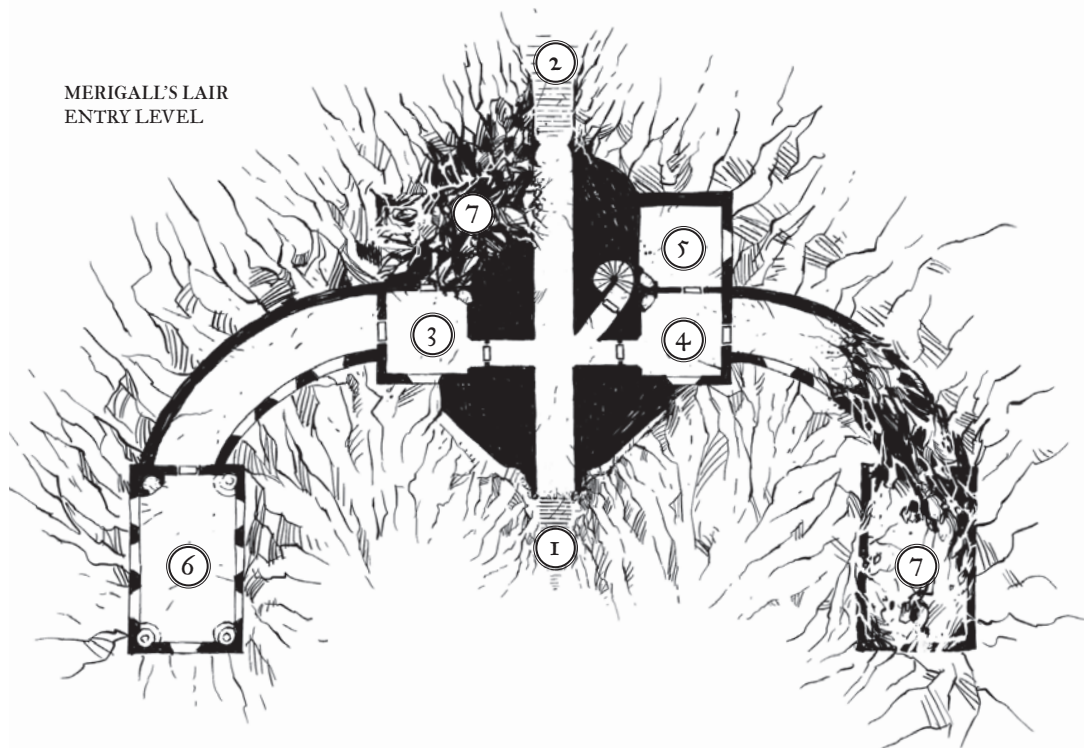
❖ CREATURES: D6-3 Rust Brothers.

4. STUDIO

The room is full of painting tools and partially finished paintings. Some depict strange landscapes that you have never seen, and many of the motifs have disturbing details like a blue and white baby thrown behind a chair or a man chopping off his own hand.

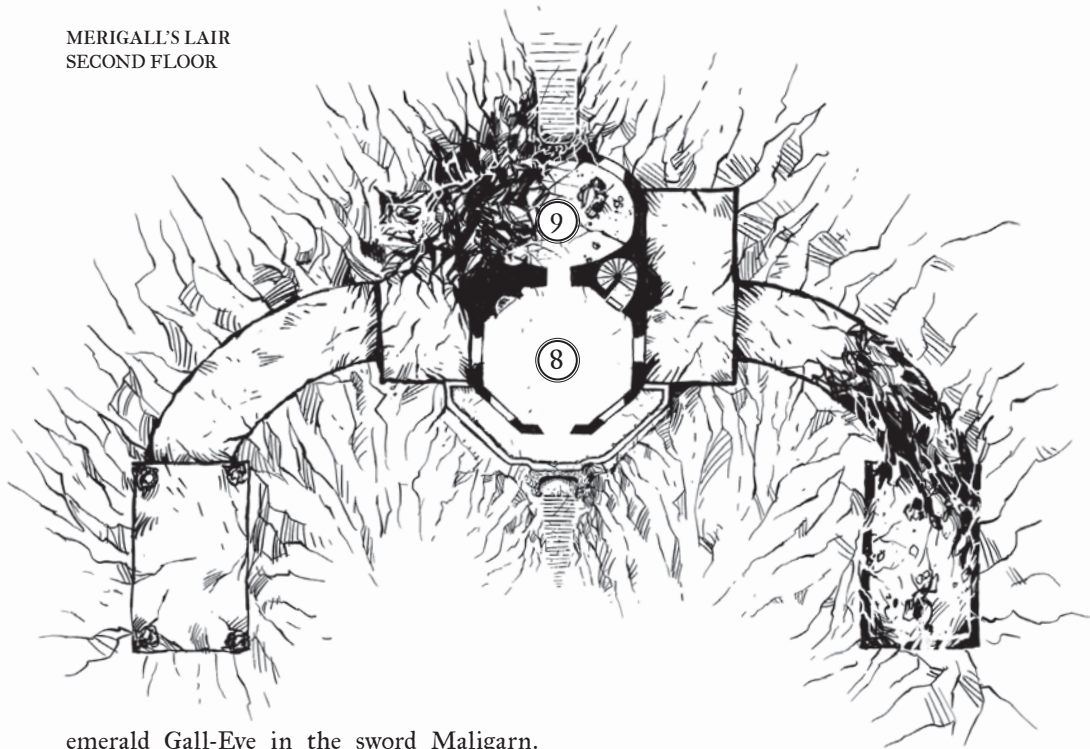
A covered portrait depicts a beautiful, dark elven woman with a snare for a necklace. The picture depicts Viridia, whom Merigall loved a long time ago, and who still dwells in the

MERIGALL'S LAIR
ENTRY LEVEL





MERIGALL'S LAIR SECOND FLOOR



emerald Gall-Eye in the sword Maligarn. Merigall can tell them the legend, if the adventurers ask. Another painting shows twelve beings of various kin and ages, each of whom bears a resemblance to the others. These are Merigall's offspring in the Forbidden Lands.

5. MUSIC ROOM

In the room are several musical instruments, of which one is a larger piece with sheets of metal that chime when thrummed. There are also two beds here, as well as wardrobes with childrens' clothes and toys.

The instrument is a *plectron*, like the one in the temple yard at Haggler's House.

❖ CREATURES: Merigall's children, Morelde and Migalda.

6. GUESTROOM

Another perfumed room with a large bed, wardrobes, fires in two fireplaces and benches with various equipment that appears to be have taken from a brothel.

Merigall may be found in this bed with a couple of naked humans, some of which are demon-tainted.

❖ CREATURES: Erosia



7. CAVED-IN ROOMS

There is only debris here.

8. MERIGALL'S CHAMBERS

From a spiral staircase, you reach a large and warm octagonal hall. The air is heavily scented and the walls are dressed in red hued velvet that has been draped around paintings. An open fire burns in the fireplace and a couple of naked people, a man and a woman, stand by a wall. A narrow ditch carved from the floor runs roughly a meter from the wall, filled with a purple-green mass that appears to be alive. In the center of the room is a padded bench, with a snare hanging above. There is also a desk and shelves with scrolls of parchment in the chamber. Mounted on the walls are ornamented serpentine weapons.

This is Merigall's chambers, the closest thing the demon has to a home. The humans are stuffed, beautiful specimens that Merigall felt it was a shame to let go to rot. The demon speaks fondly of them as former lovers. The mass in the ditch consists of rare dancing mog from Churmog. By touching it in specific places in a specific rhythm, the ripples can be made to assume exciting shapes and colors.

The scrolls of parchment deal exclusively with history and legends. A larger piece of parchment is a decently accurate map of the Forbidden Lands. Candelabras with wax candles are lit in the evening. Merigall often sits and sleeps on the padded bench, and then places the snare around the neck so that the body doesn't wander off. To the south is a balcony. The paintings depict red scenes from Churmog or beings of

different kin who all resemble Merigall – these are the demon's offspring, and the adventurers may have encountered some of them.

Merigall may be in the room, on the balcony or in the guestroom with company. The demon will not fight, but wants to make some kind of deal. Merigall will fight if attacked, but will teleport away if the battle goes badly.

❖ CREATURES: Merigall

❖ TREASURES: Three magical artifacts with a serpentine theme are mounted on the walls. All of the artifacts are described in detail in the *Gamemaster's Guide* and on cards in the deck of cards for Forbidden Lands. Merigall can give one or more artifacts to the adventurers, depending on what the demon wants them to do. Note that the adventurers don't have to come to this location. Merigall can give them a weapon in another location if it is motivated. If you have already introduced these artifacts in your campaign in a different way, you can scratch them from this location.

AN ARROW OF THE FIRE WYRM: Marks those who participated in the devastation of Aslene to the god Horn. Leads the Fire Wym Erinya to the guilty. The arrow is specifically aimed at Krasylla.

THE SPEAR IVELDE: The spear that sows discord can be used to make the statues in Zytera's Mogarium (see page 205) destroy one another until only the one containing Merigall's life essence remains. Merigall does not realize this itself.



MERIGALL'S GIFT

Merigall is the eternal schemer and will try to use the adventurers in the way that benefits the demon most. Merigall is very interested in what Krasylla has told them, and makes no attempt at hiding the disgust it feels for the demon prince. Merigall's goal is to be free of Zytera's control, and needs to drink its life essence from one of the stone guardians in Zytera's mogarium. Merigall will gladly give the adventurers gifts in the form of the magical weapons that the demon has collected over the years (see the event Merigall's Supper, below).

- ❖ **TREASURES:** A coffer is hidden under a stone tile in the floor. The coffer contains a **PRECIOUS** find with the oddity "Dwarven heirloom" (see page 193 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).



MONSTERS AND NPCs

Creatures and non-player characters that can be encountered in Merigall's lair are described below.

THE DEMON MERIGALL

The demon Merigall is one of the key players in the campaign and is described on page 35. You can find a picture of the demon on page 11.

THE BROADSWORD ASINA: The sword does additional damage against all demons and can cleave Zytera into its two parts, Zygofer and Therania.

9. CHAPEL

Half the room lacks a ceiling and under the ceiling that remains are stored stacks of roofing tiles. Presumably, the room was going to be repaired but that never came to pass. The room appears to have been a chapel to the dwarven god Hüge, for a broken statue of the god lies on the floor.

It is completely true that the room originally served as a chapel to the dwarven god Hüge, but it has gone to ruin over the centuries.

MORELDE AND MIGALDA

Morelde is a blonde ten-year-old boy and Migalda is a dark-haired twelve-year-old girl, both of whom are children of Merigall. They are both noticeably beautiful, with yellow eyes, and resemble one another, but there is something incomplete about them, as if they haven't been completely "finished" and an observer can't really be sure if they are humans, dwarves or half-elves. They are very open towards strangers, happy, and appear to be oblivious to the world outside the pavilion.

The children are being cultivated to be deployed somewhere in the Forbidden Lands, but Merigall hasn't decided where yet and neither has



it imprinted them for a location, which is why they appear somewhat incomplete. Merigall will become the mortal enemy of anyone who hurts them or any other of the demon's offspring. Either one of the children can, like Hirena, be brought forth as food for Krasylla to kindle Merigall's hatred against the larger demon.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Move 2

TALENTS: –

GEAR: Elegant clothes

EROSIA

Erosia is a demonic creature that Merigall has constructed for the sole purpose of amorous endeavours at home in the pavilion, when more exciting company is unavailable. It mostly looks like a flesh-colored, shapeless toad the size of a horse and is comprised of parts, mostly human, cobbled together with demonic mog. Erosia may appear grotesque, painted and attired with a number of limbs and organs, but if one can look past the big picture it is possible to find a certain beauty and grace in the individual parts. The creature is always friendly and inviting and won't defend itself even if attacked, in which case it will cite poetry about the beautiful mortality of life. It has mastered several musical instruments and other arts. The personality of the creature changes to suit the visitor.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 5

SKILLS: Lore 4, Performance 4

TALENTS: –

GEAR: –

CAPTAIN KARDUNE

Kardune is an Iron Guard, a hardy warrior with an austere beard. In secret, he wanted to become an artist and comes from one of the villages close to Groveland Woods. He therefore enjoys being with Merigall, and is also the demon's lover. As a teenager, Kardune was forced to join the army when his village couldn't pay its annual tithe. The captain has declined misgrown extra limbs and the other officers look down on him because of this. Kardune suspects that the times are changing, and he can turn on the Rust Brothers if he sympathizes with the adventurers. See the event "The Iron Guard," below.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 3, Crafting 2, Marksmanship 2, Scouting 2, Lore 1

TALENTS: Path of the Blade 2

GEAR: Longsword, dagger, chainmail, VALUABLE find

THE REDRUNNER HIZGELE

Hizgele loved the elf Megonda Mard (see page 210), who has been kidnapped by Zytera's underlings. Hizgele suspects that it is already too late to save her and has also allowed himself to be captured. He plans to detonate his heart ruby in front of Zytera to wound or preferably kill the creature. Hizgele is lean and wiry with long, fair hair and tatoos that depict winding plants. He wears only a piece of cloth around his torso, is bloody, but unmoved by pain or cold.



STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 4, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 3, Marksmanship 4, Survival 2

TALENTS: Pain Resistant 2

GEAR: –



EVENTS

Below are a number of events that can occur in Merigall's lair.

THE PRETEND ADVENTURERS

Morelde and Migalda suddenly surprise the adventurers, threateningly but playfully, the boy with a wooden sword and a shield and the girl dressed up as a fairy with a wand and dress strewn with stars. They live in their own world, and Merigall has played games with them where they pretend to be “adventurers”. Neither of them possess any skill in combat or magic.

THE IRON GUARD

Iron Guard Captain Kardune arrives at the pavilion with urgent information for Merigall on the state of matters. He is under pressure, and is not amused to find strangers in the area.

THE DAUGHTER'S RETURN

The steward Hirena (see page 194) comes to the pavilion with a message for Merigall from Grandmaster Manderel, requesting the

demon's presence at a counsel in the guard-house of the fortress. The children Morelde and Migalda see her as their older sister, and one can immediately spot the similarities they share.

THE REDRUNNER

A couple of Rust Brothers are bringing a screaming elven Redrunner through the passage under the pavilion up towards Zytera's mogarium. The elf calls himself Hizgele, and has been looking for the missing Megonda Mard (see page 210).

MERIGALL'S SUPPER

Merigall invites the adventurers to supper with it in its chambers. Here they are offered, more or less bizarre delicacies from both this and other worlds. To accompany the food, they are treated with nectar wine which tastes sweet and lovely and makes the adventurer discover an intense love both for life and Merigall (the demon gets +2 to MANIPULATION against those who drink the wine). During the meal, Merigall explains its role in Zytera's plans, and laments that everything has gone wrong. The demon offers an alliance to anyone ready to kill Zytera and offers the adventurers the magical weapons at its disposal (see page 201) to achieve that goal. The negotiations can sour – if the adventurers choose to decline Merigall's proposal, the demon will be wroth and BEFOUL the food in an instant. Merigall will then cast PARALYZE and TERROR before fleeing towards Zytera's mogarium.



ZYTERA'S MOGARIUM

From the bridge beyond the palace of the dwarven prince you see the peak of Mount Ora, but the scene could just as well originate in an alien and terrifying demonic world. From the black cliff giving off a metallic gleam rises a spiral tower whose silver battlements exchange bolts of lightning with the dark thundercloud overhead. The upper levels of the tower pulsate and swell, as if they were formed from living flesh instead of rock.



BACKGROUND

Zytera spends most of his time in the mogarium to experiment with mog – the living demonic substance from the world of Churmog. It is raw mog in different forms that coat the upper levels of the tower. Zytera has managed to open a protonexus – a primitive opening to Churmog – at the top of the tower. With the help of the Corpse Herder Brenziga, he keeps a thundercloud locked above the area to supply power for the experiments. Zytera's spider body climbs up and down the mountain from the balcony when the creature wants to leave the mogarium.



LOCATIONS

Listed below are the most important locations in Zytera's mogarium.

1. TRANSFORMARIUM

The path beyond the bridge writhe up towards a building at the base of the tower. Statues of both Rust and Heme stand to either side of the portal, surrounded by braziers in which red fires burn. Misgrown Rust Brothers are gathered in clamorous worship and self-flagellation beneath a balcony. Their bodies are bloodied. A number of other priests of Rust walk among them.

In the transformarium, dedicated Rust Brothers receive their extra limbs and deformities. Zytera comes to look upon them from the balcony and passes down limbs prepared in mog to the priests who attach them to the worshippers. The six cells in the building hold devotees recovering after the process, and frequently some prisoner used for raw material.

❖ CREATURES: 2D6 demonified Rust Brothers, D3 other Rust Brothers, D3–1 prisoners from the Forbidden Lands (maybe someone the adventurers have met before?).

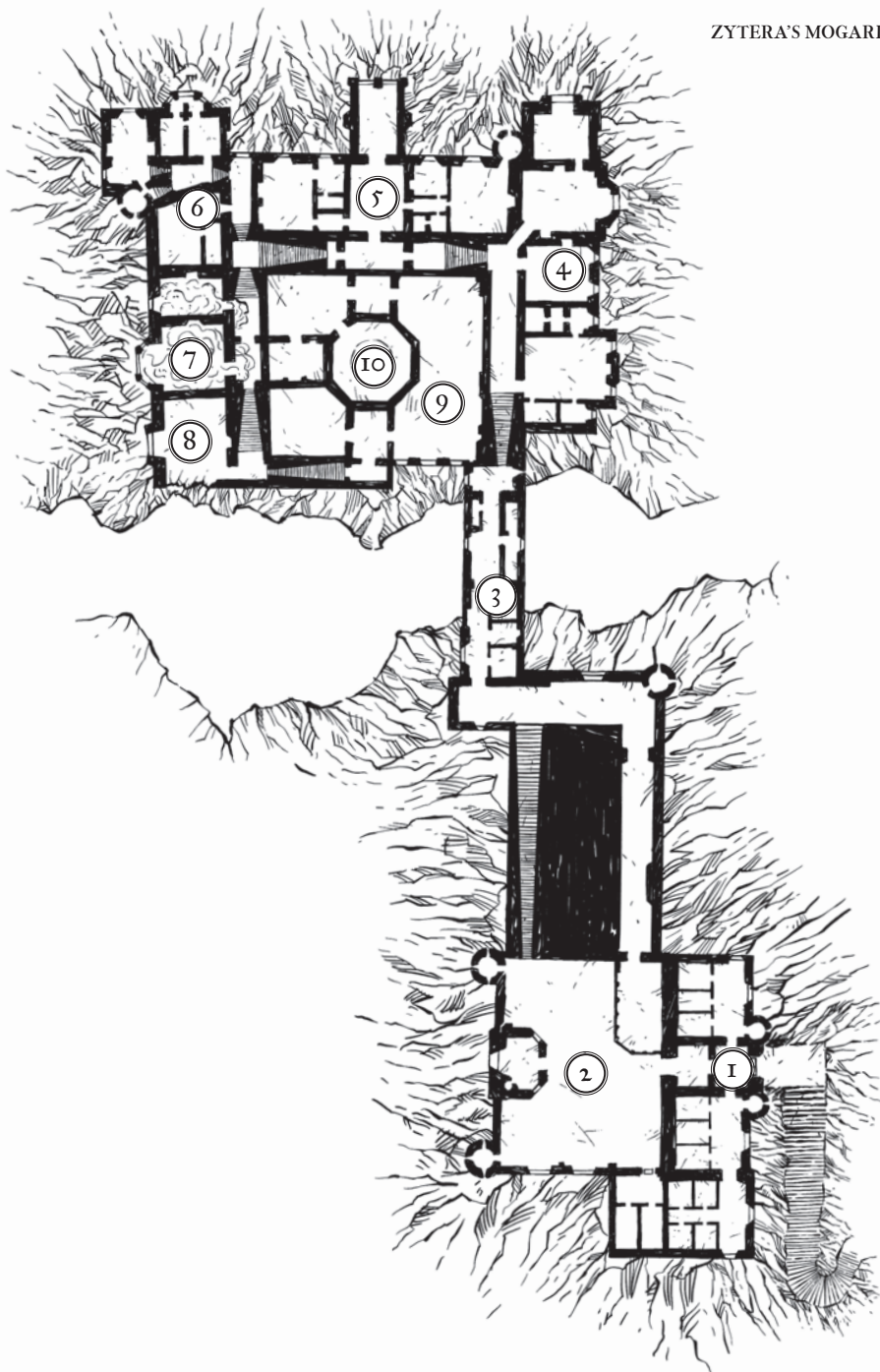
2. GUARDIAN CHAMBER

A large hall filled with statues holding stone weapons opens up inside the gate. They are all facing towards you. Some skeletons lie on the floor.

In the guardian chamber are a dozen stone statues that wake up and attack anyone who enters while not wearing a silver hauberk. However, if the spear Ivelde (see page 135 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) is thrown among them, they



ZYTERA'S MOGARIUM





will start destroying one another until only one remains – the one who carries the brass receptacle containing Merigall’s life essence as its heart (see page 37).

The guardian room can be bypassed if one scales the balcony from the transformarium.

❖ CREATURES: Twelve stone guardians.

3. VIVISECTION ROOMS

A narrow building bridges a chasm. Windows are open along its sides. The smell of decay is heavy. You can hear someone crying.

These rooms hold dissection tables with fetters and the remains of dissected bodies. A couple of youths are imprisoned in a cell. They can tell of how other prisoners have been butchered alive by Brenziga, Zytera and their living silver skeletons.

4. THE LIMB PATCH


The stench of decay is almost unbearable beyond the staircase. You hear strange scrapings and squelches coming from the rooms.

In these various rooms are roughly sorted limbs from both animals and humans. Organic masses of mog hang down from cracks in the ceiling and in through the windows. Many of the limbs appear to be alive, and twitch or slither when someone enters. The hand room contains some thirty severed, living arms that collectively attack anyone who enters, strangling and scratching. The arms technically function as a swarm (see page 127 in the *Game-master’s Guide*) with Strength 8. The swarm’s

attacks have Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). In the northernmost room are decapitated heads, some of which can talk. They are more or less insane. One head, belonging to a sorcerer, casts the spell PUPPETEER (Power Level 5) on the first being who enters the room and tries to compel the victim to attack her friends.

The southern rooms hold wooden bunks with fetters for dissection and a silver anvil with a silver hammer for shattering elven rubies.

❖ CREATURES: The freak Mard is also in the room, and may try to contact the adventurers (see the event “Mard,” below).



GASEOUS MOG

The gaseous mog found in Brenziga’s suite acts as a poison with Potency 6. Everyone within NEAR distance is afflicted.

❖ **FULL EFFECT:** The victim suffers 1 point of damage to Empathy each round until she’s broken. Additionally, she immediately develops a misgrowth and must roll on the table for abilities of the demon-tainted (see page 193). The effect is permanent.

❖ **LIMITED EFFECT:** The victim suffers 1 point of damage to Empathy and develops a temporary misgrowth. Roll on the table as for the full effect, but the effect goes away after a Quarter Day.



5. BRENZIGA'S SUITE

Above the stairs is a locked, silver-plated gate. Inside is a beautiful suite where someone obviously lives – a fire is burning in the fireplace and a decanter of wine has been prepared. The contrast to the disgusting rooms encountered before is almost terrifying.

The silver pattern of the gate is electrically charged and yields a powerful jolt if the adventurers touch it (deals 1 damage to Strength, non-typical damage). The room is inhabited by the Corpse Herder Brenziga and a few of Corpse Herders of lower rank. They operate the lightning set-up of the tower, direct the silver skeletons and help Zytera conduct the anatomical experiments.

In a wooden rack on the table three glass orbs containing shimmering fluids can be seen. If they break, gaseous mog gushes out and afflicts everyone within NEAR distance. See the adjacent boxed text.

❖ CREATURES: The Corpse Herder Brenziga, two Corpse Herders of lower rank.

6. SUITE OF THE SILVER SKELETONS

Above the stairs the air tastes like metal and stings the nose. Crackling sounds can be heard from the rooms where fleshy masses hang in through windows and through holes in the walls and ceiling. Here and there, the mass exhibits tentacles or fastened human limbs. There are a number of large, shimmering silver skeletons in these rooms.

Five silver skeletons are used as aides in the

tower, and they mostly dwell in this room. Some ten charged rods sit in the rack, where they absorb power from the thundercloud via silver cables. The skeletons can heal themselves with the rods and will gain power if they are used against them.

The spiral staircase leads up to the bases of the two northern silver spires of the building where thunder roars.

❖ CREATURES: Five silver skeletons.

7. THE WALL OF FLESH

Above the staircase the passage is narrow, since a fleshy substance wells forth from the rooms to the right. Various body parts thrash and move on the surface. It smells horrible, and every so often you can hear thundering sounds after which the entire mass shudders as if in terror.

The mass can be pushed aside with jolts from the silver rods in the suite of the silver skeletons, but is not aggressive. Both these rooms are completely filled with fleshy mog and limbs in preparatory training.

8. BALCONY

You reach a square corner room where the west wall has been completely removed. The wind howls past you. Outside, the mountain drops straight down and is coated in clinging mog. Along the walls are a number of buzzing silver beams, and a silver skeleton lies against one of them.

The room is kept free of mog since this is where Zytera leaves and enters the tower. The



beast can climb up and down the mountainside with ease. The silver beams along the walls are laden with power from the thundercloud to keep the area free of mog. The silver skeleton has become addicted to the power of the lightning and is usually found lying entwined with the beam and doesn't care about anything else.

- ❖ CREATURES: Zertorme or Redwing can appear here. See Events.

9. THE PILEUM OF THE TOWER

The upper plateau of the tower appears to be covered by flesh-colored tissue, that has assumed a varied and lively form. It slithers, pulsates, moves and thrashes intrusively everywhere. Many tentacles are aggressively curious. Large parts of the ceiling have caved in so that you can see the sky overhead. Four thirty-meter-high silver steeples rise from the four corners of the tower. Every so often, a deafening crack is heard when lightning strikes one of them from the thundercloud above, and a shimmering light creeps along the surface.

Mog becomes so intrusive that the adventurers must either chop it to pieces with a weapon or keep it at a distance with the silver rods from the suite of the silver skeletons (they can be recharged in the room). The narrow space due north has a number of hands mounted on it that will attack anyone who tries to push past them. The hands act as a swarm (see page 127 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*) with Strength 7.

10. PROTONEXUS

The center of the tower's pileum holds an enor-

mous silver bowl in which can be seen a mass that rapidly changes color and has a slithering form to it. Through holes that appear among the billowing folds you can sometimes glimpse a red, alien light and occasionally even views of alien landscapes. The mythical creature called Zytera stalks around the bowl.

This is most likely where the final showdown against Zytera will take place. This can happen in many ways, but read more on that in "The Final Showdown", below.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

Creatures and non-player characters that can be encountered in Zytera's mogarium are described below.

ZYTERA

Zytera is one of the key players in the campaign and is described in detail on page 29. There you can also find a picture of the creature.

CORPSE HERDER BRENZIGA

Brenziga is the most distinguished Corpse Herder in the Rust Church. She is completely loyal to Zytera, whom she believes to be the greatest genius the world has ever seen. She is ruthlessly dedicated to her research, seeking to animate the dead and attach the organs and abilities of the living to creatures with the demonic substance mog



under the guidance of her master. Her specialty is to dissect living creatures and to bring life to organs and new creations with the electricity that is channeled from the thundercloud above the mogarium. She also oversees the practical matters when Rust Brothers are equipped with misgrown appendages in the transformarium. Brenziga has severe burns from a multitude of accidents, but she wears these scars with pride. She is accompanied by two Corpse Herders that serve as her assistants, and she also frequently makes use of silver skeletons for manual labor.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 5, EMPATHY 3**SKILLS:** Lore 4, Healing 5, Insight 3, Manipulation 2**TALENTS:** Path of Death 3, Path of Blood 2**REPUTATION:** 4

STONE GUARDIANS

These large statues of stone represent legendary dwarven warriors. They lack Wits and Empathy and are immune to all attacks that damage these attributes.

STRENGTH 12, AGILITY 2**SKILLS:** Melee 4**ARMOR RATING:** 10 (stoneskin)**GEAR:** Battleaxe

SILVER SKELETONS

These undead monstrosities are large skeletons, perhaps those of ogres, whose bones have been lined with silver. The fingers taper off to sharp silver claws and the living eyes of beast or man have been mounted in the eye sockets. The eyes are wetted by rolling back on a regular basis, instead of blinking. The skeletons carry silver rods in their hands that flash with electricity. These are used to direct mog tissue.

STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 2**SKILLS:** Melee 3, Scouting 2**GEAR:** Claws (Weapon Damage 2, slash wound), silver rod (Weapon Bonus +2, Weapon Damage 2, damages Agility instead of Strength)**BONY:** Arrows and POINTED weapons can never cause more than 1 point of damage in a single attack.

MARD THE FREAK

The elven healer Megonda Mard, a peaceful Melder, was brought as a prisoner to Zytera's mogarium about a year ago. Her ruby was torn from her chest and shattered so that the sorcerer could use the shards as the spark of life in his miscreations. A flake of the ruby fell into a crack, however, and from this the freak Mard has been reformed. Mard looks like an abortive



human fetus, hairless with a big head, incomplete limbs and her features in disarray – it is easy to mistake her for a demonified monster.

Mard is the size of a monkey and just as agile, so she can climb around between the floors on the outside of the tower. Mog instinctly retracts from her. Her mind and speech are both rudimentary. Mard is skittish, but can sense good intentions. She doesn't know what she is or what she is supposed to do, but mostly waits for someone who can love her. Hizgela and Redwing have come to rescue her and if she sees them, her memory will partially return.

STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 5, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 4, Move 3, Insight 4

HEALING: Mard automatically recovers 1 point of lost Strength each round.



MALINA REDWING

The keen-eyed Redrunner Malina Redwing has a terrible temper and hates and despises everyone who isn't a full-blooded elf. Hizgele, whom she harbors an unrequited love for, has tried to convince her to try to rescue Megonda Mard,

who possesses unique knowledge of healing, from Zytera's grasp and she has reluctantly agreed. She had already had thin wings grown between her feet and arms so that she appears to be a crossbreed between a bat and a flying squirrel, and can glide on the winds.

The wings have thin veins filled with blood all over and appear to blaze red at a distance. Redwing wears leather armor and is a good marksman even on the move, but she is almost useless in melee. She isn't aware that Hizgele intends to sacrifice himself to exact revenge on Zytera, and would object fiercely if she found out. The two signal each other through the bays of howler rats.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 5, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 1, Move 4, Marksmanship 4

TALENTS: Fast Shooter 2

GEAR: Longbow, dagger, leather armor

WINGS: Malina can fly SHORT distance with a Movement Rate of 3. She must land after each round of movement.



EVENTS

Below are a number of events that can occur in Zytera's mogarium.

ZERTORME'S ARRIVAL

Zertorme arrives at the tower via the balcony for the showdown with his father and sister. Note that Zertorme can be overtly or secretly allied with the adventurers, Zygofer, Therania,



Merigall or someone else, regardless of how he has acted previously in the game. See page 42 for more details.



REDWING

Redwing tries to alight on the balcony (see location #8 on the map), but lands badly and damages one of her wings. She asks the adventurers to find Megonda Mard, whom she has been sent to rescue from the tower, and also to keep an eye out for Hizgele. According to Redwing, Mard is supposed to possess powers of healing. The adventurers may have caught sight of a human-sized bat with blood-red wings near Vond previously, before she lands on the balcony. If Redwing is healed, she can glide to safety from the mogarium with Mard and one other person.

MARD

The freak Mard cautiously approaches the adventurers if their intentions are good. For added enjoyment, you can let them glimpse the grotesque features of the creature before the encounter.

THE DEMONIC CREATURE

A half-finished demonified creature with lots of limbs, as angry as it is terrified, has escaped and crawling, attacks everything in its path with improvised weaponry. Two silver skeletons and a Corpse Herder are chasing it. The creature shouts confused and disjointed phrases like, "Don't go near the geezer with the gurdy!", "Blunder with the blind otter!", and "Eight and seven make me fifteen... Catch the wig!"

TENTACLES

Tentacles of mog shoot out from cracks in the walls when the adventurers pass by and attack them with nine Base Dice. The adventurer who gets struck by a successful attack is additionally GRAPPLED and suffers 1 point of damage every subsequent round until she breaks free. A tentacle has Strength 3.



THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

The encounter with Zytera at the Protonexus is the climax of the campaign. It can happen in many different ways and may include Merigall, Zertorme, Zygofer and Therania or others. What happens depends in large part on what has happened previously in the campaign, and what alliances the adventurers have formed.

Stanengist probably plays a crucial part in the finale – Zytera wants Stanengist and by



now, the adventurers hopefully know that the crown will drive Zytera insane if he puts the crown on either of his heads.

If the players haven't already figured out what they want to do, you should encourage them to do so now. Their decisions here and now will have lasting consequences for the Forbidden Lands. If they destroy Zytera, the role of the demonic ruler of the Forbidden Lands will be taken over by Krasylla. Exactly what happens in the final showdown with Zytera is up to you. Here are just a few possibilities:

- ❖ Zytera dies, upon which the protonexus runs amok and becomes an uncontrolled portal for demonic invasion.
- ❖ Zytera knowingly transforms the protonexus into an uncontrolled nexus.
- ❖ Zygofer and Therania are cut from Zytera's body with the sword Asina.
- ❖ Zygofer's lock of hair (from Martea in the Stoneloom Mines) is thrown into the protonexus, causing Zygofer to be slain by demons.
- ❖ A severed Zygofer crawls into the protonexus and disappears – for now.
- ❖ Stanengist is thrown into the protonexus or nexus, at which time the portal closes.
- ❖ Merigall steals the emerald Gall-Eye and escapes to resurrect its beloved Viridia.
- ❖ Zytera finds out that Merigall helped his wife, Martea, escape and wants to exact revenge on the demon.
- ❖ Merigall's life essence is poured into the ocean or killed with acid and lye.
- ❖ Krasylla's contract is stolen from Zygofer by Merigall, Therania or the adventurers.
- ❖ Krasylla becomes sarmog.
- ❖ Merigall steals Krasylla's contract from

Zytera and gives it to the adventurers to win Krasylla's support.

- ❖ Krasylla eats one of Merigall's offspring and Merigall finds out. This causes Merigall to want to kill Krasylla with an Arrow of the Fire Wyrn.
- ❖ Krasylla is marked with an Arrow of the Fire Wyrn and the Fire Wyrn Erinya devours the demon.
- ❖ Arvia Huggedottir has the Galdane rider Viseria killed out of jealousy.
- ❖ The Galdane riders become aware of the murder of Viseria and turn on Arvia and the dwarves.
- ❖ Empress Soria gathers an orcish horde that marches on Vond.
- ❖ Kalman Rodenfell falls in love with Merigall.





AFTERMATH

This night also passed. Hiriam Harsta leaned heavily on her sword, her weapon as bloody as her armor. She saw the sun rise beyond Shadowgate Pass in the east, and the mist after all seemed less dense than the day before.

From Aslene, a low rumble from the fire mountain Horn bailed her.



After the showdown with Zytera, the *Raven's Purge* is over – but that doesn't mean that the adventurers have reached the end of their journey! Far from it! Their actions have big consequences for all of the Forbidden Lands, which can lead to plenty of exciting new adventures.

the dragon will emerge from the ground – mark the location with a crater on the map. She will attack the homeland of the Crombe dwarves and may obliterate the clan's dwellings, after which she'll settle down in the mountains north of the Forbidden Lands to breed a new tribe of dragons worthy of the name.

CONSEQUENCES

Summarized below are the possible consequences of the actions of the adventurers during *Raven's Purge*.

RETURN OF THE DRAGON SCARNE

If the adventurers freed the dragon mother Scarne from the adventure site Stonegarden,

RETURN OF THE BLOOD MIST

If the adventurers manage to give the Bloodlings their self-confidence back at the adventure site Haggler's House, the mists may have been re-established in some hexagons of the map. The adventurers may have placed it as a line of defense around their Stronghold. The GM can decide how large areas of the map that are covered with Blood Mist at night might be.



THE EVIL SCROME

If the evil eye of the giant Scrome finds its way back to him in the adventure site Vale of the Dead (page 231 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*), from that point forward he will terrorize the land by trampling villages and crushing caravans. If the adventurers restored the eye, he will leave them and their properties alone.

THE PROTONEXUS RUNS AMOK

If Zygofer has died without the protonexus in Vond being sealed, it will transform into an uncontrolled portal to demonic worlds. Demons of all kinds will then swarm around Vond and escape into the Forbidden Lands while all the surrounding nature destabilizes as it did before in Shadowgate Pass.

KRASYLLO AS SARMOG

If Krasylla has assumed the more powerful demonic form of sarmog, he leads his own army of demons. Krasylla claims to want to dominate the Forbidden Lands, not to rule it but to be its mightiest creature and to enjoy his dominance. He wants to ravage and hunt humans as delicacies, preferably allied to someone who'll deal with more tedious chores.



THE KEY PLAYERS

The key players that dominate the Forbidden Lands after the campaign will make their mark on the land. If the adventurers have man-

aged to outmaneuver all the key players, it is instead they that set the tone.

ZYTERA

Zygofer and Therania loathe one another and only one of them, if either, will survive *Raven's Purge*. The survivor will revert to human shape through rituals. If Zygofer has survived, his head may be fused to his daughter's body. If Therania has survived, she'll steal the lower body of some suitable woman.

The survivor will command the Rust Brothers, continue their research on demons, the substance mog and the undead and, in the long term, want to exterminate all other kin in the Forbidden Lands as well as conquer Alderland.

ZERTORME

If Zertorme comes to power, possibly together with Merigall, he will seek to create a human kingdom in the Forbidden Lands dominated by Ailanders and Aslenes. He will persecute and seek to obliterate the Rust Church and kill all demons. The Raven Sisters will become the central religion, and fire shrines to the Aslene god Horn will also be erected. In time, Zertorme will want to invade Alderland.

If Zertorme comes to power together with his sister Therania, they will create a human kingdom of mixed religions, but Therania will eventually dominate her brother and twist the development according to her plans in which Rust Brothers and demons remain since "they are needed to fight enemies and traitors who intend to destroy the country."



ARVIA OF CROMBE

If the Crombe dwarves in an alliance with the adventurers succeed in slaying Krasylla and reclaiming Vond, they will form an alliance with the Aslenes and Ailanders and create a militant nation of humans and dwarves. Zertorme can lead the humans, but if he is allied with his sister Therania, the dwarves will have her murdered since they won't tolerate either demons or Rust Brothers in the Forbidden Lands.

EMPRESS SORIA OF URHUR

If the adventurers have allied with the orcs, and with their help managed to defeat Zytera and the Rust Brothers, Empress Soria will rally the orc clans under her husband with the

help of the Viraga. The orcs will experience a golden age, but the nation is fragile and will most likely fall apart as soon as the emperor couple die.

KALMAN RODENFELL

If the adventurers manage to defeat Zytera, the Rust Brothers and the demons in Vond through an alliance with the elven Redrunners, they will try to restore the old kingdom from before the Alder Wars. They will secretly try to decrease the number of humans in the Forbidden Lands by using their nature magic to decrease the kin's fertility and let them die off. The elves are in no rush and see no moral issues with this solution.





THE STANENGIST CROWN

It is said that the first six elves of the Forbidden Lands – the ones who planted the trees, drew the furrows of the rivers and gave the animals their home – after completing their mission, had their rubies gathered in the royal crown, Stanengist, the name of which means “The Hanging Stones.” In the crown they rested deservedly, but at the same time, kept watch over their creation and gave advice to their descendants. For a long time, the crown was worn by the kings of the land and granted them the power to keep the kingdom intact, but sometime right before the humans arrived in Ravenland, the thief Merigall stole three of the stones from Stanengist, and the land has been sundered ever since. Whoever re-assembles the stones in the crown and places it on her head shall according to legend gain the power to rally all kin and rule over the Forbidden Lands. The stonesinger Brander of Bynd is said to have received a vision from the god Huga in which he saw the lost stones set into the scepter of a king, the jewelry of a queen, and a sword that slays giants.

THE MALIGARN SWORD

In days past, the bloodthirsty giant Scrame ravaged the land. The stories tell of how the shieldmaiden Viridia slew him with the sword Maligarn – the Giant Slayer. She received help from Scrome, the giant’s brother, whose reward was to be appointed guardian of the gate where the deceased enter the underworld. But Viridia sustained such grave wounds during the battle against Scrame that she died soon after. The emerald that had made up her heart was set into the crown, Stanengist, but is later said to have been moved to the sword Maligarn. The weapon has been lost for a long time.



THE NEKHAKA SCEPTER

It is said that Algared, the first king of Alderland, was so wise and good that the gods turned his heart into a ruby after his death. Algadan, son of Algared, had his craftsmen carve the scepter Nekhaka with three pendants from the golden alder trees of the royal palace and set his father's ruby into the scepter. Nekhaka was carried by the Algarian dynasty for generations, but was lost in Ravenland when the last regent, Algarod, was slain with all his men by the demonic hordes of the sorcerer Zygofer. The elven elders instead claim that Algared was an elf disguised as a human and that his ruby heart was one of the six stones in the crown, Stanengist.

THE BLOOD STAR CLOAK CLASP

The story goes that the elven princess Iridne fell in love with the orc chieftain Horena, but that her father and his high council were appalled, for the elves saw the orcs as an impure and inferior kin. Iridne was forbidden all contact with Horena, stripped from her flesh, and her burning heart was set into the crown Stanengist to cool off. When the princess defied her father in the name of love and re-assumed flesh, he equipped a ship to carry his daughter across the oceans to keep her away from Ravenland until Horena had passed away. When Iridne heard her father's decision, she chose to take her own life rather than be separated from her love. She had her ruby heart set into the cloak clasp Hemella – the Blood Star – which, in secret, was brought to Horena by her faithful handmaiden. Iridne's father was furious and went to war against the orcs to reclaim Iridne's heart, but the power of love within the Blood Star strengthened Horena so that the war became long and bloody. It is said that Iridne's cruel father had the orc chieftain whipped to death after defeating him, but the cloak clasp Blood Star has been lost ever since.



ZYTERA

They say that the sorcerer Zygofer, during the final battle of the Fourth Alder War, summoned a demonic horde that slaughtered King Algarod and the Alderlander army. To consolidate the alliance, Zygofer and his daughter, Therania, agreed to being merged with a demon prince to form the man-spider Zytera, whom the Rust Brothers still venerate as the prophet of the god Rust. Allegedly, Zytera still rules the holdfast of Vond, from which the monstrosity sends out the unnatural demonic creatures that haunt the Forbidden Lands.

MERIGALL

The name Merigall soars like a vague shadow with yellow eyes across the Forbidden Lands. No one knows who the creature is or even if it is a woman or a man. Maybe there are several Merigalls, for the creature has been spotted in places far and wide from one day to the next. The young are seduced in castles as well as cottages so that the yellow-eyed offspring of Merigall can be found in the most distant regions and among all kin. Some believe the creature to be a demon, others revere it as a god, for the truth is that it is as likely to help those who encounter it as it is to destroy them.

KRASYLLO

At the end of the Alder Wars the demon prince Krasylla stood bereft of a way home to his native world of Churmog. They say that Zytera made a deal with the terrible creature then, giving it sanctuary in Vond in return for guarding Shadowgate Pass against the Aslene that Krasylla himself had ravaged. It is whispered that the human sacrifices that the villages are forced to provide to the Rust Brothers become sustenance for Krasylla and that the demon nowadays lies fat and immobile in the interior of the castle.



VIRELDA BLOODBEEK

The Ailander Raven Sisters are known as a peaceful sisterhood. They discreetly help the villagers with the art of healing and spells for the harvest, but are hunted relentlessly by the servants of the Rust Church. Sister Virelda Bloodbeak is not like other Raven Sisters. With her bushy white hair she is supposed to have started out as one of the goddess Heme's Sisters, but is said to have changed sides after an epiphany. She is said to have slain tens of the Iron Guard and their demons, and some even claim that she has faced Teramalda's burning armor in battle.

ZERTORME

Zertorme is said to be the sorcerer Zygofer's very own son. When the father caught Zertorme snooping about in his demonic grimoires he is supposed to have torn the face off his son, as beautiful as he was skilled in magic, as punishment. Zertorme then fled east to ally with his father's enemies. From the plains, he is said to lead his armies with a masked visage and to have gathered the horse clans from Aslene, who believe him to be the prophet of the volcano god Horn and the future savior of Aslene, under his banner.

ARVIA OF CROMBE

The dwarven princess Arvia stands outside the kinship of the clan, for it is told that she was born after her childless mother fornicated with a stone statue and thereafter promised all of her offspring to the god Huge. They say that Huge marked Arvia for feats of war and sacrifice for his own glory at her birth. Dwarves fear and are terrified of the woman, but respect her all the same as one chosen by the gods.



GRINDBONE

Hunters whisper of Grindbone, the village of slavers and thieves that lies beyond the forest. Many have heard the cry of the village's mill from the river but few have dared to approach. It is said that the millstones grind the souls of the enslaved to dust since slaves have no use for spirituality. Some come to Grindbone through compulsion, others in exultation. There, those captured by the cruel arrive. From there, those sold by the greedy leave.

RAVENHOLE

It is said that the dwarves mined all the blue marble to be found in the Ravenhole quarry and then left the site, at which time the ogres moved in. One thing is certain: every full moon, a din rises from the immense stone cauldron, a noise that causes animals to stampede for miles around. No one in their right mind approaches Ravenhole while the ogres hold their wild feasts.

AMBER'S PEAK

It is whispered that the half-elf Zertorme was one of the first generals of the monster Zygofer, but that he was disgusted by the villain's tyrannical rule and joined the Elven-spring of the eastern Forbidden Lands to fight his former master. When the fleeing horse-people arrived during the wars, Zertorme allowed them to stay on the plains in exchange for their submitting to his commands during the wars, and because of this, the riders hold him in the highest regard.

A melancholy has fallen over Zertorme ever since the Blood Mist lifted. He is said to have retreated to the old ruined fortress of Amber's Peak, where magical flames burn ever stronger. People say that the sorcerous Zertorme is trying to tame fire itself in order to turn it against Zytera, but many villagers are terrified as the number of fires around Amber's Peak have increased. On the few occasions when Zertorme has appeared publicly, he has been wearing a mask that is said to hide a burn that he incurred during his studies of the fire.



EYE OF THE ROSE

The orcs of the Forbidden Lands have sought their place in the world ever since they were sent to war against the humans and were then abandoned by the elves and dwarves. Many of them live bitter lives as miscreants and robbers in the forests, but word is now spreading that an orc leader is holding court in the abandoned elven fortress of the Eye of the Rose. He is said to call himself Emperor Hroka the First and the Greatest. Merchants who've visited the place whisper that the emperor has bought a priceless ruby that he intends to bestow upon his spouse so as to prove his worthiness as emperor.

PELAGIA

The humans are said to have first tread the soil of Ravenland at Pelagia. According to the druids, here the winds of the land are born between the four holy monoliths to be loaded with rain so that the clouds can carry water to the fields and forests. In these days, expectations are high at the temple of Pelagia. The temple is supposed to have been granted another gift, an occurrence that, according to legend, has only happened four times before, a gift that only the worthy can claim. What it contains or how it is claimed is difficult to say.

STONEGARDEN

It is said that the moon, stunned by the beauty of Stonegarden, will stay a while in its course above Stonegarden. At some time in their lives, most dwarves go on a pilgrimage there as the site is considered by all except the Crombe dwarves to be the dwarves' place of origin in the world. This year's Veneration of the Earth in the impregnable fortress of the Iron Hounds looks to be the most extraordinary event in years. It is said that the royal children of Belderan have come to privately discuss their father's succession. Their mute ancestors have risen from the depths, for below Stonegarden lie the forbidden grottoes leading to the elder layers of the world.



STONELOOM MINES

Some say the Meromannian dwarves abandoned the Stoneloom Mines after the Third Alder Wars, but the truth is that they were eaten by something that moved into their home. Rumors whisper that the mad wizard Zygofer cursed his family as they fled his ever more frightening presence. Tainted by a demonic infection, his daughter, Marga, sought shelter among the dwarves in the Stoneloom Mines, where she turned into a monster and consumed her hosts. None have dared enter the caves since.

HAGGLER'S HOUSE

One does not like to mention Haggler's House, the goddess Heme's greatest temple in the Forbidden Lands, for many have lost their loved ones in its domain. Yet people go on pilgrimage at the yearly harvest feast to honor the bloody mother, for those whose idols have not been blessed by the priests can expect failed crops, disease and famine in the coming year. Survival in the harsh west is paid with sacrifice: crops, silver, young blood and the bodies of dead kin. This particular year, the 300th anniversary of the birth of Zytera and the Rust Brothers, is celebrated with an even more lavish sacrifice. It is rumored that the messenger of the gods will visit the temple in person and speak to the people about the country's future.

VOND

The fortress of Vond was once the Crombe dwarves' strongest fortress in Ravenland. The largest part of the fortifications is supposed to have been situated below ground, but was razed by the dwarves when they were driven away. It is rumored that it is the Butcher of Aslene – the demon prince, Krasylla – that now rules over the fortress that guards the pass beneath the shimmering metal slopes of Mount Ora. The ruins of the city of Vond surround the area. The ruins, as well as the fortress, are most likely crawling with Zytera's troops, along with the fanatical worshippers of Rust and demonic creatures, but few who have been brought here have ever returned to testify. The peak of Mount Ora is crowned by Zytera's living palace, where even demons dare not venture. Lightning strikes incessantly between the tower steeples and the dark clouds that circle the area.