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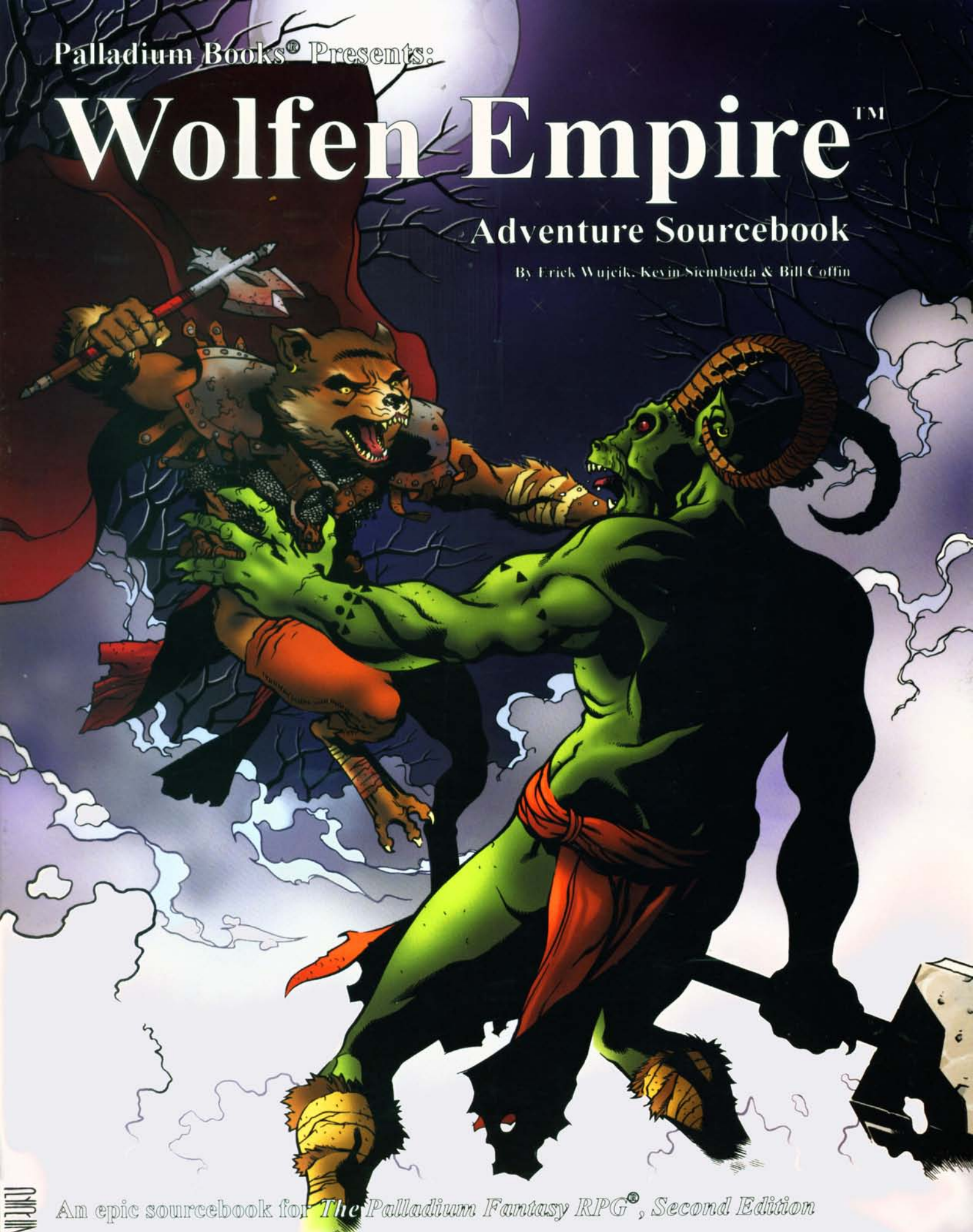
Wolfen Empire™

Adventure Sourcebook

By Erick Wujcik, Kevin Siembieda & Bill Coffin



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To Kevin and Maryann Siembieda, who have made this, and every other Palladium project I've worked on possible.

To Erick Wujcik, Thom Bartold, Alex Marciniszyn, and all of the other writers who made both **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** and **Further Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** such incredibly fun sourcebooks.

And to my wife Allison, for always being there when I need to ramble off a hundred different ideas about a hundred different things.

Kevin Siembieda's Dedication

To the loyal multitude who have waited so long for more sourcebooks for *The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game*. The adventure has only just begun.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2003

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Adventure Sourcebook

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— Kevin Siembieda, 2003

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Bill Coffin's Introduction

Welcome to **Wolfen Empire**! In preparing this book, we have compiled *some* adventures and material from **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** and **"Further" Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** – two of my favorite sourcebooks for the **Palladium Fantasy RPG**. However, though this title may be inspired by, and in places, derivative of the these two earlier titles, the text within provides a substantial amount of brand new material, all with a focus on the Wolfen and their burgeoning Empire. Expanded details on the Wolfen government, military, history and their most important cities, as well as new adventures and 101 adventure ideas can all be found in the book you are holding. Enjoy!

– Bill Coffin, 2002

Erick Wujcik's Introduction & Dedication

The Wolfen Empire has always been one of my favorite places in the Palladium World, and it was a pleasure to spend a bit more time wandering among the Twelve Tribes. Just remember, what you read here is only a small taste of what can be a huge banquet of adventures and encounters.

It's been a stranger job than usual, editing and adding to what has become **The Wolfen Empire Sourcebook**, all the while enjoying the heat and crowds of Hong Kong. Being so far from home, I particularly miss my Thursday Dragonwright Group, so I'll dedicate this to (off the top of my head, in the order they joined) Todd Bake, Don Anderson, Alan Moen, Jim Webster, Paul Deckert, Chuck Knakal, Tony Townson, Kevin Lowry, Michele Spainhour and Phil Brady. And, of course, to my love, Kathryn Kozora.

– Erick Wujcik, 2003

The Great Northern Wilderness

Environment

When the various peoples of the Palladium World think of the Northern Wilderness, they always associate it with one thing: Winter. Brutal, cold, snowy and filled with the promise of starvation, frostbite and death.

With the exception of a few mountain peaks, there is nowhere in the Palladium World where the winters are so very brutal as in the Northern Wilderness. Certain other places come close; the upper reaches of the Northern Mountains get incredibly cold and the Northern Hinterlands have their share of extreme winter weather, too. But in the Northern Wilderness the winter runs longest, the year-round average temperatures are the coldest, and there's more snow.

Looking at the map of the Palladium World, you might think that the coldest region would be *Bizantium*, the northernmost land. Bizantium does have severe winters, with heavy snow and dramatically low temperatures. It's just that compared to the interior of the Northern Wilderness, Bizantium is a tropical resort. The reason has to do with a combination of the latitude, ocean currents, and the prevailing winds across the main continent. All the coastlines, even deep inside the *Dragon's Claw*, are constantly warmed by the ocean.

The north is the coldest land, the wildest land, the cruelest land, and the largest wilderness in the Palladium World. It is also the true frontier of civilization. Virtually anywhere else, especially in all those southern lands, one finds the remnants of lost civilizations, temples of forgotten religions, or the vast tumbled playthings of ancient wizards. True, some ancient relics are located in the Northern Wilderness, but they are the exception, and the vast untouched forest is the rule.

Winter Survival Strategies

Getting through the winter, for most animals, involves adopting one of the following strategies:

1. Hibernation. Basically, the idea is to hide out and avoid the winter altogether. Creatures in this category, like bears, build up a huge fat reserve and then find a comfy place to sleep. They awake only rarely during the winter, occasionally going out for water or a quick look around, and then return to their slumber.

2. Underground or Undersnow Shelter. Since snow is a natural insulator, staying below the snow, or better yet, below the ground, is a good strategy for survival. Most small animals, especially those weighing 10 pounds (4.5 kg) or less, rely on the snow to protect them. Of course, if there's not enough snow, then there's not enough insulation, so life is risky even for those who take shelter underground.

3. Bulk. Here the creature is capable of weathering the cold of winter by virtue of sheer size and weight. Of course, insulation, like fur and fat, helps a lot. And just about all winter creatures have natural protection, but any animal weighing less than about 100 pounds (45 kg) just doesn't have enough internal heat to survive an overnight exposure to the worst of the cold. Therefore, most animals that live above ground during the winter tend to be quite large.

4. Migration. Most birds, and a number of Faerie Folk, simply leave winter behind. Flying far to the south every fall, and back again every spring, they manage to avoid the winter, yet take advantage of the lush forest greenery. A few other animals, such as the caribou and Tuskers, migrate lesser distances, just far enough south to avoid the worst of the winter blasts, usually returning to some favored place of shelter every year.

Winters & Killing Winters

Even the mildest of winters in the Northern Wilderness kill countless creatures, especially those not specifically equipped or those ill prepared (like the poor human settlers and adventurers from the south). Yet there are winters whose severity is exceptional, winters capable of killing even the most perfectly adapted creatures of the snow.

1. Normal Winters. Even a normal winter in the Great Northern Wilderness is a killer. Heavy snows prevent travel, so creatures and communities without sufficient supplies of food or fuel are pretty much doomed. Food is scarce at best, with animals either living off their fat reserves (especially the hibernating bears and squirrels), or eating from their store of hoarded supplies. Those animals who depend on grazing must rely on the few tender sprouts and tree shoots that are available in winter. Finally, there is the cold itself. Without sufficient heat and insulation, any creature will die. Exertion is always risky, since it's important to conserve energy in winter. So the life-and-death decision that comes every day is whether to risk spending energy on hunting, or foraging for fuel or food, or conserving the energy you have to fight the cold.

Part of the reason why it is so difficult, and so deadly, for Southerners is that they only take the short view. They think, "Well, if I'm cold, I can warm myself up by running around in the woods, and while I'm warming myself up I might come across something to eat." That's the wrong attitude, since coping with winter isn't just a matter of keeping warm for one day. That energy you burn in one day of running around takes off vital body fat, fat that you might desperately need a week or a month later when it gets really cold.

2. False Killer Winters or "Coyle Winters." These are winters which are not necessarily severe and have the normal range of cold temperatures, but the snow cover is *inadequate.* Either it is too dry and the snows don't come, or else there are too many unseasonably warm days and the snow cover melts away prematurely.

Wildlife suffers tremendously. First because smaller animals and plants lack the protection and insulation of the snow cover. Also because grazing animals, usually confined by the snow, range widely and destructively. Finally, because the winter carnivores go on a rampage. Wolves, and their canine cousins, plus the big cats, the Mountain Lions and Tigers, will find they can travel easily and track their game over long distances. Without snow to impede them, or to protect their prey, they eat very well.

False Killers are also called "Coyle Winters" because this is when the Coyles are at their bloodthirsty worst. The lack of snow means that the Coyles are unimpeded in their migration through the forest (or across the grasslands), which generally leads to huge groups of them, enlarged beyond their normal band size of one or two hundred, to thousands, and sometimes, tens of thousands. When gathered in such large numbers, the Coyles are given to bold raids and rampages, particularly against settlers in the Disputed Lands and Eastern Territory, but also against rival Coyle clans, their Wolfen cousins and tribes and settlements of every race and species. Thankfully, Coyle Winters are fairly rare, occurring about once every twenty years.

3. True "Killer" Winters. The most brutal weather that the Palladium World is capable of delivering occur during Killer Winters. Completely unpredictable, coming in roughly one out of every nineteen years, the True Killer Winter has gale-force winds, record-breaking low temperatures, and far more snow than is normal, often twice as much. This kind of winter is hard on everybody. Large creatures exposed to the frigid night cold are simply unable to cope and may end up dead of hypothermia by morning. If it gets cold enough, the lakes and rivers may freeze all the way to the bottom (or close to it), wiping out those creatures who depend on the liquid of the depths to survive. Colder yet, and the blanket of snow may not be enough insulation to keep the small burrowing creatures warm. Proof of the True Killer Winter comes in the Silent Spring when the bodies of the dead are finally exposed.

4. Stock Killer Winters or "Blood-Snow" Winters. Extremely rare, this is a short-lived phenomenon that happens only infrequently, roughly once every twelve years, and even then it rarely covers more than a tenth of the Great Northern Wilderness. It starts when a thick snow cover of at least two feet is hit with a sudden, unseasonable warm spell, where the temperature suddenly rises dramatically above freezing. Then comes the rain, occasionally even in the classic summer thunderstorm pattern. Water pelts down from the skies, soaking the top layers of the snow for an inch or two. Then, before a real melt can take place, the freezing weather returns. The result is a hard, icy crust on the surface of the snow. This crust, while capable of supporting the weight of lighter creatures, and even large humanoids with snowshoes, breaks under the weight of heavy, sharp-footed animals.

Moose, deer, buffalo, cattle, and caribou, even sheep and wild boar, all plunge through the crust, and then, pushing for-

ward, they often bloody their legs on the sharp edges of the ice. Countless animals perish, because they are either left helpless for the hungry predators, trapped and left exposed with no way of getting to fresh food, or gradually bleed to death in a vain effort to free themselves.

While Blood-Snow Winters are good for predators, and allow most humanoid races to live through the winter, they are a sign of lean times. The diminished numbers of the prey animals are further cut down by hungry predators until a general famine follows, which can affect a forest region for years to come.

Game Master Notes on Wintry Conditions

During much of the year, the Great Northern Wilderness is a cold, cold place. The winter is what separates the natives from the tourists in that the natives are the ones still alive come the spring thaw, and the tourists are the ones dead and buried in the snow.

When the winter comes (and in the Northern Wilderness, winter often lasts for more than half of the year), the deep snow and ever-present ice transform the entire landscape into a first-class obstacle course for anybody attempting long-distance travel. One's legs sink into the deep snow, slowing movement, while slippery ice makes it tough to gain and keep a secure foothold.

The Physics of Snow and Ice

Since Palladium Books is located in Michigan, where we get plenty of Northern Wilderness style weather, we've all grown up with snow, and have an innate understanding of the physics of making and throwing snowballs. For those readers who might not know, here are four varieties of snow:

1. Wet Snow. Generally, warm snow is wet snow. Yes, the temperature has to be below freezing (32°F or 0°C), but really warm snow has more of a "slushy" feel. Attempting to pack it, roll it, or make a snowball out of it results in a wet mess.

2. Packing Snow. For kids, this is the *gold standard* for winter. The snow is cold enough to "pack" together, so it's easy to pick snow up and form it into shapes (*snowballs!*). Take a small snowball, roll it on the ground, and it will pick up more and more snow. Keep rolling, and you can make balls, or cylinders of huge proportions, which can then be used to make snowmen, snow forts, or other cool snow structures. For snow to pack well, it has to be at least a couple of degrees below freezing, but not too much lower.

3. Dry Snow. As the temperature goes down, so does the amount of liquid water in snow. It's harder to form snowballs, because the snow is dry and doesn't stick together well. Attempting to roll a ball just results in something that immediately falls apart into snow powder. When it snows, the snow coming out of the sky will be dry "flurries."

4. Crunchy Snow. As anyone who has experienced really cold weather knows (eh, Canada?), snow eventually starts to get noisy. This means that ice particles become rigid and scrape to-

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gether. At this temperature, most creatures will seek shelter, since it is quite possible to die from the frigid cold.

The Wolfen Empire

Population of the Region

Estimated Population for the Northern Wilderness & Ophid's Grasslands

7,030,000 Canines (Combined)

5,330,000 Wolfen

1,400,000 Coyles

300,000 Kankoran

2,320,000 Humans

1,000,000 Western Empire Colonists

300,000 Ophid's Grasslands Natives

280,000 Eastern Territory Colonists

250,000 Northern Wilderness Interior Natives

230,000 North Shore Colonists (mostly on along the Inland Sea)

260,000 Bizantium Colonists

3,650,000 Other Races of Note

1,000,000 Orcs

800,000 Goblins

620,000 Centaurs

500,000 Gnomes

270,000 Kobolds

250,000 Giants (Algor, Jotan, Gigantes, Ogres, and Trolls)

130,000 Dwarves

80,000 Bearmen

Note: All numbers are approximates and do change from time to time.

To speak of the Great Northern Wilderness is to speak of the Wolfen Empire. This vast land is dominated by the Wolfen, and it is they who will determine its fate. Predicting the outcome, trying to see into the future as little as two years away, is hopeless. Only in the last 65 years have the Wolfen Tribes united, and their bright vision of a strong and united Northern Wilderness is still untested.

Much of the world still views the Wolfen with fear and mistrust. Mistakenly, they assume the Wolfen to be nothing more than a disorganized rabble of savages who are just as eager to rip out each other's throats as they would do to a human. This is a grossly unfair and inaccurate portrait to paint of this proud, new canine nation. The Wolfen are aggressive and militaristic, yes. And they do have a long and bloody history of warring amongst themselves. But in the last few decades, the Wolfen have undergone a transformation unlike any other society in the world has ever done. In the span of a single lifetime, the Wolfen have drawn themselves up out of the darkness of barbarity, and they have forged a whole new society for themselves. A system of law, of commerce, of education and of military defense. A system where the voice of the many outweighs the voice of the few. A society where the Wolfen might stand united before the world, announce their presence, and one day be recognized by the other Great Nations as one of their own.

Until such time comes, the Wolfen have many obstacles to overcome, not the least of which is quelling any internal dissent and preparing for what looks to be an inevitable war against the *Eastern Territory*. How the Wolfen manage this threat, as well as the other crises facing them, will determine not only the destiny of this fledgling nation but how the other nations of the world might perceive them. For the Wolfen, their respect as a people is as much on the line as their survival as a nation.

Long live the Empire!

One Nation, Many People

The Subjects of the Wolfen Empire

When outsiders think of the Wolfen Empire, they tend to envision an endless sea of Wolfen and nothing else. Such is not the case. The core of the Empire is indeed made up of the various Wolfen Tribes, but of equal importance are the non-Wolfen elements of this patchwork society – the *Affiliate Races* who are of the "Imperial Way" by their own free will, and the *Unsubdued Races* whose indifference or outright hostility to the Empire has made them targeted for eventual assimilation.

What makes an empire is not just domain over a great deal of territory, but the inclusion of many different peoples and/or nations under a single authority. At this moment in history, the Wolfen are succeeding like no other power in the Palladium World. In the last half century, the Wolfen Empire has expanded most aggressively, bringing into its sphere of control anyone and everyone within its substantial reach. However, doing so required a delicate touch, for if the Wolfen wished to control the whole of the Great Northern Wilderness, they would have to contend with the many different peoples who *already* lived there. One way to establish control was to militarily subjugate (i.e. beat into submission) everyone they met. This is not a good way to build an empire for two reasons. *First*, it requires a

great deal of military resources to carry it out, and as strong as the Wolfen are, they do not yet have the kind of wealth to make an army so massive that it can roll over an area the size of the Great Northern Wilderness. *Second*, subjugated people are not happy people. They often hold a grudge against their conquerors, and until those conquerors go away, the possibility for rebellion will always be around, like the persistent heat of a not-quite extinguished fire, ready to flare up again at a moment's notice.

How, then, to essentially conquer the people of the Northern Wilderness without actually conquering them? The answer is simple: *assimilation.* The complete absorption of one culture into the larger Wolfen culture in such a way that both cultures retain a bit of their identity while also becoming part of a new *joint identity.*

For example, say the Senate wishes to expand to the south, where they know several large tribes of Orcs live. Orcs being Orcs, they have no intention of submitting to anybody. They just love fighting too much and have too much respect for their own self-determination. The Wolfen know this, and so they carefully pick one of the Orc states they wish to assimilate, and they initiate an all-out effort to conquer it. They roll in their military and destroy every last bit of resistance until some form of capitulation can be obtained. Phase One is complete, now on to Phase Two.

See, elsewhere in the Palladium World, when one nation conquers another, the victor tends to destroy the vanquished, looting and pillaging and salting the earth before they go away. Even in wars of colonization, where one nation conquers another so they might "steal" their land, the vanquished territory often sees quite a bit of devastation before any kind of rebuilding can be expected. Not so when the Wolfen go to war. Indeed, they will shatter whatever military defenses stand in their way, but they try very hard to minimize any "civilian" causalities. No burning of villages. No salting the earth. No wanton raping and pillaging. The Wolfen shoot for as clean a victory as they can make it, so they might turn to *rebuilding* their vanquished foe right away.

Remember those Orcish states we mentioned before? Well, one of them is now part of the Wolfen Empire. The other Orcish states gear up for war, but before long, their desire to fight fizzles. Why? Because their vanquished brethren, all of a sudden, start living a much better life than they used to. They have a decent food supply, access to markets and transportation, and perhaps even aqueducts to carry water to their settlements. The Wolfen have not only rebuilt their once enemy, but they have improved their land and their towns. Moreover, the vanquished Orcs need only pay taxes to the Wolfen and participate in their military endeavors. That's it! No genocide has been waged, no cultural eradication. The Wolfen let their beaten Orc foes stay as they are, and they simply bring them into the Imperial fold. From the outside, it's starting to look like these beaten Orcs got a pretty good deal. So when Wolfen envoys show up at the doorstep of Orc State #2, asking them if they'd like to join the Empire, maybe the Orcs aren't so ready to fight any more. Maybe, after seeing the trouncing the other Orc State got, and seeing how they actually *profited* from it in the long run, maybe resistance is futile. Maybe, just maybe, the Orcs ought to sign over to the Empire and spare themselves any undue grief. They'll be happier for it, right?

And so it goes. As the Wolfen Empire gets stronger, the peoples it assimilates give in with less and less resistance. Sure, there are always the belligerent few who will never give up without a fight, but by assimilating cultures and peoples rather than conquering them, the Wolfen add the strength of diversity to their ranks as well as devise a way for their Empire to grow without so many growing pains. The end result is what we see today, a burgeoning Empire filled with promise, governed by Wolfen, but serving people from all races and walks of life.

Many humans, especially those from the Eastern Territory and the Western Empire, actually find this method of empire-building frightening. The voluntary nature of it all lends a weird, cult-like aspect to the whole process that is easy to demonize. The Wolfen are "brainwashers," "intimidators," "extortionists." Not really, they're just very good negotiators, experts on getting people from varying viewpoints to settle their differences, live and let live, and work alongside each other. Nowhere else in the world will you find a government that has achieved such a thing with the kind of results that the Wolfen Empire enjoys. It is what truly makes this realm *One Nation, Many People.*

The Twelve Tribes

The Twelve Tribes are the twelve original tribes of Wolfen who created the Constitution upon which the Wolfen state is based. Bitter enemies since the beginning of Wolfen history, there were traditionally thirteen tribes. However, the constant warfare and shifting alliances, always grim and bloody, eventually led to an atrocity so great that even the most barbarous Wolfen were shocked.

The story began some sixty-eight years ago, during the worst "Killer Winter" in recent Northern Wilderness history. Famine, plague and pure killing freezes were cutting into the Wolfen numbers like a knife. All the tribes, fearful of losing even more of their numbers, concealed whatever provisions and cattle they had left, and warfare between the tribes accelerated. Meanwhile, the *Algor Range Huntsmen*, one of the most powerful Wolfen Tribes, decided that they had enough food to last the winter, with a surplus besides. They opened their larder to starving Wolfen strays, to Coyles, and to others who were on the verge of death.

Somewhere the word on the snow trails changed from "The Range Huntsmen are feeding the hungry" to "The Range Huntsmen are building their numbers," and then to "The Range Huntsmen plot to conquer all the Wolfen Tribes." Between rumors and hunger, and the heavy momentum of years of strife, the combined forces of eight of the Thirteen Tribes fell upon the Range Huntsmen.

And when it was over they were no more.

Not only warriors, but elderly and children, and animals and stock, allies and more, all died in the wanton killing of that desperate winter.

It took two years before the Tribes started to confess to each other that they were not as destitute as they had pretended. With each new revelation, the horror of their act grew and grew. As among natural wolves, the Wolfen have a particular set of rules regarding conduct and behavior. There was no excuse for the *slaughter of innocents*; the killing of helpless Wolfen and their offspring.

Nor was there anyone who could be counted as truly guiltless. Members of all tribes had participated in the grim deeds of that winter.

So the Wolfen, being basically an honest people, began a great dialogue among their numbers. They asked themselves those questions that all intelligent races must eventually ponder. Questions about morality and murder, and more importantly, about government and law. Thus, was born the **Constitution of the Twelve Tribes.**

Today, the remaining Twelve Tribes form the core of the Wolfen Empire, its body and soul in terms of manpower, ideology, culture, industry, military, religion, magic, education, you name it. To understand the Wolfen Empire, you must understand its Twelve Tribes, plain and simple. They are: the *Long Knife Tribe*, the *Gold Ear Tribe*, the *Seahawk Tribe*, the *Eastern Arm Tribe*, the *Two Axe Tribe*, the *Dark Step Tribe*, the *Sun Child Tribe*, the *January Magic Tribe*, the *Ice-Eye Tribe*, the *Ursa Rex Tribe*, the *Oak People Tribe*, and the *Iron Claw Tribe.*

Forged in an act of violence, but with the determination that it would never happen again, the Wolfen Empire was born.

I. Long Knife Tribe

Called the "City Wolfen" by others, the Wolfen of this tribe are most often the leaders and bureaucrats of the Wolfen Empire. A lot of Long Knifes are gray furred, but they are otherwise typical in Wolfen looks. Their capital, *Shadowfall*, has become the capitol of all the Wolfen Empire, as well as the largest city. The Long Knifes also have a close relationship with the

Diamond Point Coyles and the humans of the *Havea Kingdom*, the first two Imperial Member States, and the oldest non-Wolfen parties to join the Empire. Many other Tribes call them the "Paper Soldiers" because they are so skilled at getting other people to join the Empire by way of treaty and agreement rather than at the point of a sword.

Long Knife Wolfen tend to be urbane, highly educated, culturally refined, and having the broadest international experience. Long Knifes are encouraged to spend their early adulthood traveling outside of the Wolfen Empire so they might see how other lands work and operate. After all, how can one make deals with other countries if one does not know what makes those countries tick? Not surprisingly, Long Knifes often speak more than one language, and they tend to be ambivalent about religion (if not outright Pragmatists, at least sympathetic to those views). They have learned in their travels to places like the Western Empire and the Land of the South-Winds that religious differences are highly effective at tearing nations apart. Better to let people worship how they please.

Tribal Population: 650,000 Wolfen, 14,000 Coyles, 800 Humans.
Appearance & Garb: Average in size, they are rarely shorter than 8 feet (2.4 m), or taller than 9 (2.7 m – 8 feet +2D6 inches). Long Knifes are dominated by those with grey fur, 65%, and 10% have grey eyes as well. Of all the Wolfen, Long Knifes dress themselves most like humans, wearing layers of garments, so a well-dressed Long Knife might wear an undershirt, over that a loose shirt with ruffled collar and sleeves, a vest over that, then an undercoat, and finally an overcoat and/or cape for outdoors.
Capital: Shadowfall (105,000).
Government: The Long Knifes have adopted their own "Tribal Constitution," so their government has a Tribal Council, a Tribal Senate, a Tribal Assembly (elected at large from the entire Tribe), as well as Tribal Imperia, Magistia, Praetoria, Quatoria and Bureaucria.
Economy: More manufacturing and more guild workshops than anywhere else in the Wolfen Empire, and many have adopted human styles of farming, growing wheat and rice to feed both themselves as well as pigs, cattle and sheep.
Education: The most educated Wolfen in the Empire, they are nearly all (99%) literate in Wolfen, with at least 50% literate in another language as well (Elven 35%, Others 20%). A system of Tribal Schools are open to all, and teach Elven, Dwarven, Gobblely, and Giantese, as well as three Human (Eastern, Northern & Western) languages. The *College of Languages* in Shadowfall has experts in all known tongues, teaches classes in at least nine languages, and has the largest library of foreign (non-Wolfen) books and scrolls in the Wolfen Empire.
Religion: Major Temples include those of the Algor, the Northern Gods, the Church of Light & Dark, the Church of Taut, the Temple of Utu and three different Temples of Dragonwright. Shadowfall is also the center of Pragmatism, where a combination Library & Publishing House hosts discussion groups twice each week.
Military Resources: Although the tribe maintains a substantial Army, numbering around 50,000 Wolfen, they are more of a City Army than anything else. Their main purpose is to defend the capital, and other main cities of the Wolfen Empire. It is unlikely that they would be mobilized to march to any distant front.

II. Seahawk Tribe

Although they call themselves "The Civilized Tribe," other Wolfen often call them "The Soft Ones." They have a slightly different look than other Wolfen, tending toward a shorter height and a more massive body. Occupying the *southern coast*, below the Algor Mountains, where the climate is mild, the rain plentiful, and the soil rich, the Seahawk Wolfen have always been considerably more timid than their wilderness cousins. Unlike most Wolfen, the Seahawks eat relatively little red meat, and enjoy fruit (they plant fruit trees throughout the forest), grains, fish and vegetables. What meat they do eat comes not from large stock animals, but mostly from domesticated pigs, rabbits, chickens, ducks and other birds. Most Seahawks worship the Northern Sea God (Algor), although the tribe itself has no official religion. Their capital, *Seaholm*, sits alongside the southern entrance to a major pass through the Algor Mountains. Very few places along their coastline are suitable for ships (huge cliffs and jagged rocks are almost everywhere), so only recently have the Seahawks become involved in ship building and sailing. Unlike other Wolfen, they don't use Long Boats or Dragon Boats, but instead build deep-hulled ships much like those of Bizantium or the Eastern Kingdoms.

Tribal Population: 290,000 Wolfen, 40,000 Goblins, 18,000 Orcs (larger farms employ Goblins & Orcs as laborers, often for generations).
Appearance & Garb: Shorter than other Wolfen (7 feet + 3D6 inches; 2.2 to 2.5 m) and usually heavier for their size. Eye color: 01-20% Brown, 21-45% Hazel, 46-65% Dark Green, 66-80% Blue-Green, 81-97% Light Green, 98-100% eyes of two different colors; roll again twice, first for the right eye, and then for the left eye. Clothing tends to be simple, loose, with brightly colored scarves over brown, gray or black garments.
Capital: Seaholm (28,000).
Government: Well organized for at least two hundred years, the whole Tribe is divided into 112 *Boroughs* (of all the Tribes, only the Seahawks have well-defined internal borders), each of which has its own Borough Caucus, with Committees and Sub-Committees that handle all the Tribal affairs. Each Borough elects members to the Tribal Assembly once every four years.
Economy: Trade guilds dominate the production of metal goods, pottery, clothing, and leather goods (including armor), as well as objects of art (the best Wolfen painters and sculptors are Seahawks), but most citizens are family farmers, and most family farms have over 100 workers, tending orchards, fields, gardens and pig pens.
Education: Very high literacy (over 85%), but only a very few learn any other languages. Most talented youngsters are apprenticed to a guild, but the rest just learn from educated relatives.
Religion: Over a dozen temples to the Northern Sea God (Algor), plus a Temple of Utu and a Church of Light & Dark, both in Seaholm.
Military Resources: Each Borough has a Militia, but training is limited, and the arms and equipment are mostly obsolete. The Seahawk Tribe could muster an army of 25,000, but it would take at least a month. Those with military talents, or just a hunger for adventure, usually join the Imperial Army.

III. Gold Ear Tribe

Their name comes from the gold earrings worn by virtually every member of the tribe. They are often called the "Rich Wolfen" or "Golden Wolfen" by others, because of the gold nuggets and occasional gold mines found in their territory. Coincidentally, they also tend toward a "tan" or "yellow" or "off-white" colored fur. This tribe has the closest relationship with the *Algor Mountain Kobolds*, from whom they have learned many of the secrets of mining and metal working. Their rugged land, although relatively barren, probably has the richest mineral wealth in the entire Palladium World. The Tribe's capital city, *Goldstar*, is the mining center of the Empire, providing the *Imperial Mint* in Shadowfall with over 80% of the raw gold, silver and copper it needs to produce coinage. Ever mindful of the future, the Gold Ears know their mines will one day run out, so they have started sinking shafts elsewhere in their territory to get a sense of what other mineral riches they might have to tap.

Tribal Population: 320,000 Wolfen, 7,000 Kobolds, 2000 others.
Appearance & Garb: Tend to be tall and lean, and 80% have tan-colored fur. Leather makes up almost all of their clothing, and just about everyone wears a leather harness that's handy for carrying tools, weapons or other items.
Capital: Goldstar (55,000).
Government: Until recently, the Gold Ears were organized into 27 Totems (such as Beaver, Snake, Raven, etc.), each with their own Councils and Chiefs. Now the tribe has only a Central Tribal Council, with four Chiefs (Chief of Lore, Chief of Earth, Chief of Faith and Chief of Battles), all elected at large, once every four years.
Economy: Mostly mining and ore processing, but banking is becoming more and more important. The "Autumn Hunt" is still the most important event of the year, when all Gold Ears head out to collect enough meat for the winter.
Education: High literacy (over 60%), with teachers and schools in most communities. A mining college in Goldstar also teaches engineering and many of the sciences.
Religion: Most Tribal members are religious, but there is no dominant religion. The Church of Light & Dark has temples throughout the area, and there are rumors of a secret cult that worships the Algor Frost Giants.
Military Resources: Each mining community has a well-trained militia, but the old Gold Ear Tribal Horde, once one of the most powerful Wolfen armies, isn't much more than a bunch of old veterans who get together for feasts. On the other hand, about 25% of all the officers in the Imperial Army are Gold Ears.

IV. Eastern Arm Tribe

One of the few Wolfen Tribes with an official religion, the Eastern Arms (also known as the *Eastern Coast* tribe) are obsessed with the Church of Taut (Set and Anubis). Their capital, *Longwater*, is little more than a trading village set at the headwaters of Mother River. They are the most primitive of the Wolfen, and they are definitely the tribe with the least involvement in the Wolfen Empire. The Eastern Arm was the last Tribe to ratify the Imperial Constitution, and many of the other Tribes view them with suspicion. To such attitudes, the Eastern Arms merely scoff. The general view among the Eastern Arm is that the Wolfen Empire will fall some day. The important thing is to be a member of a Tribe, because there will always be a Tribe.

Tribal Population: 190,000 Wolfen and 20,000 Coyles.
Appearance & Garb: Run the gamut of size and appearance, but most (85%) have very short, very thick fur; dark brown in summer, light gray in winter. Mostly they wear furs, but with the skin of the creature's head and limbs still attached. Ceremonial spears, elaborately decorated and carved, often with small "fetish" bags (little leather sacks, created by a Shaman or a Witch, containing bones, herbs, pebbles, etc.) tied around the neck, are carried at all times.
Capital: Longwater (1,700).
Government: Within the Eastern Arm there are 48 Clans, and in each Clan there are at least 20 Totems. Organization depends on strong leaders, and in the past the Eastern Arm have appointed War Chiefs with near-total power. In defiance of Imperial Law, there are still frequent battles between Clans, the latest resulting in over 200 dead.
Economy: Hunting, almost exclusively. Almost every other trade and business, including taverns and inns, are run by Wolfen from outside the Eastern Arm Tribe.
Education: Literacy is rare (less than 5%), and those who wish to study any kind of academic subject must usually leave to find schools or teachers elsewhere.
Religion: The Church of Taut, and the worship of Set and Anubis, is the official religion of the Eastern Arm. While religious persecution is illegal under the Imperial Constitution, visitors to the Eastern Arm are advised to participate in all public ceremonies.
Military Resources: The Tribe maintains its traditional military structure (there is always at least one War Chief), and an army of 2,000. However, each Clan has its own military. If all the Eastern Arm were united, say, in the face of outright invasion, they could quickly field over 36,000 Wolfen and 4000 Coyles.

V. Two Axe Tribe

Called the "Pirate Wolfen" by humans and others, the Two Axe are the foremost users of Wolfen Longboats and the new form of their ships, called *Dragonboats*. While they tend toward the worship of the Northern Sea God (Algor), they are not a particularly religious people. Of their two great cities, the capital, *Oakhill*, is the site of their main religious and sacred relics. *Whitewater*, their commercial center, lies alongside a deepwater section of Mother River (suitable for docking ocean-going ships), and is much larger and more active.

Tribal Population: 220,000 Wolfen, 7,000 Coyles, and 2,000 Kankoran.
Appearance & Garb: On the large size for Wolfen (8 feet, plus 4D6 inches; 2.5 to 3.1 m), with a 40% chance of having red fur, and a 25% chance of having green eyes. An insulting nickname for Two Axe Wolfen is "Split Lip," which comes from a genetic deformity where cubs are born with their upper lip split in two (6% chance for Two Axe Wolfen, only 1% chance for all others). Infant Wolfen born with this problem must have their upper lip sewn together, a procedure that leaves them with a

perpetual snarl and a certain stiffness of expression. Kilts are standard wear below the waist for both genders. Traditionally, Two Axe Wolfen would drape themselves in a long, wide strip of fabric, wrapping it loose in summer and tight in winter. However, tailored shirts, jackets and coats are becoming more and more common.

Capitols: Oakhill (9,000) and Whitewater (23,000).

Government: The Two Axe are divided into four sub-Tribes; the South River Runners, the Box Turtles, the Stiff Fur and the White Water (probably they were all separate tribes in the distant past), and each sub-Tribe sends five Legates to the yearly Tribal Congress.

Economy: Trade, boat construction, hunting, trapping, logging, and whatever else is profitable (including pirate raids on human vessels and settlements along the coast of the Eastern Territory). Most Two Axe are ambitious and always willing to start up a new business.

Education: High literacy (over 80%), with the Tribe sponsoring official schools in every community of 100 or more. Other than Wolfen literacy, they teach Elven, Human (Eastern) and practical mathematics (including accounting).

Religion: Oakhill has the main Temple of the Northern Sea God, an ancient place with dozens of priceless relics, and a huge stained glass window said to be over 700 years old.

Military Resources: Their "army" is actually the closest thing that the Wolfen Empire has to an official navy. The Tribe maintains most of the Empire's Longboats and Dragonboats. The crews are usually members of either the *Two Axe* or *Ice-Eye Tribes*. All Two Axe learn to fight on both land and on the water, all are excellent swimmers, and the "Two Axe" of their name is accurate in that they learn to fight with double axes. Throwing Axe competitions are held at least twice a year in every Two Axe community.

VI. Dark Step Tribe

They literally are the darkest of the Wolfen peoples, often having fur that borders on pure black and rarely having a shade lighter than dark brown. Most of the *Wolfen Druids* either come from the Dark Step Tribe, or are sent to this region for training. The Tribe is also called the "Kankoran Wolfen" by others because of their close relationship with the wilderness and wild animals. Their capital, *Darkcove*, is a quiet community situated alongside Clear Lake. The city, along with the entire Dark Step region, is a popular religious and vacation retreat for the whole Wolfen Empire.

Tribal Population: 78,000 Wolfen, 6,000 Kankoran, 1,000 Bearmen.

Appearance & Garb: Average in size, but more muscular, and there is 35% chance of any Dark Step Wolfen being totally black, with black eyes. Clothing is minimal, and they prefer to be naked while in the forest.

Capitols: Darkcove (5,000).

Government: A very close-knit Tribe, run by a Council of Eight Chiefs, each serving an eight-year term of office, but with one up for election every year. To be elected, a potential Chief will have to visit each and every Dark Step community, organizing supporters throughout the Tribe.

Economy: Mostly hunting and gathering, with almost no industry, and relatively few businesses (inns and taverns are still rare outside of Darkcove and the two main foot pathways).

Education: High literacy (over 75%). Most Dark Step young are taught by Druids.

Religion: The center of the Druids of the Great Northern Wilderness, most Dark Step have a deep reverence for Druids, their beliefs, and their customs. Still, ancient Temples to the Northern Gods can be found throughout Dark Step territory, and there are small shrines to many other gods in and around Darkcove.

Military Resources: One of the most active of the Wolfen Tribal Armies, their Maniples have a large proportion of Wolfen Rangers and Druids, making them useful as scouts and guides throughout the Northern Wilderness. Each of the Legions to the south and west is assigned a Dark Step Maniple. They operate separately from the standard military command, reporting only to the Legatia Imperia.

VII. Sun Child Tribe

The Sun Children are also known as the "Wolfen Ranchers," because they produce much of the Empire's meat and leather from their vast herds of cattle, buffalo, and other grazing animals. Their city, *Tolosanya*, is often called "Cow City" by other Wolfen, and is mostly known for the stench of its cattle yards and slaughterhouses. Aside from cattle, the Sun Children are also known for their fascination with religion. Every year, the Sun Children hold a week long celebration of the summer solstice to which the whole of the Empire is invited. The party can best be compared in real-world terms to the New Orleans Mardi Gras in size, scope and intensity of revelry. The Sun Children might be considered a little weird and flaky throughout the rest of the year, but during the Summer Celebration, this Tribe has everyone else beat when it comes to throwing a party. They are also the only Wolfen who have extensive dog ownership, including their own breed, the *Kiffi Cattle Dog*.

Tribal Population: 810,000 Wolfen, 5,000 Coyles, and 2,000 Centaurs.

Appearance & Garb: Although they have the same general physique and coloring of common Wolfen, they are instantly recognizable by their dress and decoration. They delight in covering their bodies with paint, tattoos, brands, and dyes, and complement their colorfully patterned "fur jobs" with outlandishly colored clothing and ornaments. Even in the coldest winter, they insist on wearing the latest "styles," which might consist only of bead strings or feathered vests.

Capital: Tolosanya (75,000).

Government: A constantly shifting organization, the Sun Children are organized into over 600 Clans, but no outsider can really tell how the organization works. First, males belong to male Clans, and females belong to female Clans. Second, the offspring of any Wolfen female belongs to either the Mother's Mother's Clan, if female, or the Mother's Father's Clan, if male. Since no one is allowed to mate with anyone from their parents' Clans, it means a family of four, with a mother, a father, a son and a daughter, will likely belong to four different Clans. To add to the confusion, all the cattle are owned by the Clans, not by any individual. In spite of these bizarre relationships, the Sun Children are among the most advanced Tribes of Wolfen, incredibly well organized, generally well educated, and make excellent soldiers.

Economy: Cattle, buffalo, boar, sheep and goats, as well as leather processing and manufactured leather goods. The Sun Children also are the largest producers of alcoholic beverages, making several kinds of beer and ale (*Tolosanya Cream Ale* is popular all over the Wolfen Empire, and *Clan Kelsu Beer* is even exported to Bizantium and the Western Empire), as well as a thick *Barley Brandy;* one of the strongest intoxicants available in the north.

Education: High literacy (over 70%), and an educational system that requires each Clan to provide teachers to each young Clan member.

Religion: Among the hundred or so churches, shrines and temples on their lands, they are major worshipers of the Church of Taut, Fenry Devil Worship, Dragonwright, and the Northern Gods.

Military Resources: Each Clan (both male and female) holds extensive training exercises several times each year. While the Sun Children are trained in weapons and combat, they really excel at running. Races from sprints to marathons are held pretty much continuously, often over very difficult terrain, and in all kinds of weather. Not only are the Sun Children the best message runners in the Wolfen Empire, they can also move large numbers of troops across vast stretches of the country. Several of the female Clans specialize in building huge *trebuchet,* towering machines similar to catapults with a throwing arm and a counterweight, capable of tossing the carcass of a cow, or a 1,000 pound (450 kg) boulder up to a mile (1.6 km) away (construction takes 1D4 days and a good supply of timber). At any given time the Sun Children can field an army of 40,000, and they can double that to 80,000 in two weeks, and increase it to 100,000 within a month, but the latter only if there is a dire emergency.

Kiffi/Wolfen Cattle Dogs

Wolfen aren't generally known as dog lovers, although occasionally, female Wolfen might keep a mastiff, wolfhound or actual wolf as a pet lapdog. The Sun Children are the exception to the rule. Bred for at least the last three hundred years, "Kiffi" are fast, agile, but most of all, they are smart. They have an instinct for herding, and a single Kiffi can keep 100 long-horn cattle on the move in a tight formation.

Size: Body: 4-5 feet (1.2 to 1.5 m) long, tail 24-36 inches (0.6 to 0.9 m).

Weight: 75-100 pounds (34 to 45 kg).

A.R.: Not applicable. **Hit Points:** 3D6+6. **S.D.C.:** 2D6+20. **P.P.E.:** 3D6.

Attacks Per Melee: 3.

Damage: Bite does 2D6 points of damage, claws do one point of damage.

Bonuses: +4 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to dodge, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 30 feet (9 m), Prowl 45%, Track (by smell) 80%, Swim 65%, can leap 4 feet (1.2 m) high and 8 feet (2.4 m) long, and like most canines, can perform a leaping pounce.

Speed: 50 (35 mph/56 km), maximum speed is 55 (37.5 mph/60 km).

Average Life Span: 10-15 years.

Value: Kiffi pups are usually given away as presents, but a particularly valuable dog, after training, might be worth as much as 20 or 30 head of cattle. Puppies sold in the Western Empire are seen as an exotic breed and fetch 500-1,000 gold.

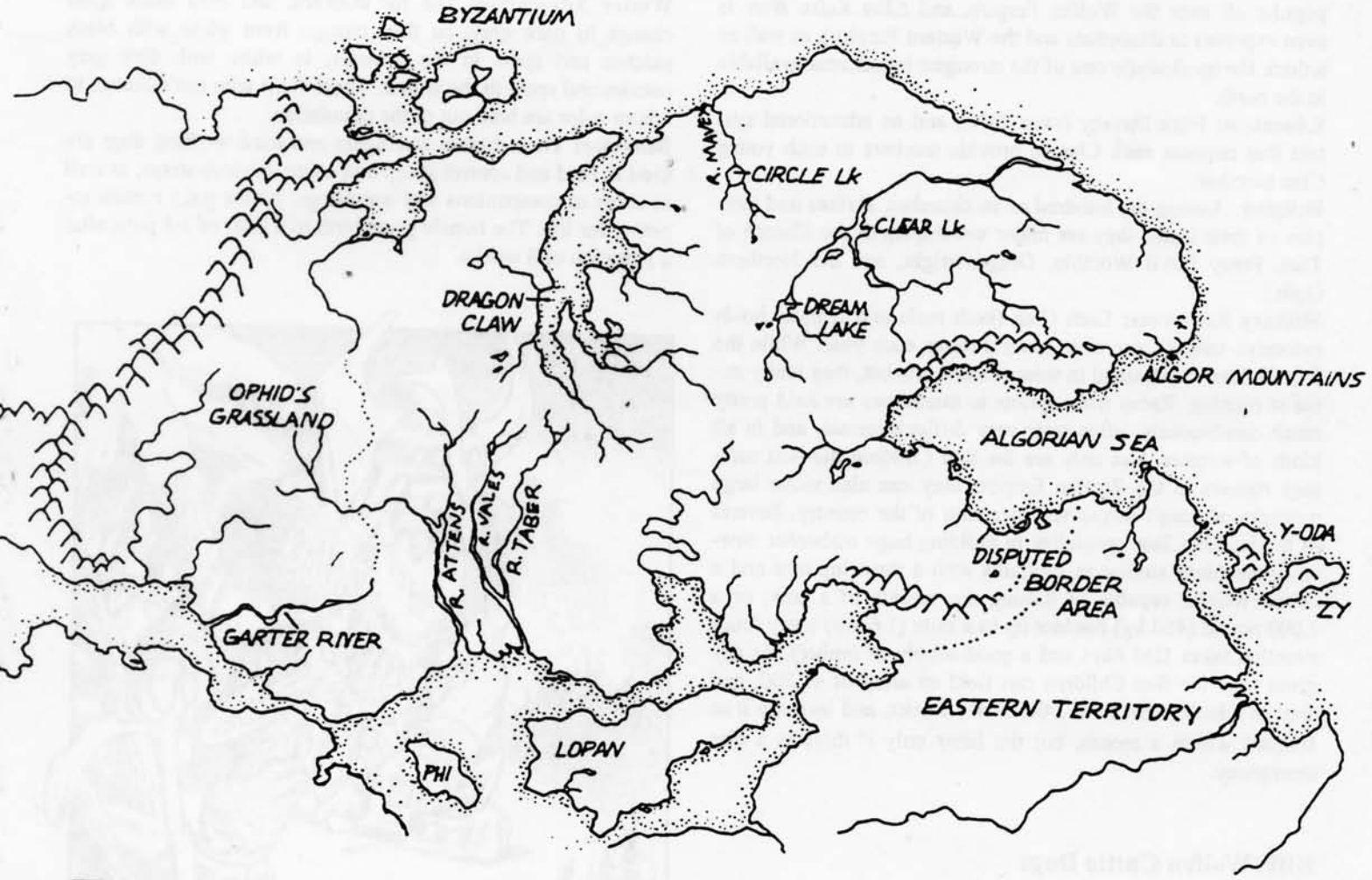
Winter Adaptation: The fur thickens, and their black spots change to dark grey, so they change from white with black patches and spots in the summer, to white with dark grey patches and spots in the winter. Those Kiffi who can't change to winter color are bred out of the population.

Behavior: These highly intelligent and hard working dogs are used to herd and control sheep and cattle, retrieve strays, as well as serve as companions and watchdogs. Mated pairs remain together for life. The female gives birth to a litter of 3-8 pups after a gestation of 8 weeks.

VIII. January Magic Tribe

Located adjacent to the January Magic territory are six Dwarven kingdoms. Politically, none of the Dwarven communities have enough power or position to qualify for any kind of statehood in the Wolfen Empire. However, the January Magic Tribe has opened its own membership up to individual Dwarves. At this point, over 800 Dwarves are "official" Wolfen citizens thanks to their connections through the January Magic Tribe, and there is the possibility that the number of citizens could triple within the next two or three years. In addition to a solid relationship with the Dwarves, the January Magic Tribe also has a good relationship with the human Member State known as the

the Northern Wilderness



Map of the known world

Kingdom of Havea. Although the January Magic have an official capital, *Atwater*, their real center of operations is the Havean capital of *Avramstown.*

Tribal Population: 100,000 Wolfen, 1,000 Kankoran, 800 Dwarves.

Appearance & Garb: On the short side, for Wolfen (7 feet + 3D6 inches; 2.2 to 2.5 m). Most January Magic Wolfen have badger-like streaks of light fur on the sides of their faces. Long ago there was one Wolfen family among the January Magic Tribe who somehow discovered the secret of making coppery thread; a shining thread delicate enough for embroidery and even for weaving cloth. This isn't as simple as it sounds, since each thread is a complex twine of several strands of flax, combined with one or more strands of fine metal wire. The thin wire was an alloy made from copper and other metals. From that day, hundreds of years ago, the clothing, belts, scarves and banners of the January Magic have taken on a metallic gleam. Currently there are dozens of different colors and shades of metal thread available, including gold, silver, bronze, the traditional copper, and even black, red and white metal (while simulating the look of these God-Dragon Blood metals – see Dragons & Gods – they are not actually made of those magical substances).

Capitols: Atwater (13,000).

Government: While every January Magic Wolfen is a member of one of the 16 Clans, those organizations only exist for ceremonial purposes. The real political power rests with the Guild Houses who control all the individual industries (thread-making, weaving, furriers, mining, meat processing, and even farming and ranching), and the Guild Council chooses representatives to the Imperial positions (Council of the Twelve, Senate and Assembly). Competition between January Magic Wolfen is almost never violent, but there are frequent squabbles between the guilds about which is entitled to produce various products.

Economy: Metal thread, woven fabric, ribbons and clothing are the chief exports, but the January Magic are also known for producing exceptional preserved foods, including dry sausage (their *pepper sausage* is an expensive treat found everywhere in the Wolfen Empire, and sold in taverns all over the Palladium World, particularly in the Eastern Territory and Timiro), as well as various types of jerky, pemican and other kinds of dried, salted, spiced or preserved strips of meat. Herds of wild animals, especially deer, elk and moose, are carefully monitored, so all hunters must have licenses and are limited to a yearly quota.

Education: High literacy (over 85%). Each child is expected to undergo at least six years at Guild or Clan Schools.

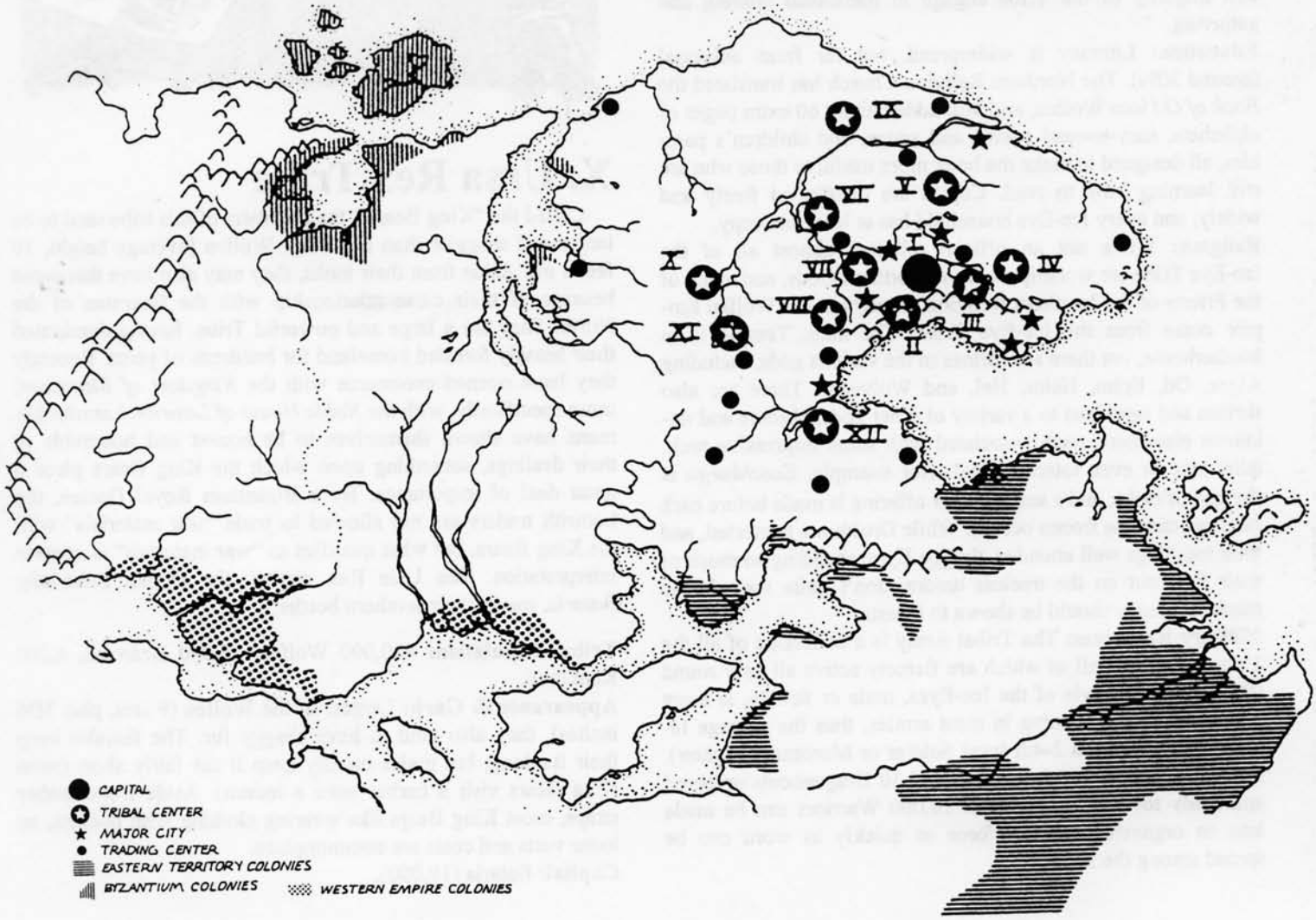
Religion: There are persistent rumors that the Sect of the Spider God (Tark) is worshiped secretly by some January Magic Wolfen. Other common religions of this region are the Northern Religion and Church of Light and Dark (the latter especially among the Dwarves & Humans).

Military Resources: Once a strong military force, almost all of the War Chiefs of the January Magic were integrated into the Imperial Army. What they have left is really not much more than a Territorial Guardian Department with only 40 Sheriffs, and around 600 Deputies. All the larger communities have Volunteer Militia, but they are only equipped for defense. Even in the face of an emergency, the January Magic would have trouble fielding an army of 5,000.

IX. Ice-Eye Tribe

Cold, barren, and cold, is the way to describe the lands of the Ice-Eyes. They are unusual among Wolfen in that a large number of them have blue eyes, and perhaps one out of every twenty has white fur, even in summer. According to the legends, the leaders of the tribe were once all a line of 'blue-eyed, white-furred Wolfen.

One of the smallest of the tribes in numbers, the Ice-Eyes control a vast region. All the larger groups tend to migrate south in the winter, with only a few small families staying behind in well-stocked strongholds to survive the winter. In winter, these holdouts hunt seal and whale along the northern shores, taking advantage of the pack ice that accumulates there.



Their capital, *Motherhome*, is as much a center for the Two Axe Tribe as it is for the Ice-Eyes. It is here that most of the important craftsmen and builders of the region dwell. Likewise, Motherhome is where most of the Ice-Eyes' Longboats and Dragonboats are constructed.

Tribal Population: 65,000 Wolfen, 1,000 Kankoran and 600 Bearmen.

Appearance & Garb: They have a reputation for being the Wolfen with the greatest endurance, but they are only slightly taller than average (around nine and a half feet/2.8 m). All have bright white fur in winter, but only a 5% chance of that being their summer color. Half are born with blue eyes. Clothing is made from patches of furs sewn together, worn with the fur on the inside at night or in winter, and inside out, with the fur on the outside, in summer or when it's warm. Inside, even in a winter igloo, they always go without clothes, wearing only a belt or two and a loincloth.

Capital: Motherhome (2,000-3000 in summer, over 10,000 in winter).

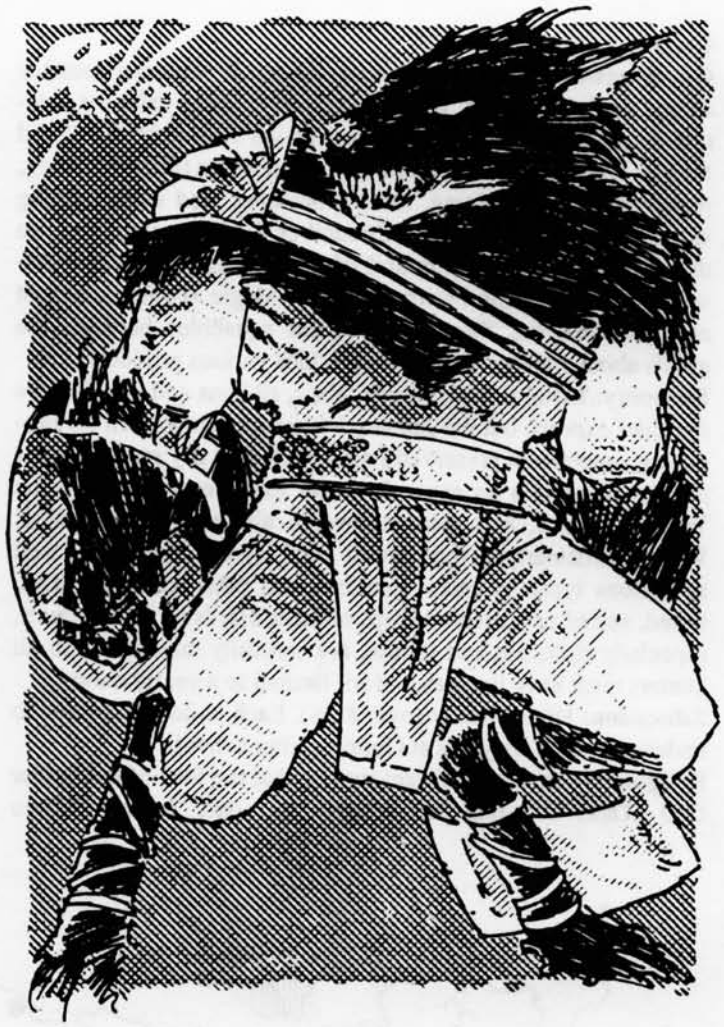
Government: Each Ice-Eye is part of a *Matrilineal Line*, a member of their mother's *Name-Group* and their father's *Totem* ("My name is Kragher, of the Genshigh line, and my Totem is the Sea Otter"). Government, whether local or Imperial, is considered "Women's Work," and even the Ice-Eye on the Wolfen's Empire's Council of the Twelve is a female.

Economy: While a few Ice-Eyes are long-distance traders, the vast majority of the Tribe engage in traditional hunting and gathering.

Education: Literacy is widespread, but far from universal (around 30%). The Northern Religion Church has translated the *Book of Od* into Wolfen, and also added about 60 extra pages of alphabets, easy-to-read poems and songs, and children's parables, all designed to make the book more useful to those who are still learning how to read. Copies are distributed freely and widely, and every Ice-Eye household has at least one copy.

Religion: While not an official religion, almost all of the Ice-Eye Tribe are worshipers of the Northern Gods, and many of the Priests of the Northern Religion throughout the Wolfen Empire come from the Ice-Eye Tribe. The main Temple is in Motherhome, but there are shrines to the various gods, including Algor, Od, Epim, Heim, Hel, and Wolvenar. There are also shrines and sacrifices to a variety of other gods, obscure and unknown elsewhere, each associated with some impressive rock, quiet lake or even totem animals (for example, *Eaechkorgh* is the god of tusks, and a small prayer offering is made before each hunt out onto the frozen ocean). While Druids are respected, and their teachings well attended, the Ice-Eyes, spending so much of their time out on the treeless tundra, don't quite see why so much reverence should be shown to forests.

Military Resources: The Tribal Army is a collection of all the Totem Warriors, all of which are fiercely active all year round (the average lifestyle of the Ice-Eyes, male or female, is more severe than basic training in most armies, thus the average female is considered a 2-4th level Soldier or Mercenary Fighter). There are at least 100 Longboats and 30 Dragonboats prepared and ready for war, and at least 16,000 Warriors can be made into an organized military force as quickly as word can be spread among the Tribe.



X. Ursa Rex Tribe

Called the "King Bears," the members of this tribe tend to be larger and shaggier than any other Wolfen (average height, 10 feet/3 m). Aside from their looks, they may also have this name because of their close relationship with the Bearmen of the North. They are a large and powerful Tribe, having dominated their heavily forested homeland for hundreds of years. Recently they have opened commerce with the *Kingdom of Bizantium*; more specifically, with the *Noble House of Lamrith*. Lamrith humans have shown themselves to be honest and honorable in their dealings, something upon which the King Bears place a great deal of importance. By a Bizantium Royal Decree, the Lamrith traders are not allowed to trade "war materials" with the King Bears, but what qualifies as "war materials" is open to interpretation. The Ursa Rex capital, the Dream Lake city *Bataria*, marks their southern border.

Tribal Population: 420,000 Wolfen, 15,000 Bearmen, 4,000 Kankoran.

Appearance & Garb: Largest of the Wolfen (9 feet, plus 3D6 inches), they also tend to have shaggy fur. The females keep their fur long, but males usually keep it cut fairly short (most King Bears visit a barber once a month). Aside from leather straps, most King Bears like wearing clothing with pockets, so loose vests and coats are commonplace.

Capital: Bataria (19,000).

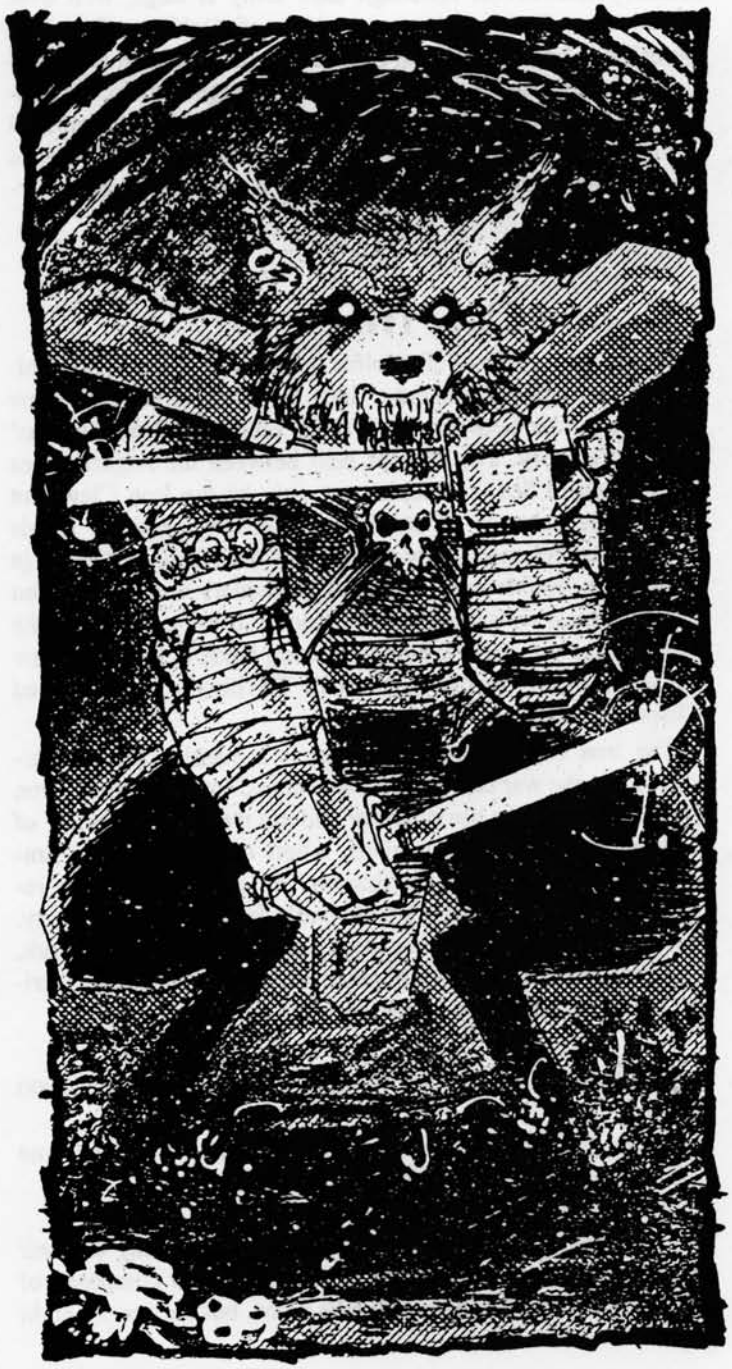
Government: Fifteen Clans still hold yearly meetings, each sending three representatives to the Ursa Rex Tribal Council in Bataria.
Economy: Trade, timber/logging, woodworking, fishing, hunting, trapping, the fur trade, some cattle, boat repairs (some building), and whatever else is profitable.
Education: Good literacy level (over 50%), with the Clans sponsoring formal schooling and trade school training. Other than Wolfen literacy, they teach Elven, Human (Northern) and basic mathematics.
Religion: The tribe officially worships the gods of the Northern Religion, but also relies heavily on Druids for spiritual guidance.
Military Resources: The King Bear Tribal Army is large enough, and well organized enough, to be considered a National Army in its own right. With a complex mix of assignments, the King Bear Army has to be flexible enough to provide border protection, security in the vast Tribal lands, and major support to the Imperial Army. Their military tradition stretches back over three hundred years and the King Bears operate their own military college in Bataria, which produces fine officers for the entire Wolfen Empire.

XI. Oak People Tribe

The Oak People are just one of *several dozen* Wolfen Tribes active in this vast region of the Empire. These other Tribes range all the way north around the western edge of the Dragon's Claw, all the way west to Ophid's Grasslands, and all the way south to the Inland Sea. However, until these other Wolfen can organize themselves politically, and petition for membership in the Wolfen Empire, they will continue to be represented by the Oak People, who are the single largest Tribe in the region, and the only one with a sense of unity and organization. The Oak People's capital is *Nasfert*, a large trading center located at the western headwaters of Mother River. Traditionally, the Oak People are merchants and traders. They have trade routes and paths leading throughout the Northern Wilderness, and they are renowned as the best guides and scouts available. They also are responsible for the treaties between the Wolfen and the Kingdom of Bizantium. Members of the Bizantium *Noble House of Yinxner* are trained by the Oak People in the Wolfen language, both spoken and written, and trade representatives annually.

Ophid's Grasslands & Dragon's Claw: Technically, the Oak People Tribe administers the vast western part of the Great Northern Wilderness. In reality, the reach of the Wolfen Empire in these places is weak, and there are hundreds of Wolfen Tribes who would be amazed to learn they are considered part of the Wolfen Empire. In Ophid's Grasslands, hordes of horse barbarian Coyles, Orcs, and Humans still fight vast wars, especially with the Centaur Tribes, without a thought for the far-off Wolfen. Several Dragon's Claw Wolfen Tribes, especially those to the west, dream of establishing a new nation that might deal equally with the Wolfen Empire and the Island Kingdom of Bizantium, and have no desire to fight the distant Eastern Territory. For now, the Imperial Senate is focusing on sending teachers and Druids, hoping to educate as many of their kin as possible, and spreading the ideals of the Wolfen Constitution.

Tribal Population: 600,000 Wolfen, 9,000 Bearmen, 1,000 Kankoran and 12,000 others.
Appearance & Garb: Many Oak People have fur of two or more different colors (usually black & brown, or brown & tan), and most turn white in winter. Clothing is either tribal with beaded vests and fringed jackets or the loose-fitting, practical leathers of wilderness scouts. This is one of the few places where Wolfen still wear their coins on strings or cords.
Capital: Nasfert (16,000).
Government: Those of the historical Oak People are organized into 48 Bloodlines, each with around 5,000 members, and each Bloodline has their own set of leaders, as well as traditional summer and winter campgrounds. Since the original Oak People are now outnumbered by those who have been "adopted" from other tribes, there is now a huge Tribal Council that meets all year round, with over 700 members.



Economy: Very much a frontier economy, the people in the Oak People area make money from logging, furs, and some mining (mostly copper and coal). There are also 17 Bloodlines who have been merchants and tradesmen for at least 100 years, and still maintain trade routes through the vast wilderness that run through deer trails, valleys, and along narrow rivers on canoes. Fewer than 5% of the Oak People have established farms or ranches, with the vast majority living as their ancestors, by migratory hunting and gathering.
Education: They have an ambitious literacy program, but only about 30% of the Oak People can read. Education for the young depends on the individual community, with only Nasfert having an organized school system (hundreds of Wolfen young are sent to Nasfert for schooling every year).
Religion: Dragonwright and the worship of the Dragon-Gods is widespread, while small Temples to the Northern Gods can be found just about everywhere.
Military Resources: Although their army is huge, well over 70,000 (that includes large numbers of Goblins, Orcs and Ogres), it is barely sufficient for handling the frequent emergencies and tribal wars that break out in their huge domain. As a result, the Oak People Army is almost never called for Imperial service, and, indeed, it is rare when at least two Imperial Armies aren't assigned to peace-keeping duties in the Oak People's territory.

XII. Iron Claw Tribe

The most *warlike* of all Wolfen are the Iron Claw. This is almost a geographical mandate, since the lands of the Iron Claw form the border between the Wolfen Empire and the humans' Eastern Territory. The strip of land between the Algorian Sea and the Inland Sea is occupied not only by the Iron Claw, but also by the colonies of the Eastern Territory, and, as if this weren't conflict enough, by the *Silver Coin Horde of Coyles* (a particularly troublesome bunch of marauders that the Wolfen Empire spends considerable effort trying to bring back into the fold). Worse yet, many of the traditional lands of the Iron Claw are actually now inside the Eastern Territory – the so-called "Disputed Lands."

The Iron Claw capital, *Ironhold*, is a massive fortress surrounded by the war camps of the assembled Imperial Army. Iron Claw Wolfen prefer heavy armor and are trained in a variety of weapons, including siege engines. Where others among the Empire consider a war with the Eastern Territory as something remote, to the Iron Claw it is a daily battle for survival and liberty. For this reason, the Iron Claw also maintain a huge spy network, sending agents of Wolfen and other races into the Eastern Territory, and throughout the human world.

Tribal Population: 470,000 Wolfen, 75,000 Coyles, and 8,000 others.
Appearance & Garb: Armor is worn so often it has become part of standard dress, and even fashionable.
Capital: Ironhold (45,000).
Government: The Iron Claw have put aside virtually all their old Tribal government in favor of a ruling *Junta* composed of sixteen Warlords. Elections still take place, but only every eight years.
Economy: Production of weapons, from daggers to siege engines, as well as armor and military structures, takes up most of the efforts of the Iron Claw. Still, most Iron Claw are farmers, herders, or hunters, who tend to their jobs with weapons and armor close at hand, waiting for the next invasion or military maneuver.
Education: High literacy (over 85%), with a huge emphasis on teaching. All Iron Claw young are expected to learn something of tactics & strategy, and military history, as well as the languages of their potential allies (Gobblely) and long-time enemies (Human: Eastern).
Religion: Religious worship among the Iron Claw is fierce and devout, with the majority of the Tribe being loyal to the Church of Taut, and a substantial minority involved in Fenry Devil Worship.
Military Resources: This is the largest and most heavily armored army in the Wolfen Empire. With over 100,000 Wolfen warriors, it is even larger than the Imperial Army itself (though not larger than the Secondary Army), and is a strange mix of Barbarian and National Army. Faced with a land under attack from the human forces of the Eastern Territory, they have put their entire Tribe on a war footing. Although not as well trained as the Imperial Army, they have the best armor and weapons of any Wolfen force. They also have decades of experience battling humans, and are eager to put an end to the invasion of their homeland.

Member States

The highest status in Wolfen society is that of a citizen of a *Member State*. These are the sub-units of the Wolfen State that are considered to have full rights and privileges, and a citizen of any Member State, regardless of race, is considered to have equal standing with Wolfen. Also, once a group or government becomes a Member State, that status becomes permanent.

There are currently three member states: The *Kingdom of Havea*, the *Algor Mountain Collective*, and the *Diamond Point Horde*, but a few others are under consideration.

Kingdom of Havea

After the consolidation of the twelve tribes, the next Member State of the Wolfen Empire turned out to be a human kingdom, Havea. King Avramson, age unknown, has presided over this small kingdom for at least two hundred years. Always cut off from other human civilization, and constantly besieged by the surrounding Wolfen and Coyles, the King jumped at the chance to join the new Wolfen Empire. This initially took the Wolfen by surprise, since they had created their constitution with only other Wolfen in mind. Still, they saw nothing in their own rules to prohibit a human state from joining. So, in a sense, it was really a human, Avramson, who started the Wolfen Empire on its course of worldwide expansion.

Historical Note: Right after Havea became part of the Wolfen Empire, Avramson went on a tour of the Eastern Territory, including trips to *Phi* and *Lopan*. Everywhere he told them, "Look, if you join the Wolfen Empire, all our problems can be

solved. As part of a combined military, we'll put an end to the problems of the wild races once and for all. Not only that, but sooner or later we'll all have to stand against the Western Empire." When they laughed, not believing that the preposterous "Constitution" would last more than a year or two, he said, "So what if it fails? So what if the Wolfen go back to warring amongst themselves? Every year it stands is another year of peace, another year when we can build. Don't you see, there are no disadvantages! No reason not to join!" Sadly, the other humans couldn't see Avramson's vision. His prediction of a strong Wolfen Empire has already come true, and his prediction of a conquering Western Empire is showing signs of becoming a reality in coming years.

Population: 55,000 Humans, 30,000 Wolfen, 1,000 Elves, and 6,000 others.

Appearance & Garb: Most of the humans are northern in appearance, with blond, red or light brown hair, and with hazel, green or blue eyes (they look like people from Bizantium), but their native tongue is that of the Eastern Territory. Peasants and country people wear a mix of wool and leather garments, while those in the city often wear blouses with frills and lace, under tailored vests and jackets. Plate armor and chain mail are also commonplace.

Royal Capital: Avramstown (40,000; 20% Human, 50% Wolfen, 30% other races). The oldest and most developed city in the Empire. It is a remarkable blend of peoples with a vibrant economy, active industry and culture.

Government: King Avramson is the hereditary ruler, and House Avram has at least 400 family members. The Havea High Council is made up of the King, all 17 Dukes, 3 representatives from the 36 Lesser Houses, and 2 representatives from the Avramstown Guild Council.

Economy: Varied, it includes farming, production of most metal, cloth, wood and leather goods (for decades Havea was cut off from the rest of the human world, surrounded by hostile Wolfen Tribes, and forced to produce everything they might need locally). Now that there is peace with the Wolfen Empire, the farms and grazing fields are producing enough food for export to the Wolfen Empire, as well as to far-off Bizantium.

Education: Literacy in Human: Eastern is high in Avramstown (70%), and among the nobility (90%), but much lower among the country people (10%). Those who do go to school are all expected to learn Wolfen, and Human: Northern (the language of Bizantium), but only the best students are expected to learn the arcane language and writing of the Elves.

Religion: While Priests of the Church of Light & Dark are found in every royal and noble household, there are also Temples for the Northern Gods, and for Rurga and her pantheon (Lista is a particular favorite), as well as for Algor, Utu and Dragonwright.

Military Resources: For generations, Havea has had to withstand constant raids and invasions. The whole place is on a high plateau, and all the natural approaches have been either "improved" (into rocky cliffs), or walled off. Constant patrols mean that any invaders or raiders will be quickly detected. The city is totally walled, as are all the major towns, and each royal and noble house resides in a heavily fortified castle. The *nobles* are all trained for war (men and women alike; typically 40% are the equivalent of the Soldier O.C.C., 45% Knights and 15% the Palladin O.C.C.), and every human male (plus about 20% of the women) belongs to a local militia. As a contribution to the war effort, Havea loans out at least 500 mounted, heavily armored Knights.

Algor Mountain Collective

Long the allies and metal workers for the Wolfen in the Algor Mountain region, the Kobolds were broken into a dozen or more bickering Fiefdoms. In their first act of deliberate diplomacy, the Wolfen decided that the time had come to unify the Kobolds. Allying themselves with the most reasonable of the Kobold factions, the Wolfen entered the underground Kobold Fiefs and swept through the subterranean battlegrounds. Within four years their conquest was complete and the defeated Kobolds quaked in fear at the slavery and vengeance that awaited them at the hands of the victors. Of course, revenge and plunder were not in the Wolfen's plans. Instead, all the Kobolds were treated with an even hand, and each offered the same choice: full membership in the Algor Mountain Collective, or banishment. In the forty years since, the Algor Kobolds have learned to govern themselves fairly and have become a central force in all the councils of the Wolfen Empire. Currently, the Algor Mountain Collective is the largest known collection of Kobolds in the Palladium World, with tunnel complexes in the Algor Mountains overlapping natural caves and going on for hundreds of miles, and often descending several miles deep into the earth.

Population: 190,000 Kobolds, 20,000 Wolfen, and 23,000 others.

Appearance & Garb: Typical Kobolds in appearance, but many of them have taken to wearing clothing decorated with the metal thread from the January Magic Tribe of Wolfen.

Royal Capital: Oliana (22,000; 80% Kobold, 10% Wolfen, 10% other races). Oliana is almost entirely underneath the surface of the earth, with only a small area "topside" where visiting surface travelers may stop and rest up, eat well, and shop.

Government: The 11 Fiefs have been organized into a "Collective" with each Fief selecting three representatives every three years. In practice, the three strongest Fiefs, the *Cold Marrow,* the *Stone Anvil,* and the *Smoulder Coals,* take turns running things, the power resting with whichever of the three can gain the most support from the other eight. Where once the Kobolds loudly complained about being prevented from assassinating their political opponents, they now grudgingly admit that the new, relatively blood free, system works well. On the other hand, the prohibition against cannibalism still causes a lot of grumbling.

Economy: Without the constant inter-Fief warfare, and with a vast Wolfen Empire full of customers, the Kobolds have never had it better. They are keen to expand their industries, and their mining, to keep up with the demand for all kinds of armor, weapons, tools, jewelry, other metal goods and even stoneworks. While they still grow some exotic varieties of mushrooms, and keep pigs and a few goats, most of their food, fabric, leather and spices are imported from the rest of the Wolfen Empire.

Language & Education: Even before joining the Wolfen Em-

pire, most of the Algor Mountain Kobolds knew how to speak Wolfen. Now only the older Kobolds remember Dwarven (about 10%). Literacy in Wolfen is commonplace (65%), but very few Kobolds can read or write any other languages. As for education, most Kobolds serve as apprentices from a very young age.

Religion: Surprisingly, the philosophy of the Pragmatists has spread widely among the Kobolds, and worship of the various cults is dying. Perhaps this is because of the good example of the Wolfen. More probably it's because the Kobolds have seen the Wolfen victorious, with little regard for the gods, and therefore the Kobolds decided that they could save all their previous tithing and donating, and keep the "god money" for themselves. The remaining Kobolds with strong religious feelings tend to be fervent worshipers of Tolmet, and there is a complete *Necroarchy* of Church Tolmet among the collective, including six Kobolds serving as *Exarchs,* and a recently promoted *Suffragan, Gelsa Jearge.*

Military Resources: Experts at defense, very few of the Algor Kobolds have ventured out into the larger world. Still, there are always a few adventurous Kobold youngsters who join the Imperial Army as armorers and weapon smiths. If invaded, hordes numbering in the tens of thousands will quickly form within the caves.

The Diamond Point Horde

These were the first of the Coyles to join with the Twelve Wolfen Tribes. Their former chief, Uhashnak, was a brilliant leader who managed to set aside the traditional animosity between the Coyles and Wolfen long enough to see the long-term benefit of association. Since then, the Diamond Point Horde has been steadfastly loyal and has worked vigorously to bring other Coyles into the Wolfen state. Uhashnak, although aged, is currently hard at work in an attempt to bring the Emerald Glint Horde into the Wolfen Empire. The Diamond Point have no capital, since it is pretty much beyond Coyles to build something as ambitious as a city. Besides, the Coyles are far too nomadic to settle down in a permanent site. It just is not in their blood.

Population: 76,000 Coyles and 8,000 others (mostly Orcs and Ogres).

Appearance & Garb: On the large size, for Coyles, tending toward darker fur and eyes. While individuals might wear anything at all, one of the traditions of the Diamond Point Horde is to wear cloth headdresses (something like small turbans) made out of black, red or orange fabric.

Capital: None; although they use *Shadowfall* as an unofficial government center.

Government: Organized along the lines of the Constitution of the Twelve Tribes, there is the Diamond Point Senate, with 50 former Chiefs and other elders, and the Diamond Point Parliament, containing two representatives each from all 162 Diamond Point Clans. Politics are loud, intense, frequently violent (unarmed combat breaks out a couple of times each month) and, according to the Diamond Point Coyles, "lots of fun!"

Economy: If it weren't for their employment with the Imperial Army, they'd have a lot more problems. While some Coyle families have traditions of farming, ranching, inn-keeping or trade, a lot of them are still, at heart, bandits and rogues more interested in a fast buck than an honest trade.

Language & Education: By far the most educated of the Coyles, up to 70% are capable of reading and writing in the Wolfen language, and the brightest of their young are trained in a variety of languages and skills.

Religion: Only about 10% are religious, mostly worshiping at Wolfen Temples, the rest claim to be Pragmatists.

Military Resources: In part, the Diamond Point Horde has fit into the Wolfen Empire because there's been near continuous warfare with the Eastern Territory, allowing the Horde's various Clan-based military units ample opportunity for bloodshed. After so many years of war, with the Imperial Army, as well as on their own, there are hundreds of experienced officers in the Horde, and another army of 10,000 Coyles could be raised in as little as three weeks.

Imperial States

Imperial States are considered to be areas or governments that may eventually qualify for Member State status, but are not yet ready. Specifically, any group must hold the status of Imperial State for a period of 10 years before it becomes a full-fledged Member State. Rebellion, treasonous activity, failure to participate in Wolfen wars or state affairs, or mistreatment of citizens, are all causes for a group to lose their Imperial State status, or (and this happens a lot with the Coyle Hordes) they have to start their 10 year waiting period all over again.

Imperial States are often new governments created by the Wolfen Empire, or states who have failed in their bid to become full members. Each Imperial State is ruled directly by one of the Wolfen governors (Magistia).

There are seven Imperial States: The *Gnome Central State*, the *Orcish States* (the *Broken Skull*, the *Awesome Mess*, the *Grand Order of Imperial Orcs*, and the *Mad Dogs of War*) and the *Coyle States* (the *Moonstone Horde*, and the *Silver Stream Horde*).

Gnome Central State

Those who didn't die in the Hinterlands or flee to the Northern Mountains fled to the east, where they came to live among the Wolfen. It has been an uneasy symbiosis, but one aided by the Gnome's mastery of various forms of oddball magic, magic that the newly forged Wolfen Empire is all too eager to learn and employ in its burgeoning war machine.

Through a major diplomatic effort, over a hundred Gnomish tribes, covering several hundred square miles, have been united into the *Gnome Central State*. It has been operating successfully for seven years, and is considered to be the most promising candidate for full statehood.

Population: 43,000 Gnomes, 8,000 Wolfen, and 5,000 others.

Appearance & Garb: Standard range of Gnomes, usually dressed in layers of carefully tailored clothing.

Capital: Szandeliak (7,000).

Government: The Gnomic Congress, with representatives from all the various Gnome Tribes, rules the State, and selects representatives to the Wolfen Imperia.

Economy: Amazingly varied, the Gnomes turn their hand to everything from gardening to toy-making, and are particularly interested in opening inns and taverns everywhere.
Language & Education: Dwarven is the common tongue, but at least 20% speak Wolfen, and of those who speak Wolfen about 10% are literate. Literacy in Dwarven is dying out, down to about 15%.
Religion: The Church of Light and Dark is the traditional religion of most of the Tribes, but there are a few who worship more obscure faiths and gods.
Military Resources: All the Gnome Tribes have their own local militia, but the Gnome Central State contributes relatively little to the Imperial Army or to the war effort (most Gnomes still hope that war with the Eastern Territory can be avoided through negotiation). On the other hand, many of the younger, more patriotic Gnomes have joined the Wolfen Army.

The Orcish States

One of the greatest successes of the Wolfen has been the unification of the various Orc tribes. From dozens of bickering groups, the Wolfen have formed these Orcs into four strong and well-organized tribes: the *Broken Skull, Awesome Mess*, the *Grand Order of Imperial Orcs*, and the *Mad Dogs of War*. Part of the reason for their success has been the brutal replacement of intractable Orcish leaders. Simply, if an Orc leader is not satisfactory, the Wolfen quickly put him to death and allow the Orcs to appoint a new leader. It is only within the last year that the Orc tribes were advanced from the status of Trial State, and many Wolfen still believe that they'd be better off just declaring the Orc lands as Imperial Provinces.

Broken Skull Orc State

Largest of the Orc States, and the one with the most organization. Fortunately all the members come from one of the most widespread Tribes of Orcs, the Broken Skull, who share the same dialect, naming conventions, feast days and rituals, and all worship the same religion.

Population: 37,000 Orcs and 6,000 others (mostly Goblins and Hob-Goblins).
Appearance & Garb: Considered the hairiest Orcs around, they usually have thick hair down below their waists, and a lot of body hair. Males also have full beards. Leather clothing is standard, but they prefer leather that has been bleached, the lighter the color the better.
Capital: Crania (3,000).
Government: *Warlord Big Skull* has surrounded himself with a small army of advisors and bodyguards, and rules the Broken Skull Orcs with an iron hand.
Economy: For the last 30 years the Broken Skull have been working the same farms and fields, operating as blacksmiths and carpenters, and running their own towns, complete with shops and inns. There were plenty of disasters early on, but recently they've been nearly as successful as humans would be with the same resources.
Language & Education: All Broken Skull Orcs speak their own dialect of Gobblely, called *Huchmuh*. Nearly 30% can also speak Wolfen, and of those, about 10% can read and write Wolfen. Aside from practical skills (hunting, farming, trapping), knowledge of other languages and academic subjects are unknown.
Religion: The whole Orc State is fervent and dedicated to the worship of the Demon God, *Modeus* (see the **Dragons & Gods** sourcebook), and *Killester*, a Priest of Modeus, is considered the Pontiff of the Broken Skull. The Wolfen aren't exactly delighted with the Broken Skulls' choice of gods, but they view tolerating it as a test of their "hands' off" policy concerning religions.
Military Resources: A huge number of Broken Skulls serve in the Imperial Army, and the State's own army is also frequently called up for reinforcements in battles with the Eastern Territory.

Awesome Mess Orc State

The most loyal of the Orcs, the Awesome Mess State has been made up of those tribes who have been cooperating with the Wolfen for 100 years or more.

Population: 28,000 Orcs, 2,500 Goblins, 3,000 Wolfen, 5,000 Coyles and 2,000 others.
Appearance & Garb: A wide variety of body types and clothing.
Capital: Segamu (6,000: 2,000 Orcs, 3,000 Wolfen, 1,000 Coyles).
Government: The generals of each of the State's Armies have formed a *Tribunal* that serves both as executive and judicial branches of the government.
Economy: Organized mostly around herds of cattle and goats, as well as some communal gardens.
Language & Education: The entire community speaks Wolfen as a native tongue, but education has been difficult, and only around 8% have mastered literacy.
Religion: In Segamu there is a Temple to Epim, the All-Mother, and most of the Awesome Mess Orcs are dedicated worshipers.
Military Resources: Thoroughly integrated into the Imperial Army, so they have no standing military of their own. On the other hand, in case of emergency, the retired veterans could put together a force of four or five thousand.

The Grand Order of Imperial Orcs

The Grand Order claims not to be a Tribe, but rather the descendants of an ancient *Royal Order* who once were rulers of all the Orcs. It seems a ridiculous claim, and there is no historical evidence to support it, but all the members of the Grand Order *believe* it. The Priests of the Grand Order claim that they are able to recognize when the new *Prince of Orcs* is born among their number.

Population: 25,000 Orcs and 6,000 others.
Appearance & Garb: They make their own wool, which is the basis of most of their clothing. In winter they wear shearling (sheep skins with the wool still attached) as tunics, leggings, coats and cloaks.
Capital: Tetaranan (2,500).
Government: Until the fabled Prince is born, decisions are made in a Great Assembly, held several times each year.
Economy: They have been granted two fertile valleys in the Algor Mountains, where they are trying to create an entire society. There are at least 20 sheep for every Orc.
Language & Education: Gobblely is the native tongue, but at least 75% speak Wolfen, and around 9% are literate in Wolfen.
Religion: Church of Taut is their official faith.
Military Resources: 2,500 of the Grand Order are part of the Wolfen Imperial Army, and another 2,500 form a permanent Grand Order Army which protects their territory.

The Mad Dogs of War Orc State

Traditionally Mercenaries from time immemorial, the Mad Dogs finally tired of being betrayed by various human employers. Over 50 years ago, their legendary leader, *Dark Blood,* realized that only Wolfen were trustworthy employers, and swore eternal loyalty. Since then they have been building up their numbers, and serving every command of the Wolfen Empire.

Population: 19,000 Orcs, 1,000 Ogres, 2,000 Goblins, 1,000 Hob-Goblins and a few hundred Trolls.
Appearance & Garb: On the large size for Orcs, and they like to wear leather armor or chain mail just about all the time.
Capital: Grevak, a tent city, usually of around 1,000-2,000 Orcs.
Government: Once every couple of months the *Council Fires* are lit, and every Mad Dog Orc is free to speak his or her mind, with decisions made by a vote of all present.
Economy: Mostly hunting and gathering, plus they keep some milk cows and boars.
Language & Education: After 50 years, Gobblely is spoken only by the oldest Mad Dogs; everyone else speaks Wolfen, and about 20% are literate.
Religion: Followers of Kirgi, but there are only a dozen Priests of Darkness in the whole State, and they know nothing of Cardinal d'Fingal's reforms, nor have they ever seen a copy of *Kirgi Futurious*.
Military Resources: At least a quarter of the Mad Dogs are with the Imperial Army at any time. If the rest of the Mad Dogs are attacked, they can easily form an army of three or four thousand.

The Coyle Hordes

Just as the Wolfen have been overwhelmingly successful in organizing the Orcs, they've had disaster after disaster in attempting to do the same with the Coyles. The problem has something to do with Coyle society and group psychology. Whereas Orcs naturally grow more cooperative in large groups, Coyles become increasingly more aggressive in direct proportion to the size of their horde. This behavior probably comes from their ancient winter hunting practices; when the leaner the winter, and the more scarce the food supply, the more savage the Coyle hordes would become. In any case, two Coyle hordes – the *Moonstone Horde* and the *Silver Stream Horde* – have been candidates for Member States for over thirty years, and neither has gone more than five years without some kind of major incident causing them to lose their "seniority."

Moonstone Coyle Horde

The Moonstones are among the richest, most organized, most educated, and most intelligent Coyles ever. They've been around for hundreds of years, usually prospering in even the leanest years. Part of the reason for their success is their control over *Scarlet Simi,* a dye that can turn most fabrics into an indelible bright red. If there has ever been any doubt that Coyles can keep secrets, it is clear that no one has ever discovered the source of Scarlet Simi.

Population: 180,000 Coyles.
Appearance & Garb: Having control of the best source of red dye on the Palladium World, they like to flaunt it, wearing everything from flamboyant red boots (and it takes a lot of dye to turn leather red!) to belts, tunics, scarves, gloves and different kinds of head wraps and hats.
Capital: Moonstone (17,000).
Government: The *Teld Family* has ruled the Moonstone Coyles as far back as anyone can remember. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of members of this surly, squabbling family, and a spate of assassinations breaks out at least once every couple of years.

Economy: Since the Moonstones can make so much money for relatively little effort (Scarlet Simi is the combination of the blood of a small, easy-to-raise beetle and some secret process), they haven't much bothered with any other way of making a living. Some of the more ambitious Moonstones have gone into the making of cloth or clothing, while others enjoy careers as raiders, bandits and thieves.

Language & Education: All speak Wolfen, and about 65% are literate.

Religion: No official religion, but the Northern Gods have been fairly popular for generations.

Military Resources: The Moonstones keep an active and well-trained army of at least 10,000 continuously patrolling their lands. They've been rather reluctant to honor the Wolfen Empire's requests for troops, and rarely are there more than 2,000 Moonstones on duty with the Imperial Army.

Silver Stream Coyle Horde

Traditionally, Silver Stream Coyles have always been wanderers, moving in small groups all over the Great Northern Wilderness, Ophid's Grasslands, the Eastern Territory, and even places farther to the south. Many Silver Streams are a bit like gypsies, and enjoy performing, either showing off their musical talents (flutes and small stringed instruments), sleight of hand, or contortionist tricks. There are even several small circuses and side shows operated by the Horde.

Population: 97,000 Coyles.

Appearance & Garb: Lighter in color than most Coyles, many of them turn completely white in the winter. They love wearing colorful clothing, including scarves and belts of many different shades.

Capital: None.

Government: Nothing particularly organized. Mostly, if there's a problem, whichever Silver Streams are in the area meet and discuss it. On more than one occasion, different groups of Silver Streams have selected different representatives to send to the same position in Shadowfall. While they have a problem taking anything relating to governing seriously, they don't spend a lot of time on infighting.

Economy: Scrounging, stealing, cattle rustling, banditry and the occasional coin from entertaining.

Language & Education: All speak Wolfen, and about 50% are literate. Many, 25%, speak other languages, including Human: Eastern, Human: Northern, Gobblely and Elven.

Religion: Not a particularly religious batch of Coyles, they will attend whatever Temple or Church seems interesting or pray to whatever god that seems to offer the most promise for their current situation. Most seem more interested in the music than the gods.

Military Resources: Roughly 8,000 Silver Streams are currently serving in the Imperial Army.

Trial States

These are newly formed governments that have not yet petitioned the Assembly for statehood. They are considered too "immature" for self-government and are being "groomed" by their Magistia. These are just a shade higher on the Imperial hierarchy than the Imperial Provinces that follow.

There are three Trial States: the *Yusbeg Allamak Tribe*, the *Centaur Federation*, and the *Dwarven Alliance*.

Yusbeg Allamak Tribe

Something of an experiment, this is the first time that a major collection of Goblins has been organized into a formal government. So far, the first three years have gone fairly smoothly, and if they can hold out without breaking into a massive civil war for another two years, then they'll be eligible for Imperial State status.

Population: 110,000 Goblins and 5000 Hob-Goblins.
Government: Modeled on the Wolfen Constitution, the Yusbeg Allamak have a Council of 14 Tribes, a Senate, and an Assembly, as well as an Imperia.
Economy: Mining and farming.
Language & Education: Almost all speak Wolfen (90%), with about 30% literacy. The native tongue, Gobblely, is gradually fading away among this tribe.
Military Resources: 25,000 form a Tribal Army.

The Centaur Federation

The most highly organized of all Centaur groups. This kind of self-government is really unprecedented in Centaur history, and would never have come about if not for the pressure of human settlements in the traditional Centaur lands.

Population: 53,000 Centaurs and 5,000 others.
Government: Each of the 424 Centaur Tribes has a slightly different organization, but they all send one member to the Federation Council.
Economy: Hunting, herding cattle and a bit of mining.
Language & Education: There are many languages and dialects among the Centaur Tribes, but at least half are now learning to speak Wolfen. Literacy hasn't taken hold, and only 1% of the Centaurs are able to read and write Wolfen (nearly 7% can read Elven).
Military Resources: The Wolfen are excited about the idea of incorporating the Centaurs into the Empire since the Wolfen see them as a race tailor-made for countering the humans' superior cavalry forces.

The Dwarven Alliance

This is a confederation of six tiny Dwarven Kingdoms nestled along the foothills of the Algorian Coast. The Dwarves have long been residents of the area, but their stubborn refusal to capitulate entirely to the Wolfen Empire has made them ineligible

for Member State status. It is a pointless gesture on the Dwarves' part really, since they enjoy being full trading partners with the Wolfen, and they even contribute substantial amounts of men and material to the Imperial Army! They just want a little more autonomy in name than the Empire is willing to give them, so they remain on the fringes of a society where they play an integral role.

Population: Only 3,500 Dwarves among all 6 Kingdoms, and 5,000 others (about 30% are Orcs, 25% humans, 25% Wolfen, 12% Coyles, and the rest other races common to the area).
Government: There is a King or Queen in each Kingdom, but none have all that much power. Family connections seem to count for a lot, and many of the families have members spread across three or more of the Kingdoms.
Language & Education: All speak Dwarven, but only 6% are literate in that language. About 30% of all Dwarves speak an additional language; either Human: Eastern, Human: Northern or Human: Western. Wolfen is becoming more widespread (perfect fluency and literacy is required for citizenship), with nearly 40% being able to speak, and 10% being literate in Wolfen.
Military Resources: Aside from trading in high quality weapons and armor, at least 300 Dwarves are in active service with the Imperial Army. Each Kingdom has an independent force of between 100 and 300 armored Dwarves.

Imperial Provinces

These are lands that have been declared permanently under the protection of the Wolfen Empire, but whose inhabitants are not considered capable of participation in the Wolfen Empire, or who are simply not capable of organizing themselves into a formal government. There are several dozen of these, but only the *Kankoran Trust Lands*, the *Faerie Kingdom*, and *Northern Elfland* have any substantial amount of territory.

Kankoran Trust Lands

Kankoran are traditionally friendly toward Wolfen, and vice versa, but their natural alliance is blocked by the incredibly varied and diverse languages and tribes among the Kankoran. Basically a peaceful people, especially in their relationships with outsiders, the Kankoran are fiercely divided among themselves. Literally thousands of tiny Kankoran tribes, some with as few as 20 Kankoran, many with separate dialects, are scattered in a random pattern all across the Northern Wilderness.

The Faerie Kingdom

Actually a series of land "reserves" or parks. Each is set aside so that the Faerie people can continue their way of life unmolested – and so that they will not interfere with the Wolfen Empire. There are no cities or towns in these "kingdoms," of course, but there are numerous large Faerie Mounds.

Northern Elfland

There is a golden city in the forest, as out of place as a Unicorn in a pigsty, that the Wolfen believe to have been built by Elves. Certainly the scale of the doors and ceilings is Elven, and Elves who have visited the city are sure that it was originally built for them. On the other hand, it seems abandoned, yet at the same time there is an eerie sense of some shadowy inhabitants. Visitors often speak of hearing the sounds of a crowd or music from a block or two away, and tantalizing smells of cooking food or aromatic incense are often reported. Without inhabitants, the Wolfen have declared the city, and the surrounding valley, to be an Imperial Province, to be protected and preserved until the owners decide to return or reveal themselves.

Trading Centers

Throughout the Wolfen Empire (and indeed, the rest of the Great Northern Wilderness, including the Northern Hinterlands), there can be found small settlements – villages, trading post compounds, tiny strongholds, etc. These are all covered by the blanket term of "Trading Center," and they are the tiniest element of the Wolfen Empire. Though they are small and command no real power, in the boondocks of the Empire, a Trading Center is often a traveler's main link with the Wolfen Empire. Good examples of what to expect in a Trading Center are the *Village of Wrijin, A Badd Place to Die*, or *Wilder-Kill;* all notorious trading posts and hangouts for travelers and adventurers.

Affiliate Races

There are a number of races with whom, for one reason or another, the Wolfen have no official treaty or arrangement, but who are viewed as friendly. In some cases, like that of the Wing Tips and the Northern Timber Wolves, it is because there is just no known way of communicating. In other cases, the offers of the Wolfen have been rebuffed, but the Wolfen attitude is still friendly and hopeful. Here are the four main categories of Affiliate Races: the *Ancient Triad*, the *Northern Folk*, the *Twilight People*, and, strangely enough, *Wild Carnivorous Animals*.

The Ancient Triad

These three races are held in awe by most Wolfen. At one time or another, all three were worshiped as gods, and their favor is still highly valued by most Wolfen. Always hopeful, the Wolfen continually seek out members of the Algor, Elves and Ice Dragons, always offering gifts and parley, and always offering important positions within the Wolfen state. Any gathering of any of these races would be immediately eligible for the highest ranking within the Wolfen state, that of a *Member State*, fully equal to the Twelve Wolfen Tribes. However, no such groups have yet surfaced within the domain of the Wolfen Empire. Chances are there are no great tribes of Elves or Algor, and no Ice Dragons would be content to be mere *equal partners* with Wolfen when they could try establishing themselves as an independent king or god. This does not stop the Wolfen from hoping anyway.

Algor. These are the vaunted Frost Giants of legend. They once roamed the Great Northern Wilderness – and other parts of the world – in great numbers before they were all but wiped out during the Elf-Dwarf War. Like Gnomes, Titans and numerous other races, the Algor got caught in the crossfire of that terrible conflict and they almost paid the ultimate price because of it.

Now, they hate *all* Elves and Dwarves and whoever else would ally themselves with either race. That includes humans, which is why the few Algor alive today openly support the Wolfen Empire's bid to repel the Eastern Territory from the Disputed Lands. This alone would be enough to endear the Frost Giants to the Wolfen, but the bond between the two races runs even deeper than that. Long ago, during the Wolfen's most primitive years, they worshiped the Algor as gods. And during that time, indeed the Frost Giants were like gods, for they built vast empires, wielded great magicks and commanded powerful armies. As the Wolfen grew into a mature civilization, they passed the Algor on their trip down. Though the worship is no longer there, the Wolfen feel for their Frost Giant allies and hope to keep them from being exterminated.

Elves. The Fair Folk figure prominently in almost every Wolfen creation legend. The most enduring of these is the notion that the Elves actually created the Wolfen race for use as a race of super-soldiers in the Elf-Dwarf War. Whether this story is true or not, it has laid the foundation of trust and friendship between Elves and Wolfen. Even Elves from enemy territories like the Eastern Territory will at least get a salute from a Wolfen adversary. When met on friendlier terms, Wolfen will consider Elves as visiting VIPs and will do their best to roll out the red carpet for them. To the Wolfen mind, the Elf commands a vast store of knowledge about history, magic and other topics the Wolfen need to learn.

Ice Dragons. These creatures were also worshiped by primitive Wolfen, but no longer. Still, the Wolfen consider all Ice Dragons as allies by default, and should any be encountered, they will do everything in their power to hire, cajole, recruit or otherwise obtain their services for the betterment of the Empire. The Ice Dragons, for their part, know a good thing when they see it, and they often accept such offers. After all, as powerful as a Dragon may be, it is not often when a *nation* of people seek you out in order to treat you like a king. Only the surly and independent attitude of most Ice Dragons keeps their kind from joining with the Wolfen wholesale. Well, that, and the ego thing – dragons can not stand to think they are being bossed around by mere mortals for any reason. No matter how sweet and appealing the Wolfen's offer, it rubs most Ice Dragons the wrong way. In general, Wolfen like all dragons (not just Ice Dragons), despite their fickle nature, knowing full well that having a dragon on their side is like having an entire extra army at their disposal. The Wolfen strategy is that perhaps if they befriend enough dragons, when the time comes to fight the Eastern Territory, a few of these creatures will feel obligated to help out their Wolfen friends and will come to fight alongside them. Whether or not this plan will actually work is a matter of intense Wolfen debate. Some say no, why would the Ice Dragons care to help? Others say yes, having faith there is some nobility buried in their scaly hearts.

The Northern Folk

In lieu of any formal agreement, most of the wild races of the Great Northern Wilderness races are considered to have at least provisional status as citizens of the Wolfen State. All of the creatures of these races are respected as intelligent and as fully deserving in a share of the future government of Wolfen.

Bearmen of the North. Possessing giant size, great strength and a love for fighting, these creatures are the perfect soldiers as far as the Wolfen are concerned. They dislike human company (well, all company, for that matter), and they have no use for treasure. Despite the pragmatic upsides to the Bearmen, the raw truth is that they seem like close relatives to the Wolfen, which gives them an inherent reason to stick together.

Drakin. Also known as "Luck Birds," the Wolfen like these creatures for their inherent goodness, an attribute often lacking in the creatures of the North. That, and there are numerous occasions throughout Wolfen history when Drakin have showed up and provided much needed help when important members of the Empire were in dire peril.

Dragon Wolves. Although often self-serving, Dragon Wolves have a natural affinity for magic that makes them an attractive friend to have. That, and the Dragon Wolves generally get along with all other races, so they have no problem fitting in wherever they go, especially with Wolfen. Many Dragon Wolves have a strange liking for the idea of a Wolfen Empire, and they tend to *volunteer* their services to the Empire from time to time. The utter lack of a formal Dragon Wolf society is the prime thing preventing their inclusion into the Empire as some sort of subordinate state, much as many Dragon Wolves would enjoy that.

Emirin. These great psionic cats have been long-time allies of the Wolfen and Kankoran, since before there was even a dream of a Wolfen Empire. The Emirin see an inherent nobility in the Wolfen, and the Wolfen see an inherent majesty in the Emirin. In general, there is an understanding between the two races that should a Wolfen need counseling or the use of psionic powers, an Emirin will volunteer its abilities. Likewise, should an Emirin need protection, a Wolfen will gladly volunteer itself and its sword to keep the Emirin safe. The Emirin have not joined the Wolfen Empire because they are only loosely organized and have no intent on gathering together as a unified whole. They would much prefer to be the permanent "friends" of the Empire.

Faerie Folk. Wolfen tolerate these merry little troublemakers, in part because they respect the fact that the Faeries have lived in these parts longer than anybody else, and in part because the Faeries seem to target human establishments the most, which is always good for a few Wolfen laughs.

Gryphon. The Imperial Army has undertaken a large-scale effort to raise Gryphons in captivity for use as war steeds. The program is showing good early results, but it will be at least another three to five years before Gryphons can be deployed in any substantial numbers. In the wild, Wolfen have a serious respect for these dangerous but majestic creatures. The Wolfen Empire offers no formal status to Gryphons, of course, because despite their great qualities, they are just animals.

Pegasus. Though there is no training program for Pegasus, the Wolfen respect these beautiful creatures all the same. Unlike the Gryphons, whom the Wolfen respect for their physical power, the Pegasus have a kindness and goodness about them that the Wolfen find especially worthy of praise and honor. For that reason, Wolfen in general consider it their duty to help out a Pegasus when the opportunity arises (freeing one from a trap, taking care of lost Pegasus eggs, etc.).

Unicorn. The unchallenged emperor of the forest, the Unicorn is a shining symbol of all that can be good and noble in the purest of hearts. The very nature of these creatures stirs something deep within the Wolfen spirit that drives them to attain great honor and justice not only for themselves but for all Wolfen kind. As such, they are also considered "protected creatures," though it is not as if these beings need Wolfen help to stay alive.

Wing Tips. These good-natured and harmless creatures have a certain fondness for Wolfen, and they will gravitate toward Wolfen members of a party first, so long as those Wolfen do not radiate evil. Wing Tips have no society, and thus, no formal place within the Empire. It is not as if they care, for these odd little creatures are content to flit about the forest, find Wolfen adventurers and go into orbit around them for as long as their wings hold out.

The Twilight People

A number of the humanoid races present in the Northern Wilderness are what the Wolfen call "twilight people." They are neither friends nor foes – not in either the light or dark. For a race that prides itself on knowing exactly where they stand with people, this aspect of certain races drives the Wolfen buggy. They know not whether to embrace such folk or to cast them out as possible enemies. For now, the status of the Twilight People is one of official neutrality, and subjects of the Empire are allowed to conduct their own personal matters with Twilight races as they see fit. Whether the Twilight People will ever be fully drawn into the Wolfen Empire remains to be seen.

Changelings and Dwarves. Both of these races suffer from long-term distrust by the Wolfen. Changelings are distrusted for the same reason why everybody else distrusts them: their shape shifting powers. Dwarves are distrusted because of their animosity towards the Elves, who are considered a close ally of the Wolfen. Despite all of that, Dwarves still have a valued place in Wolfen society as engineers and builders. And, let's face it, the Wolfen have ambitions to fire up their own rune forges one day, banking unrealistically on the prospect of perhaps rediscovering the lost art of rune smithing.

The Danzi of the Southeastern Forests. Though rare in the northland, the Danzi do inhabit the Disputed Lands and the neighboring Eastern Territory, as well as venture into the Northern Wilderness, especially in the summer. Danzi are also known to sometimes aid human invaders as scouts and assassins. On one hand, the Wolfen admire and respect the Danzi's courage, fighting abilities and independence. On the other hand, the tattooed humanoids seem to harbor a natural (or instinctive) animosity toward all canines, particularly Coyles. Thus, individual Danzi and members of all the canine races have periodically clashed since as long as anyone can remember. Most Wolfen tend to regard the somewhat feline Danzi as primitive but noble woodland people similar to their own Kankoran. And though Danzi can be a threat, their tiny (and dwindling) numbers make them more of a nuisance to be tolerated than a large scale danger to be eliminated. Undoubtedly, the Danzi will stand against the Wolfen Empire in any war with the Eastern Territory. **Note:** See the *Eastern Territory sourcebook* for more information on the Danzi.

Ogres, Trolls, and Gigantes. With their "new order," the Wolfen Empire is trying to find new ways of coming to terms with these three powerhouse races. On one hand, Ogres, Trolls and Gigantes obviously have the potential to behave like intelligent and organized people. They are traditionally valued allies of the Wolfen, and in an upcoming war against the Eastern Territory, their participation would be especially valuable. That said, these races have all proven themselves woefully inept at self-government and murderously untrustworthy in dealing with the other, "weaker races" such as Coyles, Dwarves, Elves, and so on. Until such time as these problems can be solved, all these races may be considered citizens of the other "official states," but may have no recognized states of their own.

Wild Carnivorous Animals

Although the Wolfen do not quite see wild animals as being deserving of citizenship, they do acknowledge that Wolfen governing of the Great Northern Wilderness also obligates them toward protecting certain noble creatures. Somewhat in the way that humans think of chimpanzees as the most intelligent of all animals, so the Wolfen naturally think of *wolves* as being the most advanced social animals. Wolfen philosophy is also rather close to nature, so it would come as no surprise to the Wolfen if the so-called "wild" animals turned out to be another race of intelligent creatures. In general, the Wolfen regard wild animals as *client races*, deserving of protection and respect. This includes wolves (no big surprise there), bears, mountain lions and northern tigers, and large birds of prey, such as hawks and eagles.

Unsubdued Peoples

Within the Wolfen state those who the Wolfen see as hostile are titled "Unsubdued Peoples." They are at the top of the Imperial Senate's list for peoples to assimilate (and thereby negate whatever threat they once posed). There are three basic categories of Unsubdued People at present: *Renegade Coyle Hordes*, *Human Settlers*, and *Beasts and Belligerents*.

Renegade Coyle Hordes

Considered by the Wolfen State to be its greatest threat, these are the minority (or majority, depending on whose count you believe) of the Coyles who refuse to accept the new order. The renegade Coyle hordes are also a danger because they form a buffer between the Wolfen civilization and its neighbors to the south, southwest and northwest. As a buffer, the Coyles tend more towards troublemaking than peacekeeping, constantly raiding non-canine camps and strongholds, and easily passing themselves off as "officials" of the Wolfen Empire for purposes of extortion and terror.

Although the scores of Coyle Hordes are small, there are four major exceptions. The **Silver Coin Horde** is dominant in the south, extending across the border into the Eastern Territory. The **Emerald Glint Horde** is found all along the northern edge of the Inland Sea, with their major strongholds along the River Vales, and is led by a Coyle Dynasty known as the *Drakaven Family*. The largest of the Coyle hordes calls itself the **Opal Spear Horde**. The Opals are rumored to number as many as

100,000 and their range is known to spread throughout the region west of Dragon's Claw, north to the sea, and west all the way to Ophid's Grasslands.

Most dangerous of all the Coyle Hordes are those that call themselves the **Ruby Circle Horde**. Based in Ophid's Grasslands, farther away from the Wolfen Empire than any other Coyles, they are innovative in both their use of cavalry and their use of magic. These Coyles, expertly led by one called "Circle," have also formed major alliances with both the *Zadrak Orcs* and the *Humans of the Mystic Knot*, both major horse-using raiders in the Grasslands. In addition, they are rumored to have established a major gathering of *Summoners* deep in a mountain valley to the west.

Human Frontier Settlements

There are two kinds of human settlements in the Northern Wilderness (other than those that have already entered the Wolfen fold): colonies sponsored by human nations, and independent humans. Of the colonies, the most irritating to the Wolfen are those established by the Eastern Territory, well-armed, aggressive and bent on direct confrontation with the Wolfen. In contrast, the colonies of the North Shore of the Inland Sea, and the colonies of the Kingdom of Bizantium are quite peaceful. These are colonies who have no particular grudge against the Wolfen, and who are mainly intent on surviving or, in the case of Bizantium, making a profit in their new wilderness home.

The largest of the colonial efforts, and potentially the most dangerous, is that of the *Western Empire*. They are mainly centered in Ophid's Grasslands, but stretching out to the east into the forest. These colonies started out as struggling colonies of castoffs, but a determined Western Empire has been expanding them at a dramatic pace in the last year or two. Thus, these colonies now house huge numbers of humans, often a hundred thousand or more in a single settlement. However, though the Western nobles keep sending out settlers by the thousands, they rarely survive in their new homes. First, because they are totally unsuited for the effort, so anywhere from 50-80% perish during their first winter. Second, most *colonists* have no commitment to the task. The majority are really condemned prisoners, politically displaced urbanites, or victims of poverty prevention programs. In other words, certain cities of the Western Empire use the *colonization program* as an excuse to get rid of the dregs of their urban slums – literally shipping them off to the northern colonies. These humans rarely have any of the skills needed for survival, and if they have any ambition at all, it is usually directed toward "escaping" the north and getting back to "civilization" as quickly as possible.

Independent humans. Aside from the colonies, there are also humans who have made the Northern Wilderness into home. Drawn from many sources, and many time periods, the human natives of the Northern Wilderness have turned into a hardy race of survivors, well equipped for the rigors of the northern winters, and resistant to the idea of subservience to any government, least of all that of the Wolfen. These wilderness humans, while numerous, especially in the central section of Ophid's Grasslands, are anything but organized. The groups range in size from a few hundred nomads to mountain strongholds of fifty or sixty, to family-sized log cabins in the far north, to solitary backwoods hermits, trappers and huntsmen living off the land.

Beasts and Belligerents

Try as they might to treat all races equally, the Wolfen draw the line at this selection of baddies. They have been declared "dangerous enemies" of the Wolfen State. Which is not to say that the Wolfen would *never* accept them (that goes against their Imperial Constitution), just that it would take a major demonstration of good will, and possibly divine intervention, to make the Wolfen change their minds.

Bug Bears. Malicious in the extreme, Bug Bears have proven themselves worthy of nothing more than a swift sword strike to the head. If left to their own devices a small group of Bug Bears will literally paralyze an entire road network with a relentless spree of banditry and killing.

Devil Digger. These nasty critters are all over the Northern Wilderness. They often inhabit the ground beneath a path or road, emerging to attack those who are passing by. They are a leading cause of lame horses in the region.

Eye Killer. These rare creatures are found only in the south. Their sole drive – to eat humanoids – makes them unrepentant and unchangeable creatures.

Feathered Death. Ugh! They make Harpies look nice in comparison. Their penchant for abducting and slaughtering Wolfen children makes these creatures high on the "kill first and ask questions later" list.

Kelpie. Thankfully, these evil predatory Faeries are relatively rare. While not super powerful, the presence of just one of these creatures can be enough to whittle down a boondocks village or trading post to nothing unless some heroes get involved and stop the thing's rampage.

Killgore. Seemingly primordial killing machines with no capacity for kindness, knowledge or civilized behavior. They are fairly rare even in the Northern Hinterlands where they seem to originate.

Kinnie Ger. The Wolfen have tried repeatedly to bring these creatures into the greater Empire, but it is just no use. The Kinnie Ger are too far on the feral side of things to appreciate concepts like law, order, and culture. They are mere killing machines and wild predators, and as such, the Wolfen Empire has no use for them.

Peryton. The scourge of livestock farmers everywhere, the dreaded Demon Deer are known to kill livestock in huge quantities and also whatever farmers that tend to get in their way. The Wolfen Empire has placed a bounty on the head of every Peryton killed.

Scorpion Devil. Though these monsters are better left alone, certain Wolfen will adopt them as pets and will get them to cling to their master's shoulder like a parrot. Weird, but whatever floats your boat.

Spectre. These creatures are rarely encountered in the Great Northern Wilderness because they avoid places of extreme temperature. But when a Spectre does make an appearance up north, death and destruction are always sure to follow. Lacking widespread magical resources, the Wolfen often have great difficulty with taking care of these malignant beings, a fact which has placed them permanently on the Imperial hit list.

Suckers. These things are the bane of travelers, especially those venturing into the region's deepest forests. Since Suckers show no real intelligence or desire to communicate with humanoids, the Wolfen feel they have no choice but to exterminate them.

Threkk. Vulture-like monstrosities said to still worship the Old Ones and serve the forces of chaos. Meaner cousins to the Loogaroo, they are thieves, cutthroats, and murderers always in search of new victims to prey upon. Fortunately, they are rare, and found mainly in the northernmost portion of the Northern Hinterlands.

Tuskers. The Wolfen respect the strength and ferocity of the Tusker, but they do not like its insatiable appetite for destruction. A single Tusker can, under the right conditions, virtually destroy an entire village by itself if there are no soldiers or adventurers about to dispatch the beast. When herds of them gather together, it is like an invading army has appeared. The Eastern Arm Tribe has been particularly annoyed, and is currently offering a 100 gold bounty for Tusker heads. So many bounty hunters appeared that the Tusker has all but disappeared in Eastern Arm territory. Now that other Tribes are considering taking similar measure, they're meeting resistance from the Kankoran who see such wholesale slaughter to be a crime against the Natural Order.

Winter Storm Ice Demons. Though usually encountered only in the Northern Hinterlands and Great Northern Mountains, and only in the wintertime, they are known to all Wolfen. These demons are to be avoided or slain whenever encountered, for they revel only in murder and cruelty.

Worms of Taut. Every sub-species of this creature – Blow Worms, Fire Worms, Nippers, Serpent Beasts, Tomb Worms, and Tri-Fangs – can all be found somewhere in the Great Northern Wilderness. For the most part, the creatures are as evil as they are stupid, so many Wolfen have no qualms about killing them on sight.

Zavor. What strange and dangerous little creatures these things are! Not only are they immune to the harmful effects of magic, but when exposed to it, they automatically clone themselves! So far, there have been two instances in which Wolfen mages learned this trait of the Zavor the hard way. In each instance, entire villages were overrun by Zavor before they could drive them off.

Welcome to the Machine

The Inner Workings of the Wolfen Empire

The Wolfen have achieved something extraordinary – a government able to harness the energy of an amalgamated society going in a dozen different directions at once. A government flexible enough to recognize the incredible diversity of its people while not allowing that diversity to tear the Empire apart. A government strong enough to unify its people towards a common driving goal, but not so tyrannical as to foment rebellion. A government born out of tragedy so it might bring its people peace. A government of monsters in a world of men. A government unlike anything else in the world.

Wolfen Government

Although the Wolfen government is often called an "empire," it is really anything but. It is a *republic*; that is, a government based upon elected representatives. And, unique among the nations of Palladium, it is a government representing *all* its people, not just a single dominant race.

Constitution of the Twelve Tribes

The most important document of the Wolfen Empire is the Constitution of the Twelve Tribes. It provides their guiding philosophy and direction. Shorter than most imagine it to be, it consists of but four sheets of parchment, and it starts with the phrase: "In forest assembled, we free people come to create a council . . ." Rather than a formula for government, it is instead a covenant of rights. Although it was not originally intended for use by anyone other than Wolfen, it never refers to Wolfen by name, instead using the phrases: "all free people," "Tribes," "nations" and "lands." It is administered by the Council of the Twelve, and all servants and elected officials of the Wolfen Empire must swear to uphold the Constitution and all that it represents.

Council of the Twelve

Originally, the ultimate ruling body of the Wolfen Empire, and specified in the Constitution. It first consisted of the chiefs of the twelve united tribes, now expanded to hold the chiefs of each Member State. In practice it has become a secondary body, mostly because the chiefs of the tribes have too many other duties and are restricted by the Constitution from appointing any proxies. They continue to meet every three or four years, but usually only to rubber-stamp the constitutional changes requested by the Senate or the Imperia.

The Imperial Senate

Another political body described in the Constitution, the Imperial Senate consists of 12 members from each Member State, 6 Members from each Imperial Client State, and three Members from each Imperial Province or Trial State. Each Senator is elected for life. It has evolved into an advisory council, with the right to veto laws made by the Assembly, to censor policy made by any states, and to appoint and dismiss any of the various Imperia, Praetoria, and Bureaucria of the government. Because it meets continuously, especially in the winter, it has become the most important legislative body in the Wolfen Empire.

Greater Assembly of the People

Also described in the Constitution is the Greater Assembly of the People. Meeting at least every other year, usually in autumn, there is a great assembly, where all the various peoples gather together. Unlike the Senate where membership is formal, virtually any convincing representatives of any peoples can present their credentials (sometimes no more than loud promises) and speak for their people. While it no longer creates laws, it has the power to veto existing laws. It is also powerful in that the Assembly, and only the Assembly, can admit Member States into the Wolfen Empire. One other power, that of creating and abolishing taxes, constitutionally belongs to the Assembly. This taxing power is now being contested by both the Senate and the Imperia, each of whom believe they should have the power to tax.

Imperia

Most of the "official" government bodies and positions are not specified in the Constitution. Instead, they are created by one of the three official bodies. The most important of these is the Imperia, a body of one to six leaders who are the real administrators of the Empire. Formerly, these Imperia were elected by the Council of the Twelve, but they are now appointed by the Senate. Some radicals have suggested that a more Constitutional interpretation would be to have the Imperia elected at large throughout the Wolfen Empire. Among other duties, the Imperia collects taxes, assigns money, raises and controls armies, and appoints most of the other agents and officials of the Empire.

Magistia

Effectively these officers serve as Governors in all but Member States. In the case of Imperial States, the Magistia work rather subtly, more like ambassadors than rulers. In Trial States the Magistia must wield a certain amount of power, working with the native government, but without appearing to be the actual ruler. In practice, an individual Magistia is an out-and-out Governor whose power is absolute, and who has the power to call upon any local units of the army of the Wolfen Empire to support his rule.

Praetoria

These are the officials who administrate over civil conflicts and who are responsible for interpreting the law of the Wolfen Empire. Each Praetoria is nominated by either the Imperia, the Magistia, or, in rare cases, the Quatoria, but must be actually appointed by the Senate. Any disagreements between individuals, companies, tribes, or governments, including units of the Wolfen Empire itself, are arbitrated by the Praetoria. This does not include criminal law (murder, theft, etc.), which is the sole responsibility of the Quatoria.

Quatoria

A Quatoria, or "Officer of the Law," is one of the combined police and law enforcement officers of the Empire. In remote areas, a single Quatoria Wolfen might act as marshal, judge, jury, jailor, executioner and grave digger, capable of enforcing the law on his own, or swearing in whatever "deputies" he might find necessary to deal with local problems. In the cities there are various ranks of Quatoria, ranging from patrol-rank to judge. The ranks are used to define their jobs and powers. Most Quatoria are assigned by the Imperia, although Magistia have the power to appoint temporary Quatoria within their territory.

Bureaucria

These are the various scribes, bookkeepers, librarians, translators, postal workers, and general civil servants of the Wolfen Empire. All are employees or appointees of the Imperia, and all wages and budgets are assigned by the Imperia. Whether it comes to delivering mail, keeping records, or repairing roads, it is the Bureaucria that actually does the work within the Empire.

An Empire with no Emperor?

The Wolfen Empire is a strange contradiction. It is a Republic, in that its citizens have the ability to determine their own political fate (something most rare in the Palladium World), but it is also an Empire in that it imposes its collective will on other societies and absorbs them into their own, usually through armed conquest. But the Wolfen Empire has no one supreme leader, no *emperor* to dictate to the entire realm, like what we see in, say, the Western Empire.

For many Wolfen, this is not such a strange thing. They have never had need of an Emperor, and should somebody try to establish themselves as such, it would almost certainly bring about civil war as the various elements of the Empire argued over whether or not to give up their own political freedoms and powers.

This alone has deterred many would-be Emperors from trying to take the reins of power for themselves. Another major deterrent has been the relative success of the Wolfen government so far. Although the Empire has only been up and running for a few decades, the various branches of the government have worked well and with minimal corruption or incompetence. Citizen interest and participation remains high, perhaps because Wolfen in general feel threatened by the humans of the Eastern Territory, and so long as that remains so, the people will not allow themselves the luxury of being complacent toward how their government handles things.

For such reasons, it seems unlikely that the people of the Empire would allow an Emperor to overthrow the Senate and the other mechanisms of power any time in the foreseeable future. That does not mean there are not Wolfen who want to be (or support the rise of) Emperor. At any given moment, there are a handful of would-be dictators scheming to take control of the entire nation, imposing their personal will on the whole of the Empire and making it fulfill whatever dreams *he* has for it. Most of these schemers are pathetic losers who only dream big and have no intention of taking any kind of serious action to overthrow the government. After all, the Wolfen *like* the way things are, and they will resist any efforts to upset that. So long as things remain relatively good, that is. When a major crisis hits the Empire, then the resolve of the people will finally be tested.

Three Important Notes on the Wolfen Empire

1. Borders, Territorial Rights & Real Estate. Ownership of land in the Wolfen Empire continues to be a very tricky question. Unlike, say, *Havea*, where each and every inch is surveyed, and where every acre, homestead and manor is accounted for on a legal deed, and is either the property of some noble, or chartered by the King, the Wolfen Empire is divided up in dozens of different ways, so a particular valley may be the hunting ground of two Tribes in summer, contain a traditional Trade Fair every fall, and be the winter lodge for two Clans of another Tribe altogether. Yes, in some cases, such as with the Iron Claw and the Seahawks, all the land has borderlines and property holders but, for example, it is impossible to draw a line between the lands of the Two Axe and the Dark Step, and huge tracts of the Ursa Rex are also considered lands of the Oak People.

2. The Tradition of Democratic Thought. Humans, if they don't already assume there is an Emperor in charge of the Wolfen Empire, are usually convinced that it's only a matter of time before a bloody coup occurs, and a powerful ruler will take over the whole of the Imperia. To which any Wolfen would say, "not bloody likely!"

You see, the government of the Wolfen Empire is largely based on the way most Wolfen Tribes think about rulers, rulership and succession. For Wolfen, the idea of a "King" who runs everything, and who, somehow, magically, has offspring talented enough to also be future kings, doesn't make any sense. The Wolfen Tribes are, as they have been for uncounted generations, *meritocracies,* organizations where the leadership changes according to current needs. In the hunting season, a Hunting Chief is selected, while in a particularly hard winter, a Winter Chief would be found among those elders who had survived previous hardships and, of course, when there was war, then a War Chief would be given great power. Chiefs invariably were advised by Councils, and the Councils were often elected from the various Sub-Tribes, Clans, Totems and Lineages.

The "Divine Right of Kings" is the rule by which the Emperors of the Western Empire, and the Kings of Timiro, Bizantium and most of the Human Kingdoms, explain why the descendants of a ruler are entitled to the throne. The argument is that some god or gods favored the first conqueror, and that deific blessing is passed on through their children.

Perhaps, sometime in the distant past, there were Wolfen who had the same notion. Certainly in the Tristine Chronicles there are mentions of Wolfen Kings and Queens. Perhaps the custom just faded away. Perhaps the Wolfen Royal Offspring were just unlucky, or stupid. Or perhaps, facing opponents armed with great magic, those who occupied the Wolfen Throne were systematically assassinated. No matter what the reason, the fact remains that contemporary Wolfen find the whole concept of "Divine Right" illogical, if not downright silly.

In much the same way that some scholars argue that the United States Constitution was based on the political organizations of certain Native American Indian Tribes, so the Wolfen Constitution is based on ideas and practices from the Twelve Wolfen Tribes.

One other point. We have often compared the Wolfen to the Romans of Earth's history. Because of that, some readers assume that an Emperor, like the Emperors of Rome, and corruption, like the barbarity of the Roman Arena, is something inevitable. Well, perhaps, but any such developments are a *long* way in the future. Currently the Wolfen Empire is like the young Roman Republic, its citizens filled with zeal and idealism, clever in turning nearby enemies into staunch allies, with a system of government that is inefficient, but changing and dynamic. Remember, the transformation from the free peoples of Rome to those oppressed by all-powerful Emperors took hundreds of years. The current threat to the Wolfen is not from a charismatic leader, but from hide-bound conservatives who would rather drag down the Constitution in favor of the Tribes.

3. The Attitude Toward Slavery. To most Wolfen the most evil power on Earth is not represented by monsters, demons, Deevils, the undead, or even the Gods of Darkness. No, it is the *Western Empire* that represents pure evil. For over 2,000 years Wolfen have been chained, dragged from their homes, and sent out as the playthings and slaves of the Western Empire. For over 2,000 years, those pitiful few who managed to escape, and make the grueling trip back home, have told of the horrors of the Arena, of continuous back-breaking labor, of forced breeding projects, and of the torment of Wolfen and Coyles treated as property for generation after generation.

For those who manage to make it back, every effort is made to place them back in their Tribe, or the Tribe of their ancestors. For those who have no tradition of a Tribe (no memory of rituals, totems, or line names), there is always a place in one of the expanding Wolfen cities.

The Wolfen Military

"Play music, my brother warriors, pound your drums. . . and the rest of you, pray if you like, or howl, or make whatever manner of noise you like. Do not think we need to be quiet, out of fear of an attack. The humans well know where *we are. Now we need to teach them* who *we are. I am a Wolfen, and I am a Wolf, and the moon is full, and I feel the need to howl. Let them come, in all their numbers, and we will make a pyre of their bodies, a burning pyre on the Holy Mountain G'rese, so that next year, and in all the years to follow, those of both sides of this war will know that this land, the North, is the land of the Free Peoples. We bow to no king, pay taxes for no palace. Sooner or later they will join us, shedding their golden chains, or they will leave – or they will die. No matter. Coyle, Goblin, Ogre, tonight you are all my brothers. Make music, my brothers, make great music, and make it loud enough to wake the humans, asleep in their camp . . ."*

– Wolfen Quingia, on the eve of battle

Armies of the World

First, before we get on to the specific organization of the Wolfen Empire, let us review the general military situation in the overall Palladium World. There are generally seven kinds of Palladium armies. They are usually one of the following:

1. Sub-Human Armies. Levies or tribes of Orcs and/or Goblins, often with other races, especially Ogres and Trolls, mixed in. Basically these armies depend on sheer ferocity for their impact. Here's how it works. The war chief or leader gathers together the forces, usually around a bonfire the morning before the battle, and exhorts the troops with rhetoric, lies, promises, and whatever else it takes to motivate them. Then they are marched as quickly as possible to the ranks of the enemy. If everything works out, the fighters go berserk and overrun their opponents. Otherwise, the usual result is that the sub-humans lose their nerve and panic.

Since they rarely receive decent training or equipment, sub-human armies must have a significant advantage in size or position to have a reasonable chance of winning a battle. Odds of three to one are considered necessary for an Orc army to win against humans, Elves, or Dwarves, and odds of six to one are needed to give Goblins a reasonable chance of victory. On the other hand, when used as the "shock troops" of a larger force, sub-humans can sometimes be quite effective.

2. Noble Armies. This is the most common model of what an army is in the human world and the one used everywhere the *feudal system* applies. Basically, the nobles, from King on down to Knight, form the military class of the kingdom. They train for war throughout their lives and spend whatever resources are necessary to obtain the very best weapons, armor, and war horses. Most of the fighters are Knights and Palladins, although they usually have units of loyal Soldiers, Long Bowmen, and Rangers.

Man for man, the Noble Army is the most powerful military force on the planet. Barring magical interference, they are usually capable of defeating any equal size army of any other kind. Against Sub-Human Armies, or Peasant Levies, they can often win even against odds of ten to one.

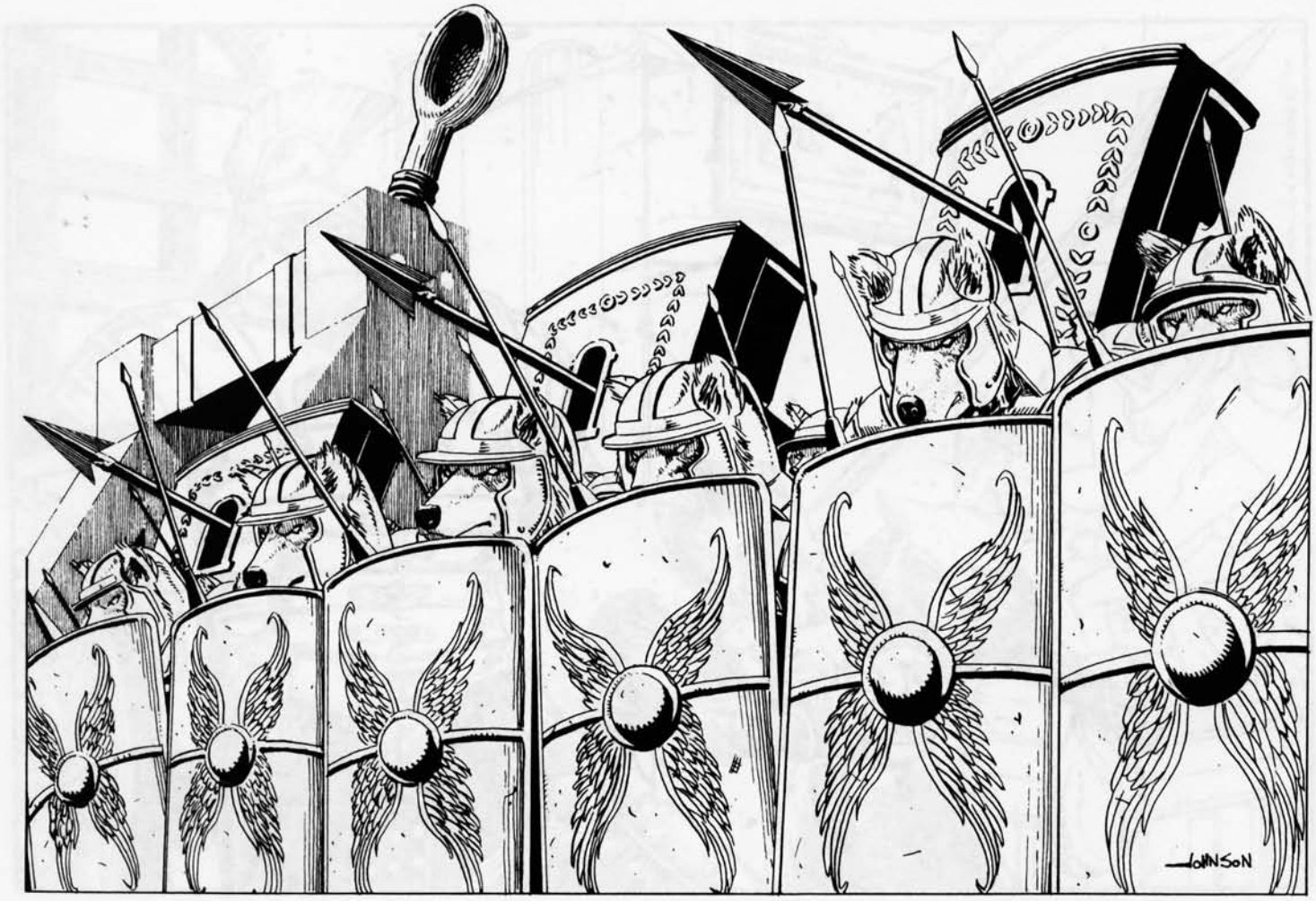
The problem is that Noble Armies are, of necessity, fairly small. It takes hundreds of peasants and craftsmen to provide the economic resources for a single Knight-at-Arms. In other words, Noble Armies have devastating power, but are always severely limited in numbers. For example, a kingdom of 50,000 people might reasonably have a Noble Army of 250 Knights (of whom perhaps 25 are Palladins) and 1,000 other professional soldiers (750 Soldiers, 225 Long Bowmen and 25 Rangers). Additional fighting forces are likely to be hired mercenaries, volunteers and militia forces.

3. Mercenary Armies are the professional armies of the Palladium World. They are the armies that fight for money. The backbone of all Mercenary Armies are the Mercenary Warriors, although they usually have their share of Soldiers, Long Bowmen, and sometimes even Knights and/or Rangers. A typical Mercenary Army might number as many as 500, with 250 Mercenary Warriors, 150 Soldiers, 75 Long Bowmen, 15 Knights, and 10 Rangers.

Mercenaries may not be as well trained and effective as Nobles, but they certainly come close. And, at certain specialized tasks, like besieging fortresses, or the use of artillery, or guerilla tactics, they are unsurpassed. The problem with all Mercenary Armies is that they fight only so long as the money comes in, and so long as the odds remain reasonable. Remember, there is no percentage in *heroism* for mercenaries. A loss on the battlefield can be ruinous, so they'll often switch sides or retreat altogether, rather than risk a total defeat.

4. Peasant Levy Armies. When worst comes to worst, and when a land is facing a large army of some kind, then "soldiers" are *recruited* from the general populace. Sometimes this involves recruiting with offers of pay and prestige, but more often, Peasant Levies are simply a nice way of describing *enslavement* – forced servitude.

The natural limitations of Peasant Armies are simple. While they are large, usually numbering in the thousands, they are very expensive. Even if one does not pay the troops, one still has to feed them, arm them, and provide them with basic equipment. The longer they are kept around, the more one has to feed them.



So most Peasant Armies are raised just weeks before the anticipated battle. Thus, they almost never have enough time for proper training.

Training the troops to fight as individuals, the way a decent noble or mercenary fights, would take too much time. Peasants are trained the simple way, to fight as a group. Therefore, the emphasis in Peasant Armies is on the drill. The idea here is that the troops learn to form solid lines, several men deep, either with spears or pole arms extended; forming a porcupine line, or with shields linked, forming a turtle line, and using short swords or axes. Against enemy cavalry, the porcupine line can be devastating. Undisciplined shock attacks, like those used by Sub-Human Armies, are often completely broken by a turtle line.

These tactics can be quite effective in defensive situations when the exact method of attack is predicted. However, against the wrong kind of attack, the Peasant Army can quickly turn into a helpless mob.

The offensive tactics of the Peasant Army are also designed around simple drills. The most common is the advancing phalanx, where a solid block of troops moves forward, and where they are trained to rotate the front lines back and the back lines forward. This means that as soldiers in the front tier are wounded, they are replaced.

Peasant Armies, when used well, can be just as good as mercenaries. On the other hand, when things don't go right, or when they are using the wrong tactics, Peasant Armies can become inferior even to Sub-Human Armies.

5. City Armies. Cities, especially prosperous merchant cities, often have their own armies of citizen soldiers. Unlike feudal systems where the nobles can devote their careers to war, city people are usually part-time soldiers.

Most City Armies are best at defense or at using technological advantages. For example, if a city produces, say, ballista, then it is likely that a large number of its soldiers, especially those that work in the ballista factories, are well trained and experienced in their use. As far as defense is concerned, this is where a City Army excels. They spend hours every week examining and strengthening their city fortifications, figure out all the possible approaches of invading armies, and plan for traps, ambushes, and the best locations for counterattacks.

It is also important to note that when a city is truly in danger, when an attack is obvious or imminent, the City Army always improves in size and quality. For one thing, thieves and assassins, always common in cities, are highly trained killers, but are rarely volunteers in organized armies. On the other hand, members of those professions are noted for their clear-eyed understanding of their own self-interest. When faced with a real threat, they *will* emerge from their anonymity and lend a nasty punch to the defending army of their city. So will men of magic, heroes and champions.

To conquer a walled city or fortress defended by a City Army is a major undertaking. Often odds of a hundred to one are not enough. Until the walls are breached, a City Army can usually hold off just about any kind of attacker.

On the other hand, removed from their home territory, entrenched positions and fortifications, City Armies are usually terrible. The troops are rarely experienced in long-distance marching or backpacking, they know little about field maneuvers, and are usually terrified of having to fight on open ground. In these situations they are, at best, something like poorly trained mercenaries, and, at worst, even more cowardly and disorganized than Peasant Levy Armies.

6. Barbarian Hordes. First, let's define what we mean by *barbarians*. Most dictionaries define barbarians as "uncivilized peoples." But that's not quite right. Barbarians are civilized, but it's just not the kind of civilization that is associated with cities and feudal society. Instead, the barbarians have a civilization based upon some other economic resource. It could be hunting, or herding grazing animals, or fishing (sea barbarians), but it will always involve a society where a large part of the population are skilled fighters.

Although Coyles are among the most skilled barbarians, there are plenty of others. Horse barbarians, whether human, Orc, or Coyle, are a major threat in Ophid's Grasslands. Barbarians generally fight for pleasure, sport, or profit. Since a large percentage of the members of any barbarian culture are trained fighters, they can usually field armies of substantial size.

The quality of both the individual barbarian fighters, and of their leaders, can vary enormously. Most barbarians fight only when easy opportunities present themselves. On the other hand, any time a Barbarian Army starts adding up a string of successes on the battlefield, it is time for everyone in the region to beware. At their worst, Barbarian Armies are only as good as Peasant Armies, but at their best, they may rival Mercenary Armies in quality, skill and daring.

7. National Armies. Take the specialized, professional training of a Mercenary Army and combine it with the size of a Peasant Levy or Barbarian Horde and you get an idea of how powerful a National Army can be. Unfortunately, National Armies are outrageously expensive. Not only do the troops have to be fed, equipped, and armed for years, but they also have to be trained and led by a large number of expensive professional soldiers. That means the nation of a National Army must be large, rich, and wise enough to exploit a very long-term investment.

There are only four lands in the Palladium World organized enough to have a true National Army: the *Western Empire*, the *Timiro Kingdom*, the *Eastern Territory*, and the *Wolfen Empire*.

The first, the **Western Empire**, has only recently regained some of its old power and professionalism. For many years, the various City Armies were the most powerful military forces in the Western Empire, and they were busy pitting themselves against one another in an endless series of local struggles. However, with the reforms of the Young Lord Itomas, the Western Army is being rebuilt. In time, it may become the most fearsome military force in the Palladium World.

Among the human nations, the army of the **Timiro Kingdom** is probably the most organized, but it is still close to its Noble roots. In other words, it still acts as if it were a Noble Army, even though it is ruled by a council of Generals. The three important branches of its army are the Sentinel Elite Cavalry, the Light Cavalry, and the Foot Soldiers. This excessive emphasis on cavalry has worked well in defending Timiro's borders from marauding tribes of sub-humans and Ogres. Whether or not it is capable of dealing with an invasion by a major force is another story.

The **Eastern Territory's** army is new, and it still has a lot of problems to work out. Although its leaders are first rate, there is a major problem with the actual soldiers. They come from three sources: First, from the obligations of the various loyal kingdoms within the Territory; second, from levies and drafts within the cities and towns; and finally, from active recruiting. The problem is that most of the kingdoms and towns keep their best men for their own defense. After all, the Eastern Territory is still a wild and untamed land. Coyle Hordes, Orc Tribes, Wolfen Bands, and even neighboring human nations all threaten the independent provinces within the Eastern Territory. Everyone knows that the National Army is the only barrier against the Northern Wilderness, but the individual city-states and kingdoms still have too many local problems to give up their best troops. As a result, the Territory's army has tremendous problems with discipline, desertion, and simple incompetence. Even worse, the army is too new to have that all-important component, a solid core of veteran troops.

Which brings us to the Wolfen Empire . . .

The Wolfen Imperial Army

The Imperial Army. It's not just that Wolfen are big. Bigness, by itself, doesn't count for much on the battlefield. Ogres, Trolls, and Giants, the largest of the Palladium races, are not noted for their battlefield successes. Nor is it because of their numbers. Masses of Sub-Humans or Peasants are not particularly effective. Neither do the Wolfen have any particular technological advantage. In fact, the weapons, armor, war machines, and tactics of the Eastern Territory, not to mention the Western Empire and Timiro, are far superior to the Wolfen.

Do the Wolfen have an advantage in the quality of their military leaders? Certainly there have been enormously talented Wolfen officers, and some could even be considered geniuses, but the officers of their human opposition come either from families who have specialized in war and who have studied it for generations, or, in the case of most Eastern Territory officers, are graduates of military academies with a very high standard of competence. In fact, the level of training and experience among human officers is usually superior to the Wolfen.

So where does that leave us? What factor gives the Wolfen the advantage? What is so special about the Wolfen Army that it consistently wins battles, campaigns, and wars?

The answer is the Wolfen soldier. Not his size, brute strength or training, though all are significant advantages, rather it is the fact that the Wolfen Army is made up of citizens, not levies. *Citizen soldiers* who don't fight for money, or freedom, or just to defend their city. Citizen soldiers who believe in the Wolfen Empire, and who fight for "Constitution, Council and Assembly," and are motivated beyond simple greed, or survival, or hatred. They are fighting for an ideal world.

Another advantage for the Wolfen soldier is a sense of tradition. Where most large nations need ten or twenty years to establish the training institutions and veteran core of the army, with the army continuing to improve with age, the Wolfen Em-

pire had theirs provided ready made. That's because the Wolfen Imperial Army started out as the Wolfen Barbarian Armies, and the transition was so rapid, less than ten years, that very few of the traditions, values, and training of the old system were lost when the troops became part of the Empire. All those old veterans who made the Barbarian Armies so effective just switched over and became the veterans of the new army.

All members of the Imperial Army must be *full citizens* of the Wolfen Empire. This means they must be citizens of one of the Member States or of an Imperial Province. That limits the Imperial Army to Wolfen from the Twelve Tribes, Humans from Havea, Kobolds from the Algor Mountain Collective, and Coyles from the Diamond Point Horde. Plus, Kankoran are also qualified because they are considered citizens of the Kankoran Trust Lands.

There are 16 Imperial Legions (I through XVI), each with over 5,000 troops. Legions are divided into Cohorts of approximately 500 troops, and each Cohort has 20 Maniples of 25 soldiers each. Among the various Imperial Legions there are 60 Cohorts of Heavy Infantry, 25 Cohorts of Light Infantry, 10 Cohorts of Scouts, 12 Cohorts of Heavy Artillery (catapults and ballista), 24 Cohorts of Light Artillery (Bowmen), 9 Cohorts of Anti-Armor Infantry, 15 Cohorts of Engineers, and 5 Cohorts of Cavalry. Each Cavalry Cohort is made up of human Knights, Palladins, and Mounted Soldiers, all from the Kingdom of Havea. All Cohorts have unique numbers, so the Heavy Infantry Cohorts are numbered from I to LX, and the Light Infantry from I to XXV. Maniples are not numbered, and are identified either by their current Lanipia ("That's Rolling-Legs' Maniple"), or by an adopted symbol ("Move the White Eagle and Brass Ball Maniples to the west").

Each Maniple is capable of completely independent action, forming either skirmish lines, or a phalanx with a front of 15 Wolfen 3 deep, with the remaining 10 shoring up the sides or rear. Maniples are generally organized in a checkerboard fashion.

Of the 16 Imperial Legions, nine are arranged along the southern border with the Eastern Territory, three are located in the southwest, north of the Inland Sea, and the remainder are stationed in the Wolfen Empire itself.

Wolfen Secondary Army

In addition to the Imperial Army, there is a completely separate Army of Auxiliary Troops made up of citizens from States with less than full membership, and anyone who doesn't qualify for the Imperial Army is welcome to join the Secondaries.

Each Legion of the Secondary Army has a full complement of Imperial Army Officers, and is specifically assigned to one of the Imperial Legions. In practice, this means that, for example, the First Imperial Legion, with its ten Imperial Cohorts, also commands ten Secondary Cohorts, including four Cohorts of Orcs, three Cohorts of Goblins, a Heavy Secondary Cohort with specialized Ogre and Troll Maniples, a Cohort of Coyles from the Moonstone Horde, and a Labor Cohort made up of Military Convicts (from both Imperial and Secondary Armies).

Secondary Army units are usually much larger than Imperial ones. The Cohorts often have up to 2,000 troops, and even Maniples are enlarged to 50 or more. This means that the Secondary Army is actually larger than the Imperial Army, massing up to a quarter of a million troops.

Wolfen Tribal Armies

Left over from pre-Empire days, but still strong, are the Armies of each of the Member States, including the Twelve Wolfen Tribes, the Kingdom of Havea, and the Diamond Point Coyle Horde (the Kobolds of the Algor Collective have no tribal army). These armies vary in size and quality, and are supported by the Tribes themselves. In an emergency, any or all of the Tribal Armies can be summoned to the defense of the Wolfen Empire. See the entries on the separate Wolfen Tribes for specific details.

Wolfen Army Ranks

Each soldier in any of the Wolfen Armies has one of the following eight ranks:

1. Iagia. A *private soldier* or "citizen soldier."

2. Xavia. The equivalent of a *Sergeant*. Xavia are generally either second in command of a Maniple, or assigned to lead specialty groups of from 5 to 10 technical experts.

3. Lanipia. These *Lieutenants* are the backbone of the Wolfen officer corps. Each Maniple, whether Imperial or Secondary, has an Imperial Lanipia assigned to it. Generally, this assignment is given to young and promising Wolfen destined for a lifetime career in the Army. This first assignment usually joins a Lanipia with his or her Maniple for no less than ten years. The Lanipia are often called *Patria* or "Father-Officers" by their men, and most Lanipia maintain a close relationship with their old Maniple for the rest of their lives.

4. Centuria. Roughly equal to a *Captain*, the Centuria lead from four to six Maniples, and there are usually two Centuria for each Cohort. This is often a temporary or testing position, with the Centuria having four years to prove themselves. At the end of that time they are promoted to Quingia, released from the service, or demoted back to Lanipia.

5. Quingia. These *Majors* are considered fully trained field officers, meaning that they are capable of taking their Cohort out into the field for up to a year, to form independent tactics and strategy, to manage all the supplies and equipment of their troops, and to fully understand the capabilities and limitations of their Cohort. Each Cohort is lead by a Quingia.

6. Millitaria. This class, roughly *Colonels*, contains the staff officers of the Wolfen Army. Although they are capable of commanding Cohorts, and even Legions, they are usually assigned to special jobs involving the vast amount of paperwork and bureaucracy that keeps the military in the field. They are also the army's security and espionage officers. Often regarded as supernumeraries, or "extra officers," this officer pool has a large number of highly trained leaders, all hoping to make the promotion to Legatia. However, while there are hundreds of Millitaria, there are fewer than sixty Legatia positions in the entire Empire, and often, promotion is a matter of waiting for the old Legatia to die.

7. Legatia. *Generals* assigned to lead entire Legions. They are the cream of the Imperial Army. All Legatia start out as one of the 32 Legatia assigned to the various Legions. They can also

be promoted out of the Legions into a variety of desk jobs, including positions in the Imperia or Senate.

8. Tribunia. Separate from the regular chain of command, the Tribunia are the *commanding officers* of the Tribal Armies. Sometimes they are retired Legatia, but in the smaller Tribal Armies, such as the Eastern Arm Tribe, or the Ice-Eye Tribe, they are sometimes hereditary leaders, or members of the chief's family.

Wolfen Army Titles

There are twelve titles in the Wolfen Army, each indicating a particular function of a soldier or officer.

1. Promotia. Indicates a temporary or brevet rank. Typically used during active warfare when officers are lost and lower ranked soldiers' are "field promoted."

2. Imperia. The official title for a *commander* from the Imperial Army. Most Imperial officers commanding Secondary Armies have the title Imperia, as do Legatia in charge of Legions and Quingia in charge of Cohorts.

3. Tormentia. A skilled Bowman (either Crossbow or Longbow), or an officer leading a specialized unit of Bowmen.

4. Ballistia. Soldiers who use artillery, or officers commanding units of artillery.

5. Scutaria. Soldiers of the Heavy Cavalry, almost always humans from the Kingdom of Havea, or their commanding officers.

6. Cataria. Heavy Armor or Heavy Infantry soldiers, or officers commanding Heavy Infantry units. Usually these are the front-line troops of the Wolfen Army, equipped with the Wolfen equivalent of a plate half-suit or double mail armor and carrying both shield and either sword or axe, along with at least two Wolfen Pilum (spears).

7. Clibania. The Light Armor or Light Infantry soldiers, or their officers. These units are equipped for speed in cross-country or battleground movement. They are usually equipped with half suits of either hard or studded leather armor, with light shields, a sword or axe, and one Wolfen Pilum. In large scale battles they are usually reserve forces thrown in to support failing lines, or to take advantage of an enemy weakness.

8. Comitia. Soldiers who act as Escorts or Scouts, or their leaders. Wear little or no armor, with soft leather armor and a light helmet being their maximum protection. **Note:** A high percentage of Comitia are Kankoran, Wolfen Rangers, or Druids.

9. Hastaria. The Wolfen pole arm or Anti-Armor Infantrymen, or the officers that lead them. They wear the heaviest of Wolfen armor, scale mail, and carry Wolfen-sized pole arms. Their main function is to operate against human Noble Armies with tactics designed to blunt or destroy the advantages of mounted human Knights and Palladins. **Note:** Users of magic may be a part of this force.

10. Dolabria. These are Imperial Engineers, or their officers. They are specialized troops trained in bridge making, siege operations, tunneling and other building tasks. A large number of the Dolabria come from the Kobolds' Algor Mountain Collective, although most of their officers are Wolfen. **Note:** Wizards and Warlocks are often part of the team.

11. Auxilia. General term for all Secondary Troops, and for the officers that command them. Note that Imperial officers, even when assigned to the Secondary Army, are never addressed as Auxilia. The Auxilia are usually garbed in some sort of leather armor and carry a spear or pole arm, mace, and large shield.

12. Mulia. Labor Troops or commanders of the Convict units. Rather than constructing prisons, the Wolfen Empire has set up several Cohorts of Laborers. Convicted prisoners are sentenced to the Mulia for anywhere from a one year term to life, depending on their crime. The Cohorts continue to operate as working military units, but are also responsible for doing the dirty work of the army, often working under the direction of the Dolabria. Other than officers, few wear anything more than cloth coverings or padded armor, and they have no weapons, only tools such as an axe, maul, mattock, shovel, hammer, and/or knife.

Wolfen Army Complete Titles

Each Wolfen officer has two titles, the first referring to his rank, and the second referring to his specialty. If there is a third title, it's always "Promotia," and it means that the rank is a *field rank*, a temporary promotion based on a training exercise, or to take the place of a missing officer. Numbers following the titles indicate the specific unit to which the officer is assigned. Therefore, a "Xavia Ballistia III-II" is a "Sergeant of the 3rd Bowmen's Cohort of the 2nd Legion," and "Legatia Imperia IX" is the "General of the 9th Imperial Legion."

Other examples:

"Lanipia Cataria XLIII-IX" means "Lieutenant of the 43rd Heavy Infantry Cohort of the 9th Legion."

"Quingia Hastaria Promotia IV-V" means "Major of the 4th Anti-Armor Infantry Cohort of the 5th Legion."

"Millitaria Imperia III-VIII" means "Colonel of the 3rd Cohort of the 8th Legion."

"Iagia Dolabria I-X" means "Private of the 1st Cohort of Engineers of the 10th Legion."

Magic

There used to be an undercurrent of suspicion and fear toward magic among Wolfen. Until the early years of the Wolfen Empire, magic users were objects of hatred, and Wolfen young were all brought up on countless stories of evil mages turning Wolfen into warrior slaves.

However, in recent years, this dread has turned into fascination. Like a teenager discovering that the forbidden might be fun, the Wolfen have embraced magic and its various practitioners. This is seen most in the movement to encourage young Wolfen to enter into the magical arts. Until recently there were no schools of magic of any kind in the Northern Wilderness, and potential magic students either studied as apprentices or traveled to the great universities of the Western Empire or Lopan. Today, the Imperial Capital of Shadowfall has a unified school of arcane study, where students may learn the ways of becoming a Wizard, Warlock, or Diabolist. Future courses of study hope to include more unusual forms of magic, such as Summoning, Conjuring, Protean Magic, Shadow Magic, Life Force Magic, and others. An affiliated school for psionic training has also been established, and is turning out Mind Mages. With both institutions, tuition is free so long as the students, upon graduation, enter into Imperial service for the next six years. Given the 50 year life span of a Wolfen, a six year stretch is a long time, but for those who do it, it is an acceptable cost of learning the secrets to such powerful arts as magic and psionics.

Unfortunately, the Wolfen's new-found love of magic and mages holds the seed of tragedy. It is not without reason that people all over the Palladium World distrust those who traffic in dark and unknown forces. Countless times in their history, dabblers in magic, it matters not whether they were well-meaning or greedy, have released uncontrollable forces and beings. Wolfen, with their bright new civilization, have yet to experience any of the really serious magical mishaps, but many believe it is only a matter of time before something goes wrong.

Religion and the Wolfen Empire

Unlike most governments in the Palladium World, there is no "official" religion in the Wolfen Empire. Instead, to quote their Constitution, "As the calling of mortals to the voices of the immortals passes our understanding, we admit our profound ignorance. Let those who hear the voices of the gods be free to follow without interference from this Council, or any Tribe, or any Nation."

The result has been an official "hands-off" policy towards religion by the Wolfen Empire. And the result has been surprisingly positive. By refusing to take sides in religious disputes, many of the most distressing conflicts among Wolfen and others have faded.

There is now no overriding religion among the Wolfen. While certain tribes (particularly IV, VII and XII) are notoriously devout, most other Wolfen Tribes have managed to make religion a fairly unimportant part of their lives.

Two other results of the Wolfen's religious policy are also important. First, the growth of *Pragmatism* has reduced the number of Wolfen who worship any religion or gods. Second, while the total number of worshipers has gone down, the variety of gods, churches, and cults worshiped by the Wolfen is growing by leaps and bounds. Here are some of the major religions observed in the Northern Wilderness, both new and old.

The Northern Gods

Worship of the Northern Gods is far and away the largest religious denomination in the Wolfen Empire, although the two gods associated with it – Algor and Wolvenar – are the least involved members of that pantheon. Algor, the Northern Sea God, is often considered by religious scholars to be an independent deity. He was once part of the Northern Gods, but has grown so reclusive that many (with the exception of Wolfen) feel he no longer belongs to the pantheon at all. The frozen Algor is the patron deity of those living in the cold North or those who sail the northern ocean waters of the world.

The other main god from the Northern Pantheon of interest to the Wolfen Empire is Wolvenar, the newly formed god of the Wolfen themselves! The exact genesis of this deity and his worship is a bit of an unknown, but some believe that with the formation of the Wolfen Empire came the collective need among the Wolfen for a god of their own, and just like that, the deity Wolvenar came into being. He is a young and impulsive god, prone to acting without thinking, and for getting overly involved in the affairs of mortals. The Wolfen love him for this, since Wolfen priests can often expect some kind of direct response from him when they cast their spells, say their prayers, or ask for miracles. The other Northern Gods, however, find Wolvenar's conduct imprudent, and they routinely chastise him for it. In his more hotheaded moments, the Wolfen god has thought about breaking away from the pantheon and starting one of his own. To populate it with new gods, Wolvenar would assume the shape of a mortal Wolfen and lay with many different Wolfen maidens in the hopes that their offspring would be at least demigods, if not fully-powered gods . . .

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a relatively new approach to the problems of religion. It is not a religion in and of itself, but instead the thinking Wolfen's response to religion. Nowhere is the Wolfen streak of practicality and simplicity so evident as in the attitude of the Pragmatists.

Basically, the entire philosophy can be summed up in the words of *Moldy-Shin Gerrath*, the Wolfen philosopher, when he said, *"Whatever works, that's what you should believe. If something doesn't work, then don't believe it. If it can't be proved, ignore it."*

It's important to understand that the Pragmatists are neither atheists, nor agnostics, nor blasphemers or heretics. They readily admit to the existence and powers of the gods. They never mock gods, churches, or clerics. Their philosophy denies nothing of religion or the benefits that worshipers may receive.

No, Pragmatists say only that the gods are beyond the understanding of mortals. That for the gods, mortals are only playthings and pawns to be used without passion in their cosmic games. For that reason, the Pragmatists will argue, it is better to stay away from the gods, to give them nothing, and to take nothing from them, in the hope that they will not meddle in the affairs of mere mortals.

Where once Pragmatism was a relatively obscure philosophical point of view, it has gradually become a sincere belief for Wolfen throughout the Empire. Much of the credit is due to the spread of literacy, along with a pair of printed pamphlets written in the Wolfen language: *Confessions of a Pragmatist*, by Yellow-Back Fangre, and *Can You Hear the Gods Laughing?* by Moldy-Shin Gerrath.

The Church of Light and Dark, the Church of Taut, and the Death Cults of Set, Anubis, Utu, & Tolmet

Probably the most popular of all religions among the Wolfen is the worship of the god Set. Many Wolfen believe that they are the divine children of Set, and that they were created in his image. For them, their appearance proves that they should be allied to Set, and the appearance of Set proves that he is the natural god of the Wolfen.

However, while there is general agreement on the divinity of Set (and his ally Anubis), there is little agreement over which of the many Set religions should be followed. So all of the various major religions based on Set are observed somewhere in the Wolfen Empire.

Adding to the confusion is the profusion of new churches and cults dedicated to Set. It is almost as if, with the birth of the Wolfen Empire, each Tribal Church, and each Priest within the Church, decided it was time to form a new religion.

The two extremes of this behavior are found in the Eastern Arm Tribe and the Sun Child Tribe. Among the Eastern Arm, following the Church of Taut is more than encouraged, it is required. Any Wolfen preaching a doctrine not strictly in keeping with the Church of Taut is considered a heretic by the Eastern Arm.

On the other hand, among the Sun Child Tribe there are literally dozens of different sects of Set. Far from punishing Wolfen for proclaiming a new "vision" of Set, or describing a new word from Set, the Sun Children flock to these prophets. As a result, there is almost complete chaos, and several of the sects are bizarre in the extreme.

Druidism

Druids, and the philosophy/religion of the Druids, are respected by the vast majority of Wolfen. Close to their homeland forests, most Wolfen are attracted to the quiet teachings of Druids, and many Wolfen travel to *Darkcove*, in the lands of the Dark Step Tribe, to study Druidism. Unfortunately, the Druids have never presented a very "flashy" version of their beliefs. This has resulted in a reduction in the numbers of Wolfen Druids and Druid followers. The more levelheaded Wolfen now heed the teachings of Pragmatism, while the more fanatical tend to be drawn to the more dramatic religions. That has left the Druids with only those relatively few Wolfen who are quiet, yet sincerely devout. If something doesn't happen soon, either to reform the religion, or to change the attitudes of a large number of Wolfen, Druidism will likely become an obsolete relic, revered, but dusty and ignored.

Fenry Deevil Worship

The Fenry, or "Wolves of Hell" (see the **Palladium Fantasy RPG, 2nd Ed.**, pg. 328), now form a major cult in the Wolfen Empire. This is due partly to the Wolfen vision of *angels*, who they naturally see as looking something like themselves in an idealized form. The Fenry Deevil Worshipers claim that the true

angels sent by the gods to the Wolfen are *Fenry*, and that only by acknowledging their divinity can Wolfen find the true religion.

Once restrictive and secretive, Fenry worshipers have started openly soliciting members. They are now wide open, accepting believers from any race, tribe, or nation. They make extravagant claims for their followers, promising victory in battle, wealth, love, or anything else that the potential worshiper may desire. What is mysterious is that many of these promises have come true! Now these Lesser Deevils, who appear as giant black wolves, are a popular symbol of power among evil or ambitious Wolfen. And the Fenry themselves have encouraged the growth of the cult, often directly assisting its leaders.

Those who disapprove of the *Cult of the Fenry* say that the whole thing is really a front for Rhada, and behind her, Mephisto, both Deevil Lords who see the potential power of the Wolfen and wish to establish a major church within the Empire. It is unknown whether the high clergy of the Fenry Cult are aware of this theory of manipulation, and even if they do know of it, it is uncertain whether or not they would disapprove.

Dragonwright

As the worship of Set has broken into a mass of cults and sects, so the Wolfen worship of Dragonwright has become a confusing mess. One of the major sources of confusion, and dissension, is the conflict between the worshipers of Kym-nark-mar (Frost Dragon) and the worshipers of Kormath (White Horned Dragon). The problem is that both sects claim that their god is the true icon of the Ice Dragon, a powerful symbol to most Wolfen. While it is a problem among several tribes, it is worst toward the west, among the various tribes and sub-tribes of the Oak People.

The Wolfen Economy

Perhaps the weakest link in the chain of Wolfen society is the economy. Which is not to say that it is hopeless, or in any immediate danger, just that it is basically unstable. That's because most of the Empire's money comes not from taxes, but from conquest. True, they have been exceptionally fair with those who they have conquered, buy they've also been practical enough to exact enough of a penalty out of their conquered subjects to make a bit of a profit. Conquest can only fund a society so far, however, and the Wolfen are running out of juicy targets to assimilate. The best bet for war is with the Eastern Territory, and there shall be no profit made from that at all. No, if the Wolfen need to prosper, they will have to find ways of building their wealth rather than merely reaping it.

Industry

The first and best way to build wealth is to establish industry. The large-scale production of goods and services is the key to bringing money in, so the Wolfen have been scrambling, ever since the formation of their Empire, to figure out ways of *industrializing* their society. The term "industrializing" is used loosely, since even the largest production facilities are relatively small, low-impact places compared to the huge steel foundries and brickworks of the Western Empire, for instance.

Right now, the primary Wolfen industry is logging. If there is one thing they have enough of, it is trees. Thanks to intervention by the Kankoran, the Wolfen do not clear-cut anywhere. And they never cut more than 10% of the trees in any given square mile (1.6 km) over the course of a decade. This gives the forest more than enough opportunity to replenish itself as the Wolfen come through cutting down expensive hardwood lumber. Once trees are felled, they are brought to a coastal city for sawmilling (another growth industry) and shipping to other parts of the world, most notably the *Island Kingdom of Bizantium, Zy* and *Y-Oda*, ports in the *southern Eastern Territory* (hey, they have to go where the money is, Wolfen merchants explain), the *Timiro Kingdom* and the *Land of the South-Winds*. Shipments are also sent to *Phi* and *Lopan*. In fact, the only major nation that does not engage directly in some level of wood trading with the Wolfen Empire is the Western Empire, both because of the political differences between the two nations and because the logistics of it are not very convenient.

Wolfen hardwood shipments are a major cash cow, since it costs the Empire very little to harvest hardwood, yet it commands a premium on international markets. If the market is good, return on a shipment of Wolfen hardwood is exorbitant, something between 1,000% (10 times the original cost) and 10,000% (100 times the original cost).

Aside from logging and sawmills, most Wolfen industries are very small operations run out of people's homes and village centers. These "backyard workshops" make the Wolfen Empire self-sufficient, but their total output is questionable. In the event of a war with the East, the Wolfen will have to rely on these backyard industries to crank out huge quantities of weapons, armor and other war materiel. Whether or not this can be done will be put to the test. The success of the backyard industries might very well determine how long the Wolfen will be able to stand up to a prolonged Eastern assault.

Trade

The whole issue of trade is a difficult one for the Wolfen. While they have a rich country, most of its riches are natural resources, not skills or manufactured products. This means that selling their wealth is almost always connected with the destruction of their forest or the land in some way.

From the Great Northern Wilderness comes timber, furs, metals, and gemstones, all of which bring good prices throughout the Palladium World. Unfortunately, the Wolfen Empire needs more than it can buy with even those plentiful funds. For example, from the Western Empire they need spices, both for rare tastes and those needed for preserving food, plus scents, silks, alcohol, books, manufactured goods of all kinds, ranging from glass to metal to ceramic, and finally, magical items of every sort.

Taxation

The thorniest Wolfen economic problem is that of taxation. Their society is so new, they have yet to come up with a stable way of dealing with the problem. Up until now, in the first fifty

years of their history, they've managed to solve most of their financial problems by the simple expedience of conquest and pillage. That will not last forever, and the difficulty lies in that which gives the Wolfen Empire its true strength, the Constitution. According to that document, only the People's Assembly can authorize new taxes or increases in old taxes.

Currency

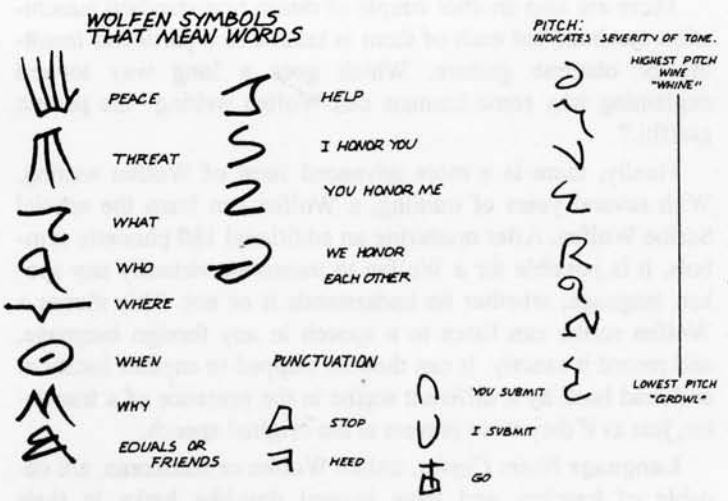
One strength of the Wolfen is their system of currency. Seeing the chaos of monies and exchanges in the human-dominated world, the first council created the Wolfen money system. Specifically designed to be different, all Wolfen money comes in rectangular slabs with holes in one corner. Part of the reason for this design comes from the old Wolfen habit of wearing long strings of teeth, pearls, and other jewelry. The new Wolfen coins can easily be worn as necklaces, bracelets, or belts.

Incidentally, the habit of wearing jewelry strings has long passed from fashion within the Empire. Now it is only the oldest members of Wolfen society or those of distant tribes who wear the old-fashioned jewelry.

Education

One measure of the strength of the Wolfen Empire has been their willingness to recognize their problems and solve them. Education is one of the clearest examples. At the creation of the Wolfen Empire there was a serious scarcity of literate peoples in the Northern Wilderness. Suddenly, with the new emphasis on laws, treaties and bureaucracies, the Wolfen government found it impossible to keep up with the paperwork. There just weren't enough skilled scribes to do the job.

Members of the first Imperia and Bureaucria were assigned to investigate the problem. It was obvious that learning was difficult, mostly because young Wolfen had to learn to speak the Elven tongue before they could learn to read and write in the Elven written language. They concluded that a drastic solution was needed: The creation of an entirely new form of writing would have to be invented. A script for Wolfen. A written tongue that conformed to the Wolfen way of thinking and the Wolfen way of speaking.



Wolfen Writing

One of the great breakthroughs in Wolfen culture has been the development of their own system of writing. Unlike previous writing systems, usually based either on ancient runes or symbols, or on abstract alphabets, the Wolfen system is extremely phonetic. That is, each symbol represents a particular sound.

Part of the reason for this is that the Wolfen tongue (essentially identical to Kankoran, Coyle, and Bearmen) is much more growling or guttural than human speech. Sounds have a definite "up" or "down" tone, and can be categorized as ranging somewhere between the high pitch of a whine and the low pitch of a growl.

Down sounds are those that tend toward orders or statements of fact, whereas *up sounds* tend to be questions or uncertain statements. Combining the up and down with the particular pitch allows for all the possible Wolfen sounds. The phonetic writing system graphically shows the pitch and direction of the sounds. In addition, taking a breath, not usually important in human languages, is generally important in the Wolfen tongue. So backward jogs in the phonetic symbols indicate a "pant."

Another interesting facet of Wolfen writing is their system of punctuation. Rather than being based on sounds, the punctuation symbols are based on common Wolfen hand gestures. So their symbol for "stop" or "end" is roughly square, a symbol that they've adopted from the gesture of a closed fist. Written Wolfen sentences both begin and end with punctuation.

Take, for example, the typical sentence, "Assemble your squad and lead them to the south." In written Wolfen the sentence would start with an opening punctuation mark, the symbol for "listen" or "heed," which is a backwards "F." Then the actual sounds of the command would be depicted according to their pitch and direction (up or down), in three letters; the first for "you-joined-with-your-group," second for "amass-military-force," and the third for "leading-southward." Finally, the sentence would end with the closing punctuation, the symbol for "submit" or "accept dominance," which is an upside-down "U."

In standard Wolfen writing there are only eight letters, each corresponding to a particular pitch. Any of these letters is formed differently according to the direction of the sound. However, there are over forty different standard punctuation marks.

There are also another couple of dozen non-standard punctuation symbols, but each of them is related to a particular insulting or obscene gesture. Which goes a long way toward explaining why some humans call Wolfen writing "the perfect graffiti."

Finally, there is a more advanced form of Wolfen writing. With several years of training, a Wolfen can learn the special Scribe Wolfen. After mastering an additional 180 phonetic symbols, it is possible for a Wolfen to transcribe virtually any spoken language, whether he understands it or not. This means a Wolfen scribe can listen to a speech in any foreign language, and record it exactly. It can then be shipped to another location, and read back by a different scribe in the presence of a translator, just as if they were present at the original speech.

Language Note: *Coyles*, unlike Wolfen or Kankoran, are capable of barking, and have several dog-like barks in their speech. This means that they can easily speak Wolfen, but that Wolfen and Kankoran have trouble speaking the full Coyle language. Taking advantage of their linguistic superiority, each Coyle Tribe has developed a code or secret language consisting solely of barks and hand gestures. To represent the barks in a written form, the Coyles have modified standard Wolfen writing, adding in six special crosses or slashes to represent their own special dialect. Other spoken languages usually known to most Wolfen are Elfen and Gobblely.

Literacy

Among *Imperial Wolfen*, roughly one out of every five Wolfen can read and write. In certain tribes, I, II, VII and VIII for example, just about all the Wolfen are literate, even the females. On the other hand, the frontier Wolfen have a much lower percentage of readers, with the worst being the Tribes IX and X, among whom barely one in fifty are educated. This is changing quickly, especially as written messages are used more and more in Wolfen wars. All this is remarkable, since fifty years ago a Wolfen capable of reading was considered a freak.

Coyles have picked up the reading habit even more quickly than the Wolfen. Among most tribes, all the officers, chiefs and leaders can read, and up to 75% of the rest of the Coyles as well. Interestingly, it is the Coyle tribes that have *not* encouraged reading that are the most successful at becoming literate. Coyles, with their natural suspicion (some would say paranoia), seem to regard the Wolfen written language as some kind of *secret plot*, and are usually eager to learn the code.

Other races within the Northern Wilderness tend toward little or no literacy. Kankoran and Bearmen, for whom the Wolfen written language is natural, are only occasionally literate (4%). Kobolds, Humans and Dwarves rarely learn the Wolfen written language (about 5%), but those who do find it easy to learn. Among other races, including Ogres, Orcs, Goblins and Centaurs, writing remains a rare skill practiced only by clerics, merchants and mages. The most literate Wolfen are fluent in both the spoken and written Elven language (still the universal tongue of the literate world) and may be proficient in several of the human languages as well.

Books and Libraries

In recent years, books have become revered by the Wolfen. Where once their contents were things of mystery, now they seem to hold the key to the mysteries of the universe! One of the major projects of the Wolfen Bureaucria is the translation of all the ancient Elven works into Wolfen form. They are also hard at work transcribing the traditional legends, myths and stories, previously passed on by word of mouth, into book form.

They have become fanatic collectors of all kinds of books and manuscripts, and are constantly adding on to the main Library of Shadowfall. Smaller libraries, also under the control of the Wolfen Empire's Bureaucria, are located in the cities of Seaholm, Goldstar (where there is also a major collection of native and imported art), Whitewater, Darkcove, and Bataria.

Paper & Printing

Printing, of one form or another, has been widespread throughout the Palladium World for thousands of years. While there are still plenty of books copied by longhand (all the larger religions maintain "Scriptoriums" dedicated to copying books, often illustrated manuscripts with beautiful calligraphy), of every 100 books at least 95 come from print shops.

Outside of the Wolfen Empire printing is almost entirely done as full page blocks.

The most significant print advancements are found in Bizantium, where a "printing machine" has been developed that allows two sides to be printed at the same time, and in the Western Empire, where some cities have adopted large-scale poster printing machines to print sixty-four pages simultaneously. Printing itself is pretty standard in Timiro, but they're known for developing machines that bind books in wood, cloth or leather covers, with the pages tightly sewn together.

However, it is in the Wolfen Empire where there is the first widespread use of *movable type*.

Instead of painstakingly carving a wood mold, or needle-etching a metal plate with the complete text of a page, a Wolfen printer can just assemble a book page from little pieces of type. The movable type system is at least ten times faster, allows for easy corrections, and is much cheaper since all the pieces can be reused over and over.

Another innovation of the Wolfen Empire has been the manufacturing of *paper* from wood pulp.

Elsewhere in the Palladium World, paper is made from a variety of ingredients, but it's almost always a combination of some kind of fabric thread (cotton or fine wool or hair) along with different kinds of water plant root. The resulting paper comes in a large variety of sizes, colors (including pure white), and thicknesses, and is durable enough to last (assuming proper care) for hundreds of years.

Wolfen paper, made from wood pulp, tends to be thick and coarse, is never pure white, and is anything but fine. When printing or writing, the ink tends to smear, and it should *never* be used for any magical purposes. Most of it is also highly acidic, so it tends to fall apart eventually, burns incredibly easily (it's great for tinder!), and it completely falls apart when soaked (actually, the Wolfen use this as a security measure, easily de-

stroying sensitive or secret documents). On the other hand, Wolfen paper is insanely cheap.

Up until a few years ago, all the Wolfen paper was brown, looked more like cardboard than paper, and fell apart after ten or twenty years. However, there have been two improved types of paper introduced since then. The new *green paper* is much lighter in color (a light shade of green, instead of paper-bag brown), and is much finer and better at taking ink. Even better is the new *grey paper*, which still has the rough texture and thickness of the old brown paper, but is supposed to last much longer; fifty years or more.

Wolfen Empire Paper Products

Brown Paper (18x24 inch, 150 sheets): Costs one gold.

Brown Paper (9x12 inch, 500 sheets): Costs one gold.

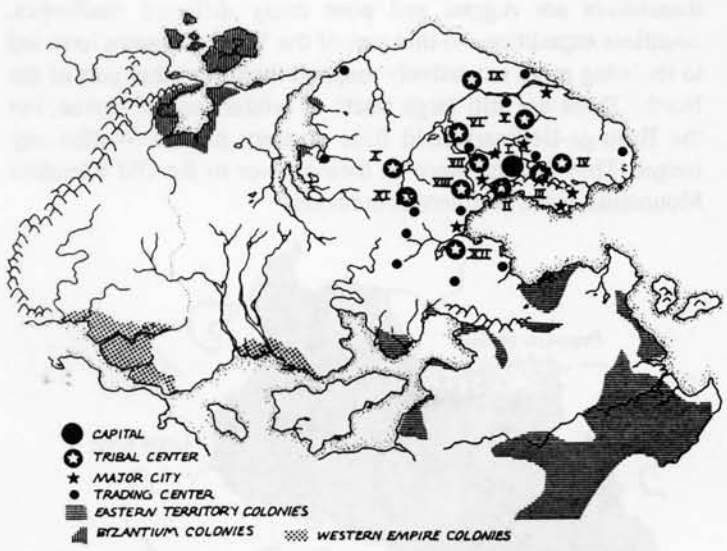
Green Paper (9x12 inch, 250 sheets): Costs one gold.

Grey Paper (9x12 inch, 100 sheets): Costs 2 gold.

Blank Green-Paper Notebook (paper cover, glued, 100 sheets): Costs 5 gold.

Blank Green-Paper Notebook (paper cover, stitched, 100 sheets): Costs 8 gold.

Wolfen Grey-Paper Blank Book (glued, 100 sheets) Costs: 5 gold.



The Geography of the Wolfen Empire

Unlike human geography, where the boundaries between one government and another are like an invisible line drawn on the land, Wolfen see the whole idea of *territory* in a much more flexible way. It is quite possible for the Wolfen to cede the same patch of land to several different groups. For example, the same patch of forest might be home to a group of Faerie Folk and also to a Coyle Horde. But in the winter, when the Faeries have migrated south, and when the Coyles have joined their cousins in the west, the same land might be considered the *winter property* of a band of Kankoran or Bearmen.

Regional Breakdown

Though the Wolfen Empire has no formally defined borders within itself, there are a number of generally agreed upon regions within the Empire that are distinguished by their geography, environment and other natural characteristics. The people of the Empire take note of these more for bearing and traveling than anything else. The regions of the Wolfen Empire are not political entities whatsoever. They have no representation, no separate codes of law, taxes, military support, etc. They are merely the basic areas that form the background of the Wolfen Empire.

There are eight regions: the *Algorian Coast*, the *Northern Wilderness,* the *Northern Coast*, the *Western Frontier*, the *Goragh*, the *Southlands*, the *Bruu-ga-Belimar Mountains*, and the infamous *Disputed Zone.*

Algorian Coast

The Algorian Coast contains the heart and soul of the Wolfen Empire. Many of its Tribal Capitals and other noteworthy cities are located here, in the fertile land overlooking the beautiful Algorian Sea. It is here that the oldest Wolfen settlements might be found. Of all the Imperial regions, the Algorian Coast is the most cleared out, with large tracts of land dedicated to farming, livestock production, logging and other endeavors that have removed much of the ancient forests from the land. Some segments of Wolfen society, and the Kankorans as a whole, find the rate of clear-cutting going on in the Algorian Coast to be terrifying. The trees being cut down took thousands of years to grow in the first place. If the lumberjacks keep this up, one day there will be no forest left! The loggers, however, are quick to dismiss such talk. After all, they are not exactly clearing huge tracts of land each year (indeed, even with magic to help, Palladium loggers can not clear land anywhere nearly as fast as modern lumberjacks might with heavy machinery). And besides, it is not as if there isn't a shortage of forest to be had. Look around, they say. The Algorian Coast has lost maybe one fifth of its total land area to settlements and clear-cutting. It took hundreds of years of sustained effort for it to get that way.

Northern Wilderness

Stretching from the northern slope of the Algor Mountains, and north through a vast land of forests, rivers and lakes is the Northern Wilderness. It is just the opposite of the Algorian Coast in terms of settlements. North of the Algor there are very few settlements to speak of, and the land is just about as undisturbed as it was when the Wolfen first stood on two legs. This is a plentiful land, one where many different humanoid peoples live in harmony, living off the forest's incredible bounty. It is also a hostile land, with a substantial population of monsters and dangerous wild animals. Beautiful, but rugged, this is a place of deep ravines, of rushing water and majestic waterfalls, as well as natural hot springs. Though the number of brigands is low, the attacks from wild predators more than make up for it.

Northern Coast

The dividing line between the Northern Wilderness and the Northern Coast is the start of the tundra; a treeless, windswept plain, where lichen and moss compete with grass and wild flowers. Though the Northern Coast has excellent access to the sea, it is home to surprisingly little naval activity. This is due in large part to the ice that encrusts the northern coastlines each winter, making it nearly impossible for ships to launch and land safely from this region for eight months out of the year.

The Western Frontier

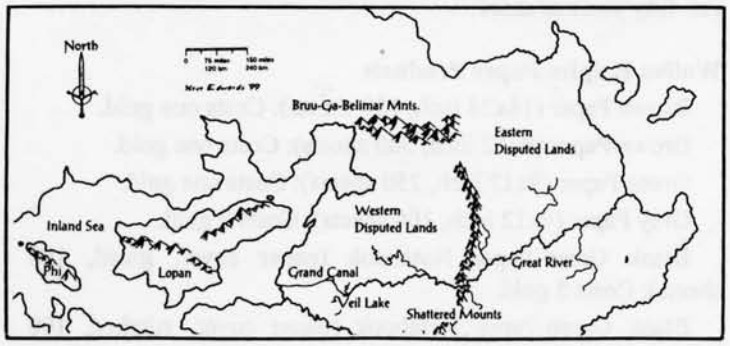
Running from the northern coastline, down along the entire coast of the Dragon's Claw, along the River Taber, and to the Inland Sea, the Western Frontier marks the *de facto* limit of the Wolfen Empire's authority in the Great Northern Wilderness. Throughout the region there are tiny garrisons of a dozen or so troops, but for the most part, the people living here must enforce their own law and depend on the Wolfen Empire for virtually nothing. There is a strong streak of independence among the people of the frontier, but since most of them are Kankoran, Orcs, Bearmen and Faeries, who are hardly the most ardent Imperial subjects anyway, it all works out okay. There are virtually no large settlements anywhere in the Western Frontier. The biggest permanent sites are along the Dragon's Claw, and half the time, these are really clandestine Bizantium smugglers settlements filled with shady types who carry out lucrative business deals with the Wolfen Empire despite their home government's ban on such activity.

The Goragh

Taking its name for the Wolfen word for "mystery," the Goragh is the smallest region of the Empire, consisting of the square of territory between tiny Lake Destiny and the endpoints of the rivers Downwater, Kota and Threnn. This land is the Wolfen Empire's "Bermuda Triangle," for most of the travelers and expeditions that enter this small region are never seen nor heard from again. For generations, the Wolfen considered the Goragh a cursed place, home to unnameable demons and monsters. Some believe it is a convergence of sorts, and that the rivers and lake all feed the wilderness' collective life force into one spot, giving the land strange powers and characteristics. Others believe it is a land of dimensional instability, and that doorways to other worlds randomly open up, swallowing up travelers and depositing freakish monsters and humanoids in their stead. And still others believe all this talk is hokum, and that those who get lost in the Goragh do so because the terrain there is difficult, and bad weather has a habit of whipping up suddenly, dooming the unprepared explorer. Until some band of intrepid adventurers plumbs the depths of the Goragh for themselves, there will be no telling what the secret of this odd little place really is.

The Southlands

This is the southernmost land containing a strong Wolfen military presence and is the home domain of the *Iron Claw Tribe*. These soldiers constantly patrol, on the lookout for Eastern scouts or war parties. The idea is that if the Wolfen made a strong show of force much further south, say in the Disputed Zone, it would only provoke the East into action. While the Wolfen are hardly ones to shy from a fight, they also are smart enough to avoid unnecessary conflict. As a result, the Southlands are where the Empire has drawn its line in the sand to say to the East, "Come *here*, and war shall be the only result." The only city of note in this region is *Ironhold*, which has become a sprawling fortress that happens to house a sizable civilian population. Most of the settlements in this area are strongholds and stockades, fortified manor houses and walled settlements.



Bruu-ga-Belimar Mountains

This rugged mountain chain has been the destination for explorers and adventurers since time began. While the mountains themselves are rugged and pose many different challenges, countless expeditions to this part of the Wolfen Empire have led to its being more extensively mapped than any other part of the North. There are still large tracts of wilderness, of course, but the Bruu-ga-Belimars hold little mystery for the Wolfen any longer. They see the place as their answer to the Old Kingdom Mountains or the Northern Mountains.

The Disputed Zone

In the southernmost reaches of the Wolfen Empire are the infamous Disputed Lands, a thick band of fertile land that is home to both Imperial Wolfen and Eastern human settlers. Both sides consider this land to be theirs, and this fundamental difference in opinion is slowly and surely pushing the two societies to war.

To hear the Wolfen speak of it, they would have been happy to co-exist with the Eastern humans here, but the Easterners wanted to lay exclusive claim to the whole land, and attempt to enslave or slaughter any resident Wolfen. Enraged and insulted, the Wolfen have ardently refused, holding their ground while

the East keeps laying claim to more and more land that is not truly theirs.

To hear the East speak of it, the whole thing is the Wolfen's fault. They are savage monsters who routinely raid human settlements, causing wanton death and destruction. To protect itself, Eastern settlers need their military in force here to keep people safe, and this is something the Wolfen will not tolerate. Well, too bad for them! They started it, after all. (The irony is, it is *unaffiliated Coyles* who are responsible for most of the plundering and killing in the Disputed Zone, not Wolfen.)

As a result of all this hostility, only the smallest and most temporary settlements ever are found in the Disputed Zone. Incessant skirmishing and harassment by both parties on the settlements of the other have made large villages and towns an impossibility. Which is tragic, since this land is more capable of sustaining a huge, diversified population than anywhere else in the Great Northern Wilderness. The land is more fertile, the forests are more plentiful, the game is more bountiful, the water is more pure, the air is more crisp. A shame, really, that when the Wolfen and Eastern humans go to war, it shall be this place that is the battleground.

From North to Far North

A Traveller's Tale

By Erick Wujcik

An account of the Baron Fieraz D'Kal, of House D'Kal, Envoy by Appointment from the Crown of the Kingdom of Bizantium, to the Senate and Imperia of the Constitutional Government of the Twelve Tribes of the Great Northern Wilderness.

Day 1: Like most of the adventures I've had the misfortune to attend, this one began in the middle of the night, with my Ensign rousing me from a deep and pleasant sleep. "Baron, I beg pardon for disturbing . . ."

"Keep your pardons," I said, feeling more than a little surly. "What's going on?"

"There are Wolfen below. More than a dozen, and one of them is the Imperial Prefect, and one of them is like no Wolfen I've ever seen, white, with blue eyes."

I grabbed my great coat, flung it on and was on my way down the stairs before he could finish. A day before we'd had word that runners from the north were coming to Shadowfall, an unusual thing at any time, but doubly odd in the dead of winter.

Downstairs I got my first look at *Ithgo*, the white, blue-eyed Wolfen who, it seems, will be my guide, my translator, and even my bodyguard.

The story he had to tell was a grim one. It seems that a human ship on the Northern Sea didn't get to open water quickly enough during a particularly bad freeze. Trapped in the ice, it was discovered by Ithgo's people, one of the many sub-tribes of the Ice-Eyes. Attacked with crossbow bolts and magic, eight Wolfen were immediately killed, and another three eventually died of their wounds. Worse, on the following day a raiding party from the ship attacked the Wolfen village, killing and wounding many, then plundered what they could carry.

Up until this point nothing had been done that the Wolfen could not understand. Although the Wolfen Constitution has brought peace and prosperity, all the Wolfen know that their heritage is one of murder, plunder and war.

No, what came next was what was unthinkable. *The attackers set fire to the village.*

Understand, in the Great Northern Wilderness, in winter, setting fire to another's storehouse means death. To set fire to a winter village was to condemn all, including the young and the elderly, to death by slow, agonizing, starvation. No Wolfen would commit such a crime, and while Coyles are painted as monsters and fiends, even they would not do anything so horrible.

My heart sank, hearing the tale. Come spring, the word would spread like another kind of fire, and the victims of that fire would be humans all along the frontiers of the Disputed Territories, and perhaps other places as well, as Wolfen struck out in vengeance. It was clear what I had to do. As Envoy of Bizantium, as one of the few of my kind fluent in the language and writing of the Wolfen, I would have to go north. At once.

Day 3: Say what you will about the Wolfen bureaucrats, they move fast. As I write this it is dark in the forest, and I am seated near the fireplace of a Wolfen Inn, my companions groaning over their aches, or already snoring or, in the case of six Wolfen, scouting out the road ahead.

We left at dawn, day before yesterday, and since that time we have covered a vast stretch of wilderness. This morning, a full day later, we left behind any trace of the comfortable farms, ranches and manors of the Long Knife Tribe.

Our progress could never have been so swift had it not been for Duke James Viggorn, representative of the Charter of Dominion, Ambassador of the Domain of Man, and brother to the King of Masthelm. He showed up with what seems like every horse in Shadowfall, at least two hundred head, as well as a four-wheeled carriage, with harnessing for a team of eight, and a two-wheeled wagon, with four horses yoked. Honestly, I have

never liked the man, as I find him arrogant and a braggart, but I can't imagine we'd be a quarter of this distance without him.

Duke Viggorn, it seems, has selected me as his companion, apparently because I am the only human present with sufficient noble blood. Rarely have I had such regret for the circumstances of my birth. Meanwhile, the one with whom I'd most like to converse, Ithgo, the Ice-Eye who made the journey all the way from the north coast, fell asleep in a pile of furs at the bottom of the wagon, and even now has yet to awake.

Day 5: We exhausted the last of the horses late last night, right around the time the carriage's rear axle broke. I have no idea how many of the original 200 are now dead or lame. Duke Viggorn set a killing pace, and I could scarcely argue with him.

From that moment until this, it has been the Wolfen who have set the pace, hurrying we poor humans along, telling us that we must cover as much ground as possible while the weather holds.

The weather? Since the current weather consists of constant wind, snow and cold . . . So cold that when Adam Tremont set his cup of hot tea upon a rock, and answered the call of nature, it was frozen clear through by the time he returned. While I've seen snow fall more quickly, this is already the equal to any blizzard I've seen in Bizantium. Perhaps this is just another example of Wolfen humor, their way of teasing the soft southerners.

Day 6: It seems that our Wolfen friends weren't joking. We kept up the killing pace of their giant strides from before dawn this morning, until late this afternoon. I was walking behind Two Tooth, one of the Ursa Rex Tribe, and the biggest of our group, and I didn't even notice he had stopped. Nor did he notice the collision. After a moment he turned, looked at me, and said, in a rumbling voice, "We'll make shelter. Now."

I'm no stranger to the chopping of trees, but what eleven Wolfen can do in fifteen minutes boggles the mind. In the first five minutes I saw four tree trunks toppled, each well over two feet around. Then I had no time to look around, for Duke Viggorn and I were put to work, each of us at opposite ends of a metal wire, shown how to use the wire to saw, and proceeded to saw through a three-foot tree trunk.

We had just cut clean through when the storm hit. Snow, yes, but it was the cold wind that cut through our furs, cut through our flesh, cut through to our bones. If you'd told me I'd been struck by an Ice Elemental, I'd find it easier to believe.

Without even thinking I crouched down behind the log we'd just cut, desperate to escape that killer wind. Tales of armies lost to the cold seemed so much more believable . . .

Sometime in the next few minutes I gave my canteen to Slay Soul, the eldest of the Wolfen, never even wondering why he wanted water at such a time. A bit later there were shouts of the Wolfen, loud enough to cut through the wind, and they were all working together, hoisting up the two largest tree trunks, and leaning them together in a triangle. Where the trunks met, Slay Soul wrapped furs, and then wetted the furs with the water from my canteen. By the time he was finished, the trunks were held together as if with cement.

I write this now, inside the hasty log structure, warmed by the bodies of the Wolfen, who have kindly let us humans take the inner space, while they form our outer ring, shielding us from the gaps in the logs.

Day 8: I could not write last night. After the hot bath, here at the Angel Inn, safe in *Darkcove*, I sought out my soft bed of furs and feathers, and slept as I have not slept since leaving Shadowfall. The local Wolfen, mostly of the Dark Step Tribe, seem as concerned about the situation to the north as any of us, and it seems they are making special arrangements for us to get across Clear Lake as quickly as possible.

As for the days left out of this journal, they were filled with walking through snow and ice, and with the most bitter cold I have ever felt. Twice the Wolfen killed beasts, and whatever they gave me to eat, I ate. Raw, steaming, and from who knows what part of the animal, I ate and was grateful.

They say that it will be worse to the north.

Day 9: Tonight we marked the passing of our dead.

It's still hard to believe how quickly, how silently, they were taken from us.

We started the day in such high spirits. The Tribal Leaders of the Dark Step Wolfen had decided that our mission was of such importance that they would allow us the use of their *Ice Boats,* which they had never before shown to outsiders. It was a bright, clear day, crisp with cold, but comfortable in our furs. Out at the port there were dozens of Wolfen and Kankoran young, flying across the ice on their skates.

The three craft were being assembled as we arrived, masts attached to hulls, hulls attached to metal runners, and then the sails rigged. Without much fuss, we separated into three groups, Lady Kadameer and Adam Tremont, along with Uvinius and Slay Soul, and their Dark Step pilot, on the middle boat.

Minutes later we were under sail, at first escorted by the skating children, and then pulling ahead of them, moving faster than the fastest horse. Miles were slipping by, and each boat would sometimes surge ahead of the others, and then give way to one that found a better wind, or a smoother patch of ice. In an hour we had put fifty miles behind us, and were already past the great cross that forms the center of Clear Lake.

Then, suddenly, as our boat pulled ahead, there were shouts from behind. Moments before there had been three speeding Ice Boats. Now there were two.

A half hour later we found where the track stopped. It ended in a sheet of fresh ice, barely as thick as my hand, and underneath was the water. Not frozen solid, as it had been elsewhere, but liquid. Quescotti, the Wolfen Healer, opened his mind, desperately searching for life, any life. Always before he had sensed whatever hidden creature was near. Here he sensed nothing.

As I write this, we do our mourning in our own ways. Simont Brange, the last human among us, other than Duke Viggorn and myself, has joined those Wolfen who worship Algor or the other Northern Gods. The other Wolfen are huddled together in grief, chanting or howling, the strange growls of Ithgo clear amongst them, as they invoke the names of Uvinius, Xavia Comitia, and of Slay Soul the Elder. As for me, I've been trying to comfort

Duke Viggorn. I never knew him to have such a depth of feeling. He regrets the loss of Lady Kadameer, of course, but she was strong in her belief in Rurga. It is the young squire, Adam, that he mourns most deeply. "He was too young, and I was careless with his life . . ."

Day 11: On the maps of this region, the area north of Clear Lake is shown as flat. Well, perhaps it is, compared to the majesty of Mt. Nimro, or the peaks of the Algor, but it's a far way from flat when you're trying to walk across it. It's been two full days of climbing up, then climbing down, then climbing up again.

Then there was the waiting. I was sliding down, down the face of the ravine, looking forward to walking on level ground for a couple of hours. Ithgo grabbed me by the back of my coat, and pulled me back, one-handed. When I turned to say something I fell as silent as the others. Every ear of every Wolfen was alert, sharp, clearly picking something up that was out of the range of human hearing. I found a place to cling, waited, and then the rumble started. Slow and faint, then louder and faster, as if we were all about to be caught in some kind of god-like explosion. Then the first creature scrambled up into the ravine below, gained its feet, and ran across our path. A moment later there was another. Then another and another and another . . .

And suddenly the ravine was full of them. Perhaps fifteen or eighteen abreast, coming at a steady run, their hooves pounding, pounding, making a living avalanche, shaking the rock so we had to hang on for dear life.

They came and they came. Hour after hour they ran by us, faster than any man can run, with hardly a gap in their ranks. How many of these creatures can there be in the world, I asked myself. Another hour, and still they came.

Finally there were just stragglers, the herd thinned to only ten or twenty at a time.

"Now!" howled the Wolfen. "Cross now!"

There was no time for argument. We slid down, then I dodged, and dodged again, was nearly knocked down by the merest brush, but managed to keep my feet and then climb to safety on the other side.

Still the Wolfen rushed me, yanked at my coat, and we climbed as quickly as we have ever climbed.

"Why?" I asked later, "What were those creatures? Were they deer? Elk? And why the hurry to cross? Why the hurry to climb out of sight?"

Ithgo named them *Eershee,* which Two Tooth translated as Reindeer. Ah, yes, I'd seen their skins, and horns, but never a living creature. As for why the hurry, why we couldn't wait for the last of them to pass?

"Because they were running, Friend F'raz. They only run if they are chased. And what chases a herd of that size? Eh? Could be wolves, maybe, so no need for us to run. But could be Coyles, maybe. Or Trolls. Maybe something worse. Maybe something that eats Wolfen. Safer to run, Friend F'raz. Safer to run."

Day 12: It's true. It got worse. Thicker forests, deeper ravines, rockier terrain, and colder weather. We seem to have adapted, all three of us humans. Yes, we're eating more than we ever have, and a slab of fat, cut from a fresh killed boar, seems tastier than any royal cake, but we can walk and our toes no longer go numb. Of course, I don't know what's in the brew given to us by our new guides, two Kankoran, and a Wolfen who walks, talks and smells like another Kankoran.

I've seen so many strange creatures, too many. I'll only describe one, a thing the Kankoran called a *Ghaashtaagh,* which looks like some furry version of an armadillo, but grown to enormous proportions. Even stranger, it has some kind of natural weapon on its tail, a spiked morning star, which I saw it use to smash a small tree to splinters.

It never ends, this forest.

Day 15: When we came to the Pine Forest there were other Wolfen waiting for us. Mostly Two Axe and Ice-Eye, but also a few King Bears. The last one was a Gold Ear, *Jimsef,* but more importantly, she is a *Quingia Bureaucria,* and one trained in the art of *Scribe Wolfen,* the skill of writing down foreign sounds, or of reading such writing back.

It seems that among the reinforcements who have arrived at Ithgo's village there was another with her skills. That one listened to the alien speech of the invaders, and created a transcription. Jimsef read, shifting her voice in a strange way, so that the sounds seemed to come from another creature altogether.

On first reading I understood not a single word. Still, there were some familiar sounds, so I had her read it again. Partway through her third attempt I stopped her.

"Dwarven," I said, "I'm sure it is some form of Dwarven. Please, start again."

I could not catch all the words, and it was strange that a word or two of Elven were also used, but it seemed to be a conversation about killing, and it repeatedly spoke of the Wolfen as monsters.

Ithgo had his doubts. "Friend F'raz, what I saw was man-sized, in metal armor. Not a Dwarf."

I had no answer. I worried, but I had no answer.

Day 16: No doubt one of the strangest things I've beheld stood right in front of us. Leaning on a stick, balanced on one leg, ignoring the howling wind, dressed only in a waist-cloth, stood the most naked Canine I've ever seen. Not naked because of his lack of clothing. No, this Coyle was naked because all the fur was shaved from his entire body. He stood in front of us, panting, grinning, clearly not the least bit bothered, while lumbering Wolfen and Bearmen huddled in their furs.

"This is your *Tagh Gheth*," Ithgo told me, and then Ithgo addressed the Coyle; "Tagh Gheth, this is Fieraz D'Kal, a human of Bizantium, who would, if you allow it, ride your Uuhgtaar to the northern sea."

It had already been explained to us that these Uuhgtaar-riding Coyles were protective of their names, and that I would be unlikely to have the honor of learning one.

As to what an Uuhgtaar might be, I will find out in the morning, hopefully after much sleep. All I know is that it is the only steed that can take us across the winder tundra.

Day 17: To those of you who might think that I'm some back-country yokel, some hick from Bizantium, let me assure you that I am not. I have seen the elephants of the Western Empire, and even some huge specimens brought to the arena from the depths of the Yin-Sloth Jungles. Yes, indeed, those are mighty beasts. Still, I tell you, comparing elephants to these creatures is like comparing a lap dog to a wolf. Was I afraid? Of course! What sane man wouldn't catch a fear to have to come so close to such a creature?

Still, we had no choice. Time was slipping away, and a vast tundra lay before us. Even carried, as Viggorn, Simont and I had been for so many miles, we were already exhausted, and it was unlikely we'd be able to run for any great distance, especially in that wind-swept frozen hell.

My Tagh Gheth stripped me of my furs, then rubbed some greasy, foul-smelling ointment on my face, back, and between my legs. Then he told me to stand still. Completely still, if I wished to live. A few moments later he led the great beast to me. It was a strange, strange feeling, to have that furry trunk drag itself over my shoulder, to feel the little naked fingers (they are part of the nose, but what else can I call them?) touch my face, gently, sniffing me here and there. Eventually it gave a huge sigh, and my Tagh Gheth motioned me forward, showed me how to stick my hand into the fur and scratch, how to pluck the thumb-sized ticks from its skin (each time one was removed, the beast would give another great grunt of pleasure, would look over and nod its head). All was well, and I had made the biggest friend I've ever imagined.

Unfortunately, things didn't go nearly so well with Duke Viggorn.

The first I knew that something was wrong, my Uuhgtaar had wrapped her trunk around me, and pulled me to safety.

Meanwhile, all the Tagh Gheth, and all the Wolfen were trying their best to save Duke Viggorn from a bellowing, maddened Uuhgtaar. He was finally pulled to safety, eventually, only suffering a few cracked ribs, and the great beast was calmed, eventually.

As it turned out, the great lout had kept a dagger up his sleeve, and the point had pricked the Uuhgtaar's sensitive nose. Foolish, and it was most fortunate that he wasn't killed.

We have to leave the Duke behind. There was no help for it, none of the Uuhgtaar would tolerate his presence, much less allow him on one of their backs.

It wasn't all that long ago that I would have been happy to leave the arrogant bastard behind. Now, having known him, I was saddened. If other Eastern nobles were like him, I had much to learn . . .

Tomorrow I ride north through the tundra. Tomorrow I ride an Uuhgtaar.

Day 18: I write this from atop the great wooly elephant, the Uuhgtaar that leans against her fellows, and whose snores fill the world. From here we see nothing but the Tundra, the flat, frozen land, broken only by rivers and outcroppings of black rock.

I can see now why the Tagh Gheth are so sure of themselves. In this land, filled with monsters, what safer place than atop a giant Uuhgtaar. In the last day we've seen all manner of creatures, from huge white rabbits, to fur-clad Ogres, from Elk to Musk Ox, yet there was nothing that did not flee from our Wooly Mammoths.

I would write more, but I'm wasting ink every time the great beast shudders.

Day 20: Ithgo is pacing, pacing because he is so close to his home. I'm told that we'll be there tomorrow, by mid-morning.

The Tagh Gheth and their Uuhgtaar left us at noonday. Powerful as the Mammoths are, they can not scale rock, and they can't walk on goat paths, and going the long way would have taken another two days. In parting, my Tagh Gheth held me, and whispered his name in my ear. Ithgo was right, it is an honor to know it, and I'll not share it, here or anywhere.

The rest of the day was just the usual. Climbing up ice-covered cliffs. Running on ice and loose stone, more often than not

a missed step away from falling hundreds of feet. Then the summit, where we stopped, and where the clouds thinned enough for us to see the coast, the village, the ship, tiny in the distance, and dozens of fires, large and small, showing the army that has gathered here. I could see the coastline for miles in either direction, but I couldn't see open water, only ice, ice and walls of ice all the way to the horizon.

I look at my entry, and I can barely believe it. It's only been twenty days since I was first awakened by Ithgo. It seems a lifetime. Truly, I've seen too much, in too short a time. Too many deaths to be sure. If what the Priests say is true, when I die, I'll see those who I remember in this life, Lady Kadameer, young Adam Tremont, Uvinius, a true believer in peace and the Wolfen Constitution, and dear old Slay Soul, as gentle a Wolfen as I have ever met. I hope those we left behind, Simont Brange, Duke Viggorn, and all the Wolfen, Coyles and Kankoran who helped us, I hope they all fare well, and find some warmth in this cold land.

So few of us left. Two Tooth, Quescotti, myself . . . and Ithgo. Ithgo who has come full circle. Who travelled all the way from this place to Shadowfall, and then back again. I ask him, as I write this, if he is finally tired. He speaks a few words, not in Wolfen, but in some secret language. Then he gives that rare laugh of his.

"What does it mean, Ithgo?"

"Rrgg..." he growls, thinking. A moment of silence. Then the light comes into his blue, blue eyes. "Ah, I have the meaning now, Scribe. Are you ready to write it?"

"Ready, Ithgo."

"I will sleep when I am dead. That is what it means. I'll sleep when I'm dead."

Day 21: This is the last entry. I'm sending this log south to Shadowfall, immediately, as soon as I finish describing what I've seen today. What I now know about the men who put torch to the Wolfen village.

First of all, the ship is no human ship. What seemed dark wood from a distance is really corroded metal, what looked to be masts are actually strange steam pipes. I've never seen one, and can scarcely believe my eyes, but I swear to you it is a *Dwarven War Barge!* How could it be? To my knowledge all such things were destroyed thousands of years ago. As for the "steel-armored men" that the Wolfen have been fighting, that's an even stranger tale. They are not living things at all, but some kind of clockwork devices, in the size and shape of men, made of steel, and clearly of Dwarven design. Not just from the tool marks, but from the Dwarven characters inscribed in every plate and joint.

Please, spread the word. The crimes committed here were not done by humans or, seemingly, any human government. Tomorrow I will . . . I must . . . approach the War Barge, and see if my scant few words of Dwarven will be enough to call a truce. If not, well, there are over twelve hundred Wolfen warriors gathered here now, as well as forces of Bearmen, Ogres and Trolls numbering in the hundreds. In magical forces they've gathered not less than thirty Wolfen Mind Mages, Warlocks and Wizards. Plus there are two Kobolds who I suspect of less stable magic, and one dark-skinned Elf who I trust not at all.

Yes, by tomorrow eve there will be peace in this place. Of one kind or another. I only pray to Utu that death will not prevail.

If word of my passing follows this log, please see that my letter reaches my beloved family in Bizantium.

One way or another, it has been a great adventure . . .

– Fieraz D'Kal, in Ice-Eye Land, Wolfen Empire, mid-winter.

Creatures of the Far North

Animals who have evolved to survive the extreme cold generally have the following features:

1. Usually much larger than their southern counterparts (the bigger the body, the less relative heat loss).

2. Often have shorter tails and ears (reducing heat loss).

3. Possess seasonal body fat, with layers built up during the warmer months, and then used as both insulation and food during the winter.

4. Possess seasonal fur and hair changes, so the winter hair is thicker and warmer, and often changes color to white or light gray for better camouflage in the snow (applies to both predator and prey). **Note:** Most dogs, and even Wolfen, Kankoran and Bearmen of the North go through these seasonal fur changes.

Awk-Awk/Northern Sea Bird
Draaghaarth
Eershee/Reindeer
Ghaashtaagh/Northern Spiked Armadillo
Haghsholoth/Great Northern Boar
Ice Gnats/Tundra Fleas
Kaarghuzen/Giant Beaver
Laangaar/North Elk
Sillihegh/Snow Rabbit/Tundra Hare
Snow Monkey
Uuhgtaar/Shaggy Elephant
Winter Crab
Yaarhkaa/Wooly Rhinoceros

Awk-Awk/ Northern Sea Bird

Size: 36-48 inches (0.9 to 1.2 m).
Hit Points & S.D.C. Combined: 3D6+12.
Attacks Per Melee: Two.
Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike (prey) and +2 to dodge.
Natural Abilities: Swim 97%, hold breathe for 1D4+2 minutes; average animal intelligence.
Speed: Swimming Spd 18 and 5 running on dry land.
Habitat: Northern coastal waters and remote northern islands.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness.
Winter Adaptation: None required.
Behavior: Stocky flightless seabirds who have adapted to living almost completely at sea. Covered in dense black and white feathers, they are perfectly adapted to sea life, as well as being resistant to the most extreme cold. Except for laying and tending their eggs, and the month it takes their young to develop, they almost never spend any time on land. Their wings are smooth and shaped more like the fins of a fish, allowing them to swim with great speed and skill.

In late December they come out of the sea in vast numbers. Some struggle up the walls of cliffs, others seek out hidden caves, but most just walk up convenient beaches, find a suitable place, and lay their clutch of 1D4 eggs. It takes six weeks for the eggs to hatch, during which time the parents take turns nesting, while the other returns to the sea for food. Once the young are hatched, the parents take turns hunting for even more food for their ravenous young. A month after birth the young are abandoned, with the starved parents fleeing for their lives as the young turn on any living thing.

Draaghaarth

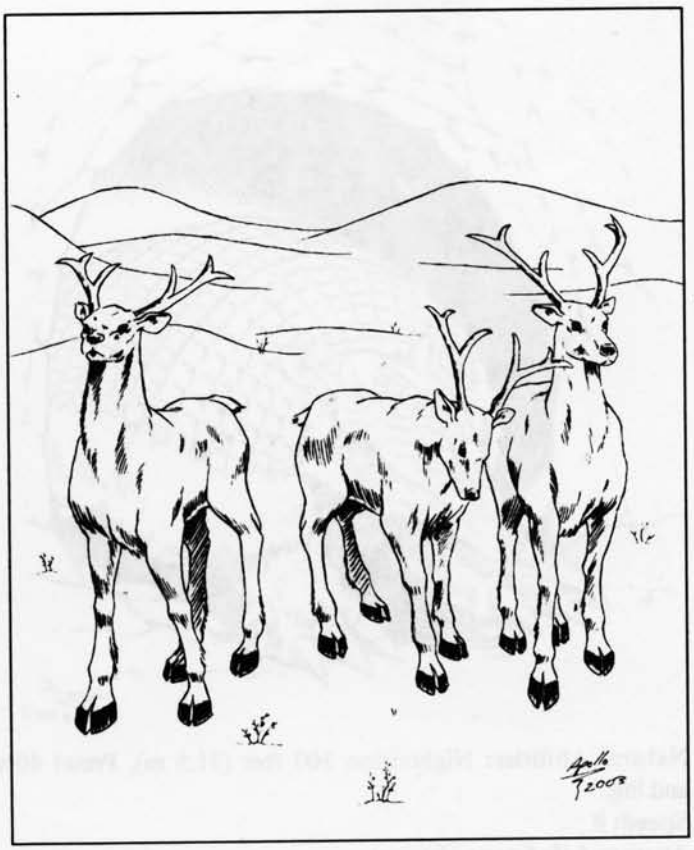
Size: 28-36 feet (8.5 to 11 m) long, tail 16-18 feet (4.9 to 5.5 m); up to 24 feet (7.3 m) tall.
Weight: 20,000-28,000 pounds (9,000 to 12,600 kg).
Hit Points: 5D6x10. **S.D.C.:** 2D6x10+50.
Natural A.R.: 6
Horror Factor/Awe: 7
Attacks Per Melee: Two; tusks do 4D6 damage, while a claw strike inflicts 3D6 damage.
Bonuses: +1 to strike and +1 to dodge, and +4 to save vs poison and disease.
Natural Abilities: Excellent sense of smell, huge eyes that can focus on very small objects, dig, and Swim 40%. When they feel threatened they can hold absolutely still for up to 30 minutes.
Speed: 8 (about 5 mph/8 km), but can run at a speed of 35 (about 24 mph/38.4 km) in bursts lasting 2D4x10 minutes.
Average Life Span: 50-120 years.
Value: Fur/hide: 500 gold, meat (whole animal): 500 gold, tusks: 40-120 gold each (two upper and two lower).
Habitat: Extreme north, including the Hinterlands and tundra.

Range: Great Northern Wilderness. Occasionally, Ophid's Grasslands and mountain valleys.
Winter Adaptation: Fur becomes more dense, but no change in color from brown and black. Massive build-up of body fat.
Behavior: Gigantic lumbering beasts, possibly the largest mammal on the Palladium World, they mostly feed on water plants, roots and seasonal fruit. They are usually solitary, joining up in pairs only for a week or two each year, with the females giving birth to a single youngling in the early spring. Their mouths are filled with grinding teeth with two downward-pointing tusks (about 36 inches/91 cm long) in the upper jaw, and two outward-pointing tusks (about 24 inches/61 cm long) in the lower jaw. Each foot has three claws. The rear claws are all about the same size and blunt, while the middle front claw is larger and used for manipulating small objects (they are remarkably deliberate and precise for such huge animals). They tolerate just about anything, including being used as a perch for birds. In the summer and winter they often seem like living statues, slowly looking around while chewing on whatever is available.

Extinction Note: These strange creatures, the last survivors of an entire family of three-toed giant herbivores, are nearly extinct. Having no natural predators, they are easy prey for some of the Giant races (especially Ogres and Trolls, who look on one as an entire winter larder). Ironically, things didn't look all that bad for the Draaghaarth until the creation of the Wolfen Empire. Up until that point there seemed to be plenty to go around for the relatively few Ogres and Trolls of their northern regions. However, with the increasing numbers of Wolfen (and humans in the Eastern Territory), as well as the new laws, many "wild" Ogres and Trolls were driven north. Now, 60 years later, it's clear that too many Ogres and Trolls have seriously depleted the number of Draaghaarth, and it may only be a matter of four or five more years before they are gone forever. Very rare.

Eershee/Reindeer

Size: 6-8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 m) long; stubby tail up to 8 inches (20 cm). Antlers are thicker and with fewer points than other deer, found on both genders, and are kept most of the year (they are shed in early spring, and start to grow back almost immediately, back to full size within two months).
Weight: 180-360 pounds (81 to 162 kg).
Hit Points: 1D4x10 (or 4D10).
S.D.C.: 5D6+25
Attacks Per Melee: Two.
Damage: Kick does 2D4+2 points of damage, butt with horns does 3D6 damage. A full charge must be done from at least 60 feet (18.3 m) away and takes the entire melee round, but does 4D6+8 damage.
Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry (with antlers), and +4 to dodge.
Natural Abilities: Swim 50%, Prowl 50%, and leap up to 8 feet (2.4 m) high and 16 feet (4.9 m) long.
Speed: 44 (30 mph/48 km), but can run at a speed of 66 (45 mph/72 km) for 2D4x10 minutes.
Average Life Span: 12-20 years.
Value: Fur/hide 40-60 gold; meat (whole animal): 60 gold.
Habitat: Forest, swamps, open brush land, and tundra.



Range: Great Northern Wilderness, Ophid's Grasslands, Bizantium, and Land of the Damned.
Winter Adaptation: In summer the hair is sparser, but they are gray with mottled spots of brown all year round.
Behavior: Migratory herds range over most of the north lands of the Palladium World. They congregate in vast numbers (a small herd has 3D6 times 100, while a major migratory herd can number in the tens of thousands). Their migration pathways are well known to predators (especially wolves!) and native peoples of the north who pick off hundreds of the weak, diseased and injured twice every year. Rutting and mating takes place in their southern (winter) woodland homes, while each female gives birth to one offspring in their northern feeding grounds on the tundra. They are easily startled and will run rather than fight unless maimed, cornered or their own young are threatened.

Ghaashtaagh

The Northern Spiked Armadillo

Size: Body: 12-14 feet (3.6 to 4.3 m) long, 5-7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m) tall, with a huge 6-8 foot (1.8 to 2.4 m) long tail, ending in a two-foot (0.6 m) spiked ball (the tail works like a spiked mace).
Weight: 8,000-12,000 pounds (3,600 to 5,400 kg).
Hit Points: 5D10+50 (or 1D6x10+40).
S.D.C.: 2D6+100.
Natural A.R.: 10
Horror Factor/Awe: 8
Attacks Per Melee: Four with tail, or one with claws.
Damage: Spiked tail ball does 3D6+4 damage, claws do 2D6+3 points of damage, bite 2D4.
Bonuses: +2 to strike and +1 to dodge.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m), Prowl 40% and dig.
Speed: 8
Average Life Span: 18 years.
Value: Hide: 175 gold. Spiked tail ball: 100 gold.
Habitat: Forest and swamp.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness (sometimes found in the northern parts of the Eastern Territory as well).
Winter Adaptation: Mostly hairless in summer, they grow dazzling, long white hair at the edges of their plate armor in winter.
Behavior: Not really an armadillo, the Ghaashtaagh is covered with armadillo-like plates, and has similar digging claws. They feed on roots, and like to spice up their diet with insects, frogs, crustaceans, or any other small creatures. Generally peaceful, they pretty much ignore anything other than what is on the ground, or underground, directly in front of them. Anyone foolish enough to attack will discover that the spiked tail ball (young have four spikes, but old ones may have as many as a dozen) is a fearsome, fast and deadly weapon. While they were once found throughout the Palladium World, they are now found only in the remote north. They aren't completely adapted to the harsh winters, and those who do not find underground shelter have a good chance of dying in the winter (generally, about 1 out of 12 die from the cold each year, but females mature at 4 years old, and give birth to litters of 6 to 8 every other year, so their numbers are slowly increasing).

Haghsholoth/ Great Northern Boar

Size: Body: 6-8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 m); curly tail 4 inches (10 cm).
Weight: 500-1,500 pounds (225 to 675 kg).
Hit Points: 8D6+10 (or 1D4x10+13).
S.D.C.: 4D6+14
Natural A.R.: 6
Horror Factor/Awe: 9
Attacks Per Melee: Three.
Damage: Tusks do 3D6+2 points of damage, head butt 3D4 (or 2D6) damage, trample 3D6 damage.
Bonuses: +3 on initiative and +5 to strike.
Natural Abilities: Nightvision 40 feet (12 m), Prowl 30%, Track by smell 65%, and Swim 50%.
Speed: 22 (15 mph/24 km), but can run at a speed of 50 (35 mph/56 km) in bursts lasting 4D6 minutes.
Average Life Span: 9-22 years.
Value: Hide 25 gold, meat (whole animal) 5-20 gold.
Habitat: Forest, northern swamps, woodland, tundra.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness.
Winter Adaptation: Bristles are thicker and take on a lighter gray shade in winter. Massive build-up of body fat.
Behavior: Nasty, aggressive, and deadly, the Great Northern Boar is a true omnivore. Not only will they munch down the traditional food of other boars, they'll also hunt down, kill, and eat just about any other creature. A single Great Northern Boar would be bad enough, but they tend to gang up, with a typical group having 3D6 males, twice that number of females (just as big, less aggressive in attacking, but completely insane when their young are threatened), and twice that number of young. Breeding seems to occur all the time, and litters are 4D6 in number.

Ice Gnats/Tundra Fleas

Size: Barely visible; on a smooth white surface they will look like teeny, tiny moving dots. An ounce of Ice Gnats would number in the thousands.
A.R.: Not applicable.
Hit Points & S.D.C.: Not applicable.
Attacks Per Melee: One.
Damage: A single Ice Gnat does no damage, however, each one inflicts an "Itching Venom" that simply causes a victim to feel like scratching (see below for more details).
Bonuses: +2 to dodge.
Natural Abilities: Leap/glide up to 4 feet (1.2 m) high, and 8 feet (2.4 m) away (more if with the wind), plus Climb 99%. Smell blood up to 1,000 feet (305 m) away 85%.
Speed: 1
Value: Worthless, except possibly to someone who wanted to use them as a horrific, indiscriminate weapon.
Habitat: Tundra, ice fields of the wintry north.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness.
Winter Adaptation: None for winter, but they hibernate whenever the temperature is *above* freezing.
Behavior: Ice Gnats have only one source of food: blood. They are too tiny to be able to bite through even the thin skin of a human, much less the thick hides of their usual victims, wooly and shaggy elephants, rhinos, and other northern beasts. However, nature has given them a powerful itching venom. Rather than doing any damage, the Ice Gnats merely irritate their hosts enough for them to scratch, and scratch, and scratch, until bleeding occurs. As soon as the Ice Gnats smell the fresh blood, they instantly release a counter-venom (which soothes the itching), and head for the blood. A drop of blood will not only feed hundreds of Ice Gnats, but it also stimulates their breeding. While

the males are content to simply eat and pursue females, all the females will each lay 1,000 minuscule eggs. The eggs mature into larvae within 90 minutes. Overnight the larvae grow into fully adult Ice Gnats (fortunately, they always hop off and go hunting for a new host). Ice Gnats naturally hibernate during the warm seasons, when larger insects and small birds would find them easy prey, and move around only when the temperature is at least ten degrees below freezing.

Visually magnifying (by magic or optical lenses) an Ice Gnat reveals a creature with a pair of powerful rear legs, eight clinging legs, a pair of bloated pincers (the right one venom, the left anti-venom), a sucker mouth, crystal wings, and a bloated rear abdomen. They have only pinpoint eyes (they are virtually blind), but have a cluster of odor-sensing hairs all along their backs.

Characters who roll 12 or better to save vs poison (P.E. bonus applies) will not even feel the venom's itch. However, the save must be repeated every 15 minutes of an infestation. Once a victim fails a save vs poison, the itching starts and gets worse and worse. As soon as a character scratches to the point of bleeding (usually one point of damage), the itching will blessedly cease. In order for a victim to resist the urge to scratch, they must roll 15 or better for their willpower (M.E. bonuses apply), every fifteen minutes of an infestation. Other than the original bleeding wound, victims suffer one Hit Point of damage per night for every 1000 larvae growing in their flesh (larvae growing in, say, blood-soaked clothing, do no damage to the host).

Kaarghuzen/ Giant Beaver

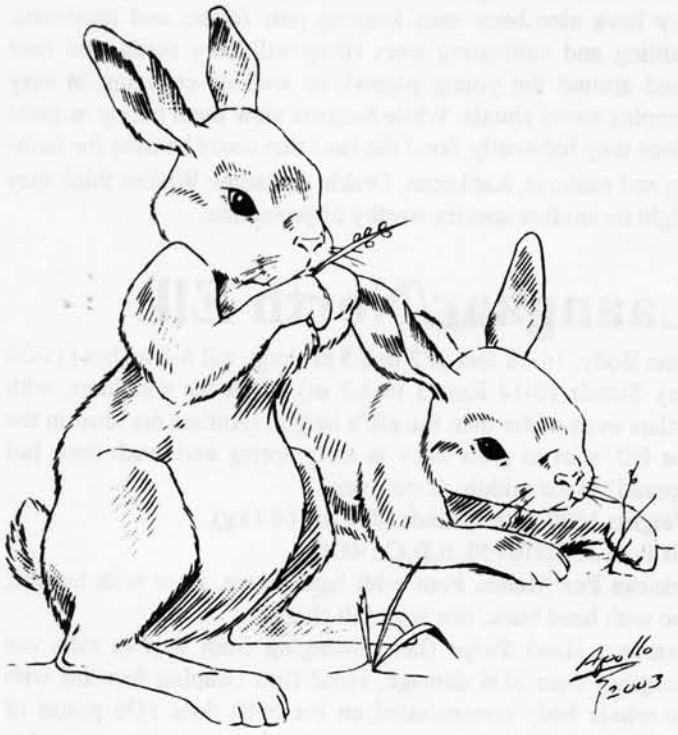
Size: Body: 6-8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 m) long, plus a 24-36 inch (0.6 to 0.9 m), flat tail.
Weight: 180-300 pounds (81 to 135 kg).
Hit Points: 4D6+20. **S.D.C.:** 3D6+10.
Attacks Per Melee: Two.
Damage: Bite does 2D6 points of damage, tail swat or claws 2D6+4 damage.
Bonuses: +2 to strike and +1 to dodge (+6 to dodge underwater).
Natural Abilities: Swim 90%, dive 24 feet (7.3 m), hold breath for 18-30 minutes, and nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m).
Speed: 6 on land or 18 in the water.
Average Life Span: 12-30 years.
Value: Fur: 150 gold.
Habitat: Rivers, lakes, streams and swamps; anywhere there is a combination of running water and trees.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness, but particularly common around the northern lakes.
Winter Adaptation: Fur is dark brown or black all year round, covered in natural water-resistant oils. Massive build-up of body fat.
Behavior: Building their homes from logs, bark and mud, the Kaarghuzen are much more sociable than smaller beavers. When left undisturbed, they build community dens that hold as many as 100 of their kind. They are also, perhaps, the animal closest to achieving sentience in the whole Palladium World.

Aside from their sophisticated dam and den building behavior, they have also been seen keeping pets (otters and muskrats), planting and cultivating trees (they will bury seeds, and then weed around the young plants), as well as engaging in very complex social rituals. While humans view them purely as pests (since they habitually flood the land that could be used for farming and pasture), Kankoran, Drakin and some Wolfen think they might be another species worthy of protection.

Laangaar/North Elk

Size: Body: 14-18 feet (4.2 to 5.5 m) long, tail 6-8 inches (15-20 cm). Stands 10-14 feet (3 to 4.2 m) tall at the shoulders, with antlers even wider than the elk's height. (Antlers are shed in the late fall, start to grow back in early spring and reach their full "spread" in the middle of summer.)
Weight: 1600-2400 pounds (720 to 1080 kg).
Hit Points: 6D10+30. **S.D.C.:** 4D6x5.
Attacks Per Melee: Four with head swipe, three with hooves, two with head buck, one with full charge.
Damage: Head Swipe (head swinging from side to side, not charging) does 3D6 damage, Head Butt (leaping forward with the whole body concentrated on the butt) does 5D6 points of damage, and Full Charge (where the Laangaar has a running start of at least 100 feet/30.5 m) does 6D10 damage (note that in each combat round, the Laangaar can only do one kind of Head Attack, and can't combine head and hoof attacks). Front kicks are with one leg only, and do 2D6 with no bonuses. While an individual Laangaar does relatively little trampling damage (just 1D6, and with a -4 to strike), getting trampled by a herd is a different matter. A herd of 6-18 does 3D10 damage, a herd of 19-30 does 6D10 damage, and larger herds do an additional 1D10 damage for every 10 additional Laangaar .

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +5 to strike (head strikes only, no bonus for hooves or trampling), +2 to parry with antlers (obviously, not available in Winter, when the Laangaar has none), +4 to dodge. Full antlers (late spring to late fall) provide +2D6 to damage for males, and +1D6 to damage for females and young, with any head attack.
Natural Abilities: Keen sense of hearing and smell, leap up to 20 feet (6.1 m) high and 45 feet (13.7 m) long.
Speed: 66 (45 mph/72 km), but can run at a speed of 88 (60 mph/96 km) for 2D6 minutes.
Average Life Span: 28-40 years.
Value: Hide 350 gold, meat (whole animal) 400 gold.
Habitat: Coniferous forest, tundra, highlands.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness. (There is also a herd maintained on the Royal Hunting Grounds in Bizantium.)
Winter Adaptation: Fur becomes more dense, lighter tan color, with a white "crest" on the shoulders.
Behavior: Laangaar travel in large herds, the size limited by the local forage (3D6 on tundra, 5D6x2 in forests, 4D10x5 in lush mountain valleys). In the Autumn "Rut," the adult males separate from the herd and engage in fierce combat (this is also a very good time to avoid their breeding grounds – easily detected by the banging clashes of their full-charge combat, and the low-pitched bellows of the fighting calls). Fauns are generally twins, and are born after a 7 month gestation. The young remain with the herd for at least three years before maturity.



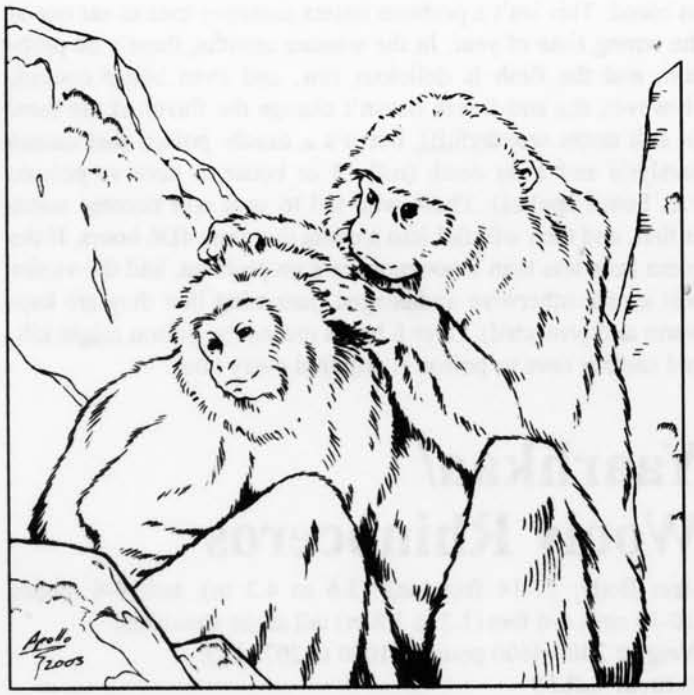
Sillihegh

Snow Rabbit/Tundra Hare

Size: Body: 24-36 inches (0.6 to 0.9 m) with a stubby "cotton" tail 3-4 inches in diameter.
Weight: 5-15 pounds (2.25 to 6.75 kg).
Hit Points: 3D6. **S.D.C.:** 2D6.
Attacks Per Melee: Two.
Damage: Bite does 1D4 damage, kick with rear legs does 1D6 damage.
Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +5 to dodge.
Natural Abilities: Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), Prowl 65% (85% in snow), and leap 6 feet (1.8 m) high and 20 feet (6.1 m) long.
Speed: 22, and is able to reach a speed of 50 (30 mph/48 km) in bursts lasting 2D4 minutes. On the top of the snow, with their huge padded feet they can travel at a Spd. of 18, and go in bursts of 44 for 2D4 minutes.
Average Life Span: 7-9 years.
Value: Fur: 10-20 gold (double when the fur is winter white), 6-12 gold for the cotton tail, meat: 6-12 gold (good eating).
Habitat: Woodlands, mountain valleys and tundra.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness and the northern parts of Ophid's Grasslands.
Winter Adaptation: Fur changes from brown to dazzling white in winter.
Behavior: During the summer months they dig vast burrows, with dozens of hidden exits, which they use in winter for protection from the cold, as well as to escape from predators. While they can live alone, or as a mated pair, they prefer to form groups of 20 to 120 (2D6 times 10), with a dominant male and a dominant female (in groups only the dominant female is allowed to reproduce). They feed on leaves, buds, roots, berries, and bark. Females produce two litters each year, in summer and winter, with 2D6 young in each.

Snow Monkey

Size: Body: 48-60 inches (1.2 to 1.5 m), plus a stubby 4-8 inch (10-20 cm) tail.
Weight: Females are 75-135 pounds (34 to 61 kg), while adult males are 120-200 (54 to 90 kg).
Hit Points: 3D6 for young, 4D6+6 for females, 5D6+12 for males.
S.D.C.: 2D6+2 for young, 3D6+6 for females, 4D6+10 for males.
P.P.E.: 2D6+2
Attacks Per Melee: Two for young and females, three for adult males. Four throwing attacks.
Damage: Young and females can inflict a bite that does 2D4, and can strike out with hands or feet doing 1D4 damage (plus P.S. Bonus). Males tend not to bite (although the bite does 1D4+4 damage), but can strike for 2D6+4 damage, squeeze, twist or strangle for 3D6+3 damage/melee, or pick up something to use as a 2D4+2 damage club. **Note:** All Snow Monkeys, even the very young, can throw four stones per melee, each doing 1D6 damage.
Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +1 to parry, +4 to dodge and +5 to roll with impact/fall. While not sentient, they are among the most intelligent animals, and have a +25% chance of solving problems and puzzles ("hmm... if I break the small limbs off that forked branch, I could use it to pick the pears off that tree").
Natural Abilities: Climb 94%, Acrobatics 82%, Swim 98%, and leap 10 feet (3 m) high and 40 feet (12 m) long. Speed: 10 on the ground, 12 swimming, and 13 swinging through the treetops.



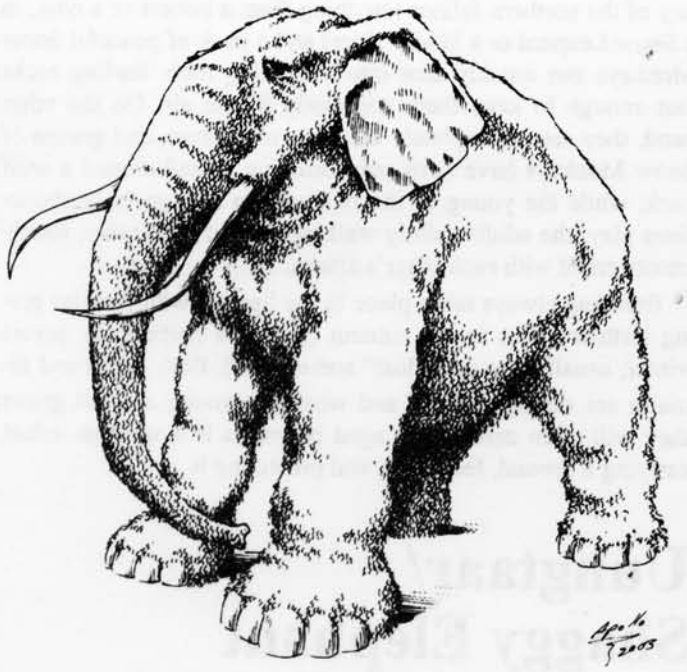
Average Life Span: 20-40 years.
Value: Winter Fur is 125 gold for a youngster, 250 gold for a female or immature male, and 500 gold for a fully mature male (note: in summer the Snow Monkey's fur is patchy and loses its silvery luster, so the fur is worthless unless they are skinned in winter).
Habitat: Any of the hot springs in the northern woodlands. While they'll range up to fifty miles (80 km) away, in the worst of the winter cold (they aren't bothered at all by snow, only by temperatures fifty degrees below the freezing point of water) they retreat for protection to their own volcanic hot springs.
Range: The Great Northern Wilderness.
Winter Adaptation: Fur is silver in winter, patchy and dull gray the rest of the year.
Background & Behavior: Now extinct throughout the human lands, the Snow Monkeys were once found as far south as the Old Kingdom and were in great numbers around the Dragon's Claw, but are now found only in the north. The winter pelts of Snow Monkeys are a cause of much human greed. The fur is luxurious, beautiful, toasty warm and, best of all, completely *waterproof*. The fur is the tip off to the way that the Snow Monkeys survive in winter. When it is relatively mild, only twenty or thirty degrees below freezing, they just bury themselves in the snow. When it gets really cold, Snow Monkeys are able to languish in volcanic hot springs. They are completely content, taking their ease in boiling hot water, while bone-chilling winds howl around them, and snow builds up on their fur. Omnivorous, they prefer fruits and nuts, as well as the occasional small mammal (mouse, chipmunk, squirrel), or insect grubs, or small birds. Lacking tastier food, they'll eat plant roots, select leaves, and even scrape up the algae that grows on the rocks surrounding the hot springs.

As monkeys go, the Snow Monkeys are fairly quiet. They tend to murmur softly to each other, but it seems more of a noise indicating comfort and security than any kind of language. Males will beat rocks against rocks or trees as warning sounds, or to threaten another male. They are particularly alarmed by any of the northern felines (anything from a bobcat or a lynx, to a Snow Leopard or a White Tiger) and a pack of peaceful Snow Monkeys can quickly turn into a snarling mob, hurling rocks fast enough to keep them constantly in the air. On the other hand, they seem completely at ease with wolves, and groups of Snow Monkeys have been seen camping in and around a wolf pack, while the young of the two species engage in rambunctious play, the adults calmly walking around each other, totally unconcerned with each other's affairs.

Breeding always takes place in the Spring, with females giving birth to twins in the autumn (if it is a particularly severe winter, usually one gets "lost" somewhere). Both males and females are doting parents, and when the young are full grown they will often care for an aged parent as if it were an infant, carrying it around, feeding it, and protecting it.

Uuhgtaar/ Shaggy Elephant

Size: Body: 24-32 feet long (7.3 to 9.7 m), tail: 1-2 feet (0.3 to 0.6 m), and up to 18 feet (5.5 m) tall.
Weight: 10,000-18,000 pounds (4500 to 8,100 kg).
Hit Points: 2D6x10. **S.D.C.:** 5D6+36.
Natural A.R.: 7
Horror Factor/Awe: 8
P.P.E.: 5D6; in addition, Uuhgtaars are very sensitive to the presence of magic energy and the supernatural.
Attacks Per Melee: Three; trunk does 1D6 points of damage, head butt 2D4, short charge and strike with tusk 3D6+6, stomp 5D6+4, trample does 6D6x2 points of damage, and a running charge and ram with head down does 6D6+6 damage.
Bonuses: +3 to strike, +1 to parry, and +1 to dodge.
Natural Abilities: Nightvision 40 feet (12.2 m), excellent sense of smell, Swim 60%, and can travel under water (up to 24 feet/7.3 m deep) by using its prehensile trunk to breathe like a snorkel. An adult elephant can also use its trunk to pick up and carry objects weighing up to 400 pounds (180 kg; but usually picks up objects considerably smaller), reach leaves high up in the trees, pull down branches, etc.
Speed: 8 (about 5 mph/8 km), but can run at a speed of 35 (about 24 mph/38.4 km) in bursts lasting 2D4x10 minutes.
Average Life Span: 45-70 years.
Value: Winter Hide: 200 gold, meat (whole animal): 75-100 gold, tusks: 400-2,000 gold each (from a stumpy, splintered wreck to a magnificent full rack).
Habitat: Extreme north, including the Tundra.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness.
Winter Adaptation: Three extra layers of hair start growing in late autumn, so in the winter they look much shaggier. No color change. Massive build-up of body fat, especially in the hump on the back of the neck.
Behavior: Families usually travel in groups of 2-8, while adult males spend most of their time alone, but in summer, for a week or two, herds of 100 or more will gather together. The troop usually consists of a dominant female, one or two subordinate females, and the young. Bigger than their southern cousins, they thrive in even the most extreme cold, but have problems dealing



with heat (most elderly Wooly Elephants die of heat stroke when they are too far from water to cool themselves off). They feed on a large variety of plants, leaves and roots, and can dig right down through the permafrost with their great tusks (both males and females have full tusks, and even a year-old Wooly Elephant will have a three-foot rack, tipped with deadly points). Breeding only occurs in late summer, and the young are born a year and a half later, in the early spring.

Except for the sentient races, Wooly Elephants have no natural predators, and all the carnivores of the Northern Wilderness know enough to keep well clear of any but the most sickly straggler. On the other hand, Wooly Elephants tolerate the presence of most other herbivores (Moose, Caribou, Deer, Musk Ox, etc., but not Great Northern Boars), and seem to actually enjoy the company of crows and ravens, even allowing them to perch on their backs and ride along on their travels.

Winter Crab

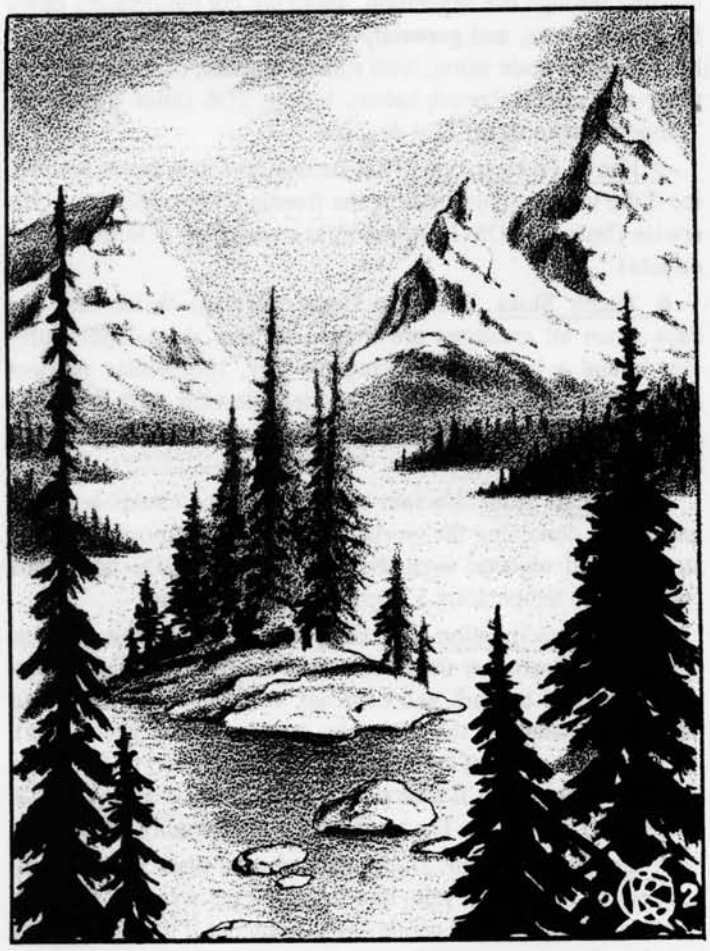
Size: 8 to 18 inches (20-46 cm) across, claws up to 4 inches (10 cm) long.
Weight: 2-8 pounds (0.9 to 3.6 kg)..
Hit Points & S.D.C. Combined: Small: 1D6; large: 2D6.
Natural A.R.: 10 (thick shell).
Attacks Per Melee: 2 (claws).
Damage: Claws do 1D6 damage.
Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +1 to strike and +2 to dodge.
Speed: 6 (12 in water).
Average Life Span: 2-6 years.
Value: 5 gold per pound (delicious).
Habitat: Beaches and rocks along the northern coastal waters.
Range: Northern coastal areas.
Winter Adaptation: Nothing visible, but anti-freeze in the blood.
Behavior: Except for one odd trait, this is just an ordinary crab, feeding on seaweed and tiny crustaceans. The way the Winter Crab survives the winter is by mixing a natural anti-freeze into its blood. This isn't a problem unless someone tries to eat one at the wrong time of year. In the warmer months, there's no problem, and the flesh is delicious raw, and even better cooked. However, the anti-freeze doesn't change the flavor of the meat (it still tastes wonderful!), but it's a deadly poison that causes paralysis and even death (roll 18 or better to save vs poison; P.E. bonus applies). Those who fail to save will become numb at first, and then will fall into a coma that lasts 4D6 hours. If the coma lasts less than 8 hours, there's no problem, and the victim will awake otherwise undamaged (assuming that they are kept warm and protected). Over 8 hours means the poison might kill, and another save vs poison is required every hour.

Yaarhkaa/ Wooly Rhinoceros

Size: Body: 12-14 feet long (3.6 to 4.2 m), tail: 4-6 inches (10-15 cm); 4-6 feet (1.2 to 1.8 m) tall at the shoulders.
Weight: 2400-4600 pounds (1080 to 2070 kg).
Natural A.R.: 9
Hit Points: 3D6x10. **S.D.C.:** 2D6+60.
Horror Factor/Awe: 6
Attacks Per Melee: One via charge/trample or two from head/horn attacks.
Damage: Head butt: 2D4 points of damage, horn attack does 3D6 damage, charging horn ram does 4D6 damage, stomp 2D4, and trample does 5D6+10 points of damage.
Bonuses: +2 to strike, +1 to dodge.
Natural Abilities: Excellent swimmers (85%), poor eyesight, excellent smelling and hearing; can smell a humanoid 500 yards/meters upwind.

Speed: 16, but can run at a speed of 44 (30 mph/48 km) in bursts lasting 3D6 minutes.
Average Life Span: 20-40 years.
Value: Hide: 100 gold, horn: 200 gold, meat (whole body): 60 gold.

Habitat: Grasslands, meadows and tundra.
Range: Great Northern Wilderness.
Winter Adaptation: Fur changes throughout the year, with the lightest shades (pale gray) in winter and the darkest in summer. Massive build-up of body fat.
Behavior: Solitary most of the year, they will form groups of 12-36 during the winter months, using their numbers to fend off packs of predators. They graze on leaves, shoots and buds of trees and bushes, building up a huge amount of fat (they eat very little during the winter). A single young is born after a gestation of 12 months. The young remains with its mother for up to 3 years, when the next calf is born.



Rolling North

Adventures & Encounter Tables for the Great Northern Wilderness

By Erick Wujcik

Just because the Great Northern Wilderness consists of vast stretches undisturbed by civilization, that doesn't mean the place is boring. On the contrary, the whole region is teeming with life of all kinds, especially in the short heat of summer, but even in the dead of winter. What follows in this section are a whole bunch of random tables the Game Master can use to generate weather, wild creatures, swarms of insects, monsters, and even entire adventures (yup, one of Bill Coffin's famous *101 Adventures* tables).

Which leaves a big question. How often should all this be used? How often should the Game Master roll up encounters?

Ever notice how different people have totally different answers for the same question? You ask one kid, "so, what happened in school today?" and the answer is, "Nothin'. What's for dinner?" On the other hand, you could run across a child who has a thousand things to say. For example, consider the following verbal report from a Northern Wilderness Scout, delivered just after returning from one week on patrol:

"What happened on our first day through the woods? Cripes! I'd have trouble just counting all the stuff we saw, all the tracks, all the birds. Speaking of birds, it was the first time I'd seen a pair of nesting blue grackles, and I saw four different flocks of Northern Geese overhead, each with seventy or eighty birds, plus three kinds of hawks, one owl (though why it was out in the daytime I don't know), a flock of Blue Jays chasing a lone crow, one dead tree completely filled with sparrows. . . Oh? Not interested in birds? Okay, well there were some really interesting trees. . . No trees either? Okay, how about snakes? We saw. . . No, not dangerous snakes, just the little brown-and-red-and-green. . . Um, yeah, we saw some big animals too. Mostly tracks of moose, elk . . . What? Just dangerous ones? Well, moose can be pretty. . . Mm. Yeah, I see what you mean. They probably wouldn't form armies and go attacking the . . . Dragons? Well, since they fly they don't usually leave tracks, so that's probably why we didn't see . . . No, we didn't see any dragons . . . Right! Yes! Back to the subject. The scout report. Well, we found a couple of beaver lakes filled with . . . No lakes? But the fish were really tasty. Don't you want to . . . No? Sorry. I understand. Well, there was this abandoned village and you could still see the burn marks and there were scattered bits of weapons . . . Fresh? What? The village? Oh, no sir, that village was probably burned down twenty or thirty years ago . . . Yes sir. I'm trying to sir. My report, sir, I'm trying to give you my report. No sir. We didn't see any signs of the enemy, sir. Not in the first day, anyway . . ."

Kind of makes you wish you had one of those "What did we see? On the first day? Nothing," kind of guys.

The point is, it's possible to roll up tons and tons of encounters. Yes, in a "real" trip through the woods it's likely that interesting things would pop up every few minutes. However, tons and tons of encounters can get in the way of the fun if, for example, the player group has to make a five day trip from one remote outpost to another. Sure, the players expect that they *may* run into trouble, but they also expect the Game Master to skip the boring parts, and just say: "Okay, the first three days are rel-

atively smooth, and all you've got are a few mosquito bites, then you find a good place to camp on your third night out. It's a green meadow, with a quick-moving stream of water nearby. . ."

Every role-player understands! Even though the description of the "good place to camp" seems peaceful, it's obvious that the Game Master didn't bother to describe the places they slept on the first couple of nights. Which means something is going to happen. Good, bad, or just interesting, that's up in the air, but something *is* going to happen.

Now, when the players are focused on the immediate environment, on that particular meadow in the vast forest, that's when it's a good idea for the Game Master to roll up a few more details. After all, it's reasonable that they'd see animal tracks by the stream, or see some of the evening birds and bats. By filling in the details, it helps the players (and the Game Master!) visualize all the little things, like the size of the stream, the placement of some of the trees, bushes, etc. Things that are definitely *not* important when passing through miles and miles of forest, but very helpful on the verge of, say, an attack by a dozen wild boar, or a couple of arrows coming from a hidden sniper, or even just the appearance of a Bearman humming a pleasant little tune to himself.

In other words, as the Game Master it's *your* job to also keep the game balanced. Yes, by all means roll up interesting encounters and details. And if the player group is just wandering aimlessly, looking for adventure, then roll up that adventure. But don't be like the scout who remembers *everything*, boring the players with too many details!

Random Encounters in the Great Northern Wilderness

For most journeys, it is a good rule of thumb to roll for every eight hours of wilderness travel, with the Game Master checking on the following table. For very long trips (10 days or more), it's probably best to just roll once per day. On the other hand, if the characters are just sitting somewhere and waiting, perhaps rolling for every hour or two would be a good idea.

01-10% The Big Nothing. Or maybe the quiet before the storm. It means the player characters cover a lot of ground with no adventures and no dangers. To spice things up a bit, the Game Master could roll in advance on the *Adventure 101 Table* and give some kind of hint about what might be coming up on the next day (or night).

11-25% Change in Weather. Roll 2D6 and consult the following:

2. Heat Wave. Sudden dramatic rise in temperature that takes anywhere from one to six hours (roll 1D6). During the summer a heat wave can last 2D6 days, but any other time of the year it's measured in hours (4D6). In summer, early autumn or late spring, it gets downright hot, with an increase of 4D6 degrees. If it's winter, the temperature moves above the freezing point of water, with an extra 3D10 degrees.

3. Flooding. While it's most common in the spring, when the ice melts in the mountains, sending torrents of water down to overrun riverbanks, lakes and streams, it can also happen at any other time of the year. While a flood can be dangerous anytime of the year, just about anywhere in the Great Northern Wilderness, it's often most deadly in the winter months, when water moving quickly under the snow unexpectedly soaks the clothing of unsuspecting travellers, creating the danger of frostbite and other cold damage.

4. Windstorm. The wind kicks up, usually from the west, blasting through the vegetation, knocking the temperature down by 2D6 degrees, and generally wreaks havoc. 20% chance per hour of a full-scale storm, with rolling thunder, continuous lightning, and massive precipitation, lasting 2D6 times 5 minutes. Temperature cools off 2D4 degrees.

5. Heavy Precipitation. That means rain in warmer months, ice if the weather is just below the freezing point, and snow otherwise (lasts for 2D6x15 minutes, accumulating 1D6 inches per minute).

6. Sunny Skies. Even the Great Northern Wilderness has days when all creatures are treated to blue skies, light fluffy clouds and a bright sun during the day, spectacular sunrises and/or sunsets, and crisp night skies glowing with heavenly wonders. A glorious few (2D6) hours of respite from the usual hellish weather.

7. Overcast Skies. No rain or snow, but the clouds are thick and angry, darkening the world and making it impossible to see any celestial objects, even the sun. Lasts for 2D6 hours and cools off the temperature 1 degree every other hour.

8. Light Precipitation. Drizzling rain, or light snow flurries, depending on whether the temperature is above or below freezing. Skies will be dark and overcast, so visibility is down and nothing is visible in the night sky (so navigation gets tricky). Each hour there's just enough snow to 'dust' everything with a layer of white, and it'll take six hours of steady flurries to build up a full inch of snow. The temperature gets steadily lower.

9. Steady Downpour. Under dark clouds, there is a continuous release of snow or rain, depending on the weather. In warm weather the rain will be gentle and steady, but if the temperature is below freezing the rain turns to a continuous torrent of fat, fluffy snowflakes (perfect for making snowballs, snowmen and snow forts). Lasts for 2D6+2 hours, and every hour results in another inch, if rain, and another six inches, if snow.

10. Warm Spell. Over the next day the temperature gradually climbs back to whatever is normal for the time of year. If it's already normal, or warmer than normal, then it gets downright hot, with an increase of 3D6 degrees. If it's winter, it actually rises a few degrees above the freezing point of water, and the snow starts to melt.

11. Cold Snap. Sudden & severe drop in temperature by 5D6 degrees. While it can get amazingly cold in the Great Northern Wilderness, a roll of anything that takes the temperature down to more than thirty degrees below the freezing point of water should be cut in half (unless the characters are wandering in the extreme north, or if there might be a supernatural explanation).

12. Twister! The sky darkens dramatically, until there is an eerie greenish glow off on the horizon. The wind kicks up, with bursts that shake buildings, rip down branches, topple rocks, and even uproot dead trees.

26-40% Difficult Terrain. Roads are the exception, not the rule. Throughout the Great Northern Wilderness travelers de-

pend on deer tracks, the crude cuts in the forest made by migrating animal herds (those made by the passage of Wooly Elephants are particularly easy to follow!), and just following whatever part of the forest, hillside, barren wasteland, or riverbank seems easiest. Uneven footing with upturned roots, jagged rocks and patches of slippery muck make up even the best ways to travel. Also, relatively little of the Great Northern Wilderness is flat, so travel is constantly either struggling uphill, or trying to keep from sliding too fast downhill (sometimes alternating every few minutes!). There are times, however, when the characters come across really difficult terrain, and it seems like the gods are deliberately making it tough to get from point A to point B. Roll 2D6.

2. Burn. Sometime in the last 1D4 years, this part of the world experienced a devastating forest fire. For the first year it's a wasteland of blackened charcoal and ash, still smoldering and stinking, and fallen trees block every path, requiring characters to be constantly climbing or jumping. On the second and third years there will be lots of small plants, including the seedlings of trees, but the remnants of the trunks and branches of the burned trees will still mean a lot of climbing. By the fourth year it's clear that the forest is coming back, and the traces of the fire are starting to disappear.

3. Rocks, Gravel or Pebbles. A barren section of at least a couple of square miles is covered with rocks of more-or-less the same size. Roll 2D6 for the size, in inches, of the average rock. Since all the rocks and pebbles are loose, it's difficult to get up to full speed, and the footing is treacherous for battle, with characters always having to save vs slipping.

4. Mud Flats. A huge flat section, stretching out for at least four miles, constantly wet and muddy. Roll 1D6 for the depth of the mud in inches. Aside from being unsteady footing, everyone and everything tends to get filthy, eventually adding layer after layer of heavy muck.

5. Overgrowth. Ground vines, bushes, and ivy cover the ground, catching every step of a foot, hoof or paw, and slowing characters down to a quarter of their usual speed. Attempting to run is dangerous, since every few steps there's the chance of being caught and tripped.

6. Ravine. In the jagged and irregular landscape (it looks like the gods had a good time tilting the ground in different directions), the only good traveling route is down a ravine cut out over the centuries by water. There's a 25% chance of a stream or river at the bottom of the ravine, but also a chance, especially in the spring months, of a flash flood coming along like an out-of-control locomotive. Travel can be easy for up to a mile, and then the only way through is climbing over rocks, wading through water, or squeezing through a narrow (but deep) gap in the ravine walls.

7. Rock Outcrop. Huge chunks of broken rock, or massive boulders (2D6x25 feet across), cover the landscape for 3D6 miles. While there are nice flat stretches (like walking on a sidewalk), every few minutes characters will have to climb up or down 2D6 feet (0.6 to 3.6 m), with sharp, jagged rocks protruding from random directions.

8. Sand. A little patch of dead land in the middle of the wilderness. While the sand pits of the north are usually pretty small (only a mile or two across), there are some serious deserts that stretch for 4D6x25 miles (160 to 960 km). Travel is unobstructed, but wind can completely obscure vision and make it really easy to get totally lost.

9. Lakes & Rivers. Those who try to promote the Great Northern Wilderness as a vacation spot, often describe it as "The Land of One Hundred Thousand Lakes." Which sounds lovely, until you're traveling cross-country, and you've got to walk around all those lakes, and cross all the raging rivers that connect all that water, all the way east to the sea. Lakes are typically crescent shaped, 4D6 miles (6 to 38 km) long, and 2D4 miles (3.2 to 13 km) across at their widest point. Maximum depth is usually 2D6x5 feet (3 to 18.3 m). At each end of the lake will be a river (10% have two or more rivers feeding into them), often with a waterfall, so just about every time the characters find a lake, they'll also find a river they have to ford. Generally, the more still the water, the deeper it is (with hidden holes up to 3D6+6 feet/2.7 to 7.3 m deep). Shallow water runs really fast, and is filled with slippery rocks. Either way, getting across involves being careful where you put your feet, and a strong chance of getting completely soaked.

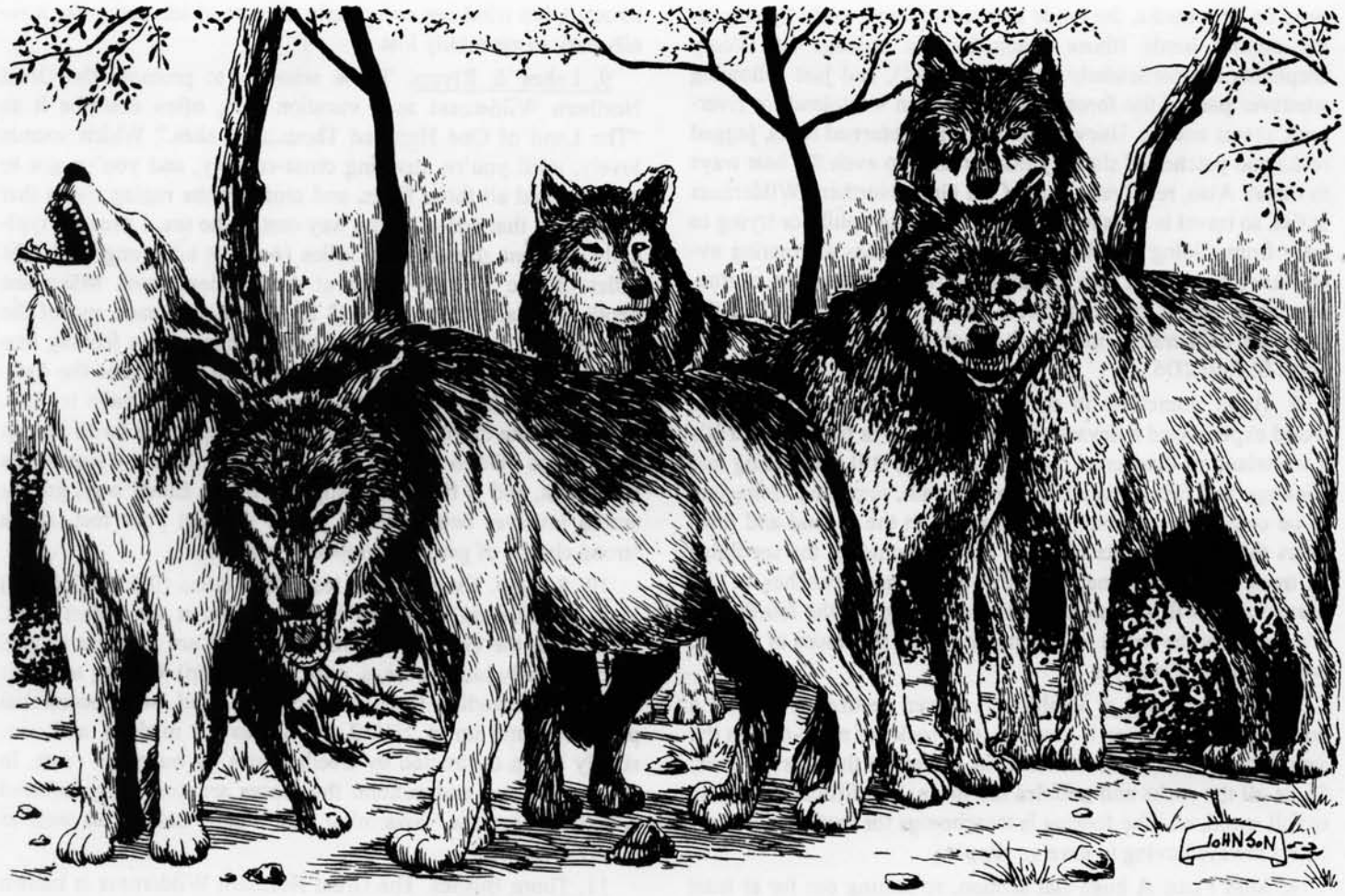
10. Swamp. Extending at least 6D6 miles (9.6 to 57.6 km) long, and 3D4 miles (4.8 to 19 km) across at the widest point, swamps in the Great Northern Wilderness are crescent shaped (they're really just big lakes, only not as deep). Getting across is a matter of wading through muck and mud, with occasional pools of water up to 2D6x2 feet/1.2 to 7.3 m deep, and constantly being obstructed by weeds, vines, or huge tree roots. In spring, summer and autumn the places are constantly infested with bugs (see the "Swarming Pest" table, below), as well as plenty of snakes.

11. Thorn Bushes. The Great Northern Wilderness is known for a variety of bushes, small trees and large weeds, all covered with thorns, prickles and needles. Running without protection is a good way to lose a lot of blood, since it's like running against a million tiny knives. Wool, cotton, silk, and even leather clothing and armor gets torn up (1D4 S.D.C. damage for every five minutes pushing through thorn bushes). While the metal of chain or plate mail isn't affected by the sharp plants, remember that almost all armor is held together with leather or cloth bindings, and those can easily be weakened or ripped by the thorns. Hacking a path is time consuming (a skilled wilderness character can cut a path at a rate of 10 feet/3 m every five minutes), and also pretty tiring (it's very hard work!).

12. Cliff. Sometimes there's just no way around, and the characters have to either climb up or down a cliff wall (20% of the time, when they climb, they'll have to climb the other way, the same distance, a mile/1.6 km or so later). Roll 6D6 for the shortest possible climb. Characters with Climb as a skill will have no problem (there are plenty of handholds), but others will have to be helped with ropes, or risk falling once every six feet (1.8 m). Transporting wagons or heavy equipment, horses or other large quadrupeds, will take hours of back-breaking work.

41-45% Border Crossing. With or without the characters realizing it, they've entered into (or exited out of) an area under the control of the powers of the region. Usually that means wandering into a Wolfen Tribal area, but there are other possibilities.

46-55% Animal Encounter. Roll on the "Wild Animals of the Great Northern Wilderness" Table.



56-60% Wild Game. Roll on the "Large Game Animals of the Great Northern Wilderness" Table.

61-70% Bugs! Roll on the "Swarming Pests of the Great Northern Wilderness" Table.

71-80% Flying Creatures. Roll on the "Bats & Birds of the Great Northern Wilderness" Table.

81-85% Monsters. Roll on the "Beasts & Monsters of the Great Northern Wilderness" Table.

86-95% Adventure 101. It's one of those days! The Game Master should roll up one of the random adventures. Also, if it seems appropriate roll again on this table to see if you get any weather changes or such at the same time. If you don't like what you rolled (doesn't fit with the campaign, you already hit that one, etc.), then roll another 1D6 and move a bit further down the table.

96-00% Wild & Crazy Times! When it rains, it pours. Roll on this table a total of 2D6 times, setting up what will happen over the next eight hours. If there are multiple weather changes, that's fine (The Great Northern Wilderness is known for being fickle!). Everything rolled up should be ready and waiting for the player characters.

Wild Animals of the Great Northern Wilderness

01-02% Alpine Monitor or Oboru
03-04% Badger
05-06% Bear, Black
07-08% Beaver
09-10% Bobcat
11-12% Coyote
13-20% Deer
21-23% Eershee/Reindeer
24% Ferret
25% Fox
26-27% Frog
28% Grison
29% Ice Gnats/Tundra Fleas
30% Kaarghuzen/Giant Beaver
31-32% Laangaar/North Elk
33% Lynx
34% Marten
35% Mink
36-38% Mole
39-43% Moose
44% Mountain Lion
45-50% Opossum
51% Otter
52-54% Pony, North
55-58% Porcupine
59-60% Rattlesnake, Cottonmouth
61-65% Raccoon
66% Sable
67-70% Sillihegh/Snow Rabbit/Tundra Hare

71-74% Skunk
75-76% Snake (poisonous or not; G.M.'s discretion)
77% Snow Monkey
78-79% Spider, Giant Timber
80-86% Squirrel, Red Northern
87-90% Toad
91% Turtle, Snapping
92% Warthog
93% Weasel
94% Wild Boar
95-96% Wolf, Gray
97% Wolverine
98-99% Woodchuck
100% Yapok

Large Game Animals of the Great Northern Wilderness

When Wolfen, native humans, Bearmen, or other humanoid carnivores of the Great Northern Wilderness go hunting, they generally are looking for one of the following:

01-10% Solitary Male Deer.
11-20% Small herd of 2D6+2 Deer.
21-28% Large herd of 3D10x6 Deer.
29-35% Eershee/Reindeer, always in a herd of 4D10+4.
36-37% Solitary Male Laangaar/North Elk or Oboru.
38-40% Herd of 3D8 Laangaar/North Elk.
41-43% Solitary Male Moose.
44-50% Moose Females with young, numbering 2D6.
51-55% Herd of 2D10+5 Musk Ox.
56-60% 2D4 Warthogs.
61-65% Pair of Male Wild Boar.
66-75% Herd of 4D6+3 Wild Boar, or a lone Arrowhead or Tusker.
76-90% Herd of 2D6x100 Yuukunkh/Woodland Buffalo (see Bison in the *Monsters & Animals* sourcebook)..
91-95% Herd of 4D6+2 dangerous, aggressive animals like the Arrowhead, Tusker or Catoblepa, maybe even Melech or Dragondactyls.
96-00% Roll 1D6 additional times on this table, indicating that different kinds of animals are found in the same area.

Swarming Pests of the Great Northern Wilderness

The winter is so hard, and so long, that the smallest creatures of the Northern Wilderness have to make the most of the few months of warmth and life. Unfortunately, to the collective misery of the larger inhabitants, that means the summer and early autumn are seasons when vast swarms of insects can make the forest into a green, buzzing hell. During these times it's not unusual to find any number of larger creatures (Wolfen, Bearmen, even Wooly Elephants!) covered in a layer of hardened mud (or just up to their necks in a muddy swamp), or completely submerged in a lake, pool or river, breathing through a hollow reed. Anything to avoid the never-ending swarms of biting, sucking, scratching, or egg-laying bugs.

Game Master Note: While the descriptions below include aspects that *could* inflict a lot of damage (such as the Blood Flies, and *Tick Fever*), Game Masters should view the swarms of bugs more like "flavor text" and a disgusting annoyance rather than a serious threat – if the characters *welcome* the coming of winter, since all the damned bugs die, then the Game Master is doing a good job.

01-10% Blood Flies. These tiny red flies, with crystal wings and pinpoint yellow eyes, are among the smallest flying insects (about one tenth the size of an ordinary housefly). They are utterly harmless, except for the fact that they lay their eggs in one of only two places. One is in the flesh of a corpse, so it's no surprise that a cloud of Blood Flies will appear around any recent kill. The other egg-laying site is in an open wound. Any open wound. Even a tiny scrape or cut is enough for a female Blood Fly to drop in a few hundred eggs. When a scab forms over the wound, that's when the eggs hatch into voracious little larvae, eating their way through the flesh and blood of the host to the tune of 1D6 Hit Points (not S.D.C.) per day. From the outside, it won't look like there's anything wrong (although the victim will feel a little numb in the area of the wound), but under the scab there is a mass of larvae growing and growing. On the 3rd day the wound area will suddenly become horribly inflamed and hurt like blazes. Scratching or cutting open the skin in the area allows the release of all the now-transformed Blood Flies. If that were the end of it, it wouldn't be such a big deal, but the problem is that at least 20% of the Blood Flies lay another set of eggs before they fly away, and if that batch is left to grow, it'll do 6D6+35 points of damage!

11-20% Bees. Wild bees have hives all over the Great Northern Wilderness, each producing a pound or more of honey every week during the spring and summer months. Generally, the bigger the hive, the larger the number of stinging bees, but an angry swarm of bees can inflict 1D4, 1D6 or 1D8 (or 2D4) points of damage every minute, depending on the size of the swarm, and the size of the bees. Worse yet, bees are perfectly capable of crawling into the chinks of even the best armor.

21-40% Black Flies. The real plague of the north are Black Flies. When they appear, they show up in the tens of millions. Each one can't do much more than cause a momentary "ouch" of pain, but when dozens are trying to bite at the same time, and when the air is so filled with them one cannot see more than a few yards (meters) ahead, characters will understand that there's no monster on Earth more terrifying! Characters caught in a stinging swarm take 1D4 points of damage every five minutes. Fortunately, Black Flies don't follow living prey, so dashing through and out of the swarm will save the day. Then again, the swarm usually covers a 3D6x20 yard/meter diameter.

41-55% Cluster Flies. As with the Blood Flies, these flying insects are only interested in corpses and open wounds. Except they like to eat the flesh of their victim right away. Each melee round they are left undisturbed over a wound they'll swoop in to chow down, inflicting 1D4 Hit Point damage per melee.

56-70% Leeches. Filling the lakes, rivers, streams, swamps, and even mud flats of the Great Northern Wilderness are these

primitive, rather disgusting little flatworms. They live off blood, and they have a natural painkiller they excrete, so the victim doesn't even know they attached themselves and are helping themselves to a liquid lunch. If characters don't check carefully they could lose up to 2D4 points of damage every hour after their skin is exposed to a liquid environment. Pulling them off is painful and pretty revolting. Burning them or sprinkling salt on the leeches causes them to let go and drop off.

71-80% Mosquitos. There are plenty of jokes about the size of mosquitos in the north woods, but the fact is, they're bred to puncture the hides of creatures a lot furrier than Wolfen, not to mention humans. The most a character could be damaged is 1D4 points, even if left completely exposed overnight. However, even a few bites can cause nasty swelling, welts and pretty much constant itching and minor pain.

81-85% Night Ants. These little brown ants seem too small to do any kind of damage to anything. However, they've got two things going for them. First, if you see one, there are likely tens of millions of them just underground or in a hollow tree somewhere nearby. Second, even a few dozen of them are capable of releasing a nasty chemical that affects the taste and smell of any food. When they find a corpse, thousands of them will crawl all over it, and the result is meat so foul that even buzzards and vultures won't touch it. The problem for adventurers is that they'll do this with *any* food they find. Go to sleep at night, and if the food isn't sealed in thick, airtight containers, by morning it will be covered with a mass of ants carrying it away. Even if the ants are scraped off, the food itself will have a 01-90% chance of being completely inedible.

86-90% Range Fleas. From June to early September, Range Fleas appear in vast numbers, each too small to be seen with the naked eye, but visible as a black haze over most of the long-suffering herd animals. They aren't fussy, and they'll infest any living thing with hair, people included, getting under clothing and feasting away. They wash off easily enough, but then they come back, again and again, causing a nearly-perpetual itching and stinging. That's because during each infestation the fleas create tiny cuts for their eggs, so anyone who remains infested for more than 24 hours will end up covered in ugly scabs and become infested with young within 1D4+2 days. The egg patches can be killed by dousing them in most any kind of alcohol, but anybody who has accidentally poured alcohol in a cut knows that it burns like the devil (one S.D.C. point per scab it is applied to or one Hit Point for every two scabs doused in alcohol). The Kankoran, Druids and most healers have a painless ointment that does the same job. A psychic or magical healing touch that cures/restores 8 or more Hit Points will kill all eggs but does not cure the many little scabs, that requires a second touch.

91-95% Ticks. Hiding in bush, grass or weed plants, ticks in search of an easy meal leap onto just about anyone in range. They bite to drink blood similar to mosquitos. While painful, they don't do all that much damage (a dozen ticks might cause one point of damage in an hour), but they often carry a disease known as *Tick Fever*, which starts with a bull's eye red welt, and then goes on to cripple characters for 2D6 days. The fever cuts down P.P. by 1D4+2 points and causes a whole range of flu-like symptoms, including fever, headaches, sleepiness, and even vertigo. However, there's only a 01-05% chance that a particular tick carries the Fever, and even then the character can try to *save vs disease* (roll a 15 or higher on a 1D20 to save; P.E. bonus is applicable) every day after the red welt appears. A failed save means the feverish character is also -2 on initiative, -2 to all combat rolls and -20% on the performance of skills. Also reduce Spd attribute by 30% and feels hot, tired, sluggish and sleepy all the time (will sleep for 1D4+3 hours at a time if allowed to rest).

96-00% Multiple Bugs. Roll again on this table 1D6 more times. Different insects means the group is pestered with more than one kind at the same time. Every time you get the same result, multiply the results for the total number of insects. For example, say you roll 3 on the 1D6, and then get a 32%, a 07% and a 41%, that would mean a plague of Blood Flies, Black Flies and Cluster Flies at the same time.

Bats & Birds of the Great Northern Wilderness

01-03% Bat, Cave. Found in caves all over the Great Northern Wilderness.

04-06% Bat, Pine. Tiny bats who live in the pine forests, and nurse their young inside of developing pine cones.

07-12% Blue Jay. Noisy forest dwelling birds who like to call out to each other about any intruders in *their* area. Will dive bomb anybody who threatens a nest or young Jay.

13-15% Buzzard. Unless driven away by Ravens, Buzzards will collect at the site of any dead or dying creature. They feed on carrion, so seeing more than one or two buzzards circling ultimately indicates a place of death, whether it be an animal carcass or battle scene.

16-17% Cardinal; vibrant red bird.

18-22% Crow, usually found in groups of 4D10 (or 1D4x10); noisy scavengers whose caws can be heard up to a mile (1.6 km) away.

23-27% Duck, Northwood. Found in most of the lakes of the Great Northern Wilderness, they are somewhat larger than their southern relations (22+1D8 inches/0.6+ m). They have a layer of fat that keeps them warm throughout the winter. While they aren't migratory birds, they need open fresh water, so as their lakes freeze over, they move farther and farther south. Hit Points & S.D.C.: 4D6+6, otherwise exactly like Mallards, and are good eating.

28-29% Eagle

30-31% Finch (summer only).

32-33% Falcon

34-38% Great Northern Goose; always in large flocks numbering in the hundreds or thousands. A single goose is a tasty game animal that can feed 12-20 humans depending on their appetites.

39-41% Grouse, Carrion. Smaller than their Western Empire cousins, they are called "Carrion Grouse" because the males will show up (like vultures and buzzards) around dead animals. They don't eat flesh, but need a strip of meat or gut (the bloodier, the better) to attract females prior to mating. All the canine races consider them delicious game animals.

42-43% Hawk

44% Hummingbird (summer only, and even then they are very rare).

45-46% Kingfisher

47-49% Loon, Speckled. Much like the Red-Throated Loon of the south, but a more secretive creature, calling to each other only in the early, pre-dawn morning, or at dusk. Kankoran call them Hoosh, and believe killing one brings bad fortune.

50-51% Osprey

52-54% Owl, Forest.

55-56% Owl, Great Horned; large nocturnal hunter of rodents.

57-60% Pheasant, another game animal that makes good eating. Found mainly in meadows, thickets and fields of tall grass and flowers; only sometimes in the forest.

61-63% Raven, Red. Called "Red Ravens," they are completely covered in black feathers, only the rims around their black eyes are red. These large birds (most are 30 inches/0.8 m tall) will eat anything, but prefer carrion to any other food. Noisy as well as being nosy (they are intensely curious about anything), they've been known to fly off with hats, daggers, and just about anything that shines or glitters. Giving chase to a Red Raven can be hazardous, especially if the bird seems frightened. They love being chased and readily lead their pursuers over cliffs, into hidden holes or bogs, or straight towards big, dangerous creatures. One particularly intelligent (and dangerous) behavior is their habit of calling in large predators to rip open corpses, or to finish off the wounded or dying. While most of the flock will stay with the prey, a few will scatter, looking for wolves or predatory cats. When wolves hear their "Thit-Thit-Thit" call, they come running, knowing that prey is near at hand. Hit Points/S.D.C.: 3D6+4, Attacks Per Melee: 3, Bonuses: +3 to strike and +5 to dodge. They travel in pairs consisting of an elder, who stays with any interesting prey, and a younger bird whose job it is to fly back and collect the rest of the flock.

64-66% Robin (summer only).

67-70% Shrike, Northern.

71-78% Sparrow, Common.

79-81% Sparrow, Ghost. Called the Ghost Sparrow partly because of its gray coloring (they are really speckled, since all the feathers are either white or black, but from more than a few feet away they look gray), and partly because they are completely silent. Tiny birds (2 to 2 ½ inches/5-6 cm, 2 Hit Points/S.D.C.), in winter they nest together in huge flocks (3D6x100 birds).

82-87% Starling (summer only).

88-90% Thrush (summer only).

91-98% Turkey, another tasty game animal that can feed 2D4+12 humans or 2-4 Wolfen.

99-00% Multiple Birds and/or Bats. Roll 1D6 more times on this table.

Beasts & Monsters of the Great Northern Wilderness

01% Algor Frost Giant

02-03% Bear, Brown.

04-05% Bear, Great Northern Grizzly.

06% Bogie

07% Brownie

08-10% Centaur

11-15% Coyle

16% Dead Moon Hag

17% Draaghaarth

18-21% Dragon (see Optional Table, below) or Sphinx.

22% Dragon Wolf

23% Drakin

24-27% Emirin

28% Eye Killer

29% Feathered Death

30% Faerie

31% Faerie, Green Wood.

32% Faerie, Night-Elf.

33% Faerie, Silverbell.

34% Grogach

35% Gryphon

36% Ghaashtaagh/Northern Spiked Armadillo

37-40% Haghsholoth/Great Northern Boar

41% Hairy Jack or Danzi (see *Eastern Territory* sourcebook).

42-45% Human

46-49% Kankoran

50% Kelpie

51% Kinnie Ger

52% Leprechaun

53% Nymph

54% Pegasus

55% Peryton

56% Pixie, Common.

57% Pixie, Frost.

58% Puck

59% Satyr

60% Scorpion Devil

61% Spectre or Killgore (see *Northern Hinterlands* sourcebook).

62% Spriggan

63-65% Sprite, Tree.

66-67% Sprite, Water.

68-69% Sprite, Wind Puff.

70% Sucker

71% Tiger, Snow.

72% Tusker or Giant Scuttle Crab (see *Northern Hinterlands* sourcebook).

73% Unicorn

74-78% Uuhgtaar/Shaggy Elephant
79% Waternix or Weirdwing.
80-81% Toad Stool
82-83% Will-o-the-Wisp
84% Wing Tips (2D6) or a lone Oboru (see *Northern Hinterlands* sourcebook).
85-87% Wolf, Northern Timber.
88-95% Wolfen
96-97% Worms of Taut
98-99% Yaarhkaa/Wooly Rhinoceros
100% Zavor

Optional Table: Dragons of the Great Northern Wilderness

01-07% Basilisk
08-13% Cockatrice
14-22% Fire Dragon
23-35% Great Horned Dragon
36-40% Seven-Headed Hydra
41-67% Ice Dragon
68-70% Kukulcan
71-79% Night Stalker
80-83% Serpent of the Wind
84-88% Thunder Lizard
89-90% Ultucan
91-00% Wooly Dragon

Optional Table: Animal & Monster Encounters of the Tundra

Basically in the Great Northern Wilderness, the Tundra is any ecosystem too cold, or too hostile to support trees, but usually found way to the north, bordering the sea.

01-05% Bat, Northern Vampire
06-23% Eershee/Reindeer
24-26% Ermine
27-28% Fox
29% Ice Dragon
30-35% Ice Gnats/Tundra Fleas
36-45% Mice
46-50% Musk Ox
51-75% Sillihegh/Snow Rabbit/Tundra Hare
76-95% Uuhgtaar/Shaggy Elephant
96-99% Wolverine
100% Wooly Dragon or 1D4 Harpies.

Optional Table: Animal & Monster Encounters of the Northern Sea Coast

01-10% Awk-Awk/Northern Sea Bird
11% Ice Dragon or Giant Scuttle Crab.
12-20% Ice Gnats/Tundra Fleas
21-23% Mermaid
24-27% Merrow
28-40% Mice
41-45% Musk Ox
46-65% Northern Goose
66-70% Northern Sea Lion
71-73% Osprey
74-75% Sea Otter
76-85% Sillihegh/Snow Rabbit/Tundra Hare
86-90% Storm Petrel
91-00% Winter Crab

Adventure 101 Table

The following *Adventure 101 Table* can be used to whip up on-the-spot encounters for the player characters while they are traveling just about anywhere in the vast wilderness that forms most of the Great Northern Wilderness. There are tons of hidden, unknown dangers lurking to surprise the unwary traveler wherever he might be. These tables are meant to reflect that danger.

If the Random Encounter roll falls between 01-50%, then the player characters have run into something. At that point, the G.M. may *make up* the encounter himself, or he may roll percentile dice again and consult the appropriate table (depending on where in the Northern Wilderness the heroes may be).

Each of these encounters are meant to be a break in the action of a larger adventure. If the G.M. so desires, any of these encounters can be the seed for a whole new adventure but he or she will have to build on what's here. The choice is yours. Enjoy!

What gives with the 101st adventure? Clearly, you're never going to roll 101 on percentile dice (unless you got some funky custom jobbers from Wally the Insane Dice Meister), but that's hardly the point. We just threw one more on top of the other 100 as a bonus for getting all the way to the end. Have fun!

01% Avalanche! And the characters are lucky because it is only a small one. (Or unlucky, if the heroes are not in a mountainous region, which makes the presence of an avalanche mind-boggling, indeed.) A person can not escape an avalanche unless he/she can fly or there is a cave or huge boulders (20 tons or more) to hide behind. In the latter two cases, an individual could still find himself buried under a ton of snow. An avalanche will scoop up humanoids, animals, and tents and carry them 2D6x1000 yards/meters down the mountain. Any items that were loose or held in hand will be lost and buried under tons of snow and ice. The characters themselves will suffer 6D6 points of damage and be stunned/unable to move for 4D6 minutes. They will also be soaking wet and are likely to develop a cold that will last 1D6 days. **G.M. Note:** Yes, this is not particularly realistic. Realism would dictate 6D6x10 damage or worse.

During the summer or autumn months, outside of the mountains, the Game Master can substitute a landslide or mudslide, where an earth tremor sets off a shift in the local terrain.

02% Dwarf Bowling. As the adventurers travel through the normally still wilderness, they hear the sound of screams and the thunderous laughter of Giants. As the player group gets closer, every minute or so they can hear what sounds like tenpins being knocked down, over and over and over again. What the heck is going on? To the horror (and grim amusement) of the player characters, they find a ring of four Algor Giants sitting about their frozen campsite playing a rousing game of "Dwarf Bowling." Yep, trussed up on the ground is a party of Dwarven warriors, each wearing full plate armor. By the look of it, they are official soldiers from the *Dwarven Alliance*. How they ended up in this predicament is unknown, but unless somebody rescues them, the Giants will continue using their tied up, armor clad forms as crude bowling balls. The Giants hurl the Dwarves down a long, icy path and into thick wooden tenpins, trying to knock over as many as they can. The Giants could be overpowered, or bribed, or the heroes could try to beat the Giants at their own game and thereby win the Dwarves' freedom. Naturally, when rescued, the Dwarves who survive this ordeal will express their eternal gratitude. Later on, the rescued Dwarves will be a little more reserved, and quite reluctant to be reminded of this supremely embarrassing episode.

03% Statue Garden. A large assortment of stone statues of various humanoids all in the pose of trying to shield their face. Most of them have horrified expressions, leading the adventurers to believe that there is some kind of monster with *petrification powers* loose in the vicinity. But what could it be? A few of the people in this collection of statues are actually rather famous, and might grant the heroes a substantial reward for restoring them back into living flesh. Among the petrified include *Skander Two-to-One*, the notorious gambler and explorer from the Bizantium Kingdom who undertook the job of mapping out the entire Northern Wilderness because he lost a foolish bet; *Lord Ralwin*, a knight from the Eastern Territory but long-time friend of the Wolfen Empire and on a mission to uncover the *Lost Scarab of Thricemore*, a magic item potent enough to shift the balance of power between the Wolfen and the Eastern humans forever; and *Lady Wraith*, a mysterious Western noblewoman known for her love of thrill seeking and taking adventures. She is heir to the single largest private fortune in the Western Empire. Or at least, she was. Her conniving brother might have stolen everything since she disappeared (petrified, it would seem) a few years ago.

04% Lost Elves. The group will run across a search party consisting of a dozen well armed Elven warriors. The Elves ask questions about an Elven exploration party last seen three weeks ago, following up some lead regarding newly discovered ruins of the ancient Wolfen. The expedition consisted of three prominent scholars and a few noble adventurers along for the ride. The group failed to check in at the nearest trading center like they had planned and are now considered *missing*. Given that this area is infamous for intense Coyle marauder activity, it is likely the group was captured or killed. There is now a reward of 1,500 gold for each member of the exploration party delivered safely to the trading center.

05% Ogres and Orcs, Oh My! A band of Ogres and Orcs give the party the once-over, as if sizing them up for battle. They wear tattered furs and leather armor and look thin and tired. They will grunt and growl at humans, Elves, Gnomes, and Dwarves, but ignore them in every other way. They hate the prettier races and are deciding whether or not they should kill this group. They are not bandits. They simply hate humans and their friends.

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

There are 2D6+4 Orcs. All are first level Mercenaries, Miscreant alignment, and wear soft leather armor. They average about 14 Hit Points each, 24 S.D.C., an I.Q. 6, P.S. 18 (+3 to damage), P.P. 10, and are easily spooked by any display of magic. They are armed with Oncin Picks (1D8 or 2D4 damage) and daggers (1D4+1 damage). They obey their Ogre masters to the last letter.

The 1D4+2 Ogre warriors are the boys in charge. They are mean, tough, and hate filled. All are 2nd level Mercenaries, Miscreant alignment, and wear studded armor and furs (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38). Figure 20+2D6 Hit Points each, 40+1D6 S.D.C., an I.Q. 10, P.S. 19 (+4 to damage), P.P. 12, and P.E. 14. They are armed with giant battle axes (3D6 damage) and short swords (1D6 damage).

06% Hurt Bearman. A Bearman of the North emerges from the nearby brush with a spear sticking out of his shoulder and three arrows protruding from his back. The poor fellow is breathing hard and covered in blood; he has been in one heck of a fight. Without even registering that the heroes are right in front of him, the creature wrenches the spear out of his shoulder and pitches it back in the direction he came. If the group does nothing, he'll crash forward into the brush again. If the group

calls out, speaks, or otherwise draws attention to themselves, he'll look startled and react warily. A couple of minutes later a band of Elven hunters arrive on the scene, with one dripping blood from a severe stomach wound. If the Bearman is gone, or hidden, the Elves ask the heroes which way the "beast" went. Do the heroes help out the Elves or the Bearman? Which is the good guy in this case, if anybody? And if the player characters get involved, exactly how do they propose to resolve the situation?

07% Gladiators of the Wild. The sounds of combat and yelling can be heard a few hundred yards/meters away, on the other side of a dense thicket of trees. Expecting a battle in progress, when the heroes check out the commotion, they are surprised to see instead a large makeshift gladiator ring, with numerous humanoids milling about, waiting their turn to fight or to bet on the upcoming action. At present, a Bearman and a Gromek are duking it out bare-handed, and an Ogre, a Troll, a Minotaur, a Spriggan, and a few other races the player characters might not have even seen before can all be seen in the sidelines, waiting for their chance to mix it up in the ring. The player characters are invited by the spectators to come and watch for a few rounds. No charge for admission, but the prices for food and drink are twice what they'd be in a normal tavern. There are two "bargains" – a *Forest Stew* that sells for only 2 gold a bowl, and *Oat Beer* which is only 1 gold per tankard – the stew is thin and the beer is thick.

Anyone can bet on any bout if they like. There is a bookie on the site who is covering all wagers. However, the odds are pretty conservative; at most, a bet pays off at 150% (i.e.: a 10 gold bet pays off 15 gold). The players can also fight if they want, receiving one free tankard of oat beer for volunteering. Victors receive a purse of 50 gold. Losers receive a nice assortment of bumps and bruises. According to some spectators, the real reason behind all of this is to find a contender powerful enough to challenge the local "badman" champion, a huge Wolfen who goes by the name of *Second Blood* and has never been defeated in single combat. Word is, whoever beats Second Blood will be inducted into a secret Wolfen warrior society that has all sorts of interesting perks and privileges for its members.

08% Janissary. The heroes find a large rock face with a severely beaten human chained to it. He is barely alive and has been left for whatever scavengers might come upon him. Above his head, written on the rock in blood (exactly *whose* blood is something worth finding out) are the words: "*Die Traitor.*" The alignment of this individual is good, however, so one must wonder exactly what kind of people would inflict such a terrible fate on a person such as this. Do the heroes detach this poor soul from the rock and give him a chance, or do they let him die? Judging by the brand on his arm, this fellow appears to be, or has been, a high-ranking member of the Western Empire's Imperial Janissaries, the most elite fighting men in the Western forces. What might he have been doing way out here, so far from his homeland's reach? Rumors abound that the West is trying to foment war between the Wolfen and the Eastern Territory, so that the East will be too preoccupied to prevent the West from taking over the island nations of Phi and Lopan. If this is indeed true (many people write it off as a crank conspiracy theory), then the presence of Janissaries way out here is troubling indeed. Whatever the answers, this person might be able to shed a *lot* of light on the Western Empire's intentions in the Great Northern Wilderness.

09% Grizzly. A northern grizzly bear suddenly stands up from behind a boulder or shrubs and bellows a challenge to the heroes who have ventured too near its sleeping place. Grizzlies are fierce, and this one attacks the nearest person without further provocation. It will fight till the death rather than retreat, but won't pursue those who flee more than a hundred yards/meters. Hit Points: 50, S.D.C. 42, 2D6+8 to damage from claws, bite does 1D8+3 damage, +2 to parry, and has four attacks per melee.

10% Centaur. A stately looking Centaur Knight meets the heroes as they travel down a large and well-worn road. The Knight hails the group as *Sir Threndle*, and he has been charged to form up a band of heroes to undertake a quest of the most dire peril on behalf of the entire Centaur Federation. Today is the heroes' lucky day, Threndle informs them, because he is hereby commandeering them to do the job. If the heroes accept, then fine. The Centaur will take them on his mission (whatever it is, he will only reveal it to those who accept the job). To those who are reluctant he offers an easy way out: all they have to say is "I am a craven coward, unfit for such a glorious task" (he'll gladly coach characters to get the words exactly right). If the heroes simply resist or refuse, Threndle will gladly take on all of the characters, one on one, in single combat. If he beats the whole party, they join him. If they beat him, he gives up and lets the party go. A hidden contingent of Centaur archers is in place to deliver fatal justice should Threndle be dealt with unfairly or dishonorably (ganging up on him, using magic, etc.).

Should the heroes defeat Threndle, he will beg them to help him in his quest. Surely, money, fame and fortune await those who complete the job! If the heroes agree, the adventure begins apace, with no hard feelings on either side (hopefully). If the heroes refuse, Threndle will respect their victory, and will let them go. But he will never forget their refusal, and he will one day see that the heroes are paid back in kind for it.

Sir Threndle vaas'Nangar. A 9th level Palladin of Principled Alignment, wearing magical chain armor (A.R. 18, 110 S.D.C.; will only fit a Centaur), he has 58 Hit Points, 40 S.D.C., I.Q. 14, P.S. 22 (+7 to damage), P.P. 22 (+4 to strike, parry & dodge) and Spd 28. He has a +4 on initiative and is a Minor Psionic (32 I.S.P.) with Sense Dimensional Anomaly (Threndle has a lot of experience traveling through dimensional portals) and Commune with Spirits. He is armed with a Magical Lance (3D6+4 to damage and +3 to strike) which he'll use in Jousts with mounted characters, and a War Hammer (4D6 damage) he uses against non-mounted characters.

The Centaur Long Bowmen include *Ereedes Reanger* (female, 4th level), *Vomont vass'Nangar* (3rd level & Threndle's young cousin), *Coppatical vass'Xaal* (female, 3rd level) and *Perrival Sunderlake* (3rd level). All are highly skilled, well-armed, and very loyal to Threndle. Unless the group does something completely crazy, they'll fire off at least two quick volleys of warning shots before opening up with fatal fire.

11% Stuck Spike-Tail Armadillo. One of the great armored beasts of the north, what the Wolfen call the *Ghaashtaagh,* is ripping huge holes into the earth, making a thundering racket, and generally flailing around with tremendous violence. On investigation, it turns out the stupid thing has managed to get its

spiked ball of a tail wedged in between a couple of massive boulders. The more it pulls, the worse it gets, and it is well and truly stuck. It has been this way for at least 3-6 days, and has ripped up and eaten all the vegetation it can reach. Now there are dozens of carrion birds flying overhead, clearly expecting that a good meal will come their way in a few days. This particular specimen weighs in at around 5 tons (10,000 pounds/4500 kg), and is still a pretty dangerous creature.

12% Widowmakers! Dead trees are called "widowmakers' by lumberjacks because they'll fall without warning, and the dry wood branches come down like a forest of spears. In this case the player characters are entering an area of forest where the trees have all been dead for two or three years (probably due to a change in the water table). These particular trees have a tendency to fall just as the party is walking underneath. Because a falling tree is so huge, it has a base attack roll of 17. Roll for each character separately. If the character rolls a 1-3, it means the victim is caught under the main trunk, not just branches, suffers double damage and is pinned under the heavy tree. All players get a chance to dodge the tree (17 or higher succeeds). If they fail, they can try to roll with punch/fall/impact for half damage. If a tree connects, it will cause a whopping 2D4x10 damage, and it will wedge its victims between it and the earth. To physically move a tree once it has fallen requires a combined normal P.S. of 200 (these things are *huge*) or a combined Supernatural P.S. of 50. The only other way out is to start chopping, which could take a considerable amount of time (even the small branches have 110 S.D.C., the limbs are 260 S.D.C., and the main trunk is 880 S.D.C. to chop through). Even those stuck under a tree can try to chop or dig themselves free. That's right, it might be easier to dig and worm their way out from under the fallen tree (takes at least 6D6+36 minutes for a lone individual, half that if assisted by two or more friends). It will seem a very odd coincidence that trees fall with such uncanny timing, but it is not a coincidence and there *is* some enemy, or malevolent entity or creature, that keeps trees from falling until exactly the right moment.

13% Blind Goblins. A dozen or more Goblins (2D6+10), all wearing full helmets, leap out from hiding places and launch a vicious attack. Player characters who move in for pitched battle will get pretty much what they should expect, close, vicious, no-holds barred, combat. However, anyone who backs away, or moves out of range, will discover something pretty interesting. The Goblins are just flailing around, and are more likely to miss than to hit any foe. Yes, they'll keep trying, and they'll definitely do better against noisy opponents, or those who are talking, but it shouldn't take long to figure out that all the Goblins are completely blind.

Of course, once the group figures this out, dealing with the Goblins shouldn't be difficult. However, if the player group wipes 'em all out (just how bloodthirsty are these characters, anyway?) they'll miss out on the opportunity to find out just who put out their eyes (close examination reveals that each eye socket has been completely burned, and that the wounds are still less than a week old).

The Goblins are all Mercenary Fighters ranging from 3rd to 5th level, mostly Miscreant alignment, and average 26 Hit Points and 16 S.D.C. each. Average stats are I.Q. 7, P.S. 14, P.P. 12. Bonuses, including hand to hand and attribute: +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, kick attack does 1D6 damage; two attacks per melee. Armor is studded leather (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38). Weapons: Half are armed with daggers (1D4 damage) and crossbows (2D6 damage), the other half use daggers (1D4) and morning stars (2D4 damage).

Game Master Note: This is a great opportunity to demonstrate to the players the cruelty of some upcoming foe. The blinding could have been carried out by the Goblins' previous employer as a punishment for failure or incompetence or just as an example to others, or they could have been blinded after surrendering in a battle ("I said I'd spare your lives, fools, and even let you keep your weapons, but I didn't say anything about releasing you unharmed! I'll leave it to your gods to guide you home . . ."), and so on.

14% Dwarven Ale. After a long and arduous journey through the wilderness, the player characters are in dire need of both food and water. Their provisions are dangerously low, and they now must resort to hunting and foraging. One of the adventurers makes an unlikely discovery – an untapped keg of Dwarven Ale! Somebody must have lost this off a merchant train some time ago and never came back for it. Anybody with the Brewing skill (or any Dwarven character) will know that Dwarven Ale is one of the few things in which a pathogen will *not* grow. In other words, it can not spoil! Plus, it has such a high caloric content that drinking a few pints is like sitting down to a big meal. Time to kick back and enjoy a few, eh? The problem is, this stuff is super, super potent. Anybody drinking a single glass must roll the P.E. number or less on a D20 or become drunk. For each subsequent glass, the character's roll gets knocked down by -4. Another wild effect of this strange brew is that drunk characters will remain so for a full 24 hours. As the party gets schnockered on this stuff, they are reminded of an old war story about how the Elves designed a series of super-potent alcoholic beverages to sneak into Dwarven society so as to make them inefficient warriors. After drinking a few pints of whatever's in this keg the party found, the story seems pretty plausible.

15% Currency Plates. The heroes discover a large locked chest with the words "Property of the Wolfen Empire" inscribed on the front. If the characters manage to break open the chest, inside are a set of plates used for minting *official* Wolfen currency, as well as a bunch of golden trading bars. With this kind of material, the average engraver could make his own gold currency. The question is, will the heroes try to return the box to the Wolfen? Or will they keep the loot and begin cranking out unofficial Wolfen coin for a quick and undetectable profit?

16% Black Patch. In the last few trading centers the heroes have visited, stories about a notorious Coyle bandit leader, *Black Patch*, keep circulating. Apparently, Black Patch made a very handsome living raiding Wolfen and human settlements along the Empire's southern border, and then did something unheard of. He retired! Coyles are not known for having such foresight, but Black Patch sure had it, and he presumably slipped away to live the high life. Word is, though, he has come out of retirement for one last big score. And with rumors that a heavily laden caravan of merchants are bound for the area, it doesn't take a genius to figure out what Black Patch might be up to. If the heroes capture Black Patch, they can cash in on a 100,000 gold reward from the Imperial government, but the wily bandit

has proven impossible to track. The best bet is to sign on as guardsmen for the merchant caravan and simply let Black Patch (and however many cronies are in his gang – it could be dozens) come to them.

17% Frost Pixie. A blue skinned Pixie appears out of thin air in front of the lead character. He announces in broken Elven and/or Goblin that he and his hidden cohort are bandits and that the group must pay the price of passage or suffer their wrath! Now granted, this tiny extortionist stands only a foot (0.3 m) tall, but even one Frost Pixie can mean big trouble (see *Monsters & Animals*, page 73, for the full range of magic abilities).

The cost of passage is a jug of sweet tasting alcohol or, preferably, candy, honey, or jam. If the group is mostly polite and complies with his demands, they will be allowed to pass without trouble. Refusal, insults, and/or attack will cause the angry Pixie to turn invisible and hide. Moments later, the adventuring group will find itself caught in a snow or hailstorm that will plague them for the next 1D6 miles (1.6 to 9.6 km), forcing the group to take shelter or suffer physical damage. Of course, the storm is Faerie Magic, created by the Pixie(s). After a while, the Pixie will appear again and politely request the payment again. This time however, he will demand 20 gold each, all the sweets the group can provide, and that the most offensive individual travel the next half mile (0.8 km) naked except for boots and gloves. **Game Master Note:** Whether there is more than one Frost Pixie (or other Faerie Folk) is up to you.

18% Dead Dragon: You can not believe your eyes! Before you in a small clearing lies the recently dead carcass of an adult Ice Dragon! The eyes and tongue have been cut out, but the rest of the body appears intact. There are no markings from battle, so however this creature might have died is a big mystery. Presumably, whoever butchered the eyes and tongue is the one who killed the beast, but that is hardly a sure thing. If the characters chose, they could spend weeks here butchering the body if they like. To do so effectively, one must successfully use both the *Skin Animals* and *Preserve Food* skills. Using both correctly will ensure the proper butchery of internal organs and other parts of the body that might go bad. Harvesting things like claws and teeth and bones need no such skill. The heroes could haul away the entire body and retire off it, but how to transport an entire Dragon carcass? Surely every thief, mercenary and other lowlife in the area will hear about this and come looking to take a little cut off the creature. Cashing in on this most rare treasure might prove to be an adventure in and of itself, providing an unusual plot structure for the players: reward first, then conflict and opposition.

19% Magical Spring. The heroes come across a natural spring that burbles up with clear, sparkling water that feeds into a small pool. The water drains directly into the earth, so there is no brook or stream leading away from the site. Those who drink this water will not age for a year. There is no save against this, and the spring does not even radiate magic, as difficult as that might be to believe. Most who drink of this water will not notice its effects and will assume in the long run they just had a year of really good health. A Water Warlock, however, will be able to tell immediately what special properties this water has. Whoever taps it could make a fortune selling philters of eternal youth, couldn't they? Still, it seems like a defilement of an otherwise beautiful and pure place. What say you heroes? Can you keep this place just your little secret? Or is the lure of millions upon millions of easy gold too much to deny? And if it is the latter, how does one keep the location of the spring a secret, because once its location is out, certainly any number of bandits, merchants, nobility and cutthroats will want it for themselves! Hmm, and what powerful beings (dragons or gods) might know about it already (and consider it theirs, making the adventurers thieves and despoilers).

20% Devil Digger. A Devil Digger, driven insane with pain, is thrashing about in the brush before the heroes. The thing is making so much noise that it would take a deaf person not to notice it. Besides, the heroes should be checking things out to be sure of what is in the area. Failing to do so often leads to trouble since one has no idea what monsters or animals might be near by. Plus, it is considered good traveler etiquette to finish off wounded monsters or animals where they are found. If one doesn't, the creature might lash out at the next person to come by. The heroes flush out the Devil Digger to put it out of its misery, when they notice something strange about the creature: it has what looks like a rune dagger thrust into its back! The Devil Digger looks at the players as they approach, and incredibly, it says in Wolfen, "You shall never have it! It is mine, I tell you, mine!" Devil Diggers are dumb animals who can't talk, so clearly this dagger is having some kind of effect on the thing. Who knows what other powers it might confer to the monster? And should the heroes slay the beast and take the dagger, what evil influences will the device try to work on the party? The knife might be best left unused and discarded as soon as is feasible. Or not. If the heroes don't mind wielding an *evil magical dagger* and perhaps becoming its minions, then . . . come what may.

21% Aderik the Druid. This frail old Druid, dressed in ragged, discolored robes, can be seen wandering from tree to tree, stopping at each of the larger trunks where he places his hands on the bark and seems to engage in a rather one-sided conversation. "Hmm... Really? You don't say. Yes? Well, I'll see if I can do something about that." and "Oh, hello. Yes, I know, it's been a few years, but I'm here now," and "No? Are you sure? Well, just so you know, I'd be happy to help. Bye now." and "Tsk, tsk . . . Oh, that's a real shame. Both of them? Well, I suppose it couldn't be helped." He'll completely ignore the player characters unless they interfere or address him directly. However, as soon as he turns his attention away from the trees, he'll address each character, by name, as if they were his children or his students. If he's asked how it is that he knows them he'll reply, "Ah, I'm sorry. How rude of me. I was sure we had already been introduced. My apologies. My name is Aderik, and I am most pleased to meet you all. Also, of course, I'd like to thank you for trying to save me, and if you happen to fail, please be assured that I am most grateful for your efforts." Aderik is a 13th level Master Druid, so advanced in his studies that he has trouble distinguishing the future from the past and vice versa. **Game Master Note:** This is a great opportunity to give the players some oblique hints of whatever larger adventure you've got in mind, especially if Aderik can be a useful addition to the story.

22% Cry of the Babies. As if carried on the wind itself, the player characters can hear the faint sound of babies crying. The sounds seem like they are far away, yet the sounds themselves

swirl around the heroes' heads, bombarding them with the distant noise of so many children in serious distress. What could be making this noise? And why or how has it sought out the heroes? Could this be some form of distress call? Or could it be a gloating calling card from a villain who preys on children? Or might it be some Faerie trick to freak out the heroes?

23% Lodestone. You know that large rock outcropping the player characters are about to walk past? The one that juts about ten feet (3 m) out of the ground and is covered with moss and lichens? Well, that's not ordinary rock. It is a *lodestone* with an extraordinarily powerful magnetic charge to it. Any metal objects within 10 feet (3 m) of the rock will be drawn to it and stuck fast. Only a combined normal P.S. of 50 or higher, or any Supernatural P.S. can remove metal objects from the stone. Oddly, there are not already metal objects stuck here, so either locals know better than to walk by it, or this rock has remained undiscovered for a very, very long time. Or could a band of thieves, vagabonds or Faerie Folk regularly retrieve stuck items for themselves (or for resale)?

24% Dragon Wolf & Dragon. A Dragon Wolf named *Jagartha* can be seen circling high overhead, nervously scanning the area for attackers. When he spies the heroes, he swoops down gracefully and alights on the ground before them. He bows his head to show he means no harm, and he introduces himself. He also notes how he is in a spot of trouble and could really use the heroes' help. You see, Jagartha is a relentless prankster, and he recently played a not-so-funny joke on an ancient Ice Dragon known to live in the area. Now the Dragon is looking for blood! But Jagartha knows the old wyrm, and that if the Dragon does not catch up to him in the next 24 hours, it will get over whatever the Dragon Wolf did and go back to sleep. If the heroes escort Jagartha for the next 24 hours and make sure he survives, he will share with the party a great and a glorious treasure! What Jagartha has to give is a small portion of the Ice Dragon's treasure hoard, and should the Dragon Wolf survive the day, he will give half of whatever he stole to the party. Of course, accepting this treasure can open a can of worms. First off, the Dragon *will* eventually learn who has his property, and he will come looking for it. Secondly, this Ice Dragon is an honorary member of the Wolfen Senate, and, as such, has the full and devoted patronage of the Wolfen Empire. Whoever messes with this Dragon messes with the Empire. This is something the heroes are unlikely to learn until it is too late, but for now, accepting Jagartha's offer will make them accessories after the fact to the Dragon Wolf's stupid and reckless prank.

25% Sun Child Wolfen. The distinctive sounds of Wolfen at hard labor, howling one of their rhythmic work songs, can be heard coming from somewhere beyond the border of a nearby swamp. At least twenty Wolfen are hard at work on some kind of project that involves chopping wood, pumping water, digging down into the mud and then, around sunset, building large fires and boiling something that stinks to high heaven. Unless the player characters have a way of flying overhead, it is pretty difficult to sneak up on the working Wolfen, particularly since (1) they have at least six sentries out at all times, keeping watch on all three access routes, (2) at least a dozen of their Kiffi dogs are also wandering around alertly, and (3) they've also taken the precaution of placing alarms – long lines of taut string, just under the surface of the swamp muck, which will ring small bells whenever the line is stretched or cut. On the other hand, the direct approach will work just fine, since the Sun Children don't feel like they have anything to hide, and they'll gladly explain what they are doing.

Their leader, *Hhaarrgaa,* explains, "You see, we are professional tattoo artists, and we've finally found the ingredient necessary to create a bright white tattoo ink. It's based on the taproot of this particular swamp's mangrove trees. Since we've come all this way, we want to get a supply large enough to last several years. Care to see?" Sure enough, all the Sun Child Wolfen are either Tattoo Artists or their young apprentices. If any of the player characters have an interest in getting a tattoo (or a piercing), there are at least a dozen skilled and talented professionals available who would do the job for no more than the cost of a good meal, or as a trade for some interesting souvenir. On the other hand, anyone attempting to attack this particular batch of Wolfen will find that at least half of them are old veterans of the Wolfen Army (3rd to 7th level Warriors), well armed, well trained, and fully capable of fighting in an organized, intelligent and deadly way.

26% Lost Maniple. Twenty-three Wolfen Imperial Soldiers are marching through the wilderness as if they were maneuvering for some great battle. Their Lanipia, *Maarkhus,* is quite young (this is his first command), and he's basically pretending as if he knows what he's doing. *Telliimi,* the seasoned Xavia of the unit, is the veteran of over a hundred battles, and she knows a confused officer when she sees one. On the other hand, she figures, it won't hurt to give the unit (the Acorn Maniple of the IXth Light Infantry, of the IIIrd Imperial Legion) a bit of a long march through strange country, and she figures they're only a

day or two from where they belong. As for the Iagia, the ordinary recruits, they are mostly from the Long Knife Tribe, mixed with two Gold Ears (lone survivors from a unit that was wiped out the year before), and one Ursa Rex. Except for the Xavia and the two Gold Ears, none of them have even seen a human before. It's unlikely that they would attack the player characters, but they might be persuaded to lend a hand if there were some local emergency.

27% Vile Mist. A nearly impenetrable mist has settled on the surrounding forest, making it almost impossible for the player characters to see more than 10 feet (3 m) in front of them. While in the mist, the heroes are at -4 on initiative since it is so difficult to see enemies approaching. What's more, the mist serves to conceal the numbers of any attacking force, so if the heroes run into a dozen foes, it might seem like only six, or it might seem like sixty. In an environment such as this, confusion often reigns during combat.

28% Peryton & Drakin. The heroes are walking along a seldom-used hunters trail when suddenly, things get quiet. *Too* quiet. Without warning, a pair of Peryton (Demon Deer) jump out of the surrounding brush, shrieking and ready to devour the party. As the heroes prepare to draw their own steel, a Drakin also flies into the scene, tearing into the Peryton with a vengeance. It seems the heroes have a temporary ally! Should they vanquish the Peryton, and should the Drakin survive, the creature will stay with "honorable fighters" for a while, accompanying them on their adventures and smiting evil every step of the way. How long the heroes wish the Drakin to stay with them is open-ended. If the group chooses to crusade against evil, the Drakin might never leave the party. Should the heroes turn to a life of selfish freebooting (including the occasional criminal act), the Drakin will leave shortly after meeting the group. And if the player characters conduct straight-out evil, they might find themselves the next targets of the Drakin's attack.

29% Enraged Algor Giant. An Algor Giant looking for blood rises out of the snow (or out of thick brush if in the warmer months) as if he has been laying in wait for just this moment. He is burning up with fever and fury, and will confront any who approach. His problem is that he has a truly epic infection at the base of one of his back teeth. It looks horrible and the infection is creating one terrible smell (hence the bad breath). "I've nothing against you shrimps, but I'll be happy to fight with any of you! I'll try not to kill you, and if you kill me, at least my pain will be over!"

Obviously he's in a lot of pain, but he will continue talking. If anyone offers to heal him with magic, he'll bellow; "Magic! Magic!!! I'll tell you about magic you little fleas! That Healer, the one in the village, he told me he'd fix me. And he did, the cursed spawn of Lictalon! Made the pain go away like it had never been. Then, when I was safely away, it came back, twice as bad. So I turned around and found that so-called Healer, and took off his jaw. Ripped it right off his head. See? Here it is," and sure enough, the Giant displays a gruesome lower jaw, complete with teeth and greying beard. "Next time someone tries to cure me with magic I'm going to save myself a lot of walking and just kill him where he stands!"

The Giant towers 16 feet (4.8 m) and attacks with a giant two-handed axe (4D6 damage) and short sword (2D6), and frost breath (4D6 damage, 30 foot/9 m range). He is a 4th level Mercenary, Anarchist alignment, has 36 Hit Points and his armor is double mail with an A.R. 14 and S.D.C. 44. I.Q. 11, P.S. 26, P.P. 12, P.E. 20, Spd 7. Bonuses, including hand to hand: +2 to parry and dodge, +3 to save vs magic and poison, +13 to damage. Three hand to hand attacks plus one breath attack per melee (4 total).

30% Forest Fire! The treetops are ablaze, spreading with incredible speed. Although forest fires are part of the natural life cycle of a forest, they are still traumatic events that do great damage to the surrounding land. In a forest such as those dominating the Great Northern Wilderness, the tall, interwoven canopy of limbs and leaves make for a natural environment wherein fires spread along the tops of the trees and then work their way down, catching people and animals within the fire. Those not immune to fire or unable to manipulate flames and heat will surely die from the blaze as it comes down the trees. Anybody who sees the fire spreading along the treetops must move quickly if they decide to outrun the fire – it is spreading at a Speed of 22! **G.M. Note:** In the Pacific Northwest of the U.S., there actually are forest fires that behave like this.

31% Emerin. The characters receive a telepathic transmission that they are in great danger and must take shelter immediately! If the heroes do as the voice in their heads commands, and they camouflage themselves somehow (hiding in the brush, covering their bodies with leaves, climbing a tree), they will watch a huge patrol of Coyle marauders pass by. Had the heroes not been warned of these stealthy killers, they would have been surprised by them and overwhelmed by their strength of numbers.

When the danger has passed, an Emerin, a great psionic cat, comes out and introduces himself to the heroes as *Softpaws*. The great cat used to live in the Northern Hinterlands, but he fled that region after facing a menace he can only call the *Sinister*. Whatever this "Sinister" is, it certainly affected the young cat, because now all he wants is for powerful adventurers to come with him as bodyguards wherever he goes. At first, Softpaws merely asks the heroes to stick by his side for the next week or so, as he gathers an Emirin hunting party to return to the Hinterlands and face the Sinister in numbers. If the heroes do not go along with this, Softpaws will remind them they owe him their lives, and in Emirin society, when one owes another a life debt, you pay it back the moment the creditor asks you to.

32% Ghost Scene. As the heroes pass into a clearing, they all get a profound sense of deja vu. Somehow, this place seems familiar to them all. Then it dawns on them, they have seen this particular place before in a famous painting, the *Battle of Everfern*, a scene in which the ancient Wolfen champion *Thrnhrrd* single-handedly fought and slew an adult Ice Dragon. The battle took place on the very spot where the player characters are standing right now! Legend has it that every ten years or so, under the light of a full moon, the ghosts of both the Dragon (whose name, strangely, has been lost to history), and Thrnhrrd return to this spot and duke it out again, a replay of their ancient struggle. As the player characters make camp for the evening, they hear a terrible racket in the nearby forest. Investigating, they seen the ghostly form of an adult Ice Dragon making its way to the battle site. Once there, the ghost of Thrnhrrd indeed appears, draws his weapon and closes for combat. At first, things go well for the Wolfen, but in short order he is disarmed, his body blasted by cold breath, and his armor severely damaged

from a few well-placed claw strikes. For the heroes, this whole thing feels less like a spectral show and more like an honest-to-goodness battle! Any good characters in the group should find the urge to help the fallen Wolfen hero irresistible. Upon entering the battle site, the heroes pass from this world into the spirit realm, where the combat between Thrnhrrd and the Dragon is as real as it gets. Outside of this battle site, neither combatant can hurt anybody or anything, much less each other. Should the heroes save Thrnhrrd, who knows? The player characters might even be able to convince the old soldier to pass from the spirit realm back into the land of the living, where he might enjoy another 50 years of service to the Empire.

33% Maimed Predator. Depending on the environment, one of the native predatory cats (Mountain Lion, Snow Tiger, etc.) catches the scent of the party, and tracks them. Starving, and unable to hunt its usual prey (the main joint of one leg has slipped out of its socket, creating maddening pain, and preventing the creature from moving normally), the big cat is desperate from hunger and will attack horses or pack animals. If there are no domestic animals, the beast jumps the smallest person in the group or somebody who smells of blood (wounded). Once the melee has begun, the beast fights crazily until killed. It has 31 Hit Points, no S.D.C., three attacks per melee, claws inflict 2D4 damage, bite 1D6; +3 to strike, parry, and dodge. See *Monsters & Animals* for details on wild felines.

34% Infinity Blossom. Characters with the skill to *Identify Plants* will notice at their feet a sprig of the super-rare *Infinity Blossom*, a flower whose nectar is reported to cure the diseases of aging (senility, arthritis, failing senses, etc.). The trick is, it has to be drunk straight from the living plant itself. In fact, they've been trampling all over these plants, and have already crushed 3D10+10 before they even notice the one with the flower. Worse, the whole field is covered with the hoofprints of deer, elk and even larger herbivores, all of whom seem to especially like eating these rare little plants. These plants are rumored to be worth up to 100,000 gold a blossom (as long as they are still alive), maybe more! Of course, one must find a potential buyer rich enough to pay such a handsome sum. Still, even if the group could only get 10% of its value, that's 10,000 gold per blossom! The player characters' good fortune has yielded them an incredible treasure this day. Now, if only they can manage to keep this *most fragile* plant alive and well during the week-plus journey from their current position to the nearest civilization with a market big enough to move something of this value.

35% Eye Killer & Baal-Rog. Characters with psychic abilities of any kind receive a strange sensation that they are being watched, but not by any ordinary creature. No, it seems like something is monitoring them from another dimension entirely. And they are right! The party is being shadowed by an Eye Killer who is using its psionic ability of Astral Projection to spy on the group and monitor their movements. Little do the characters know, the Eye Killer is actually the pet of a Baal-Rog demon that has settled down in these parts and routinely slays and devours passing travelers. Any scraps left over get fed to the Eye Killer. Hunting has been so good recently, that the Baal-Rog is thinking of recruiting some of its friends from Hades to come along for the fun. Whether or not it does this before attacking the player characters is up to the Game Master.

36% Burial Pile. On a small hill of stones lies a metal plate engraved with the following: *Here lies the body of the Unknown Ranger, whose thirst for knowledge and love for adventure knew no limits. Cut down before his time, he rests now in the wilderness that was for so long his home. But he is not gone entirely. He walks these woods still, ever ready to help those in need of it, and to aid those who show the wilderness the respect it deserves. Whosoever disturbs this grave site shall be accursed by the vengeful ghost of the Unknown Ranger.*

An interesting benediction. Smart player characters should ease themselves off the burial pile on which the plate is resting. Only then do the heroes realize that in getting positioned to read the plate, they have upset the surface rocks of the burial mound. Does this mean they have collectively tripped off the curse of the Unknown Ranger? And if so, what kind of horrible thing will come after them looking for retribution? Or will the spirit appear to them with a request (or quest) to make right what they have done or to appeal to their nobility to help some forest folk (or animals or region) in trouble.

37% Peryton. A Peryton is ready to swoop down from the clouds, or from high in the trees, in search of prey. A carnivorous winged deer, she is looking for something she can take back to the nest for her young to play with, and then devour. She will target someone relatively small (120 pounds/54 kg would be perfect), but will settle for larger or smaller targets. She bides her time, waiting for the victim to take a break (ideally when they've taken off their pack), or split up from the rest of the group. Then she comes swooping down from the rear, bites down on the victim's collar or belt, and zooms back up. The flight to her nest takes just a minute or two, and then she'll drop the wiggling goodie down to her two five-year-old youngsters (the victim should take 2D6 damage from the fall). Attempting to save the victim (who will be the "plaything" of the young Peryton for at least an hour) is tricky since (1) the nest will be at the top of some inaccessible cliff, or in the highest branches of an enormous ancient tree and (2) both the kidnapper and her mate are around to attack anyone attempting the perilous climb. The twin offspring have A.R.: 8, H.P.: 48, S.D.C.: 45 and do a 2D6+2 charging head butt (the nest is pretty big, and they know exactly where to step to avoid the holes – unlike the victim character), 1D6+2 kick, and 1D6+1 bite, each with two attacks per melee round. They are far from stupid, and they'll always try to attack from the rear while the character is facing the other one. If the captive is too tough, they'll either push it out of the nest (quite a fall there, at least 100 feet/30.5 m), or call to Mama and Daddy for a little help.

38% Western Slavers. A band of Western humans are trying to relive the glory days when their kind routinely enslaved Wolfen for sale as slaves or to the gladiatorial arenas in the Western Empire. The player characters come across this motley bunch of a dozen or so slavers as they are escorting their "inventory" (nine young Wolfen, none more than 12 years old, or taller than 6 feet/1.8 m), all in manacles and chained together, back to Western territory. What do the players do? Do they get involved and free the Wolfen children, or do they turn a blind eye, or do they try to get in on the slavers' action? There are a total of 34 Slavers (although only 8 or 10 of them will be seen with the captives), mostly rogues gathered up from taverns and alleys (mostly 1st to 3rd level bandits and vagabonds), but led by three

6th level Mercenary Warriors, and their mastermind, *Sevian Linscer,* a 7th level Ranger, and bastard son of a Western Empire nobleman. He's done this before for quick cash, and what the 30 rogues don't know is that they'll be sharing places on the auction block with the Wolfen.

39% Snow Monkeys. The characters are being followed. Two creatures, scrambling through the trees, or hiding in the bushes, are curious, and are trying to be secretive and silent. These are two adolescent snow monkeys, eager to see a little bit of the world outside of their extended family. Fascinated with humanoids, they'll even come close enough to take food from an outstretched hand. If attacked or captured, they'll make enough noise to attract the attention of the rest of their family, 112 other Snow Monkeys, including at least 20 adult males who won't take kindly to having a couple of their young molested or threatened (there's also a 50% chance a pack of 4D6 wolves will show up, none too pleased with anyone who bothers their snow monkey "friends").

40% The Witch's Curse. One by one, the rivers and streams in the area have been turning from water into wine, milk, blood, or lantern oil. Heroes all over have been dispatched to see what can be done about this freakish situation, but the player characters have an inside track on the problem. Not three days ago, they met a crazy old crone who was muttering to them about how she would "turn the waters of the Northern Wilderness into unlikely and unseemly things." Understandably dismissed as a crank by the player characters at first, this old crone now seems to be the leading suspect in the area's water troubles. But that was three days ago, and the heroes have covered much ground since then. Can they backtrack and find this old witch before she disappears entirely? And if they do find her, what can they do to make her "undo" what she has done? (A quest or special service for her? Or will slaying her turn the waters back? Etc.)

41% Wolfen Bandits. "Road tax, you must pay your road tax now," is what they tell any group that looks like green outsiders. The bandits *claim* to be Imperial Dolabria (engineers) authorized to collect taxes on passers-by. Of course, this is complete nonsense, and the *tax* is whatever looks good to these guys. On the other hand, if there's someone who looks like a native, the Wolfen will drop the act, pull weapons, and simply demand the characters' valuables. They are only interested in gold, silver, gems, jewelry, and any obvious magic items. They will leave without a fight if they believe that the group has given them a significant amount of their valuables. If a fight occurs, the Wolfen bandits fight only as long as they think they can win. If their opponents seem too powerful or possess magic, they flee.

The Wolfen bandits are all 2nd level Mercenaries and Thieves, known outlaws wanted by both the Empire and their respective Tribes. A typical bandit has 25 Hit Points, 35 S.D.C. and an average I.Q. 9, P.S. 17, P.P. 12, Spd 18; +2 to damage, four attacks per melee round. Weapons are large swords (2D8+2 damage), daggers (1D6 damage), and/or morning stars (2D8 damage). There should be two bandits for every character in the player group, plus *Unius,* the Wolfen leader, a 3rd level Mind Mage: Aberrant alignment, 33 Hit Points, 43 S.D.C.; I.Q. 13, M.E. 19, P.S. 18, P.P. 12, Spd 20; +1 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage (includes hand to hand), +3 to save vs psionics, +1 to save vs magic. Knows all Sensitive psionic powers and has 60 I.S.P. Can perform as many as five psionic or hand to hand attacks per melee round or a combination of the two. Unius has fourteen gems (each worth 3D6x10 gold), 1,200 gold coins and an assortment of jewelry. Alive, he's worth 2,000 gold to the Wolfen Empire officials, but the leaders of the January Magic Tribe will happily pay 25,000 gold for his scrawny butt.

42% Grimbor Grave. Just off to the side of the roadway is a mass grave containing nothing but Grimbor skeletons. Grimbor? Aren't they from the Yin-Sloth Jungles? Indeed they are, which begs the question of how they got here, doesn't it? There is no local legend or rumor that mentions anything like *this*! The bones are clean, dry and old. They have been here for quite some time, judging by the amount of undergrowth that surrounds them, but it has been a matter of weeks, not months or years. Deepening the mystery, if anybody tries to Object Read the bones or to otherwise establish contact with the dead Grimbor, they will get absolutely nothing. A big blank. Whoever killed these innocent souls did it in such a way that it became impossible to talk to them from beyond the grave. This suggests soul-drinking might have been at work, either in the form of a rune weapon, or through a nefarious master of the black arts (a Necromancer or a rare Life Force Wizard, perhaps? See the *Mount Nimro* sourcebook for details on the latter). Either way, something bad happened here, and until now there have never been any heroes to avenge it. The party has only one clue to go on: a nearby tree has carved into it the words *Arcuri Island.* Nobody has ever heard of this place, but the carving seems to have been drawn with a Grimbor Claw. Either a dying beast scratched this cryptic clue, or perhaps it is a calling card left by whoever perpetrated this massacre. Either way, the deeds committed here were so foul that the area itself now radiates evil, and pack and riding animals, as well as dogs and birds of prey refuse to get anywhere near this area. They stay on the outside, nervously whimpering to their human masters to hurry up and get back outside of the area, where it is safe.

43% Faerie Circle. Without realizing it, the adventurers walk right into a big Faerie Circle! They must all save vs magic or be forced to do the Faeries' Dance indefinitely, much to the amusement of the assortment of Pixies, Faeries, Sprites and other Faerie Folk who come out of the woodwork to watch the characters jig and reel. The heroes dance until they drop from exhaustion or until they can figure out a way to break the cir-

cle's enchantment. Using psionics of some kind might work. Or the heroes can try talking the Faeries into dropping the enchantment. Promising to attend a banquet of Faerie Food might do the trick. So might offering the Faerie leader (whoever that may be – G.M.s, use your imagination) gifts of magic or things of beauty. Of course, these Faerie Folk hardly seem the charitable sort, so there is a decent chance they might take what the heroes offer and still keep them dancing anyway. Any player characters who make it out of the circle unscathed (i.e., saved vs magic) had better hightail it out of the area at once. Otherwise, they will have to contend with a massed attack from the three dozen Faeries in the area, which will be a fight the heroes can not win. Better to take off, let their comrades dance for a little bit and then sneak back and rescue their friends later.

44% Teleporter. A low wall, a few hundred blocks of toppled stone, and some worn steps, all overgrown with vines and weeds, is almost all that remains of some ancient fortress or settlement. The only thing still standing is a doorway made of a single piece of brown granite. Though mostly eroded over the centuries, there are a few sheltered places where some of the original carvings have survived. The design is abstract, just a pattern of interlocking circles. Magical investigation reveals that the doorway contains some residual magic, and that it is receptive to being "charged" with P.P.E. It only takes 10 P.P.E. to turn on the magical effect, although it consumes one point of P.P.E. for every minute it remains open.

Clearly a dimensional doorway, the characters are able to feel and smell the exotic salt-air breeze from a far off place, and clearly see what is on the other side. Which is a bit strange. When it is noon in the Northern Wilderness, it is midnight in the other place, and when the sun is rising in the woods, it is setting beyond the doorway (if they have the opportunity to compare, they'll also find that when it's winter on this side, it's hot and summery on the other, and when it's summery on the Wolfen side, cold grey storms are blowing across the far land). Even without going through, it's possible to see that the other side of the gate is placed among walls and tumbled stones similar to the ones on the near side (complete with the intertwined circle motif), and that stairs lead down to a natural sandy beach, and then to what looks like an ocean. Those who explore the other side will find an idyllic tropical island, about 30 miles (48 km) long, filled with lush jungles, beautiful glades, waterfalls and, occasionally, fallen-down ruins of brown granite. Someone with skill in astronomy, with the opportunity to study the island's clear night sky, should discover that the stars along the horizon are familiar, but those high in the sky are completely changed, leading to the unlikely conclusion that the island is on the other side of the Palladium World (hey! It must be round after all!). Fish and lobster are plentiful, as are small wild pigs and delicious, fat game birds, plus coconuts and all manner of fruits and vegetables. For characters suffering through a Northern Wilderness winter, the island is likely to seem like heaven, warm, beautiful and easy on the eyes. More skeptical characters may note that many of the fruit trees have been planted in rows, and conclude that the island is probably used as a supply depot for passing ships. But whose ships, and are they friendly?

45% Rabies! Something is clearly wrong in this part of the forest. There is a slight smell of decay, and anyone with tracking skill (or a good sense of smell) is able to find the bodies of various small animals scattered here and there. There are plenty of insects around the bodies, but none of the usual carrion eaters. Healthy animals have fled the area, and all that remains are those affected by the disease – a virulent form of rabies. Sick animals drool constantly and uncontrollably, have horribly bloodshot eyes, and are unable to walk steadily for more than a few paces (they are all -2 to strike, -4 to parry or dodge). Any kind of mammal can be affected, and even squirrels, chipmunks or rabbits will approach humanoids and try to bite. Anyone suffering a bite from an infected animal has to save with a 16 or better on 1D20 (P.E. bonus applies) or also catch the illness. For humanoids, this strain of rabies lasts 1D6+7 days, with a 50% chance of death every day after the 5th day. Victims have a raging thirst, shake uncontrollably, and from the 2nd day on become consumed with a horrible fever. Ordinary healing from Healing Psionics, Cleric's Healing Touch, the spells Cure: Minor Disorders, Cure Illness & Heal Self, and even a Healing Power Circle, can prevent a victim from dying if performed every day of the illness, but will NOT cure the disease. Likewise, those with skills as Doctors, Holistic Medicine Healers, or Herbologists can stave off death by applying the correct mix of herbs on a daily basis (roll under base skill on percentile to find the right ingredients), but are unable to eliminate this strain of rabies. The only real cures are to perform a *Miraculous Healing* or a *Druidic Phoenix Healing* (see *Palladium Fantasy, 2nd edition,* pages 66 and 76, respectively.)

46% Human Stew. The characters come across a humble log cabin out in the middle of nowhere, occupied by a burly human who speaks Wolfen as his native tongue. This fellow has a somewhat feral glint in his eye, but other than that, there is nothing to indicate that he means anybody any harm. He offers to let the heroes in his house for a quick spot of food and drink; being of the wilderness, sharing food and drink is customary. Should the heroes take him up on the offer (he's just one guy, what threat could *he* pose?), the hermit brings them in and sits them down by his table while he puts a pot of stew over the fire. After a few minutes, the hermit curses under his breath and excuses himself for a moment – he forgot his hatchet and lantern outside where he had been cutting wood. Should the player characters think nothing of it (in fact, he actually did leave the axe and the lantern, so it isn't a lie), the hermit will leave the cabin and not come back for a few minutes. During that time, the aroma of the stew begins to fill the cabin. It smells good at first, but there is something strange about it. Anybody with a sensitive sense of smell or taste (such as a Wolfen) can tell immediately what is wrong. The stew is *human stew*! Fishing around in the bubbling broth reveals the bones from a human foot. If the hermit were an Ogre, it would be one thing. But he is not an Ogre. He is a *cannibal*. And now he has returned, with around a dozen of his human cannibal friends, and they are all converging on the cabin with axes and clubs drawn, their chops wet with drool as they anticipate their next meal . . . the player group!

47% Feathered Death. High above, up in the trees, the heroes hear a terrible squawking, like the combined racket from a number of crows. However, it is only two creatures making all that noise, a pair of *Feathered Death* looking for an easy meal! They swoop down and assault the lead character in the party, but for only one melee round. If the hero does not fall after that, the Feathered Death fly off in search of other prey. The foolish

creatures have left their nest unattended, so if the heroes climb up the trees to investigate (a 150 foot/45.7 m climb), they find the skeletons of seven Kankoran children. These sad young ones met their fate some time ago. Nothing is left of them save their bones and some interesting looking anklets each of them wear. The anklets are made of a strange metal alloy the heroes have never seen before, and they are carved in Wolfen to read the names of each of the children: *Angin*, *Brevin*, *Corvin*, *Drugin*, *Efrin*, *Frogin*, and *Gurthin*. Reading these names rings a bell. Weren't these the names of a brood of missing children the locals were talking about at the last trading center the group had visited? And wasn't there something about a reward for the ones who retrieved the bodies, or slew the killers? And wasn't there something also about a Kankoran search party combing the area looking for clues?

48% Green Mold. The characters encounter a dark bog, lush in summer, wet with slush in winter, where everything is slippery and slimy. Everyone has to (pretty much continuously) keep rolling P.P. checks to keep from falling on the patches of slick ground, slippery tree trunks, and slime-covered rocks. Every time one of the player characters puts his hand out to steady himself, or brushes against something, they have a 01-25% chance of coming in contact with a patch of moss. At least it *looked* like moss at the time. On at least a couple of occasions, most characters (those over 5 feet/1.5 m tall) will have to duck under low-hanging branches, so there's also a 10% change of getting it on characters' heads or hats. This whole bog is one big patch of the dreaded *Green Mold*! It takes at least a half hour to get through the bog, at which point anything on anyone's feet (boots, shoes, or bare paws or hooves) will be covered with the stuff, as will most exposed clothing. As anybody familiar with the mold can attest, this substance basically covers one's body and puts the hurt on them, big time. There are a few ways to take care of Green Mold. The easiest among them being a simple Remove Cruse spell. Failing that, the heroes must find healing magic or healing potions of some kind to negate the damage caused by the mold, but only Remove Curse actually destroys it. If the characters have no such ability at their disposal, they had better find it quick, else they will be in a heap of trouble. See the *Palladium Book of Monsters & Animals* for complete details on Green Mold.

49% Herb Motherload. In the middle of the forest is another stinking bog, filled with slime and muck, slippery and treacherous, as well as dark and wet. Aside from a few muskrats, the population is mostly made up of leeches, who will gladly take the free meal offered by any bare ankles or other flesh dipped in the frequent water-filled holes. On the other hand, this place is like a supermarket for herbs, filled with hemlock, kargalin, nightshade, dragon's venom, rodoffrin, lebarisine, and veroc, as well as at least two dozen other rare species (see *Palladium Fantasy, 2nd edition,* pages 264-267).

50% Wolvenar. While traveling through the wilderness, one of the heroes accidentally steps into a large depression in the ground. While dusting himself off, the rest of the group notices that this is no ordinary depression. It is actually a huge footprint – a huge *Wolfen* footprint. But to make a hole like this, the Wolfen must have been huge! Who or what could have done such a thing? Then it hits the group – didn't they see a deserted temple to Wolvenar a few leagues back? The one with the old candles still trailing smoke from their wicks? If indeed Wolvenar walks the earth, then surely there lies an opportunity. After all, it isn't every day mortal heroes can gaze upon a god, much less interact with one. Is Wolvenar near by? Might he have a quest for the heroes or boon to bestow on those who do him a "little favor?"

51% Jotan Giants. The sound of splintering wood startles the player characters as they prepare to break camp one morning. Through the trees surrounding their campsite burst three Jotan Giants! All are armed to the teeth, fully armored, and carrying huge nets. They are bent on capturing the player characters, stealing all of their belongings, and selling the heroes themselves on a local slave market. The Jotan should have little difficulty capturing the heroes with their enormous nets, but any player characters who elude capture for more than three melee rounds will invoke the Giants' wrath. After trying to catch the heroes for that long, the Giants grow frustrated and just try to kill them outright. For them, it would be less of a headache to pass up possible slave money if it means they can end this fight quickly, collect some booty, and move on. Observant characters should notice that each of these Jotan bears on the shoulder pads of his armor the insignia of the Nimro Kingdom, that realm of Giants way down in the Mount Nimro region. It would seem these three were (or are) members of King Sunder Blackrock's personal guard. What the heck are they doing up here? Could they be deserters? And might there be other Giants looking for these potential renegades? Who knows? Maybe if the heroes prevail in this fight, they could receive a reward for their attackers – assuming they could move the bodies to wherever the reward is waiting, that is.

52% Road Sign. The heroes come to a fork in the path to which has been affixed a sign: *To your right, a path most perilous, leading to dangers untold! A dragon in despair, a hero in crisis, a kingdom in hiding. And to your left, a path leading to equal hazard! A lost city of ghosts, an accursed hill of bones, a magic artifact lost in time. Choose well your destiny, heroes, for once down the chosen path, never again shall this fork you see!*

Which way does the party go?

53% Gigantes. A pair of Gigantes block your path. They are evil bullies who terrorize everybody in the area, humans and non-humans alike. The Giants insist that the group give them 50 gold per person or animal (or an equivalent trade). The money insures that the Giants do not kill the group on the spot. Then they will demand that the group make a five mile (8 km) detour.

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

01-20%: 40 Hit Points, 25 S.D.C., wings (flies, Spd 20), large tail, +10 to damage, +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +3 to save vs magic and poison; weapon: giant sword (3D6 damage).

21-40%: 32 Hit Points, 45 S.D.C., scaly skin (A.R. 12), turns invisible at will, +8 to damage, +3 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +4 to save vs magic and poison; weapons: giant scythe (2D8 damage) and giant mace (4D4 damage).

41-60%: 36 Hit Points, 25 S.D.C., fangs (bite does 2D6), impervious to fire, +6 to damage, +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +6 to save vs magic and poison; weapons: voulge (5D6 damage) and normal-sized short sword (1D6 damage) used as a dagger.

61-70%: 27 Hit Points, 25 S.D.C., breathes fire (3D6 damage, 20 foot/6 meter range, counts as one additional melee attack), claws (2D6 damage), +8 to damage, +3 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +2 to save vs magic and poison; weapons: none!

71-80%: 29 Hit Points, 25 S.D.C., see the invisible, thick and lumpy skin (A.R. 10), +12 to damage, +4 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +4 to save vs magic and poison; weapon: giant battle axe (3D6 damage).

81-90%: 30 Hit Points, 25 S.D.C., spits acid (4D6 damage, 20 foot/6.1 m range, counts as one additional melee attack), additional leg, +9 to damage, +5 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +3 to save vs magic and poison. Weapons: Giant war hammer (2D8 damage) and oversize falchion (4D6 damage). Also minor psionic: Resist Cold, Presence Sense, Object Read, See Aura, and Aura of Truth.

91-00%: 35 Hit Points, 30 S.D.C., additional eye in back of head (no surprise attacks from behind), additional arm (adds one attack per melee; 5 total). +8 to damage, +4 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +4 to save vs magic and poison. Weapons: crossbow (2D6 damage per bolt), and a giant sword (4D6 damage).

About 200 yards/meters away is the Giants' cave. Inside the smelly lair are two beds of sticks, rags, and fur. A huge kettle and bowls are set in a corner. A Giant-sized mace (3D6 damage) stands in another corner. A huge pile of bones, animal and humanoid, fills the rear of the cave. Under each bed are the Giants' treasure hoards. There are 1D6x10 silver coins and 3D6x100 in gold, as well as a dozen human-sized short swords, two dozen daggers, a couple small shields, and 1D4 battle axes.

54% Gothan's Trap. Whoever is "walking point" for the rest of the group blunders right into an old trap set up by some soldiers who never returned to defuse it. It is a deadfall trap, meaning that once sprung, a big section of a tree log hanging from a chain swings down from its resting spot up in the trees, aimed right for the lead member of the party. Unless the adventurer dodges (beat an attack roll of 14), the log will smash into him, causing 1D4x10 points of damage and rendering him at -2 attacks per melee for the next minute as he clears the stars from his eyes. Examining the log reveals a hastily carved signature of *Gothan the Great*, a renowned combat engineer of the early Wolfen Empire. Ever since Gothan died, travelers and explorers have complained bitterly about running into the hundreds of traps he had set up throughout the Great Northern Wilderness, especially within the southern half of the realm and the *Disputed Zone*. Word has it his seven sons have taken their father's mantle and simply build traps for the heck of it, basically mining huge stretches of the Northern Wilderness with all sorts of lethal and ingenious devices. The simple deadfall the heroes tripped off must have been a warm-up exercise or something, since it is far less sophisticated than what Gothan or his sons would ordinarily produce. Maybe it was a copycat device by an admiring fan?

55% Harnessed Gryphon. In a clearing, an adult Gryphon wearing a saddle and riding harness is thrashing about, trying to pull this equipment off of him. The riding gear bears the stamp of the Wolfen Empire, which must mean this creature is part of the Empire's program to cultivate Gryphons as flying war steeds! It looks like this one threw its rider and took off into the Wilderness. Knowing how much time and money the Wolfen spend on taming and training these creatures, it would be quite a valuable object to return to the Empire. A handsome reward would almost certainly follow (at least 2,500 gold). However, this is a mostly trained riding Gryphon. The heroes could hardly be faulted if they wanted to claim the creature for themselves. Inflicting 5-10 points of damage might shock it into submission and let it know who's boss. On the other hand, there's less of a chance the Gryphon will try to kill someone who treats it well (its Wolfen riders were kindly and patient). The creature can be ridden more-or-less like a horse, but only by characters who have the Horsemanship: Exotic skill. Otherwise, whoever tries to pilot the creature will be thrown off almost immediately. If the player characters decide to keep the monster, they should be aware that it bears the brand of the Wolfen Empire, so if they land in any substantial settlement in the Northern Wilderness, they will be considered steed rustlers and dealt with most harshly by the local authorities. Something else to consider: Gryphons eat a *lot* of food. Do the heroes have some plan for keeping their new pet well fed? Oh, and is the thrown rider anywhere nearby?

56% Sniper. From out of nowhere, a longbow arrow (2D6 damage) strikes one of the members of the party. The group has just been targeted by a sniper who is well hidden in the brush and intends to whittle the adventurers down to nothing by virtue of his long-distance attacks alone! The attacker is a 7th level Long Bowman, and he possesses a magic long bow that enables him to fire up to *twice* his usual range, coupled with a magic quiver that never runs out of arrows. On top of all that, he wears a magic cloak that confers the same abilities to the user as the 1st level Earth Warlock Spell, *Chameleon*. With this incredible combination of skill, experience, magic and knowledge of the local terrain, the sniper has our heroes at a deadly disadvantage. He is 200 yards/meters away from the group, and will continue showering them with arrows for as long as he can, breaking off only when it is clear that his targets are closing in on him and he has no chance of fighting his way out in open battle. Under such conditions, the sniper will withdraw and slink off into the forest, tracking the party and continuing his assault at a later time. And exactly who is this sinister figure? A deadly huntsmen who prefers humanoid quarry? An insane villain who enjoys killing random strangers? An old enemy, out to isolate and terrorize a particular member of the group?

57% Algor Giants. *Frostfire* and *Tilberlake* are Algor Giants. The Giants view the adventuring group with extreme caution and make growling noises, "Rhggg. . . Keep out of our way. . . Rhgg." They do not attack, but they have no problem with defending themselves. If approached in a friendly way they will stop for a short conversation, but it is clear they are in a hurry. They are headed for the city of Oliana, the capital of the Algor Mountain Collective, deep in Gold Ear Wolfen Tribal Lands. They'll trade information about what they've seen (a good opportunity for the Game Master to roll up a couple of other encounters and provide some clues), and are interested in hearing about any perils the player group may have encountered, unless the player characters attack first. Each Giant has four hand to hand attacks plus one frost breath attack per melee. Frostfire has 63 Hit Points, 50 S.D.C., and is definitely the smartest, while Tilberlake has 70 Hit Points, 66 S.D.C., and is more of the follower type. Both wear soft leather armor, A.R. 9, S.D.C. 50, and

are armed with giant staves (2D6+10 damage) and short swords (3D6+6 damage). Shortly after they pass by, an observant character may notice a large owl that seems to be tracking the two.

58% Brother Troll. The characters meet *Brother Thunder*, a case example in contradictions if ever there was one. Brother Thunder is a mighty Troll who once was a feared warlord (8th level Soldier) of the Old Kingdom. After receiving a hard knock on the head by a Cyclops, the Troll became convinced his life of wickedness was a waste and that he needed to dedicate himself to a worthier, more noble pursuit. After a long and arduous journey, he ended up in the Scholastic Monastery of *Grayhall*, on the Island of Lopan. There, he forever renounced the ways of violence and sought to dedicate himself to a life of reading, writing and enlightenment. It has been a hard path for Brother Thunder, as he came to be called. He is constantly tempted by the urge to smash things, and only his obligation to the ways of nonviolence holds him back from opening up a can of mayhem on those people, places and things that get under his skin. For those meeting Brother Thunder for the first time, he cuts a fairly comical figure, a Troll practically quivering with suppressed rage and violence. But he is really a dangerous person, a time bomb that *will* eventually go off. It is just a matter of when. And when he does blow his stack, grab a weapon and start killing, Brother Thunder will become a hurricane of violence rarely seen except in the thick of the most savage of battles.

When the player characters encounter Brother Thunder, he is on the first leg of a long journey of self-reflection. His abbot thought it would do the Troll some good to spend some time in the wilderness, where he could think about things and figure out a way to get a handle on his rage. Upon first meeting the party, the Troll Monk is in a fairly serene state of mind, and will even ask if he can accompany the group on their travels. If the party allows him into their ranks, he is cheerful and helpful, at least at first, but as time goes on, his happy demeanor slowly gives way to some of his seething frustration and violence. With no outlet for his darker emotions, the Monk is merely becoming a pressure cooker with no steam valve. Unless the player characters find some way for Brother Thunder to defuse, the guy will go off, and go off big time. But if the heroes do find a way for the Monk to channel his rage into something non-violent and productive (smashing stone with a hammer is a good idea, or chopping a lot of firewood) then Brother Thunder will remain on an even keel emotionally and could become a productive member of the group or society at large. **G.M. Note:** Have fun with this guy. For inspiration, you might want to read a few issues of *The Incredible Hulk* to get a sense of what sorts of things might turn this peaceful Monk into the "Butcher of the Wilderness," as he was once known.

Brother Thunder. 8th level Soldier, 2nd level Monk, 73 Hit Points, 82 S.D.C., with I.Q.: 9, as well as 18 P.P.E., M.E. 7, M.A. 9, P.S. 31, P.P. 21, P.E. 24, P.B. 10, Spd. 10, with +8 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, and a whopping +21 to damage.

59% Kankoran Shaman. As night falls, the player characters notice the glow of a large fire lighting up the sky nearby. Fearing this might be the start of a forest fire, the heroes move in to check it out. It is a large blaze, all right, but not a forest fire at all! It is a bonfire built and ignited by *Nikasanda,* a seemingly insane Kankoran Shaman, who is dancing around the fire babbling incessantly in some tongue only he knows. He has his

hands over his head and is hopping about like he has a major case of ants in the pants. As comical as this fellow seems, there is also a kind of mad, frenetic energy to the scene, almost as if the Shaman is *conjuring* forth some incredible powers through this bizarre ritual. When the player characters enter the clearing where the bonfire is, the Shaman stops and looks at them. He smiles and dashes forth to greet them. Speaking almost too quickly to be understood, the Kankoran explains that he had been dancing for seven days and seven nights to summon forth "the heroes to cleanse the land of the Great Darkness." Now that "they" have arrived, the Shaman says, his job is complete, and he can rest. And with that, the Shaman's eyes roll back in his head, and the fellow seems to drop dead right then and there! What might this strange person be referring to, and could the heroes *really* have been *summoned* to the spot without their knowing it? As the group discusses these things, the bonfire snuffs out as if some giant force blew it out like a candle! All of a sudden, the rantings of an insane Shaman don't seem so silly anymore . . .

60% Dragon Boat. High up in the trees, a Wolfen Dragon Boat rests suspended in the branches, as if it were plucked out of the water, hurled a great distance, and landed there. As the party looks up, they can see a few of the bodies of Wolfen sailors also hanging from the trees, dead as doornails. Their bodies are pretty badly decomposed, so whatever happened to the ship happened a while ago. Knocking it out of the tree should be pretty easy, but messy, since it will shatter on the ground, scattering the contents (including decaying body parts) all over the place. Exploring it while it's still up in the tree is hazardous (roll versus P.P. on 1D20 every minute to avoid toppling the ship). Inside is the captain's log, but it's in some Wolfen code that will

be particularly difficult to decipher. Among the forty or so maps and charts there is also a carefully drawn map of an island with markings for unusual trees, rocks, a small spring, and a cave, complete with a large, black "X" to mark the spot. And since the hold is mostly empty, it doesn't take a genius to figure out where a treasure might be hidden. What booty there might be to be found on the vessel, as well as its identity and purpose, are left to the Game Master. Perhaps this was the ship heading for a trip around the globe. Or perhaps it is one of the missing ships of the Imperial Treasure Fleet, lost some time past in a freak storm in the Algorian Sea. Or maybe the ship belongs to the dread pirate, *Captain Longtooth*, who mysteriously vanished not three months ago while terrorizing villages along the Algorian coast. Whatever the nature of the ship, its presence here, in the heart of the Wilderness is certainly puzzling. Sailors' lore states sometimes vortex winds can suck a ship off the water and throw it far away. Could this have happened here?

61% Vile Weather. Bad Weather that comes in threes. Over the course of the next six hours the player characters experience the worst that the Great Northern Wilderness has to offer, with three massive changes in weather (lightning & rainstorm, sleet, blizzard, flood, mudslide, tornado, etc.).

62% Dragon Hatchling. An Ice Dragon hatchling named *Kellnir* has established a weird little domain of his own on the western edge of the Wolfen Empire, south of the tip of the Dragon's Claw. There, he has decreed that all Wolfen shall bow before him as a god, and pay him homage. He has managed to subjugate a few small Wolfen villages, who are bowing to the Dragon simply because they have not the strength to oppose him. Travelers, hunters and Rangers, however, laugh off this dangerous juvenile as a loudmouth whose ego is writing checks its body can't cash. Sooner or later some adventurers or monster hunters or Imperial soldiers will appear on the scene and give this little wyrm the whipping he so soundly deserves. In the meantime, though, Kellnir rules his tiny corner of the world with an iron fist, routinely killing those who oppose him or even innocents who just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

63% Bears & Bees. A brown bear mother and cub are foraging honey from a beehive. If anybody comes within 100 feet (30.5 m) of them, the mother will charge. She will be happy with chasing intruders away, but will chase them 2D6x100 yards/meters. If the characters stay a safe distance, but hang around, they will find themselves being attacked by angry bees who will attack anything within 300 feet (91.5 m) of the hive. The bee attacks do no significant damage, but are painful and distracting, and sleep may be difficult; penalties: -3 on initiative, and -5% on skills for 1D4 days.

64% Ley Line Nexus. The party, guided by whatever spell casters are in its midst, have gone deep into the wilderness in search of a powerful ley line junction. Just as the group gets to the location, a partial solar eclipse occurs, causing a massive surge in available magic energy to the ley line nexus and whomever has the power to draw from it. (For details, see the **Palladium Fantasy RPG, 2nd Ed.**, p. 182). Yes, the party's practitioner of magic may drink deeply of the magic bounty to be had here . . . but they must first dislodge the *evil Wolfen Wizard* who has built his home directly on top of the nexus! As the party draws near, the Wizard, a foul-hearted villain named *Valter the Victorious,* emerges and challenges the group to mortal combat. Valter, as mages and Wolfen Imperials will recall, was a vicious renegade who strove to undo the formation of the Wolfen Empire during its earliest days. He must be over 100 years old, which means he is using some form of magic to prolong his life. Valter is wanted by the Imperial Senate for over a dozen capital crimes, including the *Massacre of Ironhold*, in which he murdered over 150 Imperial soldiers in a single night of bloody mayhem. Whoever captures this rogue and brings him to justice will be a hero to the Wolfen Empire. Now, all one has to do is dislodge him from his home when he is at his most powerful.

65% Coyote Pack. A long, deep valley, about 10 miles (16 km) long and from 1-3 miles (1.6 to 4.8 km) wide, is mostly arid, with scraggly pine trees and relatively little wild game. It is home to a pack of coyotes made bold by starvation and far too many offspring (three years before, during more prosperous times, they had 60 pups born to the pack). Now they have 22 older members, 54 three-year-olds, and 5 newborn puppies with a nursing mother back at their hidden den. They have devoured the last of the valley's deer, wild pigs and raccoons as well as many of the rabbits, squirrels, mice and moles. Every time they've tried leaving the valley they've been attacked by bigger, stronger and healthier wolf packs (wolves are better at controlling their population, allowing only the alpha male and female to breed, and they will not tolerate coyotes coming into their territories). Some of the three-year-olds are crazy enough to even attack during the day, but the real problem will be at night, when the older, wiser leaders will herd the young ones into attacking over and over again. Killing a few will send the others running, but an hour or two later they'll be back again. Throwing out food, especially meat, will create quite a melee, with dozens of coyotes ripping it apart and fighting over the scraps. The young coyotes have 2D6+6 Hit Points, 2D6+8 S.D.C., and two melee attacks; bite inflicts 2D4 damage. The older ones are too smart to directly attack unless they catch a character alone or badly wounded (they'll especially target horses). However, the older coyotes know, on some instinctive level, that they have far too many young, and they will drive the three-year-olds to attack, even if it means they die, or even if they have to kill the youngsters. On the other hand, instinct will also compel the older coyotes to protect the infants and the nursing mother, even starving themselves to bring her food.

66% Anaconda. Slithering through the underbrush is a creature most rare: the *Northern Albino Anaconda*! This creature is identical in stats to a Northern Anaconda except that it is stark white, has glowing red eyes, and an utter imperviousness to cold (magical cold does half damage). The creature is on the prowl for food, and it prefers humanoids, especially smaller ones like Gnomes, Goblins, Dwarves and Kobolds. It will not feed on giant-sized humanoids because it simply can not fit them in its mouth. The snake will let the party pass by its location, then it prowls behind them for a few hundred yards/meters, sizing up its chances. Then, when the last member in the party's marching order least expects it, the giant serpent strikes – KA-POW! – and constricts the victim without a sound. If all goes well, the party will never know it lost a member until it is too late. As for the victim, he faces a death by suffocation unless he can somehow break free of the serpent's grasp. Supernatural Strength

might do the trick nicely. Otherwise, an ordinary P.S. of at least 30 is required to throw the snake off and resume breathing. If the snake's hold is broken, it will try to flee, but, being a fairly slow creature (Speed 7), it is easy for a vengeful humanoid to catch up and slay the beast with a few good whacks with a sword or axe. The creature's skin may be stripped off and sold for 100 gold at any trading center, where it will be made into some kind of leather good.

67% Kelpies. It has been a few days since the heroes have had a chance to replenish their water supplies, so when they find a beautiful brook with clear, burbling water, they decide now would be a good time to drink their fill. As they move to the water's edge, they scan the surrounding area. The tall grasses here would provide evil creatures with a handy ambush site to snatch the unwary. Suddenly, as if to confirm such suspicions, a band of three Kelpies spring out of the grass! Each Kelpie gets one chance to tackle one of the characters. If the attack succeeds (and if the player character doesn't dodge), then the creature knocks the hero into the water and holds him there! Player characters caught in this fashion are in serious trouble, since the Kelpies will hold them under until they drown! Unless the player character can break free of the Kelpies' grip or unless the Kelpies are slain by other characters, a watery death is sure to follow.

68% Cruger Crew. The party spies a sign nailed to a tree as they pass by: *WARNING — This here land belings to the Cruger Crew, meenest bandits in the Gret Northurn Wildnesss. Pay toll in box or you will dye. 5 gold pleese.*

The party looks around, but see nobody here to enforce such a bold (and misspelled) command. On the ground is a copper pot containing about 700 gold. Somebody is actually *paying* these guys? This is almost more than the party can believe!

If the group decides to chuck in 5 gold, then nothing happens to them as they continue their journey (it's just 5 gold for the entire group, but if they decide to put in 5 gold each, well . . . they're not about to get a refund). If the characters do not throw 5 gold into the pot, then they will each randomly suffer a *curse* unless they save vs magic! Where the curse comes from or who is casting it remains a mystery – perhaps this "Cruger Crew" is more than the illiterate bunch of extortionists they make themselves out to be. If the characters ever reach into the pot to *take* gold, they will each instantly be struck by a 6D6 Call Lightning spell *and* they suffer a random curse. And if the player characters try to take the pot with them . . . well . . . that would be a bad, bad idea.

69% Scaled Deer. A deer path goes through a particularly dense part of the forest, going on for at least 20 miles (32 km) and with every branch off of it ending in a dead end of needle bush, prickly vines, or thorn trees. The first sign of something strange are the *tracks*. It is clear that they are made by deer, and quite a few deer (at least a dozen), but these deer seem to have feet split into three. In fact, there are at least five hundred of these strange and reclusive animals. They have very acute senses of hearing and smell, and stay at least a mile (1.6 km) away from any intruders. However, every evening they visit one of the eight streams for water, and a well-concealed, patient character could get a good look at them in the twilight. Roughly the shape of a deer, but covered with dull scales, with tiny ears and a deer-like mouth, they have two sets of eyes. The lower eyes are large and brown, and they use them to examine anything close up (leaves, water, items on the ground, each other). When they close the larger eyes, they open a smaller pair of luminescent blue eyes, which seem to give them perfect nightvision (1000 feet/305 m). Shy and fearful, they always try to escape rather than fight (although they will kick out with their back legs at pursuers or if trapped – 3D6+8 damage). Their scales are perfect protection against the pointed vegetation in the area, and also give them a 15 A.R. and 90 S.D.C. This is an exotic animal known only to a nearby tribe of Kankoran (who consider them endangered, and will not be pleased if they are killed in any large numbers). On the other hand, their skins, properly treated and preserved, would make for a truly superior light armor, with the weight of leather, but with far superior A.R. of 14 and 55 S.D.C.

70% Havean Troops. A contingent of four mounted Knights and 14 human Soldiers (all on horseback, with two spare horses for every man), ranging in experience from 1st to 4th level, meet the party going the other way on the road. The soldiers are from the *Kingdom of Havea*, carrying the banner of the IXth Imperial Wolfen Legion, and are ardent supporters of the Imperial Wolfen regime. They think anybody from the Eastern Territory is total scum, and they will have trouble restraining themselves from fighting whoever comes from that region. This is a touchy bunch, and any insults from the player character group will be met with formal dueling challenges (discouraged but not denied by their leader, *Sir Wilfranz Colerak*, a 6th level Palladin who wants to get his troops into battle intact). The player characters can turn down such challenges, but before they know it, word of their "cowardice" will spread through the Empire like wildfire. Otherwise, these are decent people, friendly with the Wolfen (a few hours behind them on the trail is the IIIrd Heavy Infantry Cohort of the IXth Legion).

71% Wolfen Merchants. A traveling caravan of apparently friendly merchants that cater to huntsmen and the many little villages that dot the area. They sell all kinds of everyday items such as dried meats, cutlery, knives, axes, axe handles, nails, hammers, horseshoes, rope, snare wire, water skins, hats, capes/cloaks, gloves, and similar items. No magic. The caravan is 8 wagons long, with a merchant and two assistants in each, accompanied by a group of 10 Wolfen Mercenary guards (2nd to 4th level). All the merchants are Wolfen, while a few assistants are Orcs.

The leader is a huge black-haired Wolfen, *"Bones" Kiberk*, who has an obvious disdain for humans and Dwarves. He is a fifth level Ranger and an excellent warrior. The other characters are all second level Merchants or Mercenaries. They are fairly well armed, with spears, swords and crossbows, and fly the Wolfen Imperial flag, implying that they are government sanctioned. The caravan is good for restocking supplies and accumulating rumors. The merchants are fairly friendly and prices are only slightly higher than normal.

72% Blue Forest. At first it might be just a small plant with dark blue leaves or a patch of bright blue grass in amidst the usual foliage. However, if the characters pay attention, they'll see more and more plants colored blue instead of green. Those with the skill to see (Identify Plants & Fruits, Biology, Botany, Holistic Medicine or Herbology) can see that there's more to these plants than just a change in color. Each is an entirely new

type of plant, never before seen on the Palladium World. If the players follow the blue plants back to their source (day or night, in the darkness the blue plants glow faintly but distinctly), they'll find more and more, with the blue plants gradually replacing the native green ones. After about a half an hour of walking through the stillness (there are no insects) they'll reach the center of the *blue glade of forest*. While a few old native maples and oaks remain, all the younger trees (10 years or less) have blue leaves. How much more the group finds out depends on their powers of observation. High up in the oldest of the oak trees there is a nest being tended by a silent pair of . . . birds? No, they're not exactly birds, nor are they bats, but something like a furry hummingbird. They are seed eaters and they build up a winter store of seeds, acorns and the like. However, they aren't from the Palladium World. High up in the tree is a tiny Dimensional Gate, and the strange flying creatures have discovered that they can build a nest in the Palladium World free from their natural predators. For over ten years they've shuttled seeds back, and raised young (although they always drive the kids away every April). The advantage of the blue plants is that they are inedible to Palladium World insects (and the roots of some could be distilled into an oil that would keep away any flying insects!). They're also poisonous (and bad-tasting, so there aren't any deer corpses around). Aside from the obvious adventure, discovering what might be in the other dimension, the whole area would be quite a dilemma for a Druid, who must decide whether to preserve this strange new life, or destroy it to protect the native forest.

73% Kinnie Ger. Deep in the forests, the road the characters are traveling on comes to a deep crevasse in the ground. The chasm is around 100 feet (30.5 m) wide and deep, a major pain for anybody walking through the area. Perhaps that is why there is the beginning of a bridge spanning the divide. The bridge only consists of the barest support beams, and the actual walking surface for it peters out halfway across. What gives? As the player characters examine the bridge, or perhaps as they try tiptoeing across the skinny support beams of it to get across the chasm, they will learn the reason for the aborted project. A pride of Kinnie Ger – one male and three females – have staked out the area and they took umbrage that some Wolfen dared to build a bridge over *their* chasm! The malicious felines slew around 30 Wolfen laborers over a period of about a month, and the rest of the building party fled the scene. This was about a year ago, in what locals call the *Slaughter of Bloody Gorge*. A reward has been offered on the pelts of the Kinnie Ger responsible, and it is said by local Shamans that whoever possesses the skulls or claws of these creatures will obtain strange powers, like the ability to turn invisible, supernatural strength, the ability to change shape, or even the ability to leap high in the air (like a Telekinetic Leap).

74% Devil Digger. Suddenly out of a small mound of dirt and rocks lunges an angry Devil Digger. Foam and saliva flies from its mouth as it roars and growls threateningly. Devil Diggers are notorious as crazed, berserker type mammals who will fight to the death at the slightest provocation. The character have provoked it by simply walking within 20 feet (6.1 m) of its den. Inside the den is its mate and 3 young. If the male is slain the female will rush out and continue the fight. Running away is a possible alternative but the creature(s) will pursue interlopers for at least 100 yards/meters.

75% Blow Worms of Taut. PHUT! Without warning a huge glob of sticky mucus flies through the air and splatters against a nearby tree . . . BLATCH! Another glob comes through the woods at the party, then another and another. Before the heroes know it, they are under close attack by an Orc raiding party comprised of maybe a dozen warriors (1st to 3rd level Mercenaries) who are riding on the backs of three Blow Worms which are being piloted like horses through the forest! Where the Orcs got these worms, how they domesticated them, and how they manage to navigate them through the dense forest are all mysteries the player characters might wish to pursue at some point. But for now, they are under a serious onslaught, and unless they take care of these Orcs and the Worms of Taut they command, each one of the player characters will end up either slain in battle or residing in the gullet of one of these Blow Worms.

76% Wolfen Patrol. Two Wolfen soldiers patrolling the area in search of spies and bandits. They will stop and ask the group questions like: "What is your destination? What is your business there? Have you seen any bandits or suspicious looking individuals? If so, where?" and so on. They will give humans a long speech about what happens to spies and bandits in the Wolfen Empire and caution their behavior. Then they will leave. No combat will ensue unless a character(s) acts suspicious or extremely rude. Attackers quickly discover that the two Wolfen are just part of a patrol numbering eight altogether, the rest observing nearby. If taken in for questioning, the group is escorted to a well-organized camp consisting of three Maniples (1 of Scouts, 2 of Light Infantry, 75 Wolfen in total). Resistance is met with force.

Each Wolfen is a third level Soldier, has approximately 26 Hit Points, 30 S.D.C., four attacks per melee, dressed in half-plate armor (A.R. 13, 60 S.D.C.), and armed with a short sword (2D6+7 damage) and pole arm (4D6+3 damage, giant size).

77% Pegasus Eggs: High in the sky, the party can hear the nervous whinny of a Pegasus! These most rare and beautiful creatures are truly a sight to behold as they wheel gracefully through the sky. However, hearing one in distress is most troubling, especially to good characters. What could be troubling this creature so? The party finds out soon enough, as they come across a Pegasus nest lying on the ground, having been dislodged from its treetop location by forces unknown. The nest itself is pretty banged up, but miraculously, the four eggs it contained are fine. The nest must have brushed against the upper foliage of the surrounding trees as it fell, slowing its descent enough so as to not break the eggs. Now the heroes are in a quandary. Do they keep the eggs, either to sell or to hatch the Pegasus colts themselves, or do they try to return the eggs to their rightful mother? Clearly, the second option is the more noble and heroic of the two, but how does one return eggs to a Pegasus? Perhaps if the heroes somehow got the entire nest back up in a tree, it would work. And if it does, the Pegasus will indeed be forever grateful. Upon receiving her eggs again and making sure they are all okay, the Pegasus will come after the party, landing in front of them and bowing her head in thanks. She then nuzzles each of the characters, as if giving them a kiss or affectionate snuggle, as she might do to one of her colts. From a Pegasus, this is most rare indeed! But it gets better. Forever after, whenever the party encounters a Pegasus, they will

receive favorable treatment, as if they have been *marked* by the grateful Pegasus mother with a sign that reads: *Noble And True, To Be Trusted As A Friend.*

78% Bogie. A mean little Bogie (*Monsters and Animals, 2nd Ed.*, page 62) decides to have some malicious fun at the group's expense. First he animates small loose objects and stones used to pelt the characters. No damage is done except for a point or two and much frustration and a couple bruises. After a few minutes, the assault stops and he lets the group continue in peace, for a while. Then, using ventriloquism, the Bogie makes a moaning noise come from behind a clump of bushes, like somebody in distress. Characters approaching the bushes with caution, and looking around, will see and avoid the steel jaws of a huntsman's trap. Those who are not careful step into the trap and suffer 1D6 points of damage (only armor with an A.R. of 14 or higher will prevent Hit Point damage). The adventurers find nobody behind the bushes, but now, mournful wailing seems to be coming from the neighboring tree. Suddenly, a glowing sphere of light appears floating above the bush. Next melee, all those by the bush/sphere must save vs Faerie Magic or fall victim to Wisps of Confusion. His next attack is a Fog of Fear, followed by a Wind Rush.

This cunning little fiend will not be found, even if the group looks for the instigator of the assault, because the tiny fellow is using his prowl ability (77%) and has metamorphed into the form of a large spider about the size of a human's fist. A spider should not be seen as anything strange in a forest, nor as a danger and should be ignored if noticed. Characters with a knowledge of Faerie Lore may suspect the assault to be by Faeries and take the appropriate action, such as turning one's clothing inside out. The Bogie has had his fun and takes his leave. Our heroes are likely to think that they've just traveled through a patch of "haunted forest." They'd be wise to avoid it if they should pass this way again.

79% Peryton Bait. As the heroes wander through the woodlands, their stomachs growl for want of food. It has been a few days since they had a decent meal. Their rations are low, and game animals have been really, really hard to come by. This is a sure sign that monsters of some sort are active nearby, but which ones? As the party considers this, they come across a trading center that consists of little more than a set of log cabins and a pen of livestock. The heroes go into the main cabin to see if they can score a meal, but the proprietor (backed up by the dozen or so burly Wolfen Mercenaries staying here) refuses to give the characters anything. They look like deer antlers. The proprietor says that until the party bags one of *these*, they do not get the luxury of dining here (if the characters look desperate, he might give them a loaf of hard bread, but that's it). With few other options, the party sets out to hunt in the nearby area, asking themselves the question: If they kill a deer, why not just eat it and not come back to this place for a meal? Their answer comes all too suddenly. A trio of shadows looms over the group, tipping them off to a grim development. They are being stalked from the air by *Peryton, Demon Deer*! Within a minute, the creatures attack in a savage, no-holds-barred battle. After three melees, the Peryton will break off the attack, bringing with them any slain player characters. If the heroes manage to kill a Peryton, showing its body (or at least its head) to the people of the trading center will be enough to get them the food they desire. The residents of the place will lighten up considerably, treating the party to drinks and hearty food while the proprietor mounts the Peryton antlers on his wall. By the looks of it, this place has been hunting Peryton for years, and doing a great job of it. Too bad the foul creatures so thoroughly infest this area that no amount of hunting will ever drive them away.

80% Giant Timber Spider Breeding Ground. A giant spider's web blocks the path, creating a wall of sticky fibers that is 80 feet (24.4 m) wide as it is tall. Looking up shows a Giant Timber Spider feeding on a bird caught in its web. However, the real danger lays waiting in the 3D4 web covered burrows on the ground. Inside each is a hungry giant spider; average Hit Points: 18, S.D.C.: 15, A.R. 6, the bite inflicts 1D6 damage plus poison. (See the *Monsters & Animals* sourcebook, page 197.)

The area around the web is littered with the bones of small animals and what looks to be the remains of a Goblin. The body has no valuables other than a pair of rusty daggers and four gold pieces. Examining the body will entice 1D4 spiders to attack! Stuck to the web are a dozen or so skeletons of birds and a squirrel. As long as the characters stay 30 feet (9.1 m) away and do not touch the web, they can avoid a fight with the giant arachnids. If one attacks, the others will all join in 1D4 melee rounds later.

81% Scorpion Devil. The path ahead of the party has been blocked by an enormous fallen tree. The tree is covered with a thick bed of moss made slick by recent rains. As a result, the tree is nearly impossible to climb. Thankfully, the tree landed on a large rock when it fell, creating a small opening between the tree and the ground. Brush and other debris have gathered around the hole in the years since the tree fell, so it is difficult to peer through the opening. If the party tries to go *around* the tree, it will take them 1D4 hours of tricky climbing, since this path is on a steep incline composed mostly of moss-covered rocks. One slip, and the characters have a long and painful tumble ahead of them (5D6 damage and will need help out of a ravine). The best way to go is *under* the tree, but the opening looks like a monster's den. And indeed it is! A Scorpion Devil mother and her brood of five young have nestled under the tree. The mother will lash out and attack whoever enters the opening, but she will not come out and chase anybody. She'll just jab at characters with her stinger as they enter the opening, as they crawl through, and as they exit the opening (the entire process takes three melee actions/attacks). Seriously poisoned characters might need a spot of medical attention once they have gotten by the Scorpion Devil's lair.

82% Goblin Scavengers. A band of renegade Goblins who have deserted from their tribal army. This is a seedy group of 3D6 Goblins who are more like two-bit punks than bandits. They live off the land and take what they want from travelers they encounter. They attack, but flee at the first sign of magic or an impressive feat of strength or fighting skill. They are a cowardly lot of first level Mercenaries and Thieves. Average Hit Points: 18, 14 S.D.C., armor is hard and studded leather.

83% Failed Adventurers. The party comes across an interesting scene. Lying before them are the skeletons of over twenty assorted warriors, from many different races: Wolfen, Coyle, Kankoran, human, Elf, Dwarf, even some Orcs, Ogres and Trolls! All are wearing suits of armor, but none of them seem like they are part of a standard uniform of any kind. For all the

heroes can tell, these twenty lost souls were part of some ragtag group of warriors who got into a battle and never made it out alive. Presumably, they were slain from both sides of the fight here, but unless somebody Object Reads the armor or establishes contact with the dead, there is no telling what happened here or why. If the heroes search the bodies, they find nothing of importance, save one very, very intriguing bit of treasure. It is a long sword blade covered with runes! There is no handle, cross guard or any other component of a sword here. Just the blade. It radiates magic, but it makes no telepathic contact with anybody like a rune weapon ordinarily might. Those who know their magic lore or their weapons trivia might have reason to believe that this blade could be part of a certain legendary rune sword said to destroy entire castles with a single thrust! The question is, where might the other parts of the weapon be? Are they necessary to activate the blade's intelligence and magic? Why was it left behind? Might there be more mysterious soldiers waiting to assail whoever carries this blade further into the world? Intriguing, indeed.

84% Centaurs! Big time trouble! Centaur bandits!! These guys are fast, tough and mean. They raid along the entire length of the Bruu-ga-Belimar mountains on the northern side. They are well equipped, wearing studded leather armor (A.R. 12, 38 S.D.C.) and have a variety of weapons. 1D4 are Long Bowmen, 2D4 have a spear and a saber (1D6 damage each), 1D4 are Mercenaries armed with small shields and Hercules clubs (2D6 damage), and 1D4 are thieves with Horseman Hammers (2D4 damage) and small shields. An Elven Druid also runs with the bandits (hoofed/horse totem).

Except for the bowmen, all are third level Thieves or Mercenaries. All have four attacks per melee and the average Centaur is +6 to damage, +3 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +3 to save vs magic and poison, and has a speed of 28 or faster (max is 48). Average Hit Points is 32, and S.D.C. 24.

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

85% Avenger of the Fallen. At night, the ghost of a slain hero comes in a vision to each of the player characters as they lie sleeping. This hero is clad in shimmering plate mail armor, and its race matches the race of whoever beholds the vision. That is, a Wolfen will see this hero as a Wolfen. An Ogre will see it as an Ogre. A Gnome will see it as a Gnome, and so on. The slain hero identifies himself as *Lord Challance, Avenger of the Fallen.* His mission was to scour the Northern Wilderness for a strange race of creatures known as the *Ghurlun*, hulking brutes whose natural armor and savage fighting abilities made them the terror of the land. The Ghurlun were responsible for not only Lord Challance's death, but before that they destroyed over a hundred villages in the Great Northern Wilderness over a period of a hundred years. Now, Challance urges, these creatures must be stopped forever, and the player characters are just the people to do it. Upon waking up, the heroes feel charged with the quest to find the last of the Ghurlun and eradicate them. Only when the race goes extinct shall the heroes be relieved of their burden. Until then, they all bear the *Mark of Challance* – a cross-shaped runic sign on the forehead, like it has been branded there. The heroes have one year to eradicate the Ghurlun, after which, the Mark of Challance begins to burn like a hot coal, searing into the characters' heads, killing them. Lord Challance apologizes for such stern measures, but the war against the Ghurlun must be continued, even at the cost of troubling some innocent adventurers. When the last Ghurlun dies, the Mark of Challance shall magically fade away. As Challance's vision ends and the heroes each awake with the Mark of Challance on them, some questions roll through their minds: What the heck are these Ghurlun, how come no one in the party has ever heard of them before, and where the heck are they supposed to find these things? A single year to wipe out an entire race? Even if there are only ten of these things, it might take a year just to track them all down! Sadly, Remove Curse does not relieve the heroes of the Mark; only fulfilling the mission set before them will. They had better get cracking; time is ticking away.

86% Woodsmen. A pair of woodsmen. Roll to determine their race: 1-20 Human, 21-40 Coyle, 41-60 Wolfen, 61-80 Orc, 81-00 Bearmen.

The two seem friendly enough and stop to talk with the group. They are glad to share what information they may know about the area (exactly how much they know or how accurate the data is up to the G.M.). However, these scoundrels are

Thieves (2nd level) as well as Rangers, and will attempt to pick pockets and saddlebags for gold, booze, and other small, valuable items that they can easily conceal. They will make up a terrible story denying that anything was taken should they be caught at it. If the group seems puny, the two may try to beat them up and take what they want.

87% Suckers. A massive flock of Suckers descends from the treetops to assail the party. There are over 50 of these vile creatures, and they all want to take a piece out of the player characters. Against such an enemy, flight might be more prudent than fighting. If the party does decide to flee, they will have a heck of a chase before them, since the Suckers are quick and used to flitting through the trees. The heroes might not be so fast, and have unfamiliar territory to cover. Once they get some space between them and the Sucker flock, some other kind of defense, like a force field, wall of fire, cloud of smoke or other such measure would be a good idea. The best bet is to drive these creatures off as a group, not try to destroy each one individually. If the characters manage to outpace the Suckers for a full two melee rounds, they will have gotten away, since the Suckers can only glide for so long before they lose speed and altitude. After that, the creatures are fairly vulnerable, and have to climb up high enough to start gliding again.

88% Coyle Gang. Coyles out for human blood. They aren't bandits, but Coyles with a hate for human beings. They are young, foolish, and have more guts than brains. They will attack any group that is predominately human and/or Elven, even if in the company of (traitorous) Coyles or Wolfen. These young rebels are all first level Mercenaries or Rangers, are garbed in soft leather armor, and average about 16 Hit Points and 20 S.D.C. each. All have two attacks per melee and wield swords and maces. There are two Coyles for every one character.

89% Tuskers. Local legends from hunters and trappers insist that there are a bunch of *strange new gods* walking the earth out in the Northern Hinterlands, far to the west. One of these gods, they say, is like the God of Tuskers. He is supposedly the biggest Tusker anybody has ever seen, with strange and terrifying powers! More than that, this god considers all Tuskers in the Great Northern Wilderness to be under its protection, and whoever slays a Tusker will ultimately have to answer to their vengeful god! These thoughts are what run through the player characters' heads as they fend off an attack from a small Tusker pack; one Tusker per every two player characters. Whether or not a hateful Tusker God will visit the heroes for successfully defending themselves is something for the G.M. to decide, but at the very least, this whole experience should be enough to dissuade the heroes from taking any trophies from these creatures after the battle is done.

90% Kinnie Ger. A family of Kinnie Ger see intruders in their neck of the woods as either food or fools who should die for their intrusion. They leap out from high in the trees and try to knock the characters to the ground. Then they hunch on all fours, ready to leap, and hiss the question: "Tell us Manlings (everyone is a Manling except the Wolfen and their kin), why should we not kill you?"

The creatures toy with the player group, holding off from full attack until they have an idea of how powerful their antagonists might be. This may lead to a challenge between one of the characters and a Kinnie Ger with the feline claiming that if the player character wins, the group can pass unmolested, but if the Kinnie Ger wins, the group must give them 100 gold and go around their land, which is a 40 mile (64 km) detour.

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

The three Kinnie Ger include: The father, who has 49 Hit Points, 35 S.D.C., +4 to damage, +3 to strike, parry, and dodge, six attacks per melee. The oldest son has 31 Hit Points, 40 S.D.C., +5 to damage, +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, four attacks per melee. The youngest son has 22 Hit Points, 18 S.D.C., +2 to damage, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, three attacks per melee. All three wear no armor and use no weapons; claws or bite inflict 2D4 damage plus bonus. (See *Monsters & Animals, 2nd edition,* page 69).

91% Empty Summoner's Camp. In a pleasant little glade sits a tent, a burned-out fire, and all the possessions of a Summoner, including his books, papers and magical equipment. It looks like he just stepped out, but the place has been abandoned for at least a week or two. Nearly finished, but clearly missing some key elements, is some kind of Circle of Summoning. For those who can sense such things, it seems like it would only take 30 or 40 P.P.E. to empower the Circle, and perhaps activate it. Might the Summoner be trapped in limbo? Or is there something waiting to come through, for whom the Summoner was just the tasty appetizer?

92% Hot Springs. For at least 10 miles (16 km) in every direction the landscape is mostly rock and wasteland, inhabited mostly by weeds and mice. In the middle, however, is a green oasis, even in mid-winter, the source of a constant cloud of white steam. Fifteen pools are scattered around, each containing pools of water, some boiling hot, others simmering and warm, and a few pleasantly cool. In the middle of all this is a Wolfen long-house, big enough to house over 100 in dormitory style, as well as a cooking tent where a pair of Trolls have set up a crude restaurant. Believe it or not, one of the Trolls, *Bulfirt,* is actually a very talented cook, while his mate, *Relima,* is a passable masseuse (5 gold for a 30 minute massage, guaranteed to work out the kinks). Throughout the year, but especially in winter, this place serves as an attraction, where creatures of all kinds put aside their differences and settle into the hot springs to soak for hours on end. A troupe of 11 Snow Monkeys are the only troublemakers (basically, they think they own the place, and take whatever they want – and the Trolls seem to have some superstition that forbids harming them). The only real danger comes from the frequent earth tremors; there's a 10% chance of one happening every day.

93% Crazy Waternix. For the last few hundred yards, the party has seen large spears thrust through the trees lining the sides of the path they are walking on. Any characters with W.P. Siege Weapons could swear that these are not just spears, but they are...SHHHH-THUNK! A ballista bolt strikes one of the

characters at random! As the party takes stock of the situation, they sight a crazed Waternix manning a ballista some 300 yards/meters up the path. The Waternix is shouting something about "intruders" and "bastards," but anything beyond that is unintelligible. Clearly, this creature is off its rocker, and it intends to slay the heroes merely for getting in its way. The Waternix will be able to reload and fire the ballista once more before the characters run up to its position. After that, the creature will rely on hurling flaming flasks of oil (Molotov cocktails!) at the heroes for a melee round before running away into the woods, laughing hysterically as it goes. What the heck is going on here? Where did the ballista come from? And what has made this Waternix behave so strangely?

94% Young Deserters. 1D4+2 rogue Wolfen and 2D4 Coyles have run off in the midst of a particularly deadly battle with the Eastern Territory. Currently, they are basically bandits, but they're also scared kids, barely adults, and can't figure out a way out of their current situation (they know the punishment for desertion under fire is very harsh; possibly death, and at best ten or twenty years hard labor). Starving and lacking equipment, they will spring out of the bushes, brandishing crude clubs and spears, demanding all kinds of crazy things. Resistance will result in combat. They will fight until two or more of the Wolfen are severely wounded or killed. Afterwards they will flee for their lives. The Wolfen average 30 Hit Points, 25 S.D.C., and are all first level Mercenaries. The Coyles average 22 Hit Points, 20 S.D.C., and are all first level Thieves. **Game Master Note:** If the group is made up of mostly Wolfen allies, you can change this to represent young deserters from an Eastern Territory army.

95% Wing Tips. A dozen Wing Tips gather around the party, hovering and flitting about as if investigating each individual character. The playful creatures will offer telepathic comments such as "pretty armor" or "how strong you seem!" or "is that a real magic staff?" Things like that. At first, the creatures might seem like a harmless little diversion, but as hours drag on and the Wing Tips' incessant commentary continues, the player characters will be driven half mad by all of the attention. Unless the Wing Tips can be driven away somehow, the heroes will be at -3 to strike, parry and dodge, and will perform all skills at -10% because of the constant distraction. The trick is, how to drive off the inherently good and cheerful Wing Tips? Severe action like violence is not warranted because the Wing Tips are not doing anything wrong. And, even if the heroes come right out and tell the Wing Tips to go away because they are annoying and in the way, the Wing Tips will just not get it. Any such command bounces off them like arrows off steel. As far as they are concerned, the heroes are the most interesting folk they have ever met and they intend to stick by them through thick and thin, forever and ever. Have fun.

96% Slavers. Slave merchants hunting for slaves to sell back in the "civilized" parts of the Wolfen Empire. They are an ugly and unlikeable band of lowlifes who have already caught themselves quite a haul. Their prisoners include a half dozen Orcs, six Goblins, a Danzi (or Gnome) and three humans (two of which are women). The slavers are not going to bother a group of adventurers, although they may inquire whether any of them are slaves for sale.

Our heroes' predicament will be that all the slaves plead for help and freedom. Good characters will be in a quandary. The slavers claim that everything is legal (not true, but there are Wolfen Tribal leaders willing to look the other way), and it is obvious that these slime are capturing people along the border. No amount of talk or threats will convince them to release their catch. To purchase everybody is costly, 2000 gold for each Goblin, 4000 gold for each Orc, 10,000 gold for each human and 20,000 for the Danzi (or Gnome). Furthermore, the slavers are just the type to come back afterwards and recapture everybody. A fight is the only way to set these people free.

The opposition includes: Three Ogres whose average Hit Points and S.D.C. are each 30, +5 to damage, +3 to parry and dodge, each is a third or fourth level Mercenary, wears double chain mail (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 55) and is armed with a huge sword (3D6 damage) and battle axe (3D6 damage). Four muscular Orcs whose average Hit Points are 20 and S.D.C. 25, +3 to damage, +2 to parry and dodge, each is a third level Mercenary, wears studded leather (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38), and is armed with a mace (2D4 damage), short sword (1D6+1) and small shield.

A Wolfen is the second in command. He is a thin, black and brown haired, third level *Mind Mage*, wearing lightweight splint armor (A.R. 16, S.D.C. 82), and is armed with a pair of silver daggers (1D6 damage) and a falchion short sword (2D8, giant-size). Notable psionic powers include: Detect Psionics (6), Healing Touch (6), Induce Sleep (4), Suppress Fear (8), Death Trance (1), Float (8), Impervious to Cold and Fire and Toxin, Levitation, Mind Block 4), Empathy (4), Meditation, Object Read (6), Sixth Sense (2), Sense Magic (3), See Aura (6), Bio-Manipulation (10), Bio-Regeneration (20), Catatonic Strike

(40), Empathic Transmission (6), Invisible Haze (30), Mind Bolt (varies), Pyrokinesis and Hydrokinesis (varies). Has 124 I.S.P.

A massive wall of muscle is the *Troll leader*, a brute named *Kreet*. He is garbed in weightless splint armor and wears a pair of magical Gryphon claws. A giant-sized bull whip (2D6 damage) hangs from a belt on his left hip and a giant Goupillon flail (4D6 damage) hangs on his right. Kreet is clever, mean and tricky. Although a fierce fighter, he knows when to retreat and will never personally fight to the death. He will not forget nor forgive those who defeat him. I.Q. 14, P.S. 25, P.P. 17, Spd 5; bonuses: +10 to damage, +1 to strike, parry, and dodge. Fourth level Soldier with five attacks per melee.

97% Troglodyte Landslide. Landslide! The hillside above the characters' position has given way, and the characters must flee the area at once or be covered by several feet of tumbling earth. By the time the dust settles (literally!), a huge cavern will be exposed to the surface. Inside are a large war party of a dozen Troglodytes, armed and armored for war! Perhaps this was no landslide, but the Trogs' way of opening a channel to the surface. But what's with the armament? Aren't Troglodytes supposed to be peaceful folk? Certainly not *these* Troglodytes, and they all fall upon the player characters with murderous intent.

The Trogs are all 3rd level Mercenaries, and they fight without quarter, all the while shouting curses about the "wrath of the downtrodden," and "paying back for the crimes against us," and so on. If the player characters are overwhelmed and surrender, the Trogs might spare them (01-50%) and take them prisoner instead. They will bring them back to their cavern, where the heroes see a vast network of tunnels and hollowed out chambers beneath the earth. Phosphorescent fungus lines the walls, providing ample light to see by. The Trog war party came from a small (by Trog standards) underground community called *Blengard*, which they note is merely the staging point for what will be a huge coordinated assault upon the surface world by the Troglodyte people. This is all very strange and mysterious and it goes against all conventional wisdom as to what the Troglodytes are supposed to be like. Should the characters break free before their entry to Blengard, they might be able to make it back to the surface, where they can decide what to do next – put this behind them, go back into the cave and explore, try to warn the world, try to learn more about these militant Trogs, etc. If the heroes are brought to Blengard, they are sold off as slaves and mistreated cruelly until they die or can escape.

98% Hermit. Human hermit, an old fellow who will protest any interruptions of his solitary life. He has no valuables other than food. Of course, he knows the surrounding 30 mile (48 km) area like the back of his hand and may be convinced to describe what lays ahead and perhaps even draw a map. Kindness and an offer of spices, tobacco, candy, or alcohol will help loosen his tongue. **G.M. Note:** At your discretion, the hermit may be protected by neighboring Faerie Folk, Wing Tips, or Drakin. Also, you may change the hermit's race to any of those common to the region.

99% Tower of the Alchemist. The party finds a magnificent stone tower standing amid a copse of gigantic trees. The tower is covered with moss and vines, and blends into the background very well. The structure is sound, however, and it just begs the heroes to come inside and have a look around. What a place it is! The tower seems to have been the isolated workshop of an alchemist more than a century before. Most of the jars holding reagents are gone, and the place in general is in a state of disarray, but if the characters look around long enough, they will find several trunks filled with ancient alchemical texts detailing the manufacture of various magic items, spell research, and other such arcane knowledge. Now, if only the heroes don't trip off the three Demon Stones also hidden about the place . . .

100%: Battle Royal! Well, it had to happen sooner or later, and it appears to be happening right now. A humongous battle (war?) has broken out between the Eastern Territory and the Wolfen Empire, with thousands of troops on both sides, as well as magical forces unleashed. The first clue might be a trampled battlefield, filled with the dead and dying of both sides, while distant explosions and the screams of summoned demons send a chill down anyone's back. It won't be long before armed forces start charging, cutting down anyone or anything in their path (typically 2D6x50 in each unit, armed and armored to the teeth), not to mention the dangers unleashed by military Wizards, Mind Mages, Summoners and Diabolists. Oh yeah, and Battle-Trained Warlocks releasing massive Elemental Forces. The choices for the player characters are pretty clear; either join up (with one side or the other) quick, or just run like the devil.

101%: Bonus! For the last few weeks, news has circulated throughout the outlying territories that there is a large band of Coyle marauders burning and looting everything in sight. Moreover, these raiders must be unusually skilled or large in number, because the local Magistrates have sent out three platoons of Imperial Legionnaires to deal with the situation, and none have returned! It is as if the forest just swallowed them up. A travel advisory has been posted for all adventurers as to the situation, and a reward of 100,000 gold for the guilty parties has also been made public, too. This has sent a wave of bounty hunters into the wilderness, looking to score the paycheck of a lifetime. The player characters are not part of this bunch, having other, more pressing matters to attend to. However, their travels will bring them directly through the area known to be the "hunting grounds" of this mysterious Coyle horde.

Three days into their journey, the player characters come across the site of a massacre! Ten bounty hunters all lay dead, their bodies stripped bare, and their flesh consumed already by scavengers. A few birds still pick over the remains, but that is it. As the heroes investigate further, a flurry of arrows comes out of the brush, landing at their feet, along nearby trees, etc. This is a warning volley, fired by a quartet of Elven archers who come out of hiding to address the player characters. "This is not your land, strangers," the Elves say. "Seek you the bounty placed by the Wolfen Empire?" If the characters say "yes," then they will soon face a terrible scene of carnage, to be described in just a moment. If they say "no," then the Elves will wave them on, telling them to keep walking and to not return to this location for at least three days, or they shall meet a death most hideous. The Elves refuse to answer any more questions, but if the heroes look back over their shoulders as they leave, they'll see at least a dozen HUGE Wolfen come out of the forest and assemble before the Elves, who treat them like trained attack animals! The Wolfen seem like primitive, feral versions of their current selves, and they all bear on their backs large numbers branded directly into their skin.

As the Elves and their strange Wolfen disappear from sight, one is reminded of the rumors and conspiracy theory that the Wolfen themselves were created by the Elves as a kind of weapon to be used in the Elf-Dwarf War, but they could not be finished in time. There has always been talk from certain Elves who believe this theory of going back to the "site of the creation" to retrieve the "templates" and "prototypes" of their work, but none ever really do. It is more like a ghost story of sorts Elves like to talk about. Could it be that these strange Elven archers have actually done what most others only fantasize about? Those Wolfen they command certainly seem like a "rough draft" of the Wolfen of today. The question is, what do these Elves intend to do with their strange wards and feral Wolfen? How many have they created? Or could they be something else? After all, nobody really believes Elves created the Wolfen. The big questions are, (1) will the player characters aid or oppose them? And (2) what might all of this mean to the Wolfen Empire itself, which would dearly love to get their claws on these strange Wolfen individuals and their Elven masters to ask some questions of their own? (3) Why do the Elves use their Wolfen to attack other Imperial settlements? Do the Elves have a grudge against the Empire? Or are they merely putting their "savage warriors" through open-clawed field tests of their abilities, sacrificing innocent lives to the cause? These and any other details that spring to mind involving this are left for you, the Game Master, to decide.

Adventures

Flight from the West

By Erick Wujcik

Note: Not an easy scenario, nor is it suitable for beginners. It works best if the player characters are at least sympathetic to the Wolfen Empire (ideally, at least one PC is a Wolfen). Not recommended for groups who are allied with the Eastern Territory. No minimum group size or power level.

Setup & Background: The encounter should start somewhere along the southern border of the Great Northern Wilderness, ideally in the so-called *Disputed Lands*. When the player characters meet the Slave Wolfen it will be nearly a year after the slaves fled from the Western Empire. Exhausted and desperate, they need help in finding their way to safety (basically, any Wolfen Empire outpost or settlement), as well as in defending themselves from their demonic pursuers.

Introductions & Encounters: The Wolfen Slaves

Those who are skilled woodsmen or trackers among the players' group start to notice signs of Wolfen in the area. A few minutes investigating reveals the following:

Based on the tracks, a batch of Wolfen came through here about fifteen minutes ago. However, they aren't skilled in the ways of the forest, since they have done a very poor job of covering their tracks, and at least one of them tripped over a log and fell down.

Any skilled hunter or Ranger will be able to catch up with the strange Wolfen within a half hour, and it wouldn't take much to sneak up on them. Here's what an observer would see:

You see a group of Wolfen, but they are the strangest Wolfen you have ever seen. They are dressed like refugees, wearing bits and pieces of clothing, leather and fur, all tattered and showing signs of wear. No two weapons, nor any two pieces of armor, are alike, as if the whole group had been outfitted from some junk sale.

Most odd are the Wolfen themselves. One has fur of orange and black stripes, two are white but covered in black spots, and another one, a real runt, has the shortest tail, ears and snout you've ever seen on a Wolfen. The rest have a more normal shape, but their fur is entirely black with mottled patches of white.

It's up to the player characters as to what happens next. The Wolfen will be delighted at the appearance of any Wolfen, Coyle or Kankoran, but will be suspicious and cautions around others. They treat humans with fear and dread. Still, it's pretty easy to start a conversation. Here's what the players will notice:

They look so wary, so fearful . . . Until just now, you never realized how proud all other Wolfen appear. It's as if these Wolfen didn't know how to stand upright, or how to look a human in the eye.

Game Master Background

What happens next is an opportunity for some conversational role-playing, so the player characters can find out about the Wolfen Slaves' rebellion against their masters in the West and the long trip across the lands of the Palladium World, all the way from the southern part of the Western Empire to the Great Northern Wilderness.

While language can be a problem, each of the escaped slaves speaks Human: Western Empire, Wolfen, and at least some Elven. Wolfen number *SixThree* speaks a wide range of languages, and will translate for the others, if need be. They have all kinds of horror stories about captivity and brutality as slaves in the Empire of Sin, and can talk about it and their travels thus far, for hours and hours.

What happens next is up to the players and the Game Master. Each of the Slave Wolfen has some interesting things to say (see the character descriptions that follow), but will also have a lot of questions, especially about the "Free Wolfen."

It is possible for hours, or even days, to pass in the campaign. Eventually, however, someone among the player characters should figure out that they are being followed and that something arcane and demonic is on the trail of the escaped Wolfen.

A Little Hide and Seek

The Couril demons chasing the Slave Wolfen have been taking their time about it. They've been enjoying the sights and

sounds of the Great Northern Wilderness. However, once the Slave Wolfen find some reasonable protectors (in other words, hook up with the player characters), the vile little demons go back to their hunting.

How they might be detected depends on the player group, but the Couril are rather powerful demons, and they can be detected in many different ways. **Note:** While it says 'little black faeries' in the descriptions below, the Game Master can substitute "The Couril" if the players manage to identify the demons beforehand. To the Slave Wolfen, they seem like wicked Faeries. Remember, the slaves have led very sheltered lives and know little about the world at large.

Eventually, when the Couril are attacked, or when it is obvious that they have been discovered, the demons move in close to the group and show themselves. Then they'll do the following:

The little "black faeries" move apart from each other, gesture in a magical way, and with a "pop," a figure appears between them.

"He is a human, short and skinny, but clearly human, and dressed in foppish silks of orange and black.

"'You see, Master," says one of the Couril. "We have found her, we have found your slave."

"'You morons! I told you to bring her to me when you found her! Not bring me to her! Send me back!"

"Master? Send you back where?"

While this little comedy is going on (Game Masters should feel free to ham up the stupidity of feigned stupidity on the part of the Couril, as well as the idiocy of Tolan), the slaves recognize this man:

"ThreeFive, the female gladiator Wolfen with the tiger stripes, points at the skinny guy and says, "I know him. He is Senator Tolan il'Vaas, he who owned the arena where I was a slave! He always said that he would hunt down any who escaped!"

If the players ever attempt conversation with Senator Tolan, all they get are demands that ThreeFive be killed at once while the Wolfen look to our heroes for guidance and protection. This can go on for a while . . .

Demonic Pursuit

When the player characters do not strike the Wolfen dead or show the Western Senator the proper respect for a man of his station, he begins yelling at the Couril.

"Kill them! Kill them all!"

"But, Master? Don't you want us to protect you?"

"What?"

"If we engage these adventurers or chase off to kill the flee slaves, Master, surely they will try to kill you."

"Alright . . . I'll summon something else to kill them! Ghathanak! Baal-Rog! Come forth and kill my enemies!"

Senator Tolan will try summoning Baal-Rogs, Succubus, Demon Locusts, more of the Couril, and a Banshee. However, the only thing that works is summoning Ghouls:

"What's happening? Why isn't this working? Ghouls! Ghouls come forth and slay my enemies!"

Game Masters, read the following:

Suddenly four Ghouls appear around the silk adorned Senator! Like lean, ugly corpses, they look around stupidly, and then turn away from the skinny guy (Senator) and toward the rest of the group. What are you doing?

This should be the *meat* of the combat in the scenario. Every melee round Senator Tolan can summon another 1D6 Ghouls unless he can be silenced or distracted. However, the Couril are absolutely intent on protecting Tolan from any harm, physical or magical, so they stay at his side to thwart any attacks leveled at their master. The Ghouls fight to the death and more and more should be sent against the player characters. **Note:** If the group is particularly tough or high level, a successful summoning of a Baal-Rog or Succubus can also occur, but just one.

Game Master Note: Unknown to anybody, Mormo, Lord of the Ghouls, is watching. He's planning on taking over Senator Tolan's body, and he doesn't want it seriously damaged. If necessary, he'll take deific measures to make sure of it.

End Game: The Summoning of Mormo, Lord of the Ghouls

Sooner or later, Tolan is going to get tired of just summoning Ghouls. Either that, or it'll occur to him that the Couril can't protect him from the player characters forever. After failing at a few other summonings, he finally resorts to summoning the big cheese, Mormo himself. Read the following:

The skinny guy in the Western Empire silks grabs hold of his amulet one more time. Looking like a guy who's about to play the winning hand in a poker game, he says, loudly, "Mormo, Lord of the Ghouls, God of Hades, since your servants have failed me, I summon you in person, to destroy my enemies!"

Everything gets very, very quiet. All the Ghouls and the Couril freeze, waiting for something to happen, not even resisting attacks. G.M.s, read:

"The sky suddenly darkens to a sickly dark green, and you (the player characters) suddenly choke on the smell of corpses, thousands and thousands of rotting corpses. There is a sickening shudder, and suddenly a black stone platform appears, with steps leading up to a black marble throne. Even before you look at who sits there, even before you see the thousands upon thousands of Ghouls and Nasu, even before you realize that there are blue-eyed black ravens looking down at you, you know you are in the presence of a god, a god of demons. Do you even dare to look at who sits in this throne?"

Yep, this is the real guy. Not a manifestation, but the actual Demon God from Hades. Depending on how the adventure goes, he will be summoned, in person, in all his might and fury. Of course, what the player characters don't know is that Mormo has *not* appeared to fight them.

Nope, Mormo is actually *grateful* to the player characters. By giving Senator Tolan enough trouble, Tolan has finally spent his wad, and expended all the demon summoning that he was allowed.

"Kill them," shrieks Senator Tolan, *"Mormo, I command you to kill them all! Horribly!"*

"Ah," says the God Demon, softly interrupting, *"I'm not here to kill anyone. Nor am I yours to command, human. I am here to collect on what you have bargained. I am here to collect your soul, Tolan il'Vaas."*

"Me? But . . . but . . . I have one hundred years. You promised me one hundred years of power absolute!"

"No, I promised you all that you required, all the demons that you would need, to achieve one hundred years of such power. You have used all the demon summoning that I have promised. Rather stupidly, I might say. Now it's time to . . ."

"Wait. No . . . I . . ."

"'Your soul is mine, Tolan . . ."

And with that, Tolan vanishes screaming, as does Mormo, the great black marble platform, all the Ghouls and Nasu, as well as the green darkness and the stench. In a moment, all that remains is a single black raven, its blue eyes looking at the group with lively curiosity."

Note that any demonic possession will also be gone, leaving those who were inhabited shaken, but free. The raven takes another look at the player group, seems to smile, and addresses them as follows:

"Well done, mortals, very well done! You have earned the gratitude of Mormo, Lord of the Ghouls. He would reward you. If there is anything you desire, you have but to ask."

As far as Mormo *rewarding* the characters? Well, Mormo does feel a touch of gratitude. Wise characters will leave it at that, telling Kalito the Raven that Mormo's gratitude is reward enough. Asking Kalito, and therefore, Mormo, for *anything*, is bound to lead to big trouble, but could be the seeds for another adventure altogether.

NPC Quick Stats

The Slave Wolfen Characters:

OneNine – SevenThreeFiveFive

"I do not know when it was, but it was before my Great-Grandfather's Great-Grandmother's time, when my people – my breed – were brought across the Crimson Sea, to the South Shore of the Western Empire.

"Since that time we have been bred, like dogs, or like cattle. ThreeFive, over there, see her stripes? She was bred for the Arena, and they said the stripes were a sign of tiger blood. Since my spots were so clear, it was thought I was a perfect house-slave, and I was given five wives, and told that I would be rewarded for each spotted child I produced. What they did not

tell me, but which I knew full well, was that any babe of mine born without spots would be taken from its mother, to be sold, or if the price was too low, to be given up as sacrifice to one of their stinking gods."

Former spotted house slave and natural leader of the slaves, OneNine is intelligent and resourceful. Once he gets to the Wolfen Empire he will quickly adapt, and will be grateful for the opportunity to learn all about Wolfen writing as well as the Constitution.

Equivalent to a basic Scholar or Vagabond O.C.C.
Alignment: Scrupulous. **Hit Points:** 29. **S.D.C.:** 44. **P.P.E.:** 18.
Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.E. 19, M.A. 21, P.S. 24, P.P. 20, P.E. 23, P.B. 17, Spd. 18
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Bonuses: +1 on initiative; +3 to strike, parry and dodge, +6 to damage, and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact; +2 to save vs poison, +5 to save vs psionics, +3 to save vs magic.
Skills of Note: Language: Human Western 98%, Literacy 86%, Cooking (a fine chef!) 98%, Sew (basic) 65%, Sing 80%, Imitate Voices & Impersonation 56%, and Pick Locks 60%.

ThreeFive – FiveSixEightSeven

"The uprising? They did not suspect. They believed that they had bred resistance out of us, that we were as loyal as their dogs. When we escaped, when we slaughtered our Masters, when we even slaughtered their dogs. We had to flee south, to the Jungles of Yin-Sloth, and then through the Baalgor Wastelands, and through The Old Kingdom, all the while burying our dead along the way. We are what's left of 300. Most difficult has been the territories to the south of here, where it seems Wolfen are hunted and killed everywhere. It was a lean land for us, but we have heard enough to give us heart. All this time we have had faith in the legends of our ancestors that say somewhere in the North, somewhere to the East, there is a land of free Wolfen. Tell us, is it true? Are there free Wolfen? Can we finally live free?"

This tiger-striped Wolfen female was trained for the Arena her whole life, and in close combat she is a deadly killing machine, but also well trained in "theatrical" gladiator combat that looks good, but inflicts basic damage so that the fight may last a long while. Surprisingly, she is also calm, patient, quiet and friendly.

Sixth Level Gladiator O.C.C.
Alignment: Unprincipled. **Hit Points:** 37. **S.D.C.:** 51. **P.P.E.:** 10.
Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 11, M.A. 17, P.S. 28, P.P. 22, P.E. 19, P.B. 18, Spd. 19
Attacks Per Melee: Six.
Combat Bonuses: +3 on initiative; +6 to strike, parry or dodge, +11 to damage, +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact; +4 on Snap Kick, Roundhouse Kick, Axe Kick, Backward Sweep or Tripping/Leg Hook. ***Gladiator Special Bonuses:*** +10 to Pull Punch; +5 to Draw Blood (does only one Hit Point of damage, but inflicts a dramatic looking cut on the opponent). Behead Opponent on an unmodified roll of 15 or better. It is a flashy combat move that takes all six of ThreeFive's attacks per melee, focusing on chopping off the head of an opponent, using either Sword or Battle Axe; she cannot parry, and is -3 to dodge during the entire melee round of the beheading.
Other Bonuses: +2 to save vs poison, +1 to save vs psionics, and +1 to save vs magic.
Skills of Note: Language: Human Western 98%, Field Armorer 65%, Recognize Weapon Quality 65%, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Chain, W.P. Net, W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Battle Axe, W.P. Spear, W.P. Staff; W.P. Sword and W.P. Whip.

SevenEight – OneThreeThreeOne

"Why do I look like this? I have no idea. All those on the great farm where I was born have stubby tails, short snouts and curly fur. The ears, however. . . I remember well when I was three, and I was taken to have my ears shortened. I risked capture and death, after we revolted, to go back and find the human who cut my ears. Would you like to see his ears? I have them here, on a string around my neck."

SevenEight has been a field slave all his life, so he knows about farming and little else. Hundreds of years before, the masters of his people somehow molded their Wolfen into a snub-snouted, short-tailed breed, that now breeds true.

Fifth Level Vagabond Farmer O.C.C.
Alignment: Anarchist. **Hit Points:** 32. **S.D.C.:** 48. **P.P.E.:** 22.
Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.E. 19, M.A. 21, P.S. 24, P.P. 20, P.E. 23, P.B. 17, Spd. 17
Attacks Per Melee: Three.
Bonuses: +1 on initiative; +3 to strike, parry or dodge, +6 to damage, and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact; +2 to save vs poison, +5 to save vs psionics, +3 to save vs magic.
Skills of Note: Language: Human Western 98%, Literacy 86%, Cooking (a fine chef) 78%, Sew (basic) 55%, Sing 80%, Imitate Voices & Impersonation 56%, and Pick Locks 60%.

SixThree – EightEightNineOne

"Why am I blind? Would you have the whole story?"

"When I was young, just barely four years, I was given away as a present. I thought it a kindness, since my new master was an old, old human, feeble and stricken with some wasting sickness. Jalley, the old man, mainly wanted me to fetch his books, or his pens and his papers. At first he just asked for the books by their size, or shape, or color, but then he noticed that I could be taught the letters that were printed on the books.

"This interested him, and over the next ten years he taught me all about reading and writing, and allowed me to read whatever I found amid his hundreds of books. I learned well, he said, so that by the time he died I had learned all that he had to teach, and so I could act as his personal scribe.

"When he died, I did as I had been told. I ran to the Prefect of the town, and then to the Great House of Jalley's daughter, telling them of the news. As his only servant, I was allowed to attend his funeral, and then I prepared his house, as he had instructed, laying out his will and other final papers.

"Then there was the reading of Jalley's will. All was as it should have been. Until the very end. Then, when the paper spoke of the granting of my freedom, of the small house and books and money that were to be mine, the Prefect stopped, and asked the daughter if I were to be kept or sold.

"'Wait,' I called out, 'you have stopped reading, but there is more, there is more in the will.'"

"'How do you know,' they asked. 'How could you ever know what is written?' So, when they held the paper to my face, I read it to them, perfectly, in the Elven tongue.

"'You see," I told them, 'this paper says that I am free, and that Jalley left me these books and this house, and a hundred gold as well.'

"What I said stopped their shouts and laughter. I, foolish, thought that I had won, that freedom, and the little house, and the books, would be mine. Foolish, because I had really only known Jalley, a fair human, and not typical of his kind. Besides, human slaves were often set free upon a Master's death, so why not me?

"There was to be no freedom for me, nor any reading either. Soldiers came and bound me. Then I was blinded, and then I was sold. My new owners sent me to the mines, where my lack of sight was thought a good thing.

"Still, the taking of my eyes could not take what was in my mind, could not take away what I had read in all the years before my blinding. In the mines I taught others, secretly. I taught them what I knew from books, of numbers, and of Elven, and even, scratching letters into wood or soft stone, I taught them how to read.

"I do not know why the gods have let me survive, while so many others died. I only know that I will never be a slave again."

A brilliant student, if his eyesight were returned, SixThree would be a great asset to the Wolfen Empire. Even blind he is an inspiring leader and a great teacher, who is also humble and good of heart. Rather than hate humans, he hates the system where humans could grow up with ignorance and racism.

Ninth Level Scholar O.C.C.
Alignment: Scrupulous. **H.P.:** 28. **S.D.C.:** 30. **P.P.E.:** 19.
Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 17, M.A. 14, P.S. 26, P.P. 14, P.E. 21, P.B. 12, Spd. 14.
Attacks Per Melee: 2; **Bonuses/Liabilities:** -3 on initiative; -2 to strike; -5 to parry; -4 to dodge, +9 to damage, and +4 to roll with punch, fall or impact; +3 to save vs poison, +3 to save vs psionics, and +3 to save vs magic
Skills of Note: Language: Human Western 99%, Language: Elven 95%, Language: Human Southern 85%, Literacy (Western and Elven) 98%, Writing 75%, Holistic Medicine 75%/65%, Mathematics: Basic 98%, Lore: Magic 80%, Lore: Western Empire History 90%, Lore: Antiquarian Books of the Western Empire 92% and Basic Math 90%.
Blindness Note: SixThree's blindness can *not* be cured by most healing spells (not even the magical spell, Restoration). However, a Priest could restore his sight with a Miraculous Healing, or with some other Deific Miracle. Giving sight to SixThree will be viewed with gratitude by all the former slaves.

Four Mining Slaves

EightOne, TwoFive, SevenSeven and ThreeNine

All mining slaves were taught the Elven language, as well as primitive reading and writing, while down in the mines with SixThree. All are totally loyal to the blind old Wolfen, and would give their lives to keep him safe or to restore his vision. All have roughly the same skills and attributes.

Third Level Vagabond Laborers/Miners O.C.C.
Hit Points: 3D6+15. **S.D.C.:** 2D6+40. **P.P.E.:** 3D6.
Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+8, M.A. 2D6+10, M.E. 1D6+12, P.S. 2D6+16, P.P. 1D6+10, P.E. 1D6+20, P.B. 1D6+8, Spd. 2D6+10
Attacks Per Melee: Three.
Bonuses: +2 to strike or parry, +8 to damage, and +4 to save vs poison.
Skills of Note: Languages: Elven & Human Western 98%; Literacy (Western) 50%, General Repair/Maintenance 50%, Masonry 50%, Rope Works 50%, Carpentry 35%, W.P. Blunt and Pick-Axe.

The Enemy, Monsters & One Demon God

Sisserros & Hassass of The Couril

Black skinned & black winged, these 6th level faerie-like demons have been summoned from Hades by Senator Tolan, and have the capacity to track the Tolan's Slave (ThreeFive) effortlessly and flawlessly due to some enchantment by Mormo. They have been given very specific instructions from Mormo, to summon Tolan, and to keep him safe from physical harm, but not to attack anyone else.

Attributes: I.Q. 13 & 10, M.E. 15 & 13, M.A. 9 & 8, P.S. 14 &11, P.P. 17 & 15, P.E. 15 & 10, P.B. 8 & 11, Spd. 3 & 5 running or 62 (both) in flight.
Alignment: Diabolic Evil (both).
Natural A.R.: 6.
Hit Points: 29 & 21. **S.D.C.:** 24 & 28.
Horror Factor: 8
Natural Abilities: Hawk-like vision, good hearing, dimensional teleport, know all languages and bio-regenerate 1D6 points of damage (Hit Points or S.D.C.) every melee round.
Magic Spells: Cloud of Slumber, Blinding Flash, Fleet Feet, Speed of the Snail, Chameleon, Ventriloquism and The Song of the Couril (see *Palladium FRPG®, 2nd Edition,* page 317).
Psionics: None.
Attacks per Melee: Four hand to hand or two using magic.
Damage: Claws/punch that do 1D6 S.D.C., power punch 1D4 (counts as two attacks), kick 3D6 S.D.C., bite 1D6+2 S.D.C.
Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +2 to roll with impact, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, and +2 on all saving throws.

Typical Summoned Ghoul

Let's just say that these aren't the best Ghouls that Mormo has to offer. They're definitely second rate, weak and rather stupid. Of course, being supernatural creatures, fighting them is no walk in the park, but it should be possible for the player characters to keep twenty or more of them at bay.

Typical Attributes (all): I.Q. 3, M.E. 4, M.A. 6, P.S. 14, P.P. 11, P.E. 10, P.B. 2, Spd. 7 running or 10 digging.
Alignment: Miscreant Evil.

Natural A.R.: 12
Hit Points: 22, **S.D.C.:** 16.
Horror Factor: 8
Natural Abilities: Ghouls look like rotting corpses themselves. Aside from walking or digging, they feed on the dead, and attack the living only when commanded by a superior demon or Demon Lord, or designated master (like Tolan). Also, Nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m), see the invisible, dig underground, fire and cold resistant, dimensional teleport 21%, bio-regeneration of 1D6 points per melee round.
Psionics: None.
Attacks per Melee: Three.
Bonuses: +1 to strike and parry, +2 to dodge, +8 to save vs Horror Factor, and +1 on all saving throws.
Damage: 1D4 from a bite, 1D6 from a full strength punch, 2D6 with a power punch (but counts as two attacks) and 2D4 from a kick attack, or by weapon – half have large swords that do 3D6 damage, the rest fight tooth and claw.

Senator Tolan il'Vaas

Senator Tolan was ThreeFive's owner and, like a spoiled child, Tolan is no longer interested in ThreeFive's return, only in inflicting upon her a horrible death, as punishment for her "betrayal" (i.e. running away).

At 23 years of age, Tolan is one of the youngest Senators in Western Imperial history. Sadly, for the Western Empire, his ascension to such an exalted position has nothing to do with Tolan's talent or skill. He rose to power over the corpses of his relatives, a pathway made all too smooth by offering his soul to Mormo, Lord of the Ghouls (see *Dragons & Gods*). Here's the critical clause from the "contract" that Mormo cut with Tolan:

"...and Tolan il'Vaas will be empowered to call upon the sub-demons, lesser demons and greater demons of Mormo, and even upon the mighty Mormo himself, for as much as is required for Tolan il'Vaas to achieve and retain power absolute for the length of his entire natural life (his natural life to be no less than 100 years) . . ."

Pretty good deal, huh? That part about the "100 years" was added by Tolan, who wanted to make sure he wouldn't be cheated. Sadly for Tolan, he neglected to ask about the "as much as is required" part of the deal. You see, Mormo figured out *exactly* how much help, and how many demons, Tolan would need for his full 100 years of *power absolute*. It has only been three years, and Senator Tolan has stupidly called on Mormo and Mormo's demons for all kinds of stupid reasons (like chasing after his missing Wolfen slave, not to mention showing off for his rich Western Empire pals). Mormo is getting quite tired of being at the little twit's beck and call, and is very much looking forward to when he may be permitted to seize the mortgaged soul and use Tolan's hollow body as a puppet.

Race: Human, third level Noble.
Alignment: Diabolic.
Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 17, M.A. 7, P.S. 7, P.P. 11, P.E. 6, P.B. 18, Spd. 12
Hit Points: 21. **S.D.C.:** 10.
Height: Four feet, ten inches (1.46 m). **Weight:** 88 lbs (39.6 kg).
Age: 23. **P.P.E.:** 11
Experience Level & Skills of Note: Barely any. Too lazy to have learned much of anything other than basic Math, Literacy in Western Human, Language: Western Human and Elven, Dance and a number of other basic skills required for court and politics. Tolan is a lazy, foppish loser who has used murder, trickery and wealth to achieve his goals.
Combat Training & Bonuses: None.
Attacks Per Melee: Two.
Artifacts: Only the amulet given him by Mormo to call upon his demon servants, and it is now used up and worthless as a magic item (but worth 10,000 gold as jewelry). Also has 500 gold in Western coins.

Mormo, Lord of the Ghouls

Hopefully the player characters won't be stupid enough to attack Mormo, or even try to start a conversation. However, just in case, here are his vital statistics.

Alignment: Diabolic (evil is putting it mildly).
Size: 6 feet (1.8 m) tall.
Description: A large fat man with pointed canine teeth. He appears wearing layer upon layer of gray and red silk, with a dramatic black cape over one shoulder. Eight of his fingers are adorned with massive jeweled rings, and there is a huge brooch, consisting of dozens of diamonds and rubies, over his heart. (**Note:** All these pieces belonged to Tolan's victims, those he killed on the way to becoming a Senator.)
Attributes: I.Q. 21, M.E. 20, M.A. 23, P.S. 28, P.P. 21, P.E. 24, P.B. 6, Spd. 22 (15 mph/24 km).
Attribute Notes: Incredibly agile and skillful with weapons and thrown objects, Mormo's huge bulk belies his ability to move quickly and with deadly accuracy in combat.
Natural A.R.: 9
Hit Points: 4,000, **S.D.C.:** 3,000 (bio-regenerates 1D6x10 points per melee round).
P.P.E.: 900
Horror Factor: 9
Skills of Note: Juggling, Knife-Throwing (W.P. Dagger), Paired Weapons, Targeting and all Rogue/Thief skills, all at 92%. And all Math skills at 98%.
Experience Levels: 15th level Juggler and Knife Thrower, as well as 8th level Wizard.
Deific/Demonic Powers: Mormo has the full range of power over his followers, and can perform all Prototypical Deific Powers at double the standard cost.
Magic Knowledge: All Wizard spells levels 1-4 plus X-Ray Vision, Animate Object, Fly as the Eagle, Tongues, and Mystic Portal.
Attacks Per Melee Round: Eleven physical.
Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses): +6 on initiative, +6 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +5 to pull punch, with a critical strike on any natural roll of thirteen or better. Does triple damage from behind, is impervious to Horror Factor, and is and 89% to charm or impress.
Favorite Weapons: A large "toothy" dagger, that is +4 to strike, that returns after being thrown, and which does 2D6+10 to mortals, 3D6+20 to supernatural beings, and 4D6+40 to gods and Demon/Deevil Lords.
Armor: None.

Vulnerabilities: Besides greed and pettiness, cold-based attacks/magic, holy weapons and rune weapons all do double damage.

Kalito, Raven of Mormo

A supernatural creature, with the exact appearance of an ordinary raven, except for the bright blue eyes and obvious intelligence. Kalito is just one pair of Mormo's "eyes," and Mormo can always see what Kalito sees and hears. This particular raven is very quick-witted, can speak all languages, and is very curious about the player characters.

Alignment: Aberrant. **Hit Points:** 17. **S.D.C.:** 19. **P.P.E.:** 20.
Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 19, M.A. 13, P.S. 8, P.P. 22, P.E. 18, P.B. 10, Spd. 19 (46 in flight).
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Damage: 1D4 from a bite or peck attack or 2D4 from claw attack.
Bonuses: +4 on initiative, +2 to strike (dropping things from above or claw strike), +11 to dodge (while flying), +4 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, impervious to poison, +7 to save vs psionics, +5 to save vs magic, regenerates 1D6 points (H.P. or S.D.C.) per melee round.
Skills of Note: Language: Human Western 98%, all other languages 87%, Imitate Voice 87%, Basic Math 87%, Navigation 87%, Land Navigation 92% and Prowl 50%.

Slave Wolfen of the Western Empire

Okay, here's a little quiz. Which of the following places of the Palladium World is home to the largest number of Wolfen? Is it A) The Great Northern Wilderness, B) The Baalgor Wastelands, C) The Western Empire, or D) The Old Kingdom?

If you picked A) The Great Northern Wilderness, well, you're right, but there are nearly half as many Wolfen in C) The Western Empire. Not wild Wolfen, nor free Wolfen, but a vast number of Wolfen *slaves*.

For over two thousand years, Wolfen have been used as fodder for the Western Gladiatorial Arenas, however, the vast majority of Wolfen slaves are field workers and laborers. Tough, strong and intelligent, Wolfen form a huge chunk of the workforce on the farms owned by the Empire's powerful nobles. Often numbed and drugged (the most common narcotic used on the Wolfen is *Mirfin*, a drug that dulls the mind, but not the body).

Of course, Wolfen aren't the only slaves in the Western Empire. There are plenty of humans, as well as Goblins, Orcs and lots of other races (even Ogres!), but none of them are as intelligent, strong and reliable as the Wolfen.

It's important to talk about the Wolfen Slaves for one other very important reason . . . it's called *war*.

The border conflicts between humans and Wolfen in the Disputed Lands are getting bloodier, tensions are continuing to rise, and it's looking more and more like the Eastern Territory and the Wolfen Empire are headed toward all-out war. Each side has advantages, each side has weaknesses, and nobody, on either side, is foolish enough to think that this will be an easy war, or a short one. The war will be long, and in all likelihood, it will spread.

Which is where the Wolfen slaves come into the picture.

You see, a lot of pundits have speculated that the real power holder, if the war comes, will be the *Western Empire*. Sure, they say, it will be a close thing, but if it really looks like the Wolfen are going to win, surely the Western Empire will enter the war, seeing the advantage of putting an end to the Wolfen threat, once and for all.

Except that it isn't that simple. If the Western Empire gets into the war, it's going to be a major event. It won't be something that can happen quietly, with a few hand-picked troops. No, it'll be an all-out effort, with forces raised from every Imperial Post. Everyone will know.

Including the slaves.

Most especially, the Wolfen slaves. Over hundreds of years there have been slave revolts, many, many times. Every time the slaves have been put down, the leaders executed, and the rest put back to work. But every time in the past the rebellions have been local, or at the very worst, covering a particular region. This time, if there is war with the Wolfen Empire, the unthinkable *might* happen. A slave revolt, led by Wolfen (who are, after all, the straw bosses and managers over the more unruly races) that might sweep the *entire* Western Empire!

So, bearing in mind the potential threat, let's have a little discussion about slavery in the Western Empire.

Conditions of Slavery

The Western Empire is huge, filled with hundreds of teeming cities, dozens of languages and cultures. So while slavery is everywhere, it takes many different forms and conditions, from the most brutal to places where slaves even have the right to buy their freedom. Bear in mind that Wolfen aren't the only slaves in the Western Empire, that Orcs, Goblins, Ogres and even Humans are much more common. Moreover, Wolfen slaves are one of the Empire of Sin's dirty little secrets, so Wolfen are not often included on "official" registers, deeds, or bills of sale. Still, whether Wolfen or not, most slaves labor under one of the following four systems:

1. Prison Labor Conditions: The slaves are monitored and guarded every hour of the day, locked in cells for sleeping and confined in a gated, walled area during working hours. Since so many guards are required, this kind of slavery is pretty rare for the Wolfen, except in open pit mines and quarries (underground mines generally use Goblin or Kobold slaves). Galley Slaves, those chained to their oars, have the same sort of conditions, but Wolfen are not considered suitable for this kind of duty (too large and too furry for close confinement below deck).

2. Sub-Human Conditions: As in the "Flight from the West" scenario, slaves are treated as no more than semi-intelligent animals, to be bought, sold, bred and sacrificed without any thought for their feelings. Common in plantation economies, such as in the Western Empire south of the Sea of Scarlet Waters.

3. Laborer Conditions: The classic "Collared" slave, used as the toys of the rich, serving as personal armed guards, gladiators, or particularly strong laborers (it was once the fashion to be

carried in a palanquin by eight matched Wolfen). Guild Houses and factories, those that require strong, intelligent workers, often try to acquire Wolfen slave labor. Note that Wolfen are much more expensive than human or Orc slaves. A *trained/broken* Wolfen will fetch up to 25,000 gold, compared to less than 5,000 gold for an Orc, or 10,000 for a human, plus Wolfen have much more expensive food requirements. Consequently, they are only rarely used as personal servants. Troublesome Wolfen slaves are threatened with being sold "to the mines" or "down across the water."

4. Serf Conditions: Slaves more to the land than anything else, most of the Slave Wolfen are used as farm laborers who are born, grow up, marry, have families, grow old and die, seeing their human masters just once a year for the official "counting." Since they wear no collars, and require no guards or supervision (indeed, it's common for Wolfen to be the bosses over Goblin, Orc, and even human slaves), this is the most economical and productive way of using Wolfen. Common in the "agri-business" of the Western Empire, each vast noble estate might have a population of four to forty thousand Wolfen. Don't get me wrong, life for those in Serf conditions is no bed of roses. They are constantly spied upon by magical means, and those who speak openly of rebellion are taken away or executed, but they live in relative comfort, and have heard all their lives about the horrors of a hard life in the wilderness, where their "savage ancestors" must eat each other or die.

The Forest Brewery Adventure

By Erick Wujcik, based on an idea by Bill Coffin

Note: A difficult scenario, but suitable for just about any size group. The characters should have a couple of adventures under their belt, and at least one of the player characters should be a mage of some kind, as well as have some psionics.

Setup & Background: Can be placed in the path of the player characters, in any remote location of the Great Northern Wilderness, set at least 50 miles (80 km) from any settlement or village. Another way to start things off is to have the players go looking for a missing adventurer or traveling group, and then allow them to track their way to the *Forest Brewery*.

Clues & Signs

As the characters approach the area, within a mile (1.6 km) of the place, or even farther if the winds are coming from the right direction, characters start to notice a batch of strong scents. Those with the most acute sense of smell pick it up first. G.M.s, read the following:

You pick up the smell of rot and death. There are bodies hereabouts, unburied and unburnt. Odd, since you'd think that the scavengers and vermin in this part of the wilderness would make quick work of any exposed flesh. As the wind shifts somewhat, you notice that the smell seems to be coming from more than one location. As if bodies, or pieces of bodies, have been scattered over a mile or more.

Closer, but before anything else can be determined:

There is another scent, that of some kind of strong ale. Not just any ale, but something really strong. Something that just reeks of fermentation, with enough of a "stale beer" smell to make you think you might have stumbled into a crowded tavern, and not just a patch of wilderness.

Following by scent, and then by ear (there are usually sounds of drunkenness from the current denizens, any time of the day or night), the characters eventually find a dark place formed by dozens of huge fallen trees. On the outskirts, scattered here and there, are skeletal remains (some up to 3 years old), fresher corpses, and piles of discarded refuse. Once the group reaches the center of this macabre scene, read the following:

In the dimly-lit clearing you are overwhelmed by the smell of booze, as well as the unwashed fur and bodies of the inhabitants. Scattered about are a number of people sleeping; snoring where they lay sprawled on the ground. Standing, or staggering around are a number of unkempt drunks, including at least two Bearmen of the North, some big Wolfen, and several smaller humanoids. Most are holding oversized drinking mugs as they turn toward you, all looking openly belligerent or downright mad.

Simmering and bubbling in the hollowed out stump of a tree (it's about six feet/1.8 m across) is what seems to be a natural brewery. Pour water in (there's a natural stream about 200 feet/61 m away) and the fermentation process starts almost immediately. Keep pouring in enough water and it'll produce about twenty gallons of ale, per day, all thick enough to chew, and strong enough to choke a Leprechaun.

This is no ordinary ale, but a particularly evil kind of Faerie Food. Those who consume it get drunk quickly. Not friendly drunk, or falling down drunk, but *murderously, wife beater drunk*. After a day or two, anyone who sticks around and keeps drinking will develop paranoia, aggression and a blind anger towards anyone and anything they happen to come across. While the drinkers regularly attack each other, and eventually end up killing each other, they are particularly nasty toward newcomers, who they'll see as "moochers" looking to get at the limited amount of booze.

Introductions & Encounters

When the player characters enter the clearing, they are met by the following greeting committee:

A pair of Bearmen and a Wolfen carelessly drop their cups on the ground, and turn to face you, laughing and pointing fingers at your group. The Wolfen snarls, "Think yer goin' somewhere, boys?" to the laughter of the others, and continues, "If you want to join the party, yer gonna have to go through us!"

Now it's up to the player characters. The trio continues to hurl insults, laughing and mocking everything the player characters say and do. Any retaliation in words or action only makes the trio laugh harder and in a more menacing way. If attacked, challenged to fight, or insulted sufficiently, read:

"The biggest Bearman laughs and howls, throwing off his cloak and pulling out a huge two-handed Battle Axe, while the other two step back. The other Bearman draws an oversized

great sword, and the Wolfen arms himself with a pair of rapiers. What are you doing?"

Their courage has been bolstered by drink, and they are experiencing a blind hatred for humans, Elves, and other city folk, but they'll attack anyone. Too drunk to think of self-preservation, they'll never flee, but they may fall over or pass out.

If, on the other hand, none of the player characters respond to the combat, and the whole group makes it *crystal clear* that they are not going to fight, it is possible to avoid a battle at the cost of a batch of insults ("Wussy, wussy, wussy, city folk! Stinkin' cowards . . .").

As for the rest of the drinkers, it is easy to provoke any or all of them into combat. Every hour or so, if they don't fight the player characters, they'll turn on each other. There's only one thing they seem to agree on:

"Don't hurt the Dwarf. If you kill him, you'll be the one who has to feed the stump . . ."

Game Master Background

First off, while Sago the Puck is behind this whole scenario, it should be extremely difficult for the players to figure that out. None of the resident drinkers have the slightest clue that they are being manipulated and used, and they are 100% convinced that *the Stump* is a natural phenomenon. Also, Sago has been very careful to leave no trace of his coming and going, so magic can only be detected around the Stump itself.

Mostly the Game Master should present the drinkers themselves as the problem. Mean, nasty and abusive louts with a short fuse and penchant for violence, they should never stop aggravating the player characters, and never stop trying to drive them away from the area or egg them into a fight. If deprived of their brew, these misanthropes become even more aggressive. And if the Stump is destroyed (easy enough, it's only an old tree trunk with 80 S.D.C.), the drunks turn into a murderous mob, brutally attacking and trying to kill anyone they think is responsible.

Those who are drinking have no need of any solid food, so long as they keep chugging a mug every hour. The Stump Brew, in addition to keeping drinkers drunk and mean, also heals with every sip (once per melee round), conferring on the wounded 2 Hit Points and 4 S.D.C.

Treasure: Other than weapons, none of the drinkers have anything especially valuable. All have a small number of coins (4D6 silver and 2D6 gold), and many have vague memories of missing larger purses (if questioned, they have a 01-75% chance of starting to accuse those around them, including the player characters, of being "filthy thieves!" and demanding their valuables be returned.)

Repeat Business: In a long-term campaign, Sago should be a character who returns again and again, each time setting up "shop" in a different location. Eventually, if the player characters annoy him enough, he may decide that they need to be destroyed, and he's likely to come up with some very nasty ways of making their lives miserable.

Quick Stats for Non-Player Characters & Monsters

Deer Biter the Bearman

The biggest Bearman stands 10 feet (3 m) tall and wields a giant axe (3D6). He is a 4th level Ranger, Miscreant alignment, and is a pretty mean, short-tempered character even when stone sober. He has lost track of the number of humanoids he's killed, but he'll boast that he has ripped out the hearts of at least nine, and ate each one, bloody and raw ("Chewy," he says, "I like fresh hearts 'cause they're nice and chewy").

Alignment: Miscreant. **Hit Points:** 53. **S.D.C.:** 50. **P.P.E.:** 7.
Attributes: I.Q. 7, M.E. 4, M.A. 5, P.S. 25, P.P. 14, P.E. 32, P.B. 9, Spd. 10.
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Bonuses: +3 on initiative; +4 to strike, +1 to parry; +2 to dodge, +10 to damage, and +8 to save vs magic and poison (he missed it for the Stump Brew!).

Bad Bear the Bearman

The smaller Bearman stands a mere 8.5 feet tall (2.6 m) and has a wicked looking large sword (3D6 damage). He is a 3rd level Ranger, who spent most of his life alone, keeping to himself. He's bewildered by the change in how he feels about things, but his solution to being confused is "'have another drink," and if that doesn't work, then he's likely to say, "I haven't had enough to drink."

Alignment: Anarchist. **Hit Points:** 36. **S.D.C.:** 47. **P.P.E.:** 10.
Attributes: I.Q. 6, M.E. 6, M.A. 8, P.S. 22, P.P. 17, P.E. 24, P.B. 8, Spd. 11.
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +3 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to dodge, +7 to damage, with +5 to save vs magic and poison (also missed it for the Stump Brew).

Rerkhan the Wolfen

The Wolfen stands nearly 9 feet (2.7 m) tall and is armed with twin rapiers (+2 to strike with the right one, and 3D4 damage from each). He also has a small pick (1D6 damage) and a giant-sized morning star (2D8 damage). He is a 2nd level Ranger, Diabolic alignment, and also has Minor psionic powers.

Alignment: Diabolic. **Hit Points:** 27. **S.D.C.:** 32. **P.P.E.:** 4.
Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 7, M.A. 11, P.S. 19, P.P. 15, P.E. 14, P.B. 10, Spd. 17.
Attacks Per Melee: Three.
Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike and parry; +1 to dodge, and +3 to damage.
Minor Psionic: 18 I.S.P. Psi-powers include Detect Psionics, Resist Cold, Resist Fatigue, Sense Magic, and Presence Sense.

Khul the Dwarf

One mean, bitter and sarcastic fellow, Khul doles out drink and insults, and acts as the Stump's main bartender. Unlike the others, who wander off to sleep every few hours, Khul hasn't had a wink of sleep for over a month. While he claims to know the "secret" of the brew, in fact he knows about as much as any of the others (which is to say, *nothing*, other than throw some water in the Stump, along with ten or twenty pounds of leaves, and it will just keep bubbling up the Stump Brew). While he avoids out-and-out fights, he enjoys tripping larger humanoids, or playing cruel/crude pranks (like offering up a mug filled with brew and leeches). He's armed with a nasty Battle Axe (2D6+7 damage), stands 2.5 feet (0.7 m) tall and is a 5th level Soldier.

Alignment: Miscreant. **Hit Points:** 43. **S.D.C.:** 30. **P.P.E.:** 4.
Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 8, M.A. 4, P.S. 20, P.P. 17, P.E. 21, P.B. 6, Spd. 8.
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +5 to strike, +2 to parry, +5 to dodge, +6 to damage, +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +2 to pull punch, +3 to save vs magic and poison (-3 when it comes to the "brew" to which Khul is addicted).

Rolling Drinkers & Drinking Buddies

Gathered around the Stump, scattered throughout the clearing, and snoozing on the ground (it's hard to tell the corpses from the bodies of the sleepers – at least until you kick one), are dozens of other drinkers. There is no leader to this motley crew, but all of them are rough, tough characters, who have survived at least a couple of battles with other boozers. Assume that all are at full Hit Points and S.D.C. Weapons are usually first-rate (+1D4 to strike and an extra +1D6 to damage), since poor weapons are discarded and weapons are the one thing always looted from the bodies of the losers.

01-25% Bearman. At least one, with a 01-25% chance of having another Bearman for a buddy.

26-40% Wolfen. Roll 1D6 and then subtract 4. If the answer is less than one, the Wolfen will be alone, otherwise he has one "pal."

41-55% Coyle. Roll 1D6 and then subtract 2. If the answer is less than one, the Coyle will be alone, otherwise he has 1D4 Coyle or other unsavory "pals."

56-65% Human. Roll 1D6 and then subtract 3. If the answer is less than one, then the Human is alone, otherwise he has 1D4 other "pals."

66-70% Orc. Roll 1D6 and then subtract 2. If the answer is less than one, then the Orc is alone, otherwise he has 1D4 Orc or Goblin "pals."

71-80% Goblins, 1D6 of them. There's a 01-25% chance that they'll have a leader (roll again on this table for their head man).

81-85% Kobold. Roll 1D6 and then subtract 4. If the answer is less than one, then the Kobold is alone, otherwise he has one "pal," probably another Kobold or some other monster race.

86-90% Hob-Goblin. Alone, but with a 01-40% chance of having a couple of Goblin henchmen at his beck and call.

91-94% Ogre. Alone, but with a 01-50% chance of having 1D6 weaker followers (roll again for each).

95-97% Troll. Totally alone and in a terribly foul mood. When the Troll comes to the Stump, everyone but the Dwarf moves back, way back.

98-99% Faerie Folk. Likely one or two of the more evil types like a Bogie, Grogach, Toad Stool, or Satyr, but even most Faerie Folk are susceptible to the Stump Brew.

100% Algor Frost Giant, alone and surly. Dislikes Elves more than any other race.

Alternate Strategy

If the player characters attack in force, either on the first encounter, or after retreating and returning another day, a force of 2D10+5 of the drunks will arm themselves and attempt to defend the Stump. At least half of this force can be rolled up from the prior random table, but they are led by **Jepzin the Toll Troll**, who towers 12 feet (3.6 m) tall and wields a giant Runka (3D6+2 damage) and War Hammer (2D6 damage). He is a 4th level Mercenary. **Alignment:** Anarchist. **Hit Points:** 39. **S.D.C.:** 76. **P.P.E.:** 10. **Attributes:** I.Q. 10, M.E. 9, M.A. 6, P.S. 20, P.P. 17, P.E. 18, P.B. 5, Spd. 11. **Attacks Per Melee:** Five. **Bonuses:** +3 to strike, +5 to parry & dodge, +7 to damage, +3 to roll with impact, +3 to pull punch, +2 to save vs poison, and +3 to save vs magic. **Armor:** Double Mail (A.R. 14, 50 S.D.C.). **Valuables of Note:** Has 53 gold pieces and a small pocket mirror.

Sago the Puck

A feared monster even among other Pucks, and feared by all other Faerie Folk, Sago is over 2,000 years old, many times older than any Puck should be. Four feet, six inches (1.3 m) tall, gaunt and entirely gray, Sago seems to be nothing more than skin, sinew and bone, and weighs less than 60 pounds (27 kg). None of the drinkers have ever seen Sago, nor know he even exists, let alone suspect he is the true force behind the "magical tree stump." As far as any of the Bearmen and other drunks are concerned, the "Stump Ale" is just a natural product of the forest, no more artificial than a hive filled with bee's honey, fallen apples, or a salt lick.

Sago, on the other hand, views *all* the drinkers as stooges and prey. Centuries ago he learned how to suck the life force out of other creatures, transforming it into the life force he needs to extend his own life span. After a couple of days of drinking, the drunks have no save against his life sapping power and he can tap into as many as six of them at a time for their P.P.E. The ones he is "tapped into" feed him all their P.P.E. at the moment of their death and each slain victim gives Sago another six months of extended life! (Unless slain, he already has another 96 years of life, and counting . . .) When one dies, he taps into another and waits.

Game Master Note: Sago has no pride, nor any sense of honesty. If cornered or trapped he'll plead for mercy, claim he is the victim of a curse, and generally do whatever it takes to assure his own survival. He is very good at recognizing good characters and will throw himself at their mercy, pleading for their protection. He doesn't stick around to gloat either; if given a chance to flee, he just takes off.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 20, M.A. 8, P.S. 11, P.P. 18, P.E. 10, P.B. 4, Spd. 27.
Alignment: Diabolic Evil.
Natural A.R.: 14.
Hit Points: 83. **S.D.C.:** Zero (the magic that has kept Sago alive has also made him terribly fragile, so that all damage to his body is hurtful and destructive, direct to Hit Points).
Horror Factor: 15 (although it is highly unlikely that this cunning villain will ever be seen).

Natural Abilities & Skills: Nightvision 900 feet (274 m) and easily blinded by the sudden appearance of fires and other light. Very poor daylight vision (in bright daylight can only see shapes of things close up). Sense the location of ley lines 92%, metamorphosis into a gaunt-looking, gray wild boar (at will, instantaneous and unlimited), and Teleport (up to twice per day, to a dozen different hidey-holes in the forest without risk). Tracking 85%, Faerie Lore 94%, Prowl 90%, and Pick Locks 85%. He also speaks Faerie and Gobblely, Dwarven & Elven, Human, both Eastern and Northern, as well as Wolfen, all at 98%. However, he is literate only in Elven (70%), and can't read or write in any other language.
Magic Spells: Spells include Befuddle, Concealment, Curse: Phobia, Death Trance, Decipher Magic, Escape, Luck Curse, Repel Animals, See Wards, Sense Traps, Sickness, Spoil, and Summon Fog.
Attacks per Melee: While Sago can make five hand to hand attacks per melee, he'll only resort to physical combat if cornered or if he has no other choice; he'd much rather use magic, or simply flee. In the alternative, he can cast two spells and use one physical attack per round.

Damage: Claws do 2D6+2 damage and he can bite for 1D6+2 damage, or he may use a conventional weapon or Faerie Magic.
Bonuses: +5 on initiative, +2 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge, +3 to roll with impact, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, and +5 on *all* other saving throws.
Sago's Hoard: While Sago loves his little hoard of loot, he won't defend it with his life, or even try to recover anything that is stolen from him.

- 1200+4D6x10 Western Empire gold coins.
- 500+3D6x10 Wolfen gold coins.
- 200+1D10x10 Wolfen silver coins.
- Jewelry. 3D6 Bracelets, 2D6+2 Necklaces, 5D6 Rings. For each, roll percentile (01-30 Silver, 31-50 Silver with 3D6 gold worth of gemstones, 51-80 Gold, 81-00 Gold with 5D10 gold worth of gemstones).
- Loose Gems, all cut, and all superior quality (if Sago has a chance to grab something before he runs off, it will be this small leather pouch). Six rubies (four 2 carat and two 6 carat); four diamonds (2, 2, 4 and 6 carat); three star sapphires (matched; all 4 carat); two emeralds (both 2 carat); and one pearl (2 ounces). Total value is easily over 60,000 gold.
- *Saershar.* Magical short sword; +3 to strike, but -4 to parry. It does no more damage than an ordinary sword (2D6), but all the damage it inflicts goes straight to the Hit Points of the victim and the weapon appears to be indestructible. *Value:* 25,000-35,000 gold. It may be considered cursed or dangerous by some due to its parry penalty and H.P. damage capability.

Ancient Secrets, Pirates & Mindprancer

By Thom Bartold & Kevin Siembieda

The battle raged for two thousand years, until the very powers of Hell were summoned, destroying all of that o'er which they fought. Then the hell fire did burn across the land with the light of the setting sun, and raged for uncounted days. . . And lo, a great darkness did descend upon the land, ending forever the reign of the Elves.

Mother Earth slept now in the darkness that followed. Four thousand years she slept, waiting . . . And lo, she awakened to the light of a completely new sun. The birth of man.

Men multiplied quickly, with the smile of Mother Earth upon them, and spread in earnest to the four corners of the world. And yea, verily did they prosper, in the east, and the west, and the south. But woe to those who chose the north, for they were

met by the hellish dogs that sprang from the hell fires of the Great War. Wolves who walked like men sprang up in the north to tear the life from man. The wolves snuffed out the light that shone so brightly for man in all the rest of the world, and howled that the northlands would remain theirs and theirs alone.

Thus, the Northern Wilderness has remained lost to man for ages to come.

– The Tristine Chronicles

Very little is known of the Northern Wilderness before the rise of the Wolfen societies. Legend has it that Elves were occasional inhabitants of the more pleasant regions of the forests, as were small clans of Gnomes, tribes of Centaurs and the occasional Dwarf. We recount here the opinions of one Wolfen historian, known simply as *the Chronicler.* The Chronicler's history is often at odds with the *Tristine Chronicles*, and as such, is little known in the human world. Like the Tristine Chronicles, the mysterious text is written in the Elven language.

There still stand virgin oaks planted by Elven Druids that dared to settle this land long ago. This was shortly after the end of the Elven-Dwarven Wars, early in Wolfen history. Many Elves, lost in regret for the many wartime atrocities, established early druidic practices, and tried to reconcile themselves with the world by becoming one with it. Healing the land became one of their greatest concerns. The children of the wolf, another. The Devil's Mark in Ophid's Grasslands stands as a reminder to the forces that came into play in a war that laid waste to much of the world. Only the Northern Wilderness was left unscathed by that devastation, save for the Devil's Mark.

Many refugees from the war found safe haven in the communities of the early Druids. Those refugees had with them the relics of their past. But they were laid aside as grim reminders of their lost history. Modern historians cannot explain the lack of information or relics from that era. The great books which told of the legendary rune weapons, and magic of that time all strangely vanished when the Dwarves and Elves destroyed their races. No satisfactory explanation has ever been found for the almost total lack of such artifacts even in the most preserved ruins. But here it is said, that thousands upon thousands of runic weapons, books, idols, and gold were brought to the north. Only a meager fraction of a bygone age was stored in the library of the northern Druids, never to be used again for war. There is no verification of the existence of any such community nor its treasure of legend. Others maintain that the war was so destructive that everything was simply destroyed and what remained was gathered and destroyed during the Millennium of Purification. The Chronicler maintains that this is only because no great effort has ever been made to prove this community of Druids ever existed.

Thus, the legendary Elven community eventually brought civilization to this part of the world. Not a civilization like in times before, with great weapons and great magic, but a civilization based on Druidic beliefs. This was a civilization of great personal, perhaps more aptly put, emotional wealth, the likes of which had never been seen before, or since. Its very presence was the force that helped bring the Wolf into the light of intelligence and society. This racial birthing is one reason for the Wolfen's current admiration of all things Elven.

Stories of this strange community that walked among wolves eventually spread to the early human communities to the south. The happiness and prosperity of this Elven society were taken by the humans to indicate great material wealth. The humans were only beginning to travel the seas, and unscrupulous individuals saw this as an opportunity for raiding and quick profit. Nowhere has it been proven that any such pirates existed, but in the coastal areas of the Northern Wilderness such stories are frequently recounted. Some insist that the Wolfen's hatred for Humans stems from the pirate attacks on their Elven spiritual forebears. Many argue against this reasoning, but the Chronicler insists that this is, indeed, so.

The human pirates came to the northern coast and found the Elves unwilling to share their riches *with them – claiming there were no riches, but only relics to be preserved for future generations. Relics of gold, magic, and runes. Instead, the Elves offered the "riches of peace and harmony," offering the secrets of union with nature and the art of Druidism. This was not the manner of riches sought, and so the pirates struck . . .*

Some say that a sword is not inherently good or evil, and that only by the use to which it is put does it become a thing of death and destruction. So it was that the Druids would not wield the weapons of the prior age which helped wrought the destruction of two civilizations. They would have no part of destruction renewed. When the humans came to take the weapons, the Elves did not stop them, and so more humans and even fellow Elves came to claim possessions of the ancient Elves. The peace and harmony that existed was shattered by the desires of the humans and other beings coming to take what they wanted. Artifacts of war, magic and gold were plundered. And when they were told all had been taken, the enraged freebooters struck out at Druids with deadly intent. Violence again claimed the Elves. Some fled, many tried to stop the carnage that now engulfed their society in blood and fire. Some struggled to retain the handful of ancient relics that did remain hidden and known to but a handful. Most were slaughtered and the Druid's homes put to the torch. The Wolfen rose up against this outrage on their spiritual brethren, and a great unrecorded war ensued. The civilization that was only beginning to shine was snuffed out. Buried under the weight of 100,000 Wolfen dead, and the greed of man.

So writes the Chronicler.

A Pirate's Tale

The most renowned of the northern raiders were those pirates that braved the hazards of Dragon Claw. Foremost among them was Jason, a human so encrusted with scars from his many battles that even the Wolfen came to respect him as much as they hated him. Dragon Claw is perhaps the only inland sea in the Palladium world where the tides will rise or fall over 40 feet (12.2 m) within six hours (the time between consecutive high tides is approximately twelve hours). The water progresses so rapidly into Dragon's Claw as high tide approaches that no ship of modern construction can easily survive, except perhaps the fabled Stone Ships of Bizantium and Wolfen Longboats and Dragonboats. And yet one group of pirates was so foolhardy as to establish a base at the tip of the first toe of Dragon Claw. The

tides are at their worst there, so few ships can offer pursuit. The forest around that area is so wild and thick that any land journey there is unthinkable.

Somewhere at the tip of Dragon Claw, the ancient pirate, Jason, established his base, with an undersea entrance. The very base of the cliff would be exposed to the air for less than an hour at a time when the tide was at its lowest ebb. At that time only could the secret base be entered through some well-guarded natural passage at the base of the cliff. At the end of that passage the pirates had constructed a massive sea wall that kept the base completely protected from both man and sea. Legend has it that tons of the ancient Elven Druids' treasures were plundered by Jason and his crew and stored at this base. The same legend tells that Jason and his pirates were caught in a killer winter as they prepared to take their booty south. The winter storms prevented their departure, and most of his men perished in the horrid cold and smothering snows. Jason and the rest of his men died in a surprise attack by Coyles. The treasure is said to lay hidden in the pirates' secret lair even after these many thousands of years. Nobody has ever found this mythical place, though many have searched.

The Coastal Colony of Me'zfii Onh

Me'zfii Onh is basically a nondescript wilderness port town. It is one of the smallest of Bizantium's mainland colonies, and there is clearly little adventure to be found here. It is merely a landing point for humans in this part of the Northern Wilderness. A drop off and starting point for travels into the interior.

The town is composed mostly of humans from Bizantium, though few claim Me'zfii Onh as their home. The timber business has not yet started in earnest, and there are only a few lumberjacks, but there are stands of ancient Oak and Cedar near this area, and the potential for profit is vast. A few Wolfen live in the colony, and act as official go-betweens for the humans and the local *Ursa Rex Wolfen Tribe*. If the player characters stay in town long enough, they'll learn a little folklore about the area. The legend of the Elf Druid Nation, the pirate leader Jason, and about the fabulous lost treasure are all popular yarns in the area, as the outpost is supposedly near the old pirate stronghold.

The port of Me'zfii Onh has a population of less than three hundred. Here are a few establishments of note.

The Tower of Me'zfii. Calling it a "tower" is something of an exaggeration, since this squat stone building is only two stories tall, with ramparts on the roof, but it was built as a military outpost, and it is continuously manned by at least two dozen Bizantium officers or nobles, sailors or soldiers. Official business is conducted in the "Gate House," which is a separate structure of a single room. As far as the Tower itself is concerned, it's totally off-limits to anyone but Bizantium officials. Over the last fifty years the place has been under siege at least three times (once during an uprising of Trolls and Ogres, when the rest of the town was abandoned and burned), and each time easily held off attackers until help arrived either from nearby Wolfen tribes, or from Bizantium, by sea. At least four crossbow-armed guards are on the rooftop ramparts at all times.

Lady Ky'Lee Yinxner is the official Bizantium envoy to this tiny outpost, but she sees herself more as a military commander than anything else. While part of her duties involve governing the area, as well as serving as the local judge (she's fluent and literate in Wolfen), she has a strict "hands off" policy about the local residents. At least once every couple of weeks she meets with *Burnt Eyes,* the local Oak People Wolfen Tribal Chief, with whom she has an excellent relationship. On the other hand, anyone who violates Bizantium property, whether the Tower, any Bizantium ship, or any other government property, will find that she's a more than adequate military leader (8th level Mercenary), and prone to swift military response. Criminals are either fined heavily and released or executed, usually the same day as the trial. Wolfen, Coyles or Kankoran are usually fined and turned over to Wolfen Tribal Leaders.

Cassandra's Leather Shop. The proprietor is an Elven female who is always looking to make a few gold. She can almost always be found at the shop, since she's unwilling to pay anyone a good enough wage to work for her. Typically outfitted in colorful silks and soft leather, she is also a babe (P.B. 24). On off hours she'll be lounging at the bathhouse or eating a light meal at Morning Star's Pub. She is also reputed to be a bit of a scholar and collector of ancient artifacts and oddities.

Morning Star's Pub. Stays open until the morning star shines (usually 5 a.m.). *Stweeb* is the Elven proprietor and bartender. He is also Cassandra's (from the Leather Shop, above) current beau (she is what's keeping him in this backwater colony). Stweeb is also a hunk (P.B. 23, P.S. 22) and a semi-retired Ranger (6th level). The food is good and cheap, but mostly venison and other game meat brought in from the forest. Stweeb has a very good rapport with the Wolfen in the area. Jaremy, a young Wolfen, spends much of his time at the Morning Star, sweeping floors, and helping out whenever he can. This is the place the group is most likely to hear legends about pirates and lost treasure. If anyone looks, they'll notice Jaremy's ears perk up whenever pirates are mentioned. More about Jaremy a few pages down.

Angelina's Boardinghouse. A very inexpensive place to stay, Angelina makes most of her income off of her *maids,* who not only clean the rooms, but do their best to make the men in town feel loved. The food at Angelina's is horrible, so most boarders eat at the Morning Star. The boarders are usually visiting business people from Bizantium, foresters, and ships' crews who are helping to set up the lumber operation in town. Their real homes are on the islands of Bizantium.

Secarr's Furrier. *Secarr* is a Wolfen with limited intelligence and completely illiterate. However, he is friendly, well liked, and knows furs (he could be classified as an autistic savant). He can tell you which part of the forest each of the pelts he sells comes from, and the name of the trapper that brought it to him. Furthermore, he can recognize the origin/locale of new pelts brought to him, and often wins bets (usually booze or sweets) by showing off; 01-90% chance to correctly name the area the animal was trapped. Secarr's younger brother, *Ssidd,* actually sets the prices, so Secarr isn't allowed to give anyone a cheaper price. However Secarr cannot really deal with money, so it is easy to cheat him. But Ssidd *will* find out, and come after the cheater.

Secarr has 39 H.P., 42 S.D.C., an I.Q. of 4 and P.S. 27. In combat he has four attacks per melee and is +4 to strike, +3 to parry/dodge, +10 to damage and +2 to pull punch.

Ssidd has 36 H.P., 32 S.D.C., an I.Q. of 11, M.E. 17, P.S. 22, and a P.P. of 26. In combat he has four attacks per melee and is +7 to strike, +9 to parry/dodge, +5 to damage and +2 to pull punch. A minor psychic with 36 I.S.P. and the powers of Sixth Sense and Telepathy.

The Cutting Edge. The only place to buy or sell weapons and kitchen utensils like knives, metal spatulas, spits, etc., in town. The proprietor is *Ssidd* again. He's actually a former soldier and a skilled tinker and weapon smith. For sale are all manner of traps and bladed weapons. The prices are quite high for people that Ssidd doesn't know or doesn't like, but he is a friendly sort. If the player group happens to buy Ssidd a few drinks or treat Secarr with genuine kindness, the prices come down to near the standard price (the list book price). Ssidd can be found at the Morning Star late at night, or even when sales are a bit slow (almost always). Ssidd is prone to hitting people on the head for the sole purpose of getting into "friendly" fights.

Forestry Service Offices. Unless they actually want a job, the player group will not be received well here. The service is looking for laborers, not mercenaries. If the characters want to cut down trees and chop away the undergrowth for sixteen hours a day, 50 gold a day, this is the place to sign up. If they go out on a one-day job, they'll get a filling lunch as well as an afternoon snack. Those willing to sign up for a few days get a tent to sleep in, and a quilt provided at no extra charge, as well as breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner, as long as they're out in the field. The Forestry Service has two jobs: Making sure there are clear trails and roads (things grow fast around here!), and surveying the local trees to see how suitable they'll be for Bizantium's shipyards.

Gosseman's Bathhouse. The ultimate luxury for humans or Wolfen is a place to take a hot bath. This is very Roman in appearance, although built with stone (rather than marble). Two gold buys one hour in a hot bath. For ten gold one gets a week's membership. Not as elaborate as what is found in Bizantium, or even in the Wolfen Empire, since there's only the one big pool, continuously heated by a wood furnace system, but it is a very friendly place, where everyone relaxes and chats in comfort. Run by Gosseman, an elderly Dwarf who is his own best customer (he lets his Wolfen employees do most of the work), and who is pleased to see *anyone* (even monster races are welcomed with open arms), but has a special fondness for anyone who can speak Dwarven. A retired Military Engineer (once upon a time he worked for the Bizantium Crown), he's a 12th level Soldier, and his abilities dimmed a bit with age (he's over 340 years old), he still has 37 H.P., 18 S.D.C., an I.Q. 15, M.A. 19, P.S. 11, P.E. 10 and P.P. 13. In combat he has four attacks per melee, +4 to strike, +2 to damage and +3 to parry and dodge. However, Gosseman also has hidden away several doses of a potion brewed for him by a Druid friend. It confers a "Restore Youth" which rejuvenates him for 5D6 hours, during which he'll be his youthful self, with 63 H.P., 80 S.D.C., I.Q. 18, M.A. 20, P.S. 21, P.E. 20 and P.P. 19; blazing into combat at seven attacks per melee, +9 to strike, +8 to damage and +7 to parry and dodge, as well as being able to perform most Acrobatic rolls, leaps and flips (when the potion wears off he'll be incredibly tired, and will spend the next week mostly sleeping).

Ralph's, a complete grocery and outfitter. This is the busiest store in town. Prices are all about 50% above book prices. Ralph is a big, good-natured human, and employs a number of young Wolfen assistants. He receives new supplies by ship at least once a month from Bizantium.

Oak People Lodge. Inside a wood stockade (a wall made of upright tree trunks, 40 feet/12.2 m tall), there are two long houses, as well as a dozen smaller buildings. It is home to 50 or so permanent residents, and many more occasional visitors. Officially the place is part of the Oak People Wolfen Tribe, but the Oak People are usually outnumbered by the two local tribes; the *Black Birch Wolfen Tribe* and the *Snow Grass Wolfen Tribe.* Other Wolfen, Kankoran, Coyles, Bearmen, and really anyone who can speak Wolfen and put up with the local customs are welcome to sleep over. In the winter everyone sleeps together in the long houses, pretty much in a huge furry pile. In summertime, unless it's raining, everyone sleeps all over the place, on any handy piece of ground. Visitors are welcome to partake in the nightly feasts (usually there's at least a couple of large animals being broiled over a pit fire, and at least one huge cauldron of stew). There's no official charge, but most visitors show up with some kind of contribution of food or useful items. Moochers who don't contribute anything after a couple of days are ridiculed and mocked, and eventually kicked out (although those who are wounded, sick or otherwise helpless are welcome to stay as long as they like). The biggest problem that non-Canines will find is from the dozens of Wolfen young; even a five-year-old is as big and strong as most human adults (P.S. 2D6+6), filled with boundless energy, happy to play rough, and totally unashamed about digging through someone else's personal possessions ("What's this? Can I have it? No? Okay, I'll just play with it for a little while!"). And woe be to anyone who seems to be treating the kids with less than perfect loving kindness.

Me'zfii Onh Council. This unofficial body is made up of the leading Wolfen Tribal leaders and whoever else is around who seems to have the right kind of "wisdom" for any current problems. *Burnt Eyes,* a mild-mannered Oak People Chief (7th level Ranger and a veteran of a couple of wars), is the unofficial leader of the Wolfen in the area. He doesn't like to show off, and looks pretty much like any other Wolfen, but is capable of quickly gathering together an army of 200 or more, and not just of Wolfen, if the need arises.

Game Master Note: No armor, writing supplies, or magic of any kind, are available from the shops of this small town. Furthermore, there are no domestic animals other than a dozen or so workhorses and mules. This is the northern coast, so expect cold winds, and very cold nights. Even in the summer, the night temperature can drop 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Furs are standard garb year-round.

Meet Your Guide: Jaremy

If the player characters don't meet the Wolfen pup, Jaremy, during their first few hours in Me'zfii Onh, he'll deliberately track them down and try to speak with them. This energetic youngster, only 16 years old, orphaned long ago, will gladly brag to the group that the old pirate story is wrong, claiming to have been to the secret pirate base. If the group uses magic or psionics to test his credibility, they'll find that he is telling the truth. Well, it isn't actually the truth, but he doesn't know that

and believes what he says, completely. The magic that was used to delude Jaremy in the first place is completely worn off, so there is no chance of anyone detecting that his mind has been manipulated. Here's what he'll say: *"No one around here believes me! I know where it is! I know how to find the treasure. I just need someone to go with me. Someone who can help carry everything back through the woods. All I want is a fair share. That's all I want!"* Since everyone in town has far more important things to do than indulge a child's silly fantasies, Jaremy will gladly lead the player group to the place where he knows the pirate base is, provided he gets at least 20%. It is a place he describes as "a glen high among the cliffs, a couple of days outside of town."

Second Level Vagabond Merchant
Alignment: Scrupulous, kind and trusting.
Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 11, M.A. 14, P.S. 20, P.P. 14, P.E. 24, P.B. 11, Spd. 18
Hit Points: 21. **S.D.C.:** 20. **P.P.E.:** 17.
Attacks Per Melee: Three.
Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +1 to strike and parry, +2 to dodge, +5 to damage, and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.
Skills of Note: Basic Math 60%, Fishing 45%, Sailing 50/30%, General Repair/Maintenance 50%, History (of the town and immediate area only) 45%, Land Navigation 44% and W.P. Sword.

Into the forest and through the woods

The journey from the town of Me'zfii Onh is neither easy nor short, requiring three days of travel through rough terrain just to get to the Sand Forest (Game Masters can make heavy use of the encounter tables included earlier in this book). During the trek, the player characters will frequently come across all manner of natural woodland animals. In addition to those, there can be frequent encounters with solitary Wolfen hunters and trappers, along with an occasional Kankoran or Bearman. If the adventurers are mainly human, the reception will be cold. If the group is mainly Wolfen or Elven, the reception will be guarded, although trade for food or skins might be arranged.

Also along the way, and something they'll be warned about frequently, are the lands of the *Black Birch Wolfen Tribe*. Unless the players want to make a two-day detour to the north, they'll have to deal with visiting the tribal village.

Now the problem isn't that the Black Birch are hostile, or that they'll attack, but more that they have very specific rituals for dealing with visitors. Those who come into their lands must be taken to the village for an "official welcoming," something that involves at least one feast, and at least one night's stay in the Chief's lodge. It also involves an exchange of "gifts." Each person (even horses, if they are part of the group) receives food (usually strips of smoked meat), furs, and a "magic pouch" (a tiny leather bag, sewed shut, containing a small bone and a few herbs). Whoever is introduced as the group's leader (or leaders) will also each be given a gemstone of some kind (randomly selected, and is worth 2D6x10 gold). Afterward, once the player characters receive all their gifts, the tribe falls silent, *waiting* to see what is offered in return (Jaremy will whisper, "Give them something! Something good! Now!"). If the group seems poor (wearing ragged clothing, looking hungry, etc.) then nothing much is expected in return, but if the group looks rich, they'll need to come up with something that at least *looks* impressive.

That night, after the feast, there is another exchange, but this time of entertainment. For every song, trick or dance that the Wolfen do, they'll expect some kind of show from the adventures. Bottom line, if the players do well, they might come away with the Black Birch as *lifetime allies*, but if they do poorly, then they could end up enemies for life (remember, the group probably has to come back this way). Otherwise, life among the Black Birch is pretty much like the lodge in town, filled with encounters by all sorts of curious Wolfen, young and old, friendly and hostile, ignorant and intelligent.

Return to the Wilderness

After leaving the Black Birch, there are three special characters that the heroes should meet during this phase of the adventure, on top of whatever other encounters they get involved in (again, this is a dense wilderness, filled with lots of wild creatures). The three NPCs who will track the group are *the Pegasus*, *Darksong* and *Shelandra*.

The Pegasus (Quick Stats)

Sooner or later, the adventurers see a pure white Pegasus flying high overhead. This creature inhabits the cliffs of Dragon Claw. It never gets close enough for the group to even consider its capture (even long-range magic is highly unlikely to work, because of both the speed and natural magical resistance of the Pegasus). The creature has a nest in the cliffs which the characters might consider trying to find. The graceful beast will, how-

ever, do everything it can to avoid capture. Its freedom is most important and it can fly away faster than the group can follow. If the nest is found, there is a 01-60% chance that the Pegasus will fly away to find a new home, never to return. This will not please local Wolfen who enjoy the beauty of the rare animal.

The Pegasus is a sucker for noble hearts, however, and should there be anybody among the player characters of noble and truly heroic nature, the Pegasus *might* take an inherent liking to them. Should this happen, it will initiate a kind of "probation period" during which time its adopted companion must prove himself worthy of such an unusual friend. Any lapse in morality on the companion's part, and the Pegasus leaves him forever. (**Note:** From that point on, all other Pegasus will be able to tell the character has been shunned by one of their kind). While totally hating the idea of acting as a mount or steed to anyone, the Pegasus will bear a friend, or even friends of a friend, if there is a desperate need.

Alignment: Scrupulous.
Attributes: I.Q. 7, M.E. 15, M.A. 10, P.S. 30, P.P. 24, P.E. 24, P.B. 30, Spd. 30 (running), 150 (flying; that's 105 mph/168 km).
Hit Points: 44. **S.D.C.:** 70. **P.P.E.:** 80. **I.S.P.:** 45.
Attacks Per Melee: Three.
Bonuses: +2 on initiative. +6 to strike and parry. +7 to dodge on the ground, +9 to dodge in flight. +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact. +15 to damage, +6 to save vs poison and disease. +18% to save vs coma/death, and +5 to save vs magic.
Damage: Front kick: 3D6. Rear kick: 5D6. Bite: 1D4.
Psionics: Empathy, Sense Evil, Sixth Sense, Mind Block, Bio-Regeneration, and Telepathy.

Darksong (Quick Stats)

Likely the most dangerous creature haunting the forests of Dragon Claw is Darksong the Syvan. The group will definitely encounter Darksong before they reach the glen. Darksong also searches for the fabled cave, and has done so for nearly 200 years!

As a Syvan, Darksong appears as a partially decayed human corpse. An immortal of unknown origin. Since all Syvans are only comfortable surrounded by magic and wealth, there must be some reason why Darksong has spent nearly two centuries in search of the treasure trove.

Once the group is a day or so away from the town, Darksong makes his appearance, coming to their camp in the middle of the night. He'll stridently demand to know their business. Diplomacy and politeness is the group's best tact. If he learns that they are headed for the pirate cave, he will attempt to take Jaremy away from them. If he suspects that the group is too powerful and might slay him in a battle (which is most likely the case since Darksong will be outnumbered), he'll follow them at a discreet distance, waiting for the right moment to strike. Though the heroes might try to shake off Darksong or chase him away, he will prove unflappable, sticking by the heroes at every twist and turn. It is obvious he intends to follow them to the Pirates' Treasure, come what may.

Like most of his ilk, Darksong hates the living and will not hesitate at hurting, torturing, or killing any or all members of the group. When the treasure is found, he'll stake his claim and attempt to destroy anybody who stands in his way.

Alignment: Miscreant Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 20, M.A. 9, P.S. 9, P.P. 9, P.E. 11, P.B. 4, Spd. 15
Hit Points: 150. **S.D.C.:** 110. **P.P.E.:** 40. **I.S.P.:** 200.
Natural A.R.: 13
Special Abilities: See the invisible, nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), fire and cold resistant (half damage), Recognize Illusions: 90%, Sense Magic: 70%, Sense Psionics: 78%, Sense Evil: 60%, Sense/Feel Emotions: 80%.
Attacks Per Melee: Two physical or three by psionics.
Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +3 to save vs psionics, +2 to save vs all magic.
Psionics: All Healing, Sensitive and Physical powers plus Bio-Regeneration (super), Empathic Transmission, Electrokinesis, Telekinesis (super), Telekinetic Force Field, Mentally Possess Others, Mind Block Auto-Defense, Mind Bond, Mind Wipe, Psi-Shield, and Psi-Sword.
Weapons: None. When threatened he will use psionic abilities alone. When Darksong takes a prisoner he likes to wound them with their own weapons.
Magic Items: None.
Valuables: Only has 100 gold on his person, plus basic wilderness gear.

Shelandra (Quick Stats)

Shelandra, a self-serving Waternix, is in the area specifically because she has heard the stories about the Syvan's search for treasure and is looking to find a few spicy tidbits for herself (ideally, she wants to beat him to it). She'll hear the group approaching through the forest, and will decide to shadow them, much like Darksong. The difference is, neither the group nor Darksong is likely to detect her presence. She'll be planning to follow them to whatever they happen across, but usually remains far enough away so that *Kchalkch*, the glen's permanent resident, doesn't sense her.

Note: Effectively a sixth level Thief.
Alignment: Anarchist.
Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 15, M.A. 8, P.S. 8, P.P. 11, P.E. 9, P.B. 18, Spd. 15 (45 in flight).
Hit Points: 33. **S.D.C.:** 11. **P.P.E.:** 23.
Natural A.R.: 9
Natural Abilities: Prowl (77%), Swim (77%), Climb (50%/40%), Track by smell (52%), nightvision: 90 feet (27.4 m), keen normal vision and hearing, turn invisible at will, see the invisible, and bio-regenerate 2D4 Hit Points/S.D.C. per melee round.
Attacks Per Melee: Three.
Bonuses: +2 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge, and +2 to save vs magic or poison.
Damage: Bite: 1D6. Claws: 1D4. Or, the creature may use weapons. Shelandra currently is unarmed, but that will change before the adventure is done...
Magic Items: None.

The Sand Forest

Gradually the ground of the forest changes, becoming more and more barren, with fewer plants, and fewer and fewer trees, until there are no living things around at all. Moreover, the ground is unusually sandy for this part of the country and sand encrusted pillars of soft stone rise up from the ground in places like stalagmites (typically 4-7 feet/1.2 to 2.1 m tall). Over the centuries, Spriggans have added their own stone pillars to add to the overall strange effect of the place.

The Glen

The glen is a quiet, beautiful valley hidden inside the Sand Forest. It is filled with wild flowers and tall grass, and at its center is a towering oak that must be a thousand years old. It is to the tree that Jaremy runs. He stops 30 yards/meters before the tree, puzzled by his own excitement and the contradicting sight before him. The young Wolfen mutters, "I . . . I don't understand it. This place . . . it . . . I mean . . . I know it's here! I saw it! Felt it!! But . . . now, it's different."

What lays before the adventurers is not a secret passage to the pirates' treasure hoard, but instead, the withered body of a Wolfen. The body is more corpse than alive, with vacant eye sockets and sagging flesh hanging from ancient bones. The roots of the great tree have snaked around the body like tendrils, and the body itself is partially sunken into the very tree trunk, indicating that it has been here for centuries! Resting in the Wolfen's lap is a dirt- and moss- encrusted sword. Despite the corpse-like appearance, the body seems somehow alive. A dozen Wing Tips hover above the eerie visage and another two dozen dart through the branches of the oak.

Those who can detect such things will sense the presence of both *magic* and psionics far greater than that radiated by the Wing Tips. Telepathic communication with the flying little rascals reveals little, only that they are here because of "the great sadness." They, themselves, are constantly projecting an empathic aura of happiness (and have been for centuries) to soothe the sorrow that radiates from the Wolfen. However, since the Wolfen isn't of a good alignment (nor is the sword), they will do nothing more on his behalf. Although they are able to, they will not act as interpreters for the unfortunate Wolfen. This makes the Wolfen corpse-thing hate them all the more. However, as long as he lives, they stay to comfort him as much as they can.

The Wolfen corpse-thing instantly senses the use of Telepathy or the presence of any psychic and attempts to communicate with them via Telepathy and/or Empathy. Young Jaremy was the unwitting subject of an empathic union with the thing, which explains his honest memories of the pirate hide-out; they were the implanted memories of the fallen Wolfen. Oddly enough, Darksong has never stumbled upon this tragic creature and may step out of hiding to examine it (he can sense the magic and psionics that radiate from the corpse-thing).

Game Master Note: The Syvan will definitely show himself if none of the player characters have the means to communicate with the creature. However, much to Darksong's dismay, the Wolfen corpse-thing will use its own exceptional psi-powers to increase the Syvan's telepathic union to broadcast its sad tale to everyone within 300 yards/meters.

Kchalkch's Story

The withered old Wolfen is, indeed, alive. And his dilemma is that he longs to die but can not!

His name is *Kchalkch* and he cannot die. Nor can he lose consciousness. His body is a mere weathered, leathery hide stretched over a skeleton. He has no eyes in the sockets, no tongue in his mouth, no nerves, no muscles. He should not be alive. He has not eaten or breathed in hundreds of years. Thus P.E. and Hit Points are virtually nonexistent and yet he still lives. As long as he remains with his cursed rune sword, *Mindprancer*, he will go on living. No matter what damage might be done to the worthless husk that is his body, even if it is burnt to ash and scattered, his consciousness will remain tied to the sword, which cannot be physically removed from beneath the tree unless he willingly gives it up. Even then, he cannot be free to die until the person who is given the sword *returns it* to where he found it at one of the pirate Jason's treasure hoards.

Kchalkch is a Wolfen who has lived for well over 1,000 years, very likely a few thousand years, but no accurate accounting can be made.

He can only be reached psionically, but Kchalkch's psychic sensing abilities are so acutely developed that he can see the world with an acuity that few other beings ever approach. He sees everything around him at all times. He is totally sincere in everything he says, and the group should have no reason to doubt him. **Note:** For Kchalkch, line of sight, and eye contact do not truly apply. He can "see" everything around him for quite a distance with his extremely sensitized psionic abilities.

His mind is fully awake and aware of his environment (at least as much as his psionics allow him), not in the least feeble-minded, or insane. He is quite lucid, but unable to relate to current history.

He is a wealth of information about the time long before the unification of the Twelve Tribes, even before the Eastern Territory was declared "The Domain of Man," and the battles fought in those days. He is happy to relate the incidents of his life, and tries as hard as he can to get the group to do him "one small favor." If only the group would take his sword back to where he found it. If they will, he'd be forever grateful. If the group is *good*, he appeals to their sense of goodness and compassion to get them to do this final service for a creature that needs to die. If the group is greedy, he tells them about the riches to be found at the pirates lair. If the group is evil or covets power, he works on that aspect of their nature. He is desperate, and will not take no for an answer, though there is little he can do about it. He believes that the only way he can be released from life is by the return of the sword to its original resting place.

Kchalkch learned of the rune sword's powers early on in his relationship with the weapon and capitalized on those powers. Sadly, it was only much later that he learned that immortality could be a curse and not a blessing. Despite immortality, his body did not heal any faster than normal. Yes, every wound would heal, given enough time, but with time his body aged normally. By age 70 he was ancient by Wolfen standards. In those days, Wolfen just didn't live longer than 30-40. By 200, he was beginning to get rather frail, and still he lived on. After 300 he began to look forward to death. However, Mindprancer would not let him die. Furthermore, it led him to believe that he could never be released from life.

Worse yet, the evil thing would not let him sleep. Before Kchalkch reached the age of four hundred, he had already endured more than 300 years of the "gift" of constant awareness. He lost the desire to do anything, even the desire to move. The rune sword's coaxing could not rouse him from his lethargy. As a result, Mindprancer desires no longer to remain with Kchalkch, something that had never happened to it before. So it has offered the Wolfen a way out. If he could only return it to the place he found it, the sword would release him, bring about a painless death and leave it free to find a new owner.

So Kchalkch began his final journey, to return to the pirates' cave where he found the sword so long ago. Only by this time the Wolfen was frail beyond belief, and it took him many years to return to the forest of Dragon's Claw, where he could retrace his steps to the pirates' cave. Unfortunately, centuries of crippling life had dulled his memory and he could not relocate the cave. After years of searching, Kchalkch finally collapsed at the glen, his ancient body finally failing him. He has sat waiting, leaned up against the giant oak tree, for hundreds of years. Over the centuries, the Wolfen's psionics have mutated into a Zen-like state of awareness, linked with his surroundings. The years of meditation have also restored his memory to crystal clarity, so he remembers exactly where the pirates' cave is located. Only the influence of the sword, Mindprancer, has prevented him from sinking into insanity, for which he is grateful.

Game Master Note: Once the existence of Mindprancer is made known, the Waternix will attempt to retrieve it. Mindprancer would be very pleased to be wielded by Shelandra. She is a young ninety years old and has a long natural life span and a suitable disposition. Although she dislikes all humanoids, she may work with the group as a scheme to get Mindprancer. After acquiring the sword, she'll desert them. However, if they meet again (perhaps in the pirates' cave), Mindprancer will encourage her to treat them well.

Darksong may covet the sword, but is far more interested in the rest of the pirates' treasure trove. Consequently, he will bide his time until it can be located. The sword can easily instill the cave's location in the mind of the one chosen to deliver it to the cave via a Telepathic implant that fades quickly over time. Note that the Syvan will hunt down and kill the Waternix if she should steal the sword from our heroes.

The sword doesn't care about what happens to Kchalkch, but it cannot realign itself to a new person unless it is returned to the treasure cave and the Wolfen dies. Until this happens, it is *powerless* as a rune weapon.

Kchalkch (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Aberrant Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 15, M.A. 20, P.S. Zero!, P.P. Zero!, P.E. 1, P.B. 4, Spd. Zero!
Hit Points: One! **S.D.C.:** Zero! **P.P.E.:** 10. **I.S.P.:** 1,000 (!).
Age: Unknown; born sometime long before the unification of the twelve tribes. At least one or two thousand years old!!
Experience Level: An unheard of *250*!
Combat Capabilities: Zero! This character is utterly unable to fight. He is an immobile corpse and does not use any psionic abilities against other life forms. Basically, he is a talking head for the player characters to interact with. Were he resurrected

somehow, he would probably be an extraordinarily powerful figure, what with his insanely high level of experience and all, but that is NOT what he wants. He sincerely just wishes to die.
Psionics: All Sensitive abilities.
Weapons: Just Mindprancer.
Armor, Magic Items, and Other Equipment: None.
Note: Kchalkch has an intense monochrome aura, appearing not at all Wolfen, but perhaps more like a being of pure energy. Even when using a Presence Sense, Kchalkch shines out above all the other presences around.

Mindprancer the Rune Sword

Mindprancer is a rather small black sword with only a faint indication of the runes etched along the length of its blade. If a psychic character uses the Object Read ability on the sword, he will learn certain things about its history.

The sword was first owned by an Elf named Lendor, who acquired it shortly before the final war between the Elves and Dwarves. Only the final maelstrom that burned much of the world was able to stop Lendor's evil plans. He lived for a short while as a disembodied spirit hovering near the sword after his body was atomized. Lendor was released from the sword because he possessed it for less than three months and the psi-link was not complete (takes 6 months). The sword was recovered and added to the relics of the legendary Elven Druids during their exodus to the Great Northern Wilderness.

Mindprancer lay without an owner for an uncounted time, for the sword could not tell the passage of time without a wielder. When the pirates came, Mindprancer was once again brought to life in the hands of the scoundrel named Jason. The human pirate established his base in the Northern Wilderness and hundreds, perhaps thousands, died on his mystic blade. Thanks to the wiles of Jason and the powers of Mindprancer, the Pirates of Dragon Claw reigned supreme for nearly 200 years. All Mindprancer knows is that one evening Jason left him on a table inside a secret cave and never returned. Linked as they were, Mindprancer could feel Jason's death on the surface above. Its last impressions from the pirate, the feeling of stupidity and the image of Wolfen.

Since Jason was Mindprancer's first linked owner, it is bound by the memories and life of its first master. Thus, the secret lair of Jason is the home of Mindprancer. Ultimately, it is the pirate cave of Jason that the rune sword must always be returned to.

The pirate base was lost to history and left untouched and forgotten for ages, until Kchalkch found it. Kchalkch was a fisherman, constantly looking for a bigger fish and a better fishing spot. He often fished in and around Dragon Claw. One day he was caught in a sudden storm that swept him and his boat along the coast and smashed it against a wall of rocks. When he awoke from unconsciousness, he found himself in a strange cavern. Fearful, Kchalkch reached for the first weapon he spied. As fate would have it, that weapon was Mindprancer.

The rest of Kchalkch's life is that of adventure. Some deeds good, others bad, all culminating into a life of apathy and pain.

If questioned, Kchalkch explains all this with a bitter recollection, for he never remembered the pirate's cave until he was old and physically deteriorating. The sword had kept him from remembering. Mindprancer would not allow Kchalkch to remain in the cave for fear he would find one of the other great rune swords more desirable than he. Mindprancer was happy to be alive again and would not risk losing life to another. Only now does Kchalkch realize how the sword had manipulated him with its psionics.

Mindprancer is a "Greatest Rune Sword" with an I.Q. of 22. He can communicate with his wielder, as can any rune sword with a personality, but is different in many ways from most known rune weapons.

Mindprancer has all common rune powers, plus a wide assortment of unique abilities, as follows:

Bonuses. Exceptionally lightweight and well balanced; +2 to strike and parry. Also adds bonuses to certain covert skills. These include: +20% to Scale Walls, +10% Concealment, +10% Palming, +10% Prowl, +10% Sleight of Hand, and adds the skill: W.P. Paired Weapons.

Alter Alignment (Sword only). Mindprancer quickly takes on the alignment of his wielder, but is still uncertain of the scope of his own powers. Mindprancer has only had three owners in all the time he has existed: Lendor, the Elf assassin, Jason, the human pirate, and Kchalkch, the Wolfen.

Conceal Magic Aura (Sword only). The sword radiates powerful magic, but might actually be missed when Sense Magic is done because of special mystic shields that conceal its true aura. A first look should reveal "some magic;" 01-50% likelihood, while a roll of 51-00% means *no* magic is sensed at all. A second or third look is necessary to see its true mystic nature.

An Assassin's Blade. Mindprancer is a short sword designed for the sole purpose of cutting throats and murder. Intended as an assassin's weapon, it is indestructible, eternally sharp, and does *4D6 damage* when used in battle. If used as its designers intended (this means a strike to the neck), it inflicts *double damage* even to supernatural beings and creatures of magic such as angels, demons and dragons. Such a strike must be a *Called Shot* by the user.

The Power of Immobilization. A unique feature of this assassin's sword is the power to render a victim completely incapable of movement (saving throw versus magic is 16). This power can only be used once per day, but can be maintained indefinitely, as long as the victim remains within 20 feet (6.1 m) of the sword. Once immobilized, the assassin can simply walk up to the victim and slay him. The helpless person cannot cry out physically, magically, or psionically! Wards and circles near the victim may fend off the assassin or help save vs mystic attack.

Psionics, the Subtle Art of Manipulation. Mindprancer also possesses certain psionic powers that it can use to help the one who wields it, or to manipulate the actions of its wielder. When the sword's alignment is evil or Anarchist, it will often manipulate the person it calls "master" for its own malevolent reasons. (Remember, the sword assumes the alignment of the person it links with. Thus, if evil, the sword will become and act evil.)

Its psionic powers include:
Healing: Select six.
Physical: Select six.
Sensitive: Select six.

Super Psionics: Hypnotic Suggestion and two others of choice, except for Psi-Sword and Psi-Shield.

Total I.S.P.: 140; all abilities are equal to an eighth level Mind Mage!

The Power of Awareness. Another unique power of the sword is that it instills its master with an immunity to sleep, fatigue, and charms of any nature. Even a blow to the head will not knockout the person linked to the sword. However, after 2D6 decades, not only does the blade make its master impervious to magic and psionic sleep and charms, but also to natural sleep.

The Curse of Continual Awareness. As desirable as it may seem at first, to never lose consciousness does have its drawbacks. When the blade was first formed, the powers that were placed into it exceeded its designers' expectations. Not needing to sleep seemed to make it easier to accomplish so much more in life. The body itself still experiences a certain amount of fatigue and physical wear and tear. However, periodic rest, not full sleep, is required. An unforeseen side effect is that, eventually, the senses become more acute. The sword's owner becomes aware of every little sound and movement. But while this can be of great value, it is also a curse. Resting while fully awake quickly becomes a bore. The sword's owner can never quite relax and grows increasingly edgy and anxious, plagued by the constant stimulation of sight and sound. The awareness also makes the character much more attuned to the pains of his own body; a cut, bruise, illness, hunger, etc., are all gnawing sensations, like an itch that can't be scratched. Even if a limb is severed, he will remain fully conscious and aware of it. Bonuses: +5 on initiative, +1 to parry, +2 to dodge; cannot be knocked out, stunned, or charmed. Penalties: A prevailing melancholy and lasting anxiety and listlessness that can lead to extreme mood swings and paranoia.

The power of immortality means the wielder of the sword will never die as long as he is linked to the rune weapon. Even if his head is severed from his body, he will continue to live, and because of the curse of continual awareness, he will be conscious of it all. If his head is reattached to the body, it will eventually heal, but only after an extended recovery period (5D6 months). If the head is not reattached, he will continue to live anyway, but in a significant amount of discomfort. Physical damage and poison cause pain but not death. Even if the body is completely destroyed, the poor creature's spirit will remain alive and trapped with the sword.

To be free of the sword and of immortality, the weapon must be *returned* to the pirates' cave where it was found. This can only be done by its owner, or by an individual to whom the weapon has been freely given – but only for the purpose of returning it. The person chosen to return the weapon must also agree to do so willingly. With all parties in agreement, the sword can be taken away from the owner. However, the rune weapon is nearly powerless when in the hands of somebody other than its owner. Only the immortal person to which it is linked can use the sword at its full mystic power.

Mindprancer has the following abilities when used by someone other than its owner: **1.** Radiates magic but has no magic powers. **2.** Can communicate telepathically only with the person who carries it. Has no other psionic abilities. **3.** Is basically a normal short sword inflicting 2D6 damage. **4.** It cannot link with anybody else nor utilize its magic until the previous owner is dead. The previous owner can die only when the rune sword is returned to the pirates' cave. This will *instantly* destroy the pre-existing link (the previous owner immediately falls over dead without the sword's magic) and enable Mindprancer to find a new owner.

Trek to a Dead Pirate's Treasure

If Kchalkch's plea for death does not touch the characters' hearts, then the promise of fabulous wealth and ancient magic should appeal to their greed. Any Elf in the group should feel compelled to investigate if only to restore part of Elven history. The existence of Jason the Pirate, and his Elven treasure hoard could change the world's view of history and perhaps, the Wolfen. Those without lofty, philanthropic motives should be salivating over the vast wealth that may await them.

Both the Syvan and Waternix will offer to take the rune sword (that is, if either has revealed themselves yet), but Kchalkch and Mindprancer will prefer one of the *player characters* to take charge of returning the sword. **(G.M. Note:** Kchalkch will desire a good character to take the sword, while Mindprancer will prefer an Anarchist or Aberrant one.) The choice is Kchalkch's. If the Waternix and Syvan are still secretly following the group, they will continue to do so until the treasure is found.

The Pirate Base

Once a courier is chosen, Mindprancer will direct him, step by step, to the location of the pirate base. The rune sword has only a fraction of its abilities until a new master can be found, so it desires to be free of Kchalkch as much as the Wolfen longs to be free of it.

The journey to the pirate coast is a good ten day trek on foot; four on horseback. The young Wolfen, Jaremy, will be ecstatic about this journey and recite the many stories (and he knows many) he has heard about the treasure, magic swords, sea serpents said to guard the treasure, the ghost of Jason the Pirate, and numerous other tall tales. Good characters may not want to take Jaremy on this potentially dangerous journey, however, they can't just leave him in the glen to return to town alone (it is a three day trip through dangerous woodlands to escort him back to town). Furthermore, the obstinate youngster insists that he'll only follow them if they try to leave him behind. "Besides," snorts Jaremy, "I'm the one who got you this far. This is as much my adventure as anybody else's, an' nobody's gonna cheat me outta my cut of the loot!" Ah, the foolishness of youth!

Game Master Note: The trip through the forest can be fraught with danger. However, our band of champions luckily avoid trouble. Game Masters should skip ahead to their arrival at the pirates' cove. However, if you're dead set on encounters along the way, you can use the encounter tables found elsewhere in this book. Or you can come up with your own ideas. This is a pretty wild area, with roving bands of Orcs, Goblins, Coyles,

Bearmen, and even an occasional Algor Giant, not to mention bears, wolves and tigers.

The Pirate's Cove

The path to the pirate base is down the side of a treacherous looking cliff. Actually, the climb is not nearly as steep and dangerous as it looks when standing 900 feet (274.3 m) above crashing waves. The characters have enough time to reach the bottom, find and enter the cave, replace the sword, and climb back to safety to avoid the rapid rise of the water that comes with high tide. Or so Mindprancer assures them.

Game Master Notes: A) No boat could survive the treacherous waves or the rapid rise and fall of water in this area. The group should have no explanation for the ability of the pirates to maintain a base here, other than magic. **B)** The ability to travel underwater would certainly be a bonus in completing their mission. **C)** Low tide will last about one hour. **D)** Since the region immediately outside the pirate base is under water half the time, it is only natural that certain water creatures frequent the area. The group will have to get past a few of them to reach the pirates'secret cave.

Near the Entrance

There is a sizable tribe of Kappa living in the deep water off the cove, and they control the Snaggled Tooth Gobbler sea serpent that lives here. If the group is noisy or destructive, the Kappa send out the Snaggled Tooth Gobbler to attack them. The Kappa are intolerant of land dwellers and they send their sea serpent to chase off or devour troublemakers. They have only moved into this region a few centuries ago, so they don't know, nor care, anything about the pirates'cave or its treasure trove.

The Snaggled Tooth Gobbler does communicate by extended telepathy, but will not be turned aside from its task of eating or chasing away intruders. If communication is established, it will be congenial, but it is not very bright (I.Q. 4), and must obey its tiny masters. It calls itself Fang.

Fang the Sea Serpent (Quick Stats)

Snaggled Tooth Gobbler
Alignment: Anarchist.
Attributes: I.Q. 4, M.E. 5, M.A. 5, P.S. 30, P.P. 15, P.E. 20, P.B. 3, Spd. 44 swimming (30 mph/48 km).
Hit Points.: 200. **S.D.C.:** 350. **P.P.E.:** 30. **I.S.P.:** 50.
Natural A.R.: 10 and **Horror Factor:** 14.
Attacks Per Melee: Three physical or psionic attacks.
Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge, +15 to damage, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, and +3 to save on all other saving throws.
Psionics: Three physical powers and two sensitive powers; G.M.'s choice. Plus, Telepathy.
Damage: Bite: 5D6. Fire breath: 4D6+6 out to 40 feet (12 m). Head butt: 3D6. Full speed ram (two attacks): 1D6x10.
Note: Fang will fight until it is down to its last 50 Hit Points and then swim away like a torpedo, whimpering and whining all the way. If he is not killed, he returns to his Kappa masters to be healed. There is a 01-39% chance that a band of 4D4 Kappa warriors are sent out to investigate within 6D6+30 minutes. If the land dwelling interlopers appear not to be a serious threat and leave soon (within 8 hours), the Kappa will not bother with them. If they believe the land dwellers are setting up a permanent base camp, they will attack. The Kappa King is a sixth level Water Warlock.

Typical Kappa Warrior (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Anarchist.
Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 10, M.A. 10, P.S. 20, P.P. 15, P.E. 20, P.B. 10, Spd. 5 (on dry land), 200 (swimming underwater, that's about 135 mph/216 km).
Hit Points: 60. **S.D.C.:** 30. **P.P.E.:** 10.
Natural A.R.: 13 and **Horror Factor:** 12.
Experience Level: 2nd level Mercenary.
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Bonuses: +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +2 to strike, +4 to parry or dodge, +5 to damage, +10% to save vs coma/death, and +3 to save vs magic and poison.
Weapons: Trident (2D6; small). They can also crush with their claw hand for 2D6 damage or use it as a clubbing appendage for 1D6+2.

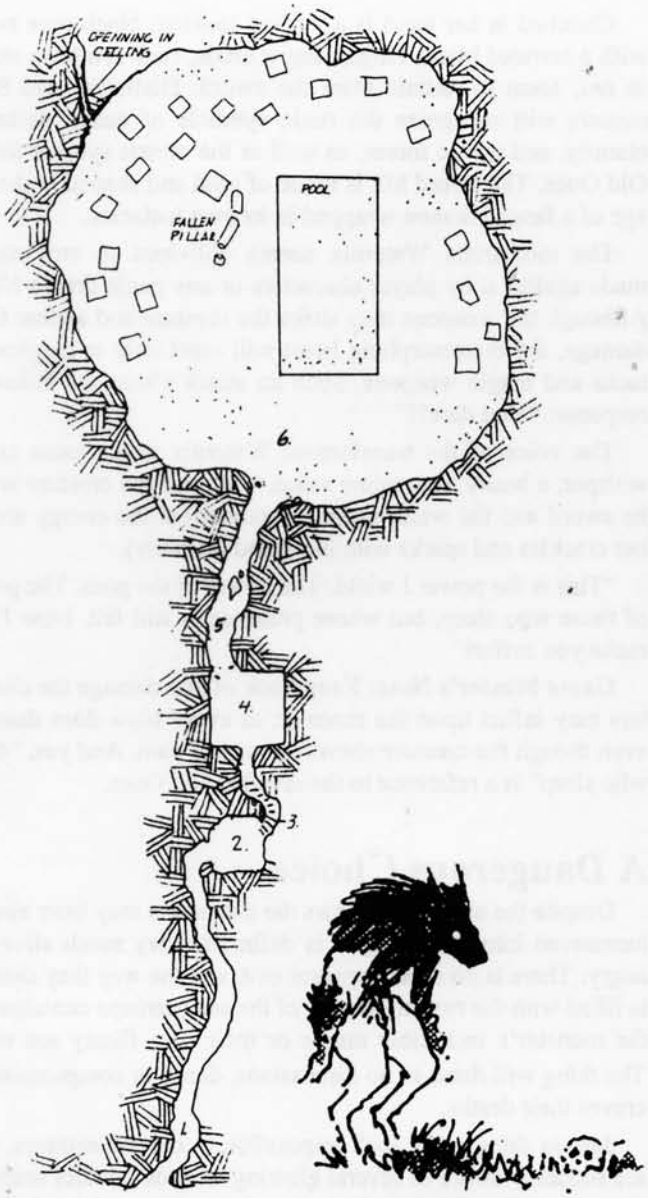
Kappa King (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Miscreant.
Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 13, M.A. 13, P.S. 20, P.P. 17, P.E. 20, P.B. 10, Spd. 5 (on dry land), 200 (swimming underwater, 135 mph/216 km).
Hit Points: 70. **S.D.C.:** 40. **P.P.E.:** 180.
Natural A.R.: 13 and **Horror Factor:** 12.
Experience Level: 6th level Water Warlock.
Attacks Per Melee: Five physical or two by Elemental Spells.
Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +2 to pull punch, +10% to save vs coma/death, and +3 to save vs magic and poison. Critical strike on a roll of 18-20.
Spells (Water Warlock): Cloud of Steam, Salt Water to Fresh, Change Current, Ride the Waves, Calm Waters, Impervious to Ocean Depths, Communicate with Sea Creatures, Water Wisps, Protection from Lightning, Whirlpool, Hurricane, and Summon Sharks or Whales.
Weapons: Trident (3D6; magical and returns when thrown). He can also crush with his claw hand for 2D6 or use it as a clubbing appendage for 1D6+2.

Inside the Cave

Any Warlock should realize immediately that the pirates' secret base could only have been built through the control of Water Elementals.

1. Inside the cave's mouth it is dark and wet. The natural entrance is a winding tunnel that runs for about 300 feet (91.5 m), and it is extremely slippery. At first, the tunnel slopes down and then, near the end, upward. It is always tall enough and wide enough for two Wolfen to walk erect and side by side. At the end of the tunnel are the remains of the old sea wall constructed by the pirates. It has collapsed centuries ago, exposing the chambers beyond to the sea.



2. This is the chamber that the sword must be placed in. There is a stone table on either side, and the one that Kchalkch indicated is on the left. The floor is covered with sand and sea shells, but nothing of value is to be seen. There is an opening at the far end of the chamber. There are also a number of heavily corroded metal structures on the walls near the entrance that were once the mechanisms for opening and closing the sea wall.

Mindprancer instructs his courier that this is the right place and to lay him down. A moment after being put on the table, he says, "You have done well. Kchalkch has at last found the eternal peace he so long desired. Now let's get out of here. Who wants me?"

The rune sword will coax the characters to have one of them pick him up and claim it for himself. Mindprancer does not wish to spend the next few eons dormant at the bottom of the sea. If asked about the other treasure, the self-serving sword feigns ignorance and speculates that it was found and plundered long ago. "Now let's get going. Not much time till high tide." Ignoring the sword and investigating further reveals the following . . .

3. An opening worn smooth by the action of the water. However, a discerning eye may notice traces that this opening has been enlarged. Near the opening are the corroded remains of metal fittings that once held up the secondary sea wall. Steps have been cut into the passageway beyond the opening. The passage is extremely slippery, but its upward spiral may beckon to the curious. The characters should realize that if they wish to explore further, they may not have time to exit before the water begins to rise. This will mean *drowning* unless there is another way out or the sea wall is rebuilt via magic.

4. Okay, they've taken the risk and quickly ascend the stairs. The main entry chamber is a large, 30 by 30 foot (9x9 m) room with a small opening in the west wall from which the characters have just exited. The walls are damp all the way to the roof of this chamber, which is about twenty feet (6.1 m) up. The ceiling also has a number of small fissures running across it that are dripping water. Wet sand covers the floor. Near the entrance, the sand is easily two feet (0.6 m) deep, but thins out as you get further across the room (only 5 or 6 inches deep at the farthest point). There is also a rectangular, 10 foot (3 m) wide, 10 foot (3 m) tall, opening in the far wall that may once have been a door. If the group returns to the surface now, they will still get out before the water starts rising. Other than some broken pottery and unidentifiable pieces of rusted metal, there is nothing to be found in this chamber.

5. This is another tunnel that runs about 90 feet (27.4 m) to the east. Unlike the others, it does not appear to be a natural formation. Warlocks and Summoners in the group should recognize it as the handiwork of an Earth Elemental.

6. The tunnel opens into a huge natural cavern. In the center of the sand and seaweed covered floor is a large artificial pond, rectangular in shape. A number of small stone huts are scattered around the pond. The huts are all similar in construction, each being about ten feet (3 m) square, with a single three foot (0.9 m) wide, seven foot (2.1 m) tall opening in the side furthest from the entry tunnel. A flat stone roof tops the water-beaten structures.

The pond is filled with relatively clean seawater. One end of the pond is 12 feet (3.6 m) deep, the other end, closest to the entrance, is slightly over three feet (0.9 m) deep. A layer of about a foot and a half (0.45 m) of sand covers the bottom of the pond, just as six inches to a foot of sand covers the entire floor of this chamber.

One of the player characters (Game Master's choice) will stub his toe on a rock jutting from the sand. Glancing down at it, he or she should notice the rock has an odd shape. Bending over for a closer look, or nudging it loose with one's foot, shows it to be a marble statue of an Elf in ancient regalia. Moving the statue also reveals a glimmer of yellow and a crunching sound underfoot. Mucking around in the sand produces an Old Kingdom Dragon coin with all its gems (value is 5000 gold!). Digging around a little more produces two more gem-laden Dragon coins, and a dozen Elven Kril coins. The crunching sound underfoot is the sound of coins being stepped on.

Rummaging through the sand sends young Jaremy hooting and hollering in excitement; the entire floor is covered in gold! Anybody with the right knowledge of history or precious metals realizes that the coins are from the earliest days of the Old Kingdom, and are worth far more than their weight in gold as artifacts. The booty in this chamber is worth millions!

Game Master Note: The chamber appears to have no other entrance/exit. Nor is there any apparent or immediate danger.

However, sensing for magic and/or psionics will indicate an abundance of both. A psychic Presence Sense indicates *many* presences, although those who can See the Invisible will see only the Syvan and the Waternix who have followed the group to this chamber (or joined the party earlier).

At this point, an eerie feeling washes over the entire party. Nothing specific, but a sense of uneasiness, like the feeling that someone is looking over your shoulder, but when you turn to look, nobody is there.

Suddenly, each of the heroes hears their name being called to them in a deep, husky whisper. It is not like a whisper one hears, but rather a Telepathic transmission directly into their minds, something only they can pick up. At first, even though everybody in the party is receiving generally the same transmission, the heroes might think that only they are receiving any kind of message. Again the whisper calls their names saying, "Come and drink the power of the gods. Come to me, so that we may become one and, together, rule this world." The whisper fades and the characters each turn, without thinking, toward the toppled pillar near the pond. They stand for a moment as if dazed or lost in thought, simply staring at the pillar. Then, as if roused from a dream, their heads clear. The voice is gone.

Astute characters should realize that they were all hearing this strange voice at the same time. Characters with any level of psionics will feel a swell of psychic energy and magic.

Any good characters who walk within 15 feet (4.6 m) of the pillar are knocked off their feet and hurled 10 feet (3 m) away from the pillar by a Telekinetic blast. Evil or Anarchist characters who approach the pillar hear the voice encouraging them to come closer, saying, "Yes, come, come and seize your destiny. Welcome the power of the gods and shape your world into your own image."

Before any player character can take any further action, Darksong or Jaremy shouts something like: "Oh no! We waited too long! The water! The water's coming in!!"

Indeed, the excitement and mystery of the moment has made the characters lose their sense of time. It is high tide. If the group has reached this chamber, and have not taken precautions to stop the rising water, they may drown here.

Within one melee (15 seconds), the water has risen above their ankle is and increasing rapidly. Only sealing the tunnel with a magic wall of stone can stop the onslaught of the encroaching sea. The entire chamber will be filled within 3D4 minutes.

If the characters have erected a sea wall, they will hear the rush of water echoing in the chamber. They will have to spend the night, until low tide, or find another way out.

Suddenly, Darksong screams: "What is she doing? Nooooo! Stop her!" But before anybody can take action, Shelandra the Waternix will have emerged from the shadows (perhaps forgotten by the heroes until this point) and draws a rune sword from behind the pillar.

Instantly, she grows to 20 feet (6.1 m) tall, crackling with mystic energy. Her fur begins to drop off in clumps to reveal heaving muscles under a dark red skin. The feathers of her wings shrivel, only to be replaced by gnarled bone and leathery membranes.

Clutched in her hand is a wicked looking, black rune sword with a serrated blade. Huge, almost crude, rune symbols, etched in red, seem to radiate from the sword. Diabolists and Summoners will recognize the runic symbols of death, darkness, eternity, and magic forces, as well as the mystic symbol for the Old Ones. The sword hilt is made of gold and shaped in the image of a fanged demon wrapped in its own tentacles.

The monstrous Waternix seems oblivious to any attacks made against it by player characters or any panic driven NPCs. Although the weapons may strike the creature and appear to do damage, the metamorphing beast will react only to magical attacks and magic weapons. Such an attack elicits the following response: "You dare?!"

The voice of the transformed Waternix is the same as the whisper, a husky, masculine voice. With this the creature waves its sword and the water instantly recedes (or the energy around her crackles and sparks with increased intensity).

"This is the power I wield. The power of the gods. The power of those who sleep, but whose presence is still felt. Now I will make you suffer!"

Game Master's Note: Keep track of any damage the characters may inflict upon the monster, as every blow does damage, even though the creature shows no sign of pain. And yes, "those who sleep" is a reference to the dreaded Old Ones.

A Dangerous Choice

Despite the number of blows the characters may have already hammered into this thing, it is definitely very much alive and angry. There is no other apparent exit, and the way they came in is filled with the rushing waters of the sea (perhaps contained by the monster's incredible magic or their own flimsy sea wall). The thing will listen to no discussions, deals, or compromises; it craves their deaths.

Just as things may look impossible to our adventurers, they are suddenly aware of several glowing weapon handles scattered throughout the chamber. Each is aglow with magic and calling out to each one of them, saying things like: "Take me, I will serve you well." "I am your only hope." "Quickly, grab me or you will die." "Brave warrior, together we will smite this evil." and "Do not hesitate. Without my help, you – and your friends – will perish. But with me . . ."

If Mindprancer is present, he will identify the sword that has transformed the Waternix as "one of the Great Dwarven Demon Blades, also known as *God Slayers.* This particular blade is *Necrom, the Undying, Bringer of War."*

The Dwarven Demon Blades are things of legend and reputed to be the most powerful of all rune weapons. No Demon Blade has ever been seen since the last days of the Elf -Dwarf Wars over 5,000 years ago. Mindprancer is at a loss as to advising the group about the other rune weapons that continue to call out to them, saying only, "I am great, but I alone have no chance of defeating Necrom."

The characters can select one of the other rune weapons or rely on their own resources. The choice is left to each individual player as to how his character will react. There should be enough rune weapons for all, or most, player characters who may want one. Of course, there is no telling what affect any of

these mystic weapons will have on the characters. Heck, this could be an evil plot to turn them *all* into monsters. Nobody knows. Darksong, the Syvan, reaches for a rune sword only inches away, but stops, turns, and draws his own weapon. He is apparently not willing to take the chance, at least not at this time (he'd prefer to use Mindprancer if possible).

The Death Duel

The fight with the monster controlled by Necrom is to the death. Our heroes have no recourse but to fight or die! G.M.s, when running the events from here on out, you might wish to consider the following:

1. The characters do not, necessarily, have to use the other rune weapons to fight the Necrom monster. Although hideously powerful, Necrom is vulnerable to all types of attacks, and the adventurers may have the power to defeat him on their own. However, Necrom is mean and merciless, making this battle a bloody one.

2. Though the characters fear otherwise, only Necrom instantly links with and transforms any who touches it. Consequently, the characters can use the other rune weapons in this combat and discard them afterward with comparatively little ill effects. Major curses and problems *will* manifest themselves only if a character keeps the weapon (the link is complete within 3D6 days).

3. Unfortunately, there is no way to save the Waternix. Necrom must be killed to end his terror, but to kill him means the Waternix will also perish. If he is left to live, Necrom will escape the cave at the next low tide and plague the countryside.

4. Anybody who touches the Necrom Demon Blade after the battle will be likewise instantly transformed and the conflict renewed, thus it should be left where it falls. Necrom remembers all of his lives and will crave revenge for his recent defeat at their hands. Necrom starts at full power at the beginning of each new incarnation.

The following are the descriptions for Necrom and the other rune weapons. Let the battle begin.

Necrom, The Rune Sword

The famous Dwarven Demon Blades were swords created toward the end of the Elf -Dwarf War when the Dwarves began to use demonic forces to help them win. Ultimately, this horrible alliance with the demonic would result in the end of Dwarven civilization and deal the Elves a blow from which they could never recover.

Like all of the greater and greatest rune weapons, the Demon Blades possessed powers and abilities not intended by their creators, and were often beyond the control of those who made or used them. The Demon Swords were the most powerful, evil, and uncontrollable of them all.

Necrom is one such weapon. The sword was designed to transform its wielder into an unstoppable juggernaut; a super warrior. Little did the ancient Dwarven runesmith responsible realize that he was tapping into the evil of the Old One known as *Tarm-kin-toe*, symbol of hatred, treachery, vengeance, and pain.

Elven history that chronicles the great war speaks often of the atrocities of the Dwarven "Demon Warrior," Necrom, the Undying. Legend says that though Necrom died a hundred deaths, he would rise again, like the Phoenix, to extract his vengeance against Elves and all things living. There are several passages that describe atrocities that made his Dwarven masters weep and beg for mercy on the behalf of their Elven enemies. There are even accounts of three separate occasions when Dwarven warriors, allegedly, battled against Necrom to stop him from extracting vengeance too terrible for even the most hardened warrior to allow.

Then, one day, Necrom died and did not return. The Elves assumed that they had at last destroyed the fiend. A few decades later, the war ended. How the hell-spawned sword fell into the possession of the Druids is a mystery. The fact that the pirates did not ever use it is a miracle. But now, Necrom is back, ready to fulfill the mission he was created for, to destroy Elvenkind and all who stand in his way.

Game Master Note: Necrom could be yet another vehicle that could hasten a war between the Wolfen and humans. In order to destroy the Elves, he would gladly join the Wolfen to crush the beings that call Elves friend!

Type: Flamberge. (Though anybody transformed into the giant Necrom can wield the weapon in one hand without penalty.)
Alignment: Diabolic Evil.
Damage: 5D6, triple to Angels and Gods of Light, or any supernatural or creature of magic who is of a Scrupulous or Principled alignment.
Powers: Other than those common to all rune weapons, Necrom has only one power, and that is it instantly and permanently transforms its user into a gigantic, supernatural version of his former self.

The transformed victim is the flesh and blood extension of the rune sword itself. Thus, Necrom, who is both sword and giant, will only strike using its fists or blade. If Necrom drops the sword (almost an impossibility), he still remains Necrom, but will make every effort to regain it to become "whole" again. Anyone who touches the sword while the embodiment of Necrom exists suffers burning pain and 4D6 damage, and the giant will feel itself being violated. The sword can NOT be read by psionics.

Necrom the Undying (Quick Stats)

Anyone who touches this rune sword is instantly transformed into Necrom. There is no saving throw! The demonic blade will always first address its potential new owner, beckoning him or her with promises of power. A feeling of evil and dread accompanies this little telepathic conversation, alluding to the evil nature of the weapon. This will usually limit the sword's victims to fellow evil beings, the greedy, and the foolish. The transformation turns the victim into a gigantic, demonic version of himself. His flesh becomes red and leathery, losing all body hair, gains bulging muscles, and grows to 20 feet (6.1 m) in height. All of the statistics and features listed below supersede those of the victim. In the event the character has a statistic higher than Necrom's, then the Necrom stats are added on to the victim's stats.

Race: Demonic giant!
Alignment: Diabolic!
Attributes: I.Q. 8, M.A. 16, M.E. 16, P.S. 41 (Supernatural), P.P. 22, P.E. 16, P.B. 4, Spd. 16
Hit Points: 500, plus that of the host.
S.D.C.: 1,000, plus that of the host.
Natural A.R.: 14
Horror Factor: 18
Height: 20 feet (6.1 m). **Weight:** 3,000 lbs (1,350 kg).
Age: Ageless. Those transformed into Necrom no longer age. They have become the Undying, an immortal machine of war, destruction and demonic torment.
Special Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36.5 m), see the invisible, bio-regenerates 1D4x10 points per melee round, Climb/Scale Walls 98%, Swim 98%, Track (humanoids) 50%, Land Navigation 75%, Basic Math 98%, speaks all languages 98%, and is literate in Elven.
Attacks Per Melee: Eight!
Damage: Restrained punch: 2D6, full strength punch or kick: 1D6x10, power punch or kick (counts as two attacks): 2D6x10. Any attacks with the rune sword Necrom inflict damage on top of whatever supernatural strength damage the giant inflicts. Because Necrom is a creature of magic, even a punch or kick is considered to be an attack by a magic weapon.
Bonuses (includes attribute bonuses): +4 on initiative, +5 to strike, parry, and dodge, +7 to strike with the rune sword, +4 to pull punch, +1 to save vs magic, psionics, and poison attacks, and is impervious to Horror Factor, possession, and disease.
Psionics: All Sensitive psi-powers *except* Astral Projection, Sixth Sense, and Total Recall, all performed at 5th level proficiency.
Magic: Impervious to spells, wards, and circles of *imprisonment*, including Immobilize (no effect whatsoever, just walks right out), Carpet of Adhesion, Magic Net, and even Petrification. He can also Dispel Magic Barriers 4x daily, and perform each of the following two times a day: Negate Magic, Levitate Self, Part Waters, Walk the Waves, Calm Storms, Extinguish Fires, Ignite Fire, Energy Bolt, Stone to Flesh and Close Fissures. All magic is at 10th level proficiency.
Purpose: To destroy all Elves. Consequently, any Elves in the group are his first targets.

Other Rune Weapons

Wyndstrom, The Soul Drinker

Type: Bastard Sword.
Alignment: Aberrant.
Damage: 6D6
Powers: In addition to the standard seven abilities common to all rune weapons, Wyndstrom has the following:

- Drink the souls of its enemies. This can be done as often as six times per 24 hour period. Whenever an attempt to drink a soul is made, the victim of the attack endures double damage. If the attack kills the opponent, his soul is drunk by the sword.
- Four Fire Elemental spells can be cast per day: Fire Ball (6D6 damage), Cloud of Steam, Cloud of Ash, and Blue Flame. All are at 6th level strength.
- **The curse:** The sword is honorable, but evil. As such, it will try to corrupt its master into thinking its way: Aberrant evil. Furthermore, it inflicts upon its owner the Curse of Vulnerability: -2 on all saving throws, cannot roll with impact, and, in this case, reduced healing (normal medical restores only one Hit Point per day and magic or psionic healings are at half).

Lytsong, The Redeemer

Type: Broadsword.
Alignment: Unprincipled.
Damage: 4D6 plus bonuses to the wielder of +1 to strike, parry, and dodge when using the sword.
Powers: Other than those common to all rune weapons, Lytsong has the following:

- Adds 20 Hit Points to its master.
- Clerical Abilities: Healing Touch (3D6 Hit Points) six times a day, chance to turn 4D6 dead 01-68% six times a day, double damage to devils and demons.

• Four Air Elemental spells can be cast per day: Call Lightning (6D6 damage), Dissipate Gases, Breath of Life, and Invisible Wall. All are at 6th level strength.

• **The curse:** The sword has the Curse of Rags (a worse version than normal) to keep the owner humble. Rags causes clothing and armor (including magical) to deteriorate. Clothes that is worn or are carried by the victim become tattered rags within a week, armor loses 10 S.D.C. a day until useless (magic armor loses one point per day), and other items on the person, such as belts, straps, pouches, snap or break within the same period.

Sidian, The Schemer

Type: War Hammer.
Alignment: Scrupulous.
Damage: 5D6
Powers: Other than those common to all rune weapons, Sidian has the following:

• The rune hammer can turn itself invisible, but can still be seen by its master (+3 to strike and parry when invisible).

• Six Magic Spells can be cast at will: Invisibility (self), Mesmerism, See the Invisible, Tongues, Mask of Deceit, and Detect Poison. All are at 6th level strength. Sidian has a store of 150 P.P.E. to empower these spells. It regains lost P.P.E. at a rate of 10 per hour.

• **The curse:** Insanity befalls the wielder of this rune weapon. Within a few short weeks, the victim of the curse becomes *paranoid*; always suspecting that people are scheming against him and situations are not what they appear. Actually, this adds a +2 on initiative rolls, but also makes sleep and peace of mind difficult (reduce Hit Points and the P.E. and P.B. attributes by 2 points from lack of rest and anxiety). He also has a *phobia* about dragons for reasons unknown.

Al-Mar-Syzzn, the Defender

Type: Battle Axe.
Alignment: Principled.
Damage: 5D6, but does double damage against the *undead, creatures of magic* and *evil supernatural beings* (including dragons, sphinxes, demons and Necrom).
Powers: Other than those common to all rune weapons, Al-Mar-Syzzn has the following:

• Enables its master to understand, read, and write *all* languages at 66% efficiency (does not include magic symbols or runes).

• Four Earth Elemental spells can be cast: Rock to Mud, Encase Object in Stone, Wall of Stone, and Travel Through Stone. 110 P.P.E. is available per day to power these spells.

• **The curse:** Spoilage rots the food and spoils the drinks owned by the master of this axe. Consequently, the character can never own any food items, and must always beg provisions from another or buy them fresh and eat them within the hour. This individual is also *obsessed* with collecting rare Elven toys.

Mindbender, the Tormentor

Type: Short Sword.
Alignment: Miscreant, loves to torture and abuse others.
Damage: 4D6
Powers: Other than those common to all rune weapons, Mindbender has the following:

• The master of the sword saves vs psionics the same as a Mind Mage, 10 or higher.

• Psionic Powers include *all* Physical psi-powers and the Super-Psionic abilities Bio-Manipulation ("Evil Eye"), Cause Insanity, Cure Insanity, Insert Memory and Induce Nightmares. Total I.S.P. is 100 per day (recovers I.S.P. same as a Mind Mage).

• **The curse:** The owner of this malicious sword is plague by the curses of Hallucinatory Noises and Phantom Odors. These are somewhat different from the known curses of other swords. The sword owner becomes jumpy and skittish, because he often experiences strange sounds and smells. If the sword is in a mean mood, or if its "master" didn't follow one of its suggestions, then his dreams may be haunted by nightmares as well. The result of this is a *phobia* (fear) of the invisible and a distrust and dislike of magic. Sleepless nights and a nervous condition creates the following penalties: -1 on initiative, -1 from P.B. attribute, and a skill penalty of -20% when trying to perform a skill under stressful circumstances.

After the Battle

This adventure pretty much ends with the destruction or incapacitation of the giant, Necrom. All that remains is escaping the cave and dividing up the loot. Or is it?

1. If the seawater is being kept at bay by Necrom's magic (Part Waters), then it will come flooding in the moment he is slain. The tidal wave flings everybody against the far wall, inflicting a mere 1D6 damage, but with a 01-44% chance of knocking the person out! Unconscious characters will drown within six melees.

As the group is swirling around, rising toward the ceiling, one of them should spot a hole in the ceiling, like a crevice or narrow tunnel. The tunnel is only three feet (0.9 m) wide and very steep, about a 90 degree ascent. A human-size person can squeeze through fairly easily, although slowly (half normal speed). Wolfen and other large creatures can struggle through this tiny tunnel only if they abandon their armor, and even then there is a 01-67% chance that they will get stuck and can *not* go any further – roll percentile dice for every 10 feet (3 m) traveled. Fortunately, the water will stop about 20 feet (6 m) up the tunnel.

The narrow passage continues upward about 120 feet (36.5 m) and ends in a small cave, 20x10x8 feet (6x3x2.4 m) in size. The walls seem to indicate that the chamber may have connected with another cavern or passage, but these have been buried by numerous cave-ins over the centuries. No amount of digging will get our band of adventurers to the surface (they're still about 500 feet/152.4 m underground). Now they'll have to wait until the water subsides, about 11 hours from now.

2. The next problem will be healing the wounded. Even if the characters erected a sea wall, they'll have to wait till the water subsides to get out. Reaching the surface may be emotionally rewarding, but remember, the group is days from civilization. Medical aid will have to come from their own members.

3. Dividing the treasure. The amount of gold inside this cavern is incredible and also weighs tons! A typical gold coin weighs one ounce, the 500 gold piece weighs four ounces, as does the Old Kingdom Dragon coin. Remember, the only way out is down slippery tunnels and up a 900 foot (274 m) cliff wall, and has to be done in one hour's time between low and high tides. Generally, a character can carry his P.S. x10 in pounds (or 4.5 kg x P.S.). This means a character with a P.S. of 10 can normally carry 100 pounds (45 kg) with minimal difficulty. Characters with a P.S. 22 or higher can carry their P.S. x20 in pounds (or 9 kg x P.S.). However, in both cases, this will reduce speed by half. Furthermore, the treacherous conditions means the characters can only carry about *half* that amount. Stripping off armor and leaving it behind will help, enabling the person to carry about 75%.

The group's best bet is to try to find the most expensive coins, like Dragon coins, and leave the rest for later. **Note:** To get everything out of the cave will take at least 1D6+3 months of work, *every day*.

One of the problems the characters face is digging the gold out of the sand. This adds to the amount of work involved. Also, unless a sea wall is built, each high tide dumps a new layer of sand over *everything*.

4. A bigger problem is that many of the treasure items are magic and/or cursed. **G.M. Note:** Exploit this heavily, especially if the characters are too greedy. Many dangers still exist, hidden under a layer of sand and gold. The most immediate and obvious danger is the sword of Necrom and the other rune weapons that relentlessly plead to be adopted (as G.M.s, you can add up to 2D4+2 more of your own design or of lesser power). What happens if someone else touches the Necrom, even by accident? What other horrors lay silently waiting for their first victim in 5000 years? Even some of the coins or other artifacts (statues, rings, etc.) may be cursed. Note that any paper or cloth items rotted away ages ago.

5. Darksong, the Syvan, will want first choice of two of the rune weapons, and a lion's share of the gold (at least 65% of it all)! If he doesn't get what he wants, there will be big trouble. Darksong could add an entire new chapter to this adventure by bringing monsters and/or henchmen to kill the group. Whatever the trouble, Darksong will be in the shadows, orchestrating it all.

6. Sheesh, the problems never end. The Kappa, remember them? Well they will frown upon this constant activity by land dwellers in "their" domain, and will take action to eliminate them, immediately. The first assault will be a scare tactic. All other assaults will use deadly force. **Note:** If the Kappa figure out that the land dwellers want the stuff in the cave, they will either cave-in the entrance or go in and remove the things that are attracting them. As an army of underwater beings, they could remove half the treasure in a single day. Of course, a Kappa version of Necrom is likely to climb out of the pirate's cave at the next low tide.

7. Hey, Game Masters, is there any significance to the rectangular pool in the treasure chamber? It's up to you.

The Treasure

The following is the total treasure in the entire cavern. Don't get too crazy and let them get it all (yipes!), but a small fortune should not be out of the question considering what they should have had to go through to get it. Besides, transporting that kind of loot in a hostile wilderness can lead into adventure all on its own, so it is likely that *every* expedition to retrieve some of the treasure will result in an adventure and/or battle. The more treasure taken, the harder it will be to ever actually spend it or to keep the rest of the treasure a secret. G.M.s, always consider cause and effect.

- 150,000 one ounce gold coins: worth about 4 million in gold.
- 20,000 four ounce, Elven Kril coins: worth 500 gold each, or 10 million gold.
- 12,000 rare old coins: worth 250,000 in gold, but worth 10 times as much on the collectors' market.
- 50,000 three ounce silver coins: worth 250,000 in gold.
- 4,000 Old Kingdom Dragon coins: worth 5000 gold each (all have gems intact), total value: 20 million at face value, double to a collector of rare Elven coins. However, a full week's excavation is likely to uncover no more than 5% (that's 200 coins). A full day's scrounging will produce 3D6 of these babies for the entire group.
- Hundreds of other broken or decayed items litter the area. Some are clearly ancient arms and armor that have rusted and rotted over the centuries, others are the shattered remains of statues, pottery, and dozens of things decayed beyond recognition.
- One Magic Cutlass: 2D4+2 damage, and can do a Blinding Flash three times a day. Value: 23,000 gold as a magic item.
- One Eternally Sharp Long Sword: 2D6+3 damage. Value: 25,000+ gold.
- One White dagger: Even the rust is white. Returns to wielder when thrown, but does no damage as a blade; only 1D4 as a

small club; +1 to strike when thrown. Seems to be indestructible, cannot be sharpened, and turns anything it touches for more than six hours, white – including its owner! (A Remove Curse is necessary for a person to return to his normal color.) Value as an artifact and curiosity item: 10,000-30,000 gold, maybe more to the right person.

Game Master Note: Feel free to add items, magic or otherwise, just don't get too carried away. And don't forget that there are still the five other rune weapons waiting to be adopted. Of course, only the foolish or evil will take all of them.

Journey to Darkwood

By Alex Marciniszyn and Kevin Siembieda

Prologue

Under the shadows of the tall trees near the heart of the Great Northern Wilderness, Fraktar sets his traps. Signs suggest the coming winter will be severe, but that is good. The animals he hunts will have thick coats and bring a better price.

Simmis, his brother, watches nearby for strangers and Wolfen patrols. Although the Wolfen have kept their peace agreements, they are becoming increasingly wary of the growing number of humans in this area. The human towns and villages grow ever larger with each passing season. Those who make their living in the fur trade have been slowly increasing their forays into this largely unexplored land. The Wolfen cannot be pleased with this. Perhaps that is why no new settlements have been allowed in this area over the last few years.

The two brothers have traveled the deepest they have ever ventured. Suddenly, Fraktar grabs his brother and points to the sky (there would be a debate, later, over who sighted it first), a sailing ship with unfurled sail and moving oars passing overhead! A flying ship! It circles for a moment and then descends into the woods, scarcely 40 yards/meters away. Afraid they might be seen, but even more afraid that this may be a threat to their people, they sneak closer to get a better look.

To their astonishment, the flying longboat has not landed, but hovers four feet (1.2 m) above the ground, its anchor stuck on the trunk of a fallen tree. The ship is manned by animated skeletons who stare at the dark figure presiding at her stern. The captain is a creature of flesh and blood, clad in black leather. That he is a man of magic, there can be no doubt.

It is Simmis who first notices that the forest behind the ship's bow is strangely misshapen, mostly leafless, and cast in an unusual brown hue. Even the few remaining leaves are brown. Not a dry autumn brown, but the soft brown of sickness and decay. It is Fraktar who realizes that the sickly brown of the leaves and bark is the same color as the wood of the flying longboat.

Then, the black-clad sorcerer turns toward a cluster of fine young saplings. A sneer stretches across his lips as he extends his staff. A beam of pale light flows from the staff, bathing the trees in its glow. Although there is no wind, the trees shudder.

Moments later, the bark and leaves turn a familiar sickly brown. The staff is retracted, the light stopped, and brown leaves begin to fall. Fraktar and Simmis have seen enough, and slink back into the woods. Behind them the trees sigh as the pale red light sweeps upon another cluster.

A Stranger's Plea

Our adventure begins as the player characters pass through a small settlement of Bizantium humans nestled between the Dragon Claw Sea and Dream Lake. This outpost, a humble place called *South Grange*, is abuzz with a story of evil wizardry just outside their borders. The story of *Fraktar* and *Simmis* is on everybody's tongue. However, although the two trappers are well liked and respected, their story meets with some skepticism. More than a few of the townsfolk mention the brothers' love for ale, and others shake their heads and speak of their experiences with Faerie pranks.

The brothers are out leading a small expedition of townsmen to the location to prove their wild claims. A messenger has been sent to one of the larger towns in the area to make a report just in case there is real trouble. The expedition is not expected back for several weeks.

South Grange is home to 193 people. Most reside in log cabins or Indian-style huts. Although a few small farms of corn and wheat can be seen, 70% of the population is involved in the fur trade in one way or another. The standard practice is the locals hunt and skin pelt-worthy animals and then sell the hides at a nearby trading post or to wandering merchants and adventurers. Since South Grange is officially in Wolfen Imperial territory, the town often pays exorbitant "protection" fees to the local Imperial patrols and the local Imperial government so they might look the other way and *not* report the town's presence to higher-ups in the chain of command. As soon as the Senate learns of South Grange, the place will be taken over, and the South Grangers like their freedom just fine, thank you. (Ironically, being officially absorbed into the Empire would afford them the same freedoms, Imperial protection, and taxes much lower than the extortion they are currently paying.) Where this sticky situation hurts the town is during times like now, when there appears to be some menace threatening the place. With no armed forces of their own, and no ability to ask the Wolfen for help, the people of South Grange are in a bind. Who can help them in their time of need? Who might stand up for them? Traveling heroes and adventurers, that's who. Adventurers not unlike the player characters, who are passing through town when Fraktar and Simmis' story makes the rounds.

This is a community of hard-working people. There are no taverns, brothels, or stores. The few places of note include:

- **The Temple of Light and Dark.** This has one 4th level Priest and his two assistants willing to address the spiritual needs of whomever seeks their counsel.
- **The Trapper's Den.** A dance hall and saloon where the drinks are strong and the entertainment is bad but enthusiastic. A heaping meal of venison, buffalo, or rabbit costs 8 gold.
- **Mrs. Broton's.** A large home owned by a married couple who often put up travelers for 6 gold a person. Mrs. Broton is famous for her fruit pies and jams, rumored by some to contain pinches of Faerie Food in them for "a little flavor kick."
- **Furrier and Official Office of the Bizantium Liaison.** This is the guy accountable to his bosses back in Bizantium. He can be thought of as a combination Mayor and work supervisor. Most of his time is occupied with coming up with enough payoff money each month to keep the local Wolfen government at bay. This guy has the most stressful job in town, since he knows the month he fails to pay off the local Magistrate, South Grange will be harassed and probably destroyed by the corrupt Imperial Wolfen who patrol the region. The Bizantium government certainly won't come to help them.

The liaison puts little substance in the "wild yarn about flying boats." As far as he is concerned, nobody else has seen any flying boats, and the whole thing sounds like a big Faerie prank, that's all. Fraktar and Simmis ought to have some hot coffee, a cold bath, and think long and hard about what they say before filling the town with nonsense.

Far Hunter

There is little to keep the heroes in town for very long, and even after grilling the locals for all they know about this strange tale about a flying ship, the heroes still don't have much to go on. Even if the player characters are hell-bent on finding the truth behind the story, they have no substantial leads on it. Perhaps, they think, it is best that they forgot about the whole thing and continued on their journey. Not an hour after leaving town, however, the group is confronted by a vision most strange.

From the dark background of the forest emerges a mist-like image of a humanoid figure, floating five feet (1.5 m) above the ground. He is enveloped in a gray mist and clutches a gaping wound in his chest. He gasps and says, *"A great evil has attacked the spirit of the land. All those noble warriors among you, hear my request. Go three days journey afoot, southwest, and join my servants, Fraktar and Simmis."* The mist swirls and the wounded figure is replaced with the image of the two trappers, but the voice continues, *"They have great need of your aid, as does the forest."* The mist swirls again and the mysterious figure is back. *"Shortly thereafter, you will be joined by my champion, the Far Hunter. Please, go like the wind. The spirit of the forest will guide thy travel."* And with that, the image is gone.

Note: Every character will have heard the plea in his native tongue and seen the figure as a member of his own race. All will trust his words and feel his urgency. Characters of a selfish and good alignment will sense that to obey his request is the right thing to do. Evil characters believe the sincerity of the plea, but may still cling to their own agenda.

The trip is not likely to be an easy one. Although it is only three days by foot, and though there is a well-worn hunters' path leading in exactly the direction the heroes need to go, the adventurers must contend with more than their fair share of wild animals, Wolfen patrols, bandits, and foul weather. Roll percentile dice four times for each day of travel (every six hours). A roll of 51%-00% means there is an encounter. Roll again on the following table to see what the encounter is – or, if the G.M. likes, he can consult the previous encounter tables in this book.

Random Encounters

01-10%: A tiger on the prowl. It attacks only if it is hurt by the group, otherwise it backs away after a staring contest that'll last 2D6 agonizing minutes.

11-20%: Two Ogres and an Orc on a poor day's hunt. If they think they can defeat the group, they'll attack. If they suspect the group is too powerful, they'll simply try to con them out of some gold, food, or booze; especially booze. They know nothing about a flying boat and find the question amusing and the source of a number of bad jokes ("Flyin' boat, no. Seen a big flying bathtub though. Oh, and . . . and a Wolfen with wings, and . . .").

21-25%: A wounded brown bear has just torn itself free of a trap and the pain has driven it mad. The poor beast attacks and fights to the death. Hit Points: 46, S.D.C. 12 (it is wounded). Attacks per Melee: 3; claws do 2D6+3 damage, the bite doing 2D4.

26-30%: A wild boar comes charging out of the brush and attacks. These animals are just plain mean. It fights to the death. Hit Points: 28, S.D.C. 18. Attacks per Melee: 2; by tusks doing 2D4 damage.

31-40%: 2D4+1 Coyle warriors, from the *Moonstone Horde*, leap out of the woods, shrieking, "Death to those who kill our forest!" These wild men have decided that the group is responsible for the strange brown forest, and seek revenge. They fight like men possessed and to the death. Any restrained prisoners will confirm the story about the "dead brown forest," though none have seen a flying longboat. Each Coyle has four attacks per melee, averages about 30 Hit Points and 25 S.D.C. Most wield a battle axe and short sword or spear and dagger. If calmed down and convinced the group is looking to stop the real perpetrator of the evil deed, 1D4 of the Coyles may join them in their quest, however, they have no love for Southerns (anybody south of the Disputed Lands), and may leave the group in the lurch, steal from them or betray them to save their own necks; all are Anarchist or Miscreant alignments.

41-50%: 1D6 Giant Timber Spiders drop out of the trees to attack the group as prey. Each has about 24 Hit Points/S.D.C., two attacks per melee and bite does 2D4 damage plus poison unless a save is made. The poison causes fever and nausea for 24 hours and victims are -1 to strike, parry, dodge, -10% on skill performance, with multiple bites having a cumulative effect/mounting penalties. A 16 or higher is needed to save. See page 197 of the *Monsters & Animals* sourcebook for complete details.

51-60%: Wolfen patrol! A band of the corrupt Wolfen Rangers and Soldiers assigned to this area. There are 2D4+1 walking along the path. The troops will immediately question the travelers about their citizenship and purpose in these parts. If the heroes are unwilling to cough up 20 gold each for "administrative costs," (bribe!) then the soldiers will attempt to capture them and bring them to a local city for "processing" (imprisonment, interrogation and eventual "evacuation"/deportation, but only after stealing all of their belongings). This is a bad lot, but if the heroes slay the patrol, they should hide the bodies, otherwise another patrol finds them and raises a territorial alarm in every settlement in the area. Such an alarm will take a good 3-4 days to fully sound, but once the local settlements have all been alerted of an outlaw presence, the resulting manhunt will make things very uncomfortable for the player characters unless they vacate the Dragon Claw area within a few days or can pin their murder on Omicron or other villains.

61-70%: First level Goblin bandits foolishly attack. There is one for each player character, plus there is the Goblin leader. Each has about 1D6+18 Hit Points, 2D6+6 S.D.C., three attacks per melee round, they are garbed in studded leather (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38), and are armed with spears (2D6 damage) and short swords (2D4). They flee if the battle does not immediately go their way. None of them know anything about brown trees or the flying boat.

71-80%: A mated pair of Scorpion Devils charge out from under a fallen tree. Each has 24+2D4 Hit Points and 40 S.D.C., A.R. 6., and four attacks per melee. Bite does 2D6 damage, claws 1D6 or by poisonous stinger. The poison does 3D6 damage unless the character saves vs lethal poison (14 or higher). The two fight to the death or until the intruders run 300 yards/meters away, because 20 yards/meters from the attack scene is a nest with 1D4 young.

81-90%: A horrible abomination of nature lumbers out of the forest. It was once an animal that has been transformed into some kind of crazed humanoid monster, the size of a Bearman! Roll to determine the type of animal: *01-25%:* Tiger, *26-50%:* Badger, *51-75%:* Bear, *76-00%*: Wild Boar. Hit Points: 30+3D6 plus 1D6x10 S.D.C. Attacks per Melee: Four; claws inflict 3D6 damage or bite 2D6+3 damage. Fights to the death. No one has ever seen anything like this before!

91-00%: 3D4 wild boar. If the group gives them a wide berth, they can avoid trouble. If they come within 100 yards/meters, six of the boars rush to attack.

The Spirit of the Land

As our heroes near their destination, they see trees with marks cut into them. Rangers know that this is the way trappers (and Coyles) often mark a trail. Some of the largest markings indicate tribal hunting boundaries. Trespassers are not welcome, and depending on the composition of the group, possibly very unwelcome. However, all feel that they are on the right path.

Near the end of their journey they run into Fraktar and Simmis. They too have seen the mist shrouded form, who they identify as "The Spirit of the Land," and who told them that they would be "joined by heroes come to save the land." Thus, they see the party as friends, not outsiders.

Fraktar, the eldest, addresses the group, saying, "The Spirit of the Land has shown us your faces. We do not know why he has chosen outsiders to help us, but we trust his reasons. Come, we will talk as we travel. Soon you will meet his greatest warrior and our greatest friend, the Far Hunter."

As the adventurers continue on, the brothers retell their first encounter with the sorcerer and his flying longboat, and how they led four fellows from their town to verify the existence of the brown forest. When they arrived, the expanse of brown trees was twice as large. Despite the brothers' protests, the men insisted on exploring the twisted landscape.

"The place has a feeling of death," grumbles Fraktar.

"You can smell it," adds Simmis.

"The birds and animals have all fled into the green, but if the brown keeps growing, soon we'll all choke on the dust of death. That is why the Spirit of the Land has called us forth."

Fraktar continues to explain how they suddenly found themselves surrounded by skeletons. Only he and his brother escaped unharmed with a third member of the party who was later mauled to death by a "demon tiger that walked like a man." Simmis wipes the sweat from his brow and mumbles, "The forest is being twisted to the image of evil."

The rest of the journey will be a little less grim as Simmis relates the legends about the *Far Hunter*.

"He has been seen running with the wild animals since the days of our first settlements. Some say he is an immortal, but none know for certain. His home is said to be a land of ice many month's journey from of this land. It is written: 'He defends the land when great evil comes. When men cannot prevail alone, he will prevail. The Far Hunter never fears, for he is one with the Spirit of the Land.' Our customs say that if a man should see him, he should not be approached unless he beckons you to do so. To do otherwise shows great disrespect." Simmis pauses for a moment, only to be prodded by Fraktar, "Tell them of the Far Hunter and the Black Beast," he suggests. Simmis nods and continues.

"During a winter of 100 years ago, a strange four-legged beast came to the Wilderness. It had no hair, just coal black skin, and bright yellow eyes. Some said it resembled a monstrous dog, others a giant cat, but all agreed its head and long neck moved and struck like a snake. It killed anything it could catch, but it only mutilated its kills, leaving them uneaten. Neither spears nor arrows could pierce its hide, and the beast could bite sword blades in half. The Far Hunter soon appeared to face it, dressed in silver splint armor and riding a snow leopard. Those who saw the battle say that he could disappear from one place and reappear in another. That a blinding light came from his sword, and that his blade only cut into the creature four times to kill it!"

It is clear that the brothers feel greatly honored to have been chosen by the Spirit of the Land to fight at the side of the Far Hunter. The short trek with Fraktar and Simmis is without danger.

Arrival at Darkwood

When the party arrives at its destination, the forest is a dead parody of its former self. It is everything that Fraktar and Simmis described: Twisted limbs from sick brown trees claw at the sky. There is an eerie stillness about the brown woodlands, and even those who are the most accustomed to city life can smell the scent of death and decay. The brothers speculate between themselves that the "dark wood has grown larger yet." They also wonder why the Far Hunter has not yet joined the party.

The group, guided by the Spirit of the Land, sense that they must *enter* the Darkwood. Action will be quick in coming as 1D4+2 human and 1D6+2 Coyle skeletons erupt from their hiding places under dead leaves and from high in the trees. All attack!

Animated Dead (Quick Stats)

These zombie-like automatons are the new creatures of the brown forest, brought to life by the sorcerer in the boat. Like all animated dead, they are slow, dim-witted, and unskilled fighters. They can be destroyed by being smashed with normal weapons, burnt with fire, or blasted by magic. A priest may also be able to "turn" them. See the Animate/Control Dead spell on page 200 of the **Palladium RPG, 2nd Edition** for details.

Alignment: Diabolic Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 3, M.E. 3, M.A. 3, P.S. 15, P.P. 15, P.E. 15, P.B. 3, Spd. 6
Average Hit Points: None. **S.D.C.:** 70+2D6. **P.P.E.:** None.
Attacks Per Melee: Two.
Weapons: Most attack with swords (2D6), axes (3D6) or spears (3D6).
Armor: Most wear tattered leather (A.R. 6, S.D.C. 15) or tattered chain mail (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 25). A few might use shields as well, but they are not really skilled in using them (+2 to parry).

The Longboat Arrives

Only 1D4 melees after the encounter with the skeletons, Fraktar points to the sky and exclaims: "Look, the longboat!"

Overhead is the flying longboat, silently dropping down toward the adventurers. It stops to hover about 20 feet (6.1 m) above the ground. Fraktar and Simmis turn pale and jockey for cover behind a boulder (so might the Coyles if any had joined the group).

A figure in black leather, staff in hand, leans over a railing to peer at the characters. A wicked grin is etched across his face as he addresses those on the ground.

"I am Omicron, keeper of this place." He gestures at the dark woods around him. "Why do you attack my servants?"

Before the group has time to respond, a warrior clad in silver splint armor appears and proclaims, "The Spirit of the Land has been taken from this place. You are the despoiler whose very presence causes the animals to flee and the trees to die. The smell of death is all about you, evil one. Leave, now, or die."

In response to these accusations, Omicron laughs and sneers. "Evil? I am just a lost traveler who wishes to establish a home in this land. Like any other, I simply mold my surroundings into something more to my liking."

Just then, characters of an evil or selfish alignment will hear a voice in their heads, saying, "Join me and help me establish my kingdom in this world. Your reward will be power and wealth beyond reason, as you rule at my side."

To Omicron's surprise and dismay, the Far Hunter has also heard his voice and roars, "Coward! You can not turn these men so easily. The spirit of life is too strong in their hearts. You cannot conceal your true nature from me or them, harbinger of death!"

With this outcry, Simmis hurls his throwing axe at the sorcerer (it just misses). The Far Hunter draws his blade, only to be blasted by a lightning bolt that fires from Omicron's staff.

Omicron looks at the player characters and says, with his ever present grin, "Go home you fools, before you all die."

The line is drawn. The adventurers face Omicron and his magic staff, along with a dozen more skeletons and two mutant bears (described below) for the group to tackle. Now the battle begins in earnest, with the heroes, Fraktar, Simmis, and the Far Hunter on one side and Omicron and his small army of undead and mutants on the other side.

Game Master Note: Running a fight with so many combatants might prove to be an administrative nightmare, so for dramatic purposes, you might consider having Fraktar and Simmis spend the fight wrangling with 1-4 skeletons each, Far Hunter wrangling with the mutant bears or Omicron, and the rest of the bad guys left to the player characters attention or vice versa, with the group tangling with Omicron and the bears. This is purely optional, however, and suggested only as a means of making the climax of this adventure easier to see through.

The Bear Monsters (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Diabolic Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 3, M.E. 3, M.A. 3, P.S. 30, P.P. 15, P.E. 15, P.B. 3, Spd. 6
Hit Points: 80. **S.D.C.:** 80. **P.P.E.:** None.
Natural A.R. : 12 and **Horror Factor:** 13.
Attacks Per Melee: Five.
Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +5 to strike, parry and dodge, +15 to damage, impervious to Horror Factor and mind control. Normal weapons inflict *half damage*, but silver and magic weapons and spells do full damage.
Damage: Claws inflict 3D6 damage (+15 from P.S.) or bite doing 2D6 damage.
Note: These creatures will fight till the death.

Omicron's Lair

The sorcerer fights until he loses most of his Hit Points (down to 10 or 20%). When this happens, he turns tail to run, flying away in his boat or under his *own* power, to a clearing a half mile (0.8 km) away.

The clearing is a fire blackened circle 150 feet (45.7 m) in diameter. At its center is a 60 foot (18.3 m) tall, rectangular, stone building ringed by 4D6 skeletons (one third Coyles, one third humans, and a third others). The building has an obvious front door, but airborne characters will see an opening on the roof (this is where the air boat usually docks).

The skeletons are slow enough that most characters can run by them with little trouble other than a random, wild swing at them (-4 to strike). The 10 foot (3 m), double doors are unlocked. Inside is a single large room. The 30 foot (9.1 m) tall ceiling is supported by six pillars. Furthest from the door is an elaborate bed, a marble table with four carved wood chairs, and a wood closet. Inside the closet is an extra suit of leather armor, three black robes, a set of clothing, and a long sword.

Near the bed, there is a five foot wide (1.5 m) *hole* in the ceiling. This is the entrance to the next floor. An eerie, pale red light can be seen glowing inside. **Note:** Since Omicron can fly, there is no need for stairs and intruders will have to boost one another up, use a rope and grappling hook or other means (magic flight, psionic levitation, etc.) to gain access.

The second floor is another single large room, same size as the first. In the corner to the east is a pile of souvenirs: some

rocks, bloody human clothes, a couple helmets, and dozens of skulls; human, Wolfen, Coyle, Goblin, Orc, and animal. Near this disgusting pile is a pile of brown wood tools, a score of 10 foot (3 m) long, 2 foot (0.6 m) wide planks (made of the same enchanted wood as the boat), an extra magic sail, and some magic thread (to repair the sail).

On the opposite side of the room is a plain stone pedestal, about five feet (1.5 m) tall, with four different colored stones (red, blue, green, and orange). Above it is the opening in the ceiling. The wall directly behind the pedestal is completely black, with no trace of brickwork. If touched, the person's hand passes through it. Characters can stick their heads through or even step through the wall where they see a long brown corridor that ends in a brilliant orange light. Behind them is the black wall. To get back, they simply walk through the wall. The black wall remains until somebody moves the rocks on the other side. The orange light is really an inter-dimensional portal that joins the Palladium World to an alien realm where everything is dead and twisted, just like the forest surrounding Omicron's lair. Should the heroes explore this strange and deadly world, they will learn that it is a realm filled with people and creatures who sustain themselves entirely by stealing the life force of others! Though Omicron's powers are great in the Palladium World, they are nothing in the world he calls home, which might explain why he came here in the first place. Here, all he needs do is be himself in order to gain the status of a dark god.

Observant characters will notice that the rocks glow in sequence every time the black wall is touched. Removing one or more of the rocks causes the black wall to flicker once and disappear, replaced by a normal stone wall. Putting the rock back (in the right sequence) makes the black wall reappear. Switching the rock pattern on the pedestal causes the wall to change color. Each color is a different dimension, though exactly what or where these dimensions are is up to the G.M. Whether or not something nasty comes out of these portals when they are activated is also left to the G.M. (A fun diversion might be if the heroes follow Necrom into one of the other dimensions – a different Palladium world setting, perhaps – and then must go through some kind of adventure to get back home, by which time Omicron will be fully healed and in need of another thrashing.) The rocks and the pedestal are all magic. To destroy one (the stones each have 100 S.D.C.), or to remove the stones, is to close the portal. If destroyed, Omicron will have to create a *new* portal to return to the Palladium World. A very expensive and time consuming project.

So, where is our villain? Did he go home? Flee to a different dimension? Or is he hiding nearby? If hiding, how will he react if the characters trap him in this dimension? If trapped in his own world, will he bother to return? And if Omicron is gone, what of his strange little stronghold, connected as it is to so many different places of the Megaverse? Should the heroes desire it, they could take over this place and use it to launch a series of inter-dimensional travels of their own. Where this might take the party, G.M., is in your hands. Have fun with it! This could be a great excuse to explore the *Heroic Realms of the Megaverse* (those worlds that are similar in environment to the **Palladium Fantasy** world but feature different land, monsters and magic) or they might jump to a world of a different Palladium game altogether, like that of **Rifts®**, **Wormwood™** (a very fantasy-like setting), **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Nightbane®** (or a **Palladium Fantasy/Nightbane** alternate dimension; such a hybrid adventure would be particularly interesting as the heroes fight off the sinister Nightlords and their armies of Hounds and demonic minions), and so on. Remember, if Omicron vanishes, and the group uses the place as a dimensional gateway or base camp, the evil wizard is likely to make one or more return visits to cause them, and others, trouble and mayhem.

Omicron, the Master of Darkwood

Race: Though Omicron was once human, his study of the darkest alien mystic arts has transformed him into something else. Something more than a little sinister. Something beyond ordinary evil.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 19, M.A. 15, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 13, P.B. 12, Spd. 11

Hit Points: 60. **S.D.C.:** 120. **P.P.E.:** 225. **I.S.P.:** 95.

Natural A.R.: 12 and **Horror Factor:** 14.

Experience Level: Equal to a 7th level Wizard. (**Note:** If the G.M. likes, Omicron can be a *Life Force Wizard* instead. This O.C.C. is fully detailed in the **Mount Nimro** sourcebook.)

Special Abilities: See the invisible, float/hover, fly 20 mph (32 km), sense the sick and dying (4 mile/6.4 km range), wither plants by touch, and emits an aura of death and decay that all living beings can sense and smell. Feeds on P.P.E. energy, preferably the P.P.E. released at the moment of death, but can survive indefinitely on ley line energy (the equivalent of bread and water). His lair is located on a ley line nexus (two short lines).

Attacks Per Melee: Six physical or three by magic.

Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +2 to pull punch, +3 to save vs possession, +5 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to save vs psionics and +30% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Info: Snap kick: 1D6. Critical strike: 19-20.

Psionics: All Sensitive, Healing and Physical psionic powers, but has only 95 I.S.P. so he uses them carefully and sparingly.

Spells: 225 P.P.E. and knows all common knowledge spells plus the following:

Wizard Spells: Levels One & Two: All.

Level Three: Armor of Ithan, Breathe Without Air, Energy Bolt, Float in Air, Ignite Fire, and Fuel Flame.

Level Four: Carpet of Adhesion, Energy Field, Ley Line Transmission, Multiple Image, Repel Animals, and Shadow Meld.

Level Five: Circle of Flame, Heal Wounds, Horrific Illusion, & Superhuman Strength.

Level Six: Call Lightning, Fire Ball, Fire Fist, and Impervious to Energy.

Level Seven: Animate & Control Dead, Constrain Being and Dispel Magic Barriers.

Level Eight: Spoil, Sickness, Eyes of the Wolf and Commune with Spirits.

Level Nine: Monster Insect and Transferal.

Level Ten: Banishment and Phantom Horse.

Weapons: Aside from his rune staff *Death Bringer*, Omicron wields no other weapons. When he cannot use the staff, he relies on his considerable magic and life-stealing abilities.

Armor: Omicron wears a magical suit of Black Leather Iron (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 125) that is covered with pointed metal studs along the seams (those trying to grab him have a 30% chance of taking 1D4 damage from the points).

Magic Items: None, other than his magic staff.

Other Equipment: None, other than his flying longboat.

Note: Omicron is not from our world. He recently had a friend, experimenting with dimensional portals, open a portal to the Palladium World. He was attracted by all the life this world had, and came to feed. Omicron feeds on life essences drawn through his magic staff or from people at the moment of death by any means (must be within 20 feet/6.1 m). If the staff is destroyed, Omicron is destroyed with it, for the two are linked. If Omicron is killed, but his staff is not destroyed, it will corrupt others to the ways of death. The staff could be considered the equivalent to an evil, Palladium rune weapon. His lair is built at the nexus of two short ley lines.

Death Bringer, Omicron's Staff

Alignment: Diabolic evil with an I.Q. of 12.

Damage & Bonuses: 3D6, +1 to strike and parry, plus special powers.

Powers: 1) Feed on life essences. This can be done to plant life with the pale red light. Area affected is 20 feet (6.1 m), and turns everything a strange brown color. This can be done three times a day. To feed on animals or humanoids, the staff must deliver the killing blow in order to feed on the life essence (this is different from drinking souls). Victims slain by the staff are -20% to save vs coma/death. If the person recovers, his life essence is taken back from Death Bringer.

2) Once every 24 hours, the staff can be used to transform a normal mammal (but *not* an intelligent life form) into an insane, mutant, humanoid monster. The monster is racked with pain and attacks anything it encounters. Attacks by claws that do 2D6 damage for most animals or 3D6 for large or predatory animals, bite 2D6; four attacks per melee. Hit points: 2D4x10+10, S.D.C. 1D6x10+40.

3) The staff can cast four Elemental spells a day: Call Lightning, Protection From Lightning, Change Wind Direction, and Create Wind (mild). And has 88 P.P.E. at its disposal per 24 hours to perform them.

4.) Is impervious to lightning, but not fire or other attacks that are directly leveled against it. The staff has 250 S.D.C. and magically regenerates 2D6 points per melee round.

5.) Communicates with its wielder telepathically.

6.) Can Animate and Control as many as 200 dead! Can also turn 1D6x10 dead with a 82% success ratio.

Omicron's Longboat

A.R.: 15, **S.D.C.:** 600 front, 400 mid, 500 rear sections, 100 mast and 50 sail.

This magical vessel can only be piloted by Omicron or by an Air Warlock. The captain of the vessel must have a feeling for the forces of nature in general, and air specifically. The strange craft functions much like a normal boat except that the captain can control its speed and response with his thoughts, and that it rides air currents instead of the waves. The oars can be manned by anybody. Omicron had skeletons as a matter of personal preference. The air oars add to the speed of the otherwise slow flying vessel. Eight men are needed to row the oars to get maximum speed. Each pair of oars adds 5 mph (8 km); all eight means an additional 20 mph (32 km) to the normal sailing speed.

Sailing speed depends on the force of the wind. Sailing against the wind is impossible. *No wind* means the ship simply drifts along in the desired direction at one mile an hour (1.6

km), a good time to use oars. *Light breezes* of 2-6 mph (3.2 to 9.6 km) will send the longboat flying along at 8-10 mph (12.8 to 16 km). *A medium breeze* blowing 8-16 mph (12.8 to 25.6 km) will send the ship cruising up to 20 mph (32 km). *Heavy winds* of 17-28 mph (37 to 45 km) will send the ship speeding at maximum speed: 35 mph (56 km). Winds heavier than 35 mph (56 km) will tear the sails and break the mast. When these winds whip up, the captain or crew must bring the sails down and must land. The ship cannot fly without its sails, even with the use of oars. Ironically, the flying boat is lousy in the water, with a maximum speed of 8 mph (12.8 km).

Note: The vessel will always carry an aura of death about it, and animals will not want to ride it. Can carry a crew of about 30 humans; 35 feet (10.6 m) long.

The Spirit of the Land

The Spirit of the Land is an archaic mother earth type entity spoken of by some Druids, Rangers, and Kankoran of the Northern Wilderness. There is no formal religion for him nor any physical evidence that this being really exists, only stories.

As for the Spirit itself, it is nothing more than a great and mysterious entity that has no permanent physical form at all. Presumably, the Spirit commands incredible magic and psychic powers, and may use ectoplasm and/or illusion to take physical form as the Far Hunter, but the extent of its powers remains unknown to all, even those who are devoted to it. For all of its ability, however, the Spirit of the Land seldom takes direct action against those things which directly threaten the forest or the planet. Rather, it finds noble and worthy champions and inspires them to defend the land, offering minimal assistance itself. Some believe it is the culmination of the spirits of the slain Elven Druids from long ago (if one believes those Druids actually did exist) who manifest their continuing life essences into a sort of spiritual friend or Earth Spirit that watches over the Dragon Claw region if not the entire Great Northern Wilderness. In times of need they become the Far Hunter, but he can only be maintained for a few short weeks before he vanishes.

The Far Hunter

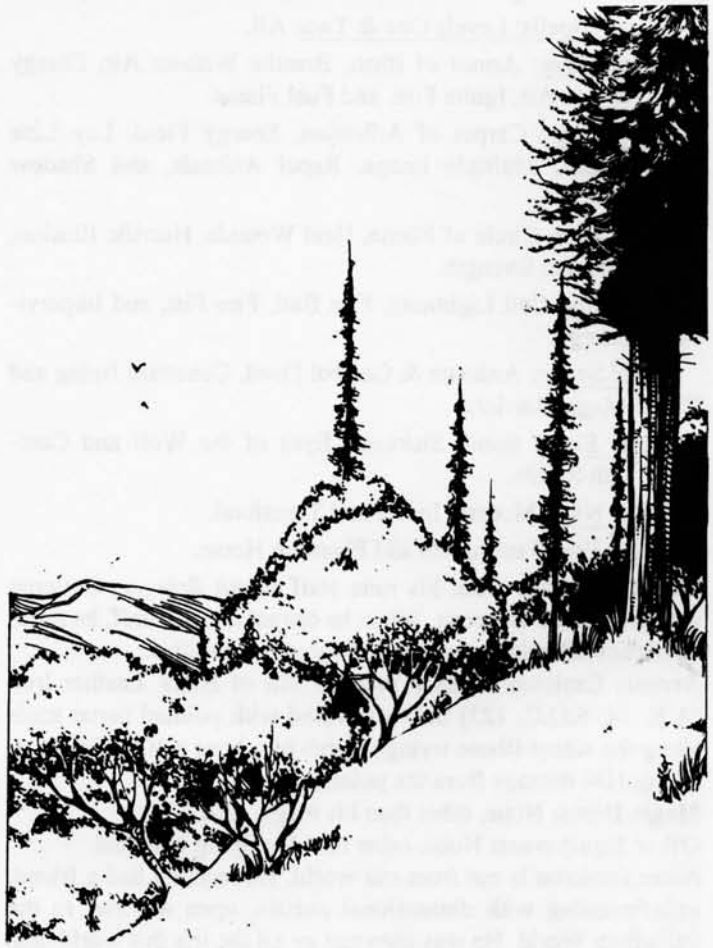
The Far Hunter is a mythic hero of unknown origin. He will fight Omicron's minions while the characters go after the sorcerer themselves. After the battle, he will thank the heroes for their help, telling them that, "This day you have saved your world from a horrible evil, and have taken one more step toward union with the Spirit of the Land." With these words he vanishes.

Known aspects and abilities follow:

Alignment: Principled.
Attributes: I.Q. 21, M.E. 21, M.A. 25, P.S. 23, P.P. 21, P.E. 21, P.B. 21, Spd. 21
Hit Points: 70. **S.D.C.:** 80. **P.P.E.:** 25. **I.S.P.:** 95.
Armor: Magical Splint with an A.R. 15 and 100 S.D.C.
Experience Level: Equal to a 10th level Ranger.
Special Abilities: See the invisible, sense the sick and dying (4 mile/6.4 km range), sense magic and evil (same as the spell except has a 4 mile/6.4 km range), teleport at will, heal self, and Ranger abilities of at least 10th level proficiency; a superb fighter. Telepathic probes on him are mostly ineffectual, however, he radiates good, magic, and human. There is also a random thought or memory about Elf Druids from a time long ago.
Attacks Per Melee: Eight.
Bonuses (includes attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, +7 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +6 to pull punch, and is impervious to disease, possession, Horror Factor, and normal cold and heat (magical cold and heat do full damage). +2 to save vs Ward and Circle magic.
Weapons: Uses a great silver sword that radiates of both magic and ectoplasm and does 4D6 damage to mortal enemies and 6D6 to creatures of magic and the supernatural. The sword magically appears in his hands and vanishes if dropped.
Note: Nothing much else is known about the Far Hunter, other than a slew of legends and tall tales, some of which seem to conflict or contradict each other – but then who knows what is true or false when it comes to this mythical figure?

Fraktar & Simmis

Fraktar and Simmis are trappers equal to 8th and 6th level human Rangers, respectively. Both are of Scrupulous alignment, kind, compassionate and believe in the Spirit of the Land. They will never forget the day they were chosen to fight alongside the Far Hunter to save the forest. The two will go on to become folk heroes in this territory, friends of the Wolfen Empire, and this adventure is just the first of many heroic acts on their part. Do the player characters and these two ever cross paths or join forces again? Well, Game Masters, do they?



A Most Royal Conspiracy – Adventure

By Kevin Long and Kevin Siembieda

Our adventure begins with an ordinary enough happening in the life of an adventurer – a town in trouble and needing a champion to set it free. Only this is no ordinary town, and this is no ordinary set of troubles they struggle against. And as the heroes find out soon enough, this is no ordinary adventure they have embarked on. What begins as a favor to an embattled town throws the adventurers into the center of a conspiracy that might very well destroy the entire Wolfen Empire and spark war between up to three countries at once!

A Cry for Justice

After a savage raid by Wolfen troops, the inhabitants of *Sarathen*, a small human village in the Disputed Lands just south of the Wolfen Empire border, send out a call for help. The adventurers just happen to be passing through at the time (or answer the call). A craggy, bearded man in his late 50s approaches the player characters with this tale of woe.

"I am *Jedima*, village elder and mayor of Sarathen. My fellow villagers and I beg you to help us avenge our dead and save our people taken as slaves by the Wolfen dogs!"

Any Wolfen, or Wolfen-like characters (Coyles, Kankoran), in the party terrify the villagers. Many brandish pitchforks and clubs at the canines, others spit at their feet. An uproar fills the air as word spreads that a Wolfen(s) is in town. The frightened people hoot, "Don't trust 'em, Jedima, they consort with the enemy!" "How do we know they were not among our attackers?!" "No, no, don't let them take my baby!" "Death to all wolves!" The rest of the party will have to choose their words well to calm this crowd, and they'll have a hard time convincing the villagers that any Wolfen character can be trustworthy. However, Jedima is willing to trust anyone who seems willing to help. After quieting the crowd, he continues to speak.

"As you can see, the mere presence of a Wolfen sends my people into madness. This is because we have been plagued by these monsters time and time again!" He casts an embarrassed look at any Wolfen in the group and continues, "For nearly a year we have been the target of their unholy raids. They burn our homes and crops, kidnap our loved ones for slaves, and eat our children!" This last comment is an exaggeration that draws angry shouts and curses from the crowd.

The player characters are all too familiar with the rumors and tall tales about the Wolfen's inhumane treatment of prisoners, death camps, and the eating of human babies. If they have any firsthand knowledge about this part of the world, or have been in the company of Wolfen, then they know the stories to be false yarns passed on by generation after generation of frightened and hate filled humans. Undoubtedly, any Wolfen in the group has proven his friendship and loyalty in battle on countless occasions. However, if the party is naive, then they may believe these stories and only serve to fuel these people's ire and fears. These tales of atrocities are equally likely to convince an inexperienced group to try to rescue the captured townspeople.

Less naive characters will not be so easy to convince, but Jedima is a convincing fellow, and these people's pain is very real. Good characters should feel duty bound to at least investigate the situation and see if there really is somebody to rescue from wrongdoers. Another adventure begins to unfold.

Death At River's Edge

Jedima and a ragtag group of ten poorly armed villagers lead the player characters on their journey into the wilderness. The men cannot be dissuaded from coming along, insisting that the heroes will need all the help they can get. The going is slow since the villagers are on foot, except Jedima, who rides a donkey. However, the villager in the lead assures them that the Wolfen's trail is fresh and they must be near. Any Ranger in the group can confirm this.

After tracking the Wolfen raiders for several miles through dense forest and brush, the group comes upon a slow moving river. Several of the village men rush ahead to quench thirsty throats in its refreshing waters. As they drink at the river's edge, a clawed hand reaches up from the depths and hauls one of the villagers into the river. Swirls of mud make it impossible to see.

Before anyone can react, the unlucky villager bursts to the surface, with half his face missing! He screams to the others for help, but again disappears under the waves. The frothing water where he last went down slowly turns crimson. The man's cousin screams and tries to jump in after him. Fortunately, the other villagers restrain him from this foolishness. The water begins to churn, followed by a gargantuan splash, as something leaps out onto the riverbank. A seven foot (2.1 m) tall creature with the head of a horse, a human trunk, long-clawed hands, and horse legs, gurgles a snarl as it decides who its next victim will be. Dripping water and blood, the seaweed-covered thing takes a step toward the villagers, who cluster together in terror. Only old Jedima sits upon his donkey without flinching. "Kelpie," he mutters.

Unless the player characters do something quickly, the Kelpie will charge the townsmen. It will easily knock away their crude weapons and drag two more into the river. Even if the player characters and the remaining seven townsmen retreat, there's a problem. The Wolfen crossed the river here, at its narrowest and most shallow point. To pursue the raiders, the group must also cross here. To go around and cross elsewhere means losing a lot of time, and there's nothing to assure them that the Kelpie won't follow. The group does have one thing in their favor; the Kelpie is overconfident from his easy kills and continues to stalk them on land, where it is the most vulnerable. If they strike fast and hard, and keep it on land, they can defeat it with comparative ease.

As if on cue, the thing races toward Jedima, some 30 feet (9.1 m) from the river's edge. **Game Master Note:** If the group is slow to save Jedima, he will successfully dodge the attack by slipping off the donkey. The poor animal will not be so lucky as the Kelpie rips its throat out in frustration and murderous glee.

The Kelpie (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Diabolic Evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 10, M.A. 5, P.S. 30, P.P. 15, P.E. 15, P.B. 3, Spd. 20 running in humanoid form or 66 running as a horse.

Hit Points: 50. **S.D.C.:** 140. **P.P.E.:** 11.

Natural A.R.: 9 and **Horror Factor:** 16.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 30 feet (9 m), resistant to fire and cold (does half damage), metamorphosis at will into a horse (no limit on duration), swim (92%), and breathe underwater indefinitely.

Attacks Per Melee: Five (6 underwater).

Bonuses: +4 to strike (+5 underwater), +4 to parry and dodge (+5 underwater), +1 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +15 to damage, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 on all other saving throws.

Damage: Bite: 1D6. Claw strike: 3D6. Power claw strike: 6D6 (but counts as two attacks).

Note: May fight to the death or dive for the water and swim away to lick its wounds when reduced to less than 20% of its H.P. Given its high amount of Hit Points and S.D.C., it will probably take a little while to whittle this thing down to size.

If the group succeeds in defeating the beast, they can cross the river with ease and take up the Wolfen's trail on the other side. Finding an alternative route will add 1D4 hours to the Wolfen's escape. The trail leads to a dirt path that runs north and south. Tracks indicate that the Wolfen raiders met with another group in wagons, and turned northward down the path. This means two things: One, that the raiders were able to double or triple their speed, putting them hours ahead. Two, the group is no longer straddling the disputed human border of the Eastern Territory, but is definitely in Wolfen territory.

Ambush!

Mile after mile passes, until a small fortified city is spotted in the valley below. It's safe to assume that this is not a human city. Before the characters can formulate their next move, Wolfen Soldiers step out of their hiding places among the trees. At least 50 Wolfen longbow archers stand ready with bows drawn. The brush on all sides rustles as another 100 mounted Wolfen troops, weapons at the ready, emerge from the thick forest. (**Note:** Canine characters in the group, or characters with the racial history skill, may notice that the composition of this force is actually half Wolfen and half Coyle.)

A tough looking Centurion rides forward, the sun glimmering off his golden plate armor and his white teeth. At his side is his lieutenant and a strangely quiet figure in robes.

"I see we have returned just in time. Throw down your weapons and surrender!" he barks, "Or you spies will die where you stand!"

This large gray Wolfen is obviously in command, yet he keeps glancing nervously at the slender, cowled figure on his right. The black robes conceal the person's features. Presumably he(?) is a Wolfen, or perhaps an Ogre Mage, judging from the giant size of the rider. The soldier on the left is the Coyle lieutenant, an evil looking fellow distinguished by a prominent scar across the left side of his face and eye.

The cowled figure slowly raises its head, though no features are visible within the darkened hood, save a pair of glowing red eyes. In a sultry female voice, she says, "I highly recommend you listen to the Centurion or suffer a fate far worse than arrows or steel." (**G.M. Note:** Any character who performs a See Aura will register an aura of magic and intense evil, and strength. It is clear that she is a mid-level magic user.) The characters should surrender or have a really good plan of escape, otherwise they'll be riddled with arrows. These are seasoned veterans with the strength of giants, and outnumber the characters about 20 to one. Any rebuttal about being spies can be addressed in the city.

"Go to hell, you mangy dogs!" bellows one of the village men as he and a few of his fellows charge forward. Before the archers can react by releasing a fusillade of deadly arrows, the cowled figure whirls and points a bony finger in the villagers' direction. Instantly, they stop in their tracks, grab their heads, scream, and fall over dead, blood running from their ears and mouths. Of all the villagers, only Jedima and the scout still live. "You. Old man. You live only because I may find you useful. And you, youngster, I let you live so that you may return to your tribe and tell your people what you've seen this day. Give them this message: 'If they continue to live on Wolfen soil, they shall die on Wolfen soil.' Now, go and do not look back!" (The human scout is allowed to leave.) Turning to the Wolfen Centurion, she commands, "Regius, take these people into custody, gather their weapons and shackle them so we have no further violence. Let them meet their fate in Prime."

"As you order, Lady Cassandrix," whispers to the Centurion nervously.

G.M. Note: Obviously, the characters are outgunned and any attempt to escape or fight will be met with violence and magic. However, those who are more brave than intelligent may decide that it is better to die in battle than as a Wolfen slave, and attack anyway. If this happens, the character who makes the first threatening move will be cut down by a dozen arrows; 3D4x10 damage is inflicted to both armor and Hit Points. If he still lives, he falls unconscious, is restrained, and healed, for torture, later.

Six Wolfen armed with pole arms approach each of the other characters. Although menacing, they will be looking to subdue rather than kill. Another dozen soldiers run to place themselves between Cassandrix and any would-be attackers. If she is killed at this point, the soldiers attack with deadly force and take no prisoners (this adventure is over, roll new characters)!

If the heroes try to fight, no further chances will be taken with these unpredictable humans, and a Cloud of Slumber will engulf them. The cloud is cast by one of the accompanying clergy or Cassandrix herself. All the captives are bound, gagged, and dragged to the city under heavy Wolfen guard.

The City of Prime

The city of Prime is fairly new, being barely a decade old. The countryside around it is fertile farmland, while the city itself is enclosed on all sides by a 30 foot (9.1 m) wall. Four aqueducts jut out of the wall and lead into the mountains. Towers overlook each of the four main gates, guarded by eight Wolfen archers and four Coyle infantrymen. On either side of the towering gate houses are two catapults and another 24 infantrymen. A 4th level Warlock, one for each of the Elements, resides near each of the gates so that he may lend his special talents to the defense of the city. A total of 1,600 troops are found here. This city is prepared for war.

Prime is composed of wide avenues, narrow streets, and one- and two-story stone buildings. Wolfen and their Coyle kin, along with an occasional Goblin, Hob-Goblin, and Orc, browse at the numerous shops, stores, and taverns. Considering the number of people who live here, the city is surprisingly clean and well maintained (14,000 live in the city, with another 4,000 living in the surrounding area).

Prime is laid out in a typical Wolfen square pattern (a common layout for Wolfen cities), with four main roadways leading to the government buildings in the center of the city. A paved roadway just inside the city walls runs completely around it, with smaller streets branching off from it and connecting with the four main thoroughfares.

The center of the city is also surrounded by a 30 foot (9.1 m) wall and four gatehouses, 30 troops are stationed at each. Inside the second wall are the main places of government, the *Magistia's palace*, the *House of Law*, and other *halls of bureaucracy*, all surrounded by paved courtyards and gardens. Behind a park are the residences for the heads of government and beyond them, grain warehouses.

Situated to the left of the government complex are stables, blacksmith facilities, and weapons storehouses. Across the way is the *Great Circus,* an arena used for chariot races, pageants, and festivals. Next to it is the *Gladiatorial Arena* where combatants pit their skills in battles, often to the death, for the enjoyment of the spectators. Captured spies, military prisoners, and criminals are often the fodder for the gladiatorial games. Consequently, the lower levels of the arena are prison cells and a dungeon. Both the Great Circus and the Gladiatorial Arena seat 7500 persons and are usually filled to capacity at all performances. Though the Empire frowns on blood sports and arenas, the rulers of Prime adore them and dare to ignore the Imperial *suggestion* to ban them.

Surrounding the arenas are the library, a couple theaters for the performing arts, bathhouses, and some more opulent residences for the city's wealthy.

The Audience Before the Governor

Shortly after the player character' arrival to the city, the party is taken before the Governor of Prime. Each one is chained and yanked along by his or her personal escort, a Coyle Soldier (2nd level). The guards stay at their sides the entire time.

Sitting before the player characters, in his elevated throne, is *Governor Optimus*. At his right hand is the black-clad she-devil, *Cassandrix*. A dozen guards and two robed figures (an Air and Earth Warlock, both 4th level) stand on either side behind the throne. The Governor stares vacantly into the distance, his head resting in hand. He appears to be more Coyle than Wolfen, perhaps a half-breed, middle-aged, garbed in the traditional robes of the office, and wears the large, golden, seal ring of authority on his right hand. Cassandrix leans down and whispers something in his ear, awakening him from his daydream.

"What? Oh, yes . . . yes."

He surveys the group of adventurers with a discerning eye, leans forward and addresses them with contempt in his guttural voice. He speaks in Elven or Wolfen, whichever language the most characters can understand.

"I am Optimus, Regional Governor of this territory, and you are the spies sent by our enemies to reconnoiter our numbers and our city's defenses, yes?"

Any reply by the characters results in being struck on the head or in the stomach by their guards.

"Silence!!" growls Optimus, angrily. "I did not give you permission to speak!"

Further comments or protests on the part of the characters put them on the receiving end of an even more vicious strike with a sword hilt. Optimus continues.

"I know that you come with this lowly human scum from the village of Sarathen," pointing at Jedima, "to spy for your invasion force waiting beyond the border. You are hot to extract your pitiful revenge, eh?"

This last statement is rhetorical and not meant to solicit a response, but Jedima cannot hold his tongue.

"A vengeance that will make you suffer like the hundreds you have killed and taken into slavery, you filthy son of a . . ." Before Jedima can finish, however, two Wolfen guards pummel him into silence with a few well-placed shots to the stomach.

"Revenge," snarls the Governor, "For what we have done? Hah! You make me laugh, old man! Yourrr kind," he slurs, "have been treating my brethren like animals for centuries. I have personally seen the bodies of a hundred Wolfen warriors, their hands bound and throats cut after they had surrendered. Women and children, gutted and left for the carrion-eaters to feast upon. And you speak to me of vengeance. It is we who shall be avenged! In time, I will ride down and I shall . . ." Optimus is brought back to the moment by Cassandrix squeezing his arm.

"As for slaves," says Optimus, more calmly as he inspects his manicured fingernails, "we Wolfen do not take slaves. We are a fair and civilized people. Unfortunately for you, we must have participants in our gladiatorial games here in Prime. And it's so difficult to find volunteers. You must understand, the games, though barbaric, quench the burning in the people's stomachs from a less civilized time when the bloodlust was all consuming. And you, my dear spies, shall be consumed by the games, and . . . and know . . . true . . ." Optimus slowly fades off, his eyes glazed, as he stares blankly at the ceiling. Then a smile spreads across his face as he says in a lilting tone, "Do you hear them? Do you? The voices . . . the beautiful voices? Calling me to my destiny. I shall lead. Yes, yes, it has been foretold in the stars! . . . ooh . . . don't you hear them?!"

Clearly, Optimus is insane. Bananas. Out to Lunch. A fact that bodes ill for the heroes, since their fate is now in the hands of a certifiable madman.

Game Master Note: Should the characters lash out or kill Optimus during their initial meeting with him, battle will ensue. Surprisingly, they will be subdued, not killed. This dreadful action will only set the wheels of political intrigue in motion so much sooner.

Prisoners

There is nothing more to be said. Cassandrix dismisses the prisoners and they are hauled back to their cells at the arena. All of their possessions are in a pile within the main guard chamber that leads to the prison. Only a Thief, Assassin or Prestidigitator may have been able to palm and conceal something small, like a knife or lock pick.

This dungeon is circular, windowless, and has only one door; a solid wood door, 6 or 8 inches (0.15 to 0.2 m) thick. A peephole in the door is the only way to look inside. Two torches are lit and placed in iron holders near the door. Each member of the player group is shackled to the wall. The chains are around their wrists, waists, and ankles, suspending them around three feet (0.9 m) above the floor. On the stone floor are several circles drawn in what looks to be blood. The guards are extremely careful not to step near them.

Escape is a slim possibility. The characters have only a few hours to brood or plot before their interrogation begins. If they escape their chains (100 S.D.C. each, locks are 30), they have to get through the oak door which is barred by two large slide bolts on the outside (remember, everything is giant-size, too). The bolts have a combined S.D.C. of 100, the door itself has an S.D.C. of 400. Loud noises or fire send eight Coyle Soldiers to investigate.

Should the heroes successfully defeat the eight Coyles, they have to get through another barred door (same stats as before) and defeat the dozen Wolfen who are the main guard.

If these forces are defeated, the group can get their belongings, but where do they go? Back into the dungeon is a dead end, though they may be able to hide for hours in the maze of empty cells. Up and out will be blocked with 1D4+1 encounters with additional guards and soldiers (2D6 opponents each time). If the adventurers make it to the surface, they are in a city of Wolfen where humans and non-monster races stick out like a sore thumb. Inevitably, they will be chased by Soldiers and citizens alike, until captured or killed (the Wolfen people react the same as would a human town with escaped Wolfen criminals). Eventually, Cassandrix and one of the Warlocks (probably Air) join in the manhunt. The characters' only hope for escape is magic or getting to one of the aqueducts and crawling out through it. Of course, the Wolfen army will send out 100 troops to hunt them down in the woods. **Note:** Jedima is too old and knows that he will only slow the group down, so he will insist he be left behind, saying, "I'm too old and feisty. They ain't gonna kill me. But you boys save yourselves. I should never have gotten you involved in this. I'm sorry. Now, get movin'. I'll never be able to live with myself if I got you all kilt. And thanks, for what you tried to do."

Typical Coyle Soldier (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Miscreant Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 13, M.A. 13, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 14, P.B. 12, Spd. 18
Average Hit Points: 32. **S.D.C.:** 24. **P.P.E.:** 9.
Experience Level: 3rd level Soldiers.
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Weapons: Each carries a wicked hippe pole arm (4D6 damage) and has a bastard sword (3D6) in a back sheath.
Armor: Studded leather: A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38.

Typical Wolfen Legionnaire (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Anarchist, Aberrant or Miscreant.
Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 13, M.A. 13, P.S. 20, P.P. 17, P.E. 20, P.B. 14, Spd. 22
Hit Points: 30. **S.D.C.:** 40. **P.P.E.:** 9.
Experience Level: 3rd level Soldiers.
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Bonuses: +3 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact. +2 to pull punch, +5 to damage, +10% to save vs coma/death, and +3 to save vs magic and poison.
Weapons: Voulge (5D6) and a falchion sword (3D6).
Armor: Studded leather: A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38.

Cassandrix Interrogates

If the characters do escape, that's great. However, they'll miss the rest of Cassandrix's fun unless they are recaptured.

If the group escapes but is recaptured, they'll end up back in the dungeon (Cassandrix will comment, with a touch of sarcasm, about their resourcefulness.) Regardless, they will be visited, sooner or later, by Cassandrix for interrogation. She enters the room accompanied by four Wolfen guards. Although the guards step gingerly around the circles, she strolls right through them as if they weren't there.

"Now tell me," she says in a soft, almost seductive voice. "What is the size and dispersion of the invading human forces?"

She'll select one of the player characters and pet his face softly, saying, "Come, come child, we know you to be a small patrol scouting ahead for an even larger force. Don't deny it." This character is being psionically probed. He must roll vs psionic attack or Cassandrix will peer into his mind. If this first probe falls, she'll try Hypnotic Suggestion. If this too fails, she'll move on to another. She will remain frighteningly calm and confident, ignoring snide remarks, curses, and spit.

If her psi-probes do not extract the information she is looking for, or she receives an unsatisfactory reply, she turns to Jedima. Pointing to his shackles, she unlocks them Telekinetically (a trick that took her years to master), dropping the old man to the floor.

"Perhaps these fools really don't know anything. Are they your pawns, old one?"

She pauses a moment and frowns, "Your defenses are strong, but there are many ways in the art of persuasion."

She motions for two of the guards to grab Jedima and drag him to her.

"Don't make this hard on yourself," she purrs. "Tell me what I wish to know, little man, tell me now!"

Jedima spits right in Cassandrix's eye and hisses, "Go to Hell, you devil."

"Very well," she snarls, "but I'll send you there ahead of me – but, oh so very slowly."

With this the guards drag him to the base of a circle. Cassandrix is strong enough to easily handle him from this point on, chains him inside the circle, and steps back with a lock of Jedima's hair. She affixes the hair to a rag doll that she had under he cloak and shapes the figure so that it somewhat resembles an old man. Then, she kneels at his feet and begins to write. She stops and rises, saying, "We Wolfen have been slow to adopt the ways of magic, *Jedima Andro Walkin* (his true name). Oh, don't look so surprised that I know your name. I know more about all of you than you might think, my darlings."

Cassandrix draws a small, thin dagger from her belt and dangles it above the rag doll effigy and says, "While we are latecomers to magic, we are fast learners. As you'll see."

With these last words she plunges the knife into the doll, Jedima winces and groans. She does it again and again, each time evoking louder tormented screams from the old man. She continues until he falls unconscious. At that time, he is revived and given a healing potion. When his strength is back, she repeats her questions. Unsatisfactory answers compel her to begin the torture anew. The characters will never forget his tormented screams. **Note:** The circle is a Summoner's Circle of Pain! For now, Jedima is Cassandrix's only victim, though it will be days before she intends to let him die. She is convinced that the other members of the group are just stupid pawns of an old man's revenge plot. She is also fairly convinced that there is no human army advancing on the city, but that doesn't stop her little games of torture.

If somebody in the group tries to stop Cassandrix by lashing out with magic or psionics, she'll back away, saying, "Save your powers for the arena where they will do you some good." And with an angry wave of her hand, send a lightning bolt, blasting

Jedima apart, a second before she whisks out the door. Her parting words through the closed door are, "I will enjoy your death in the arena."

Within a day or two, the characters are made to fight in the arena.

The Arena of Death

The day they are to fight in the arena, the group is led, shackled, to a rectangular waiting room. The room is dimly lit by one tiny slit of a window, 4 inches wide and 12 inches tall. The floor is covered with straw stained crimson from blood. Holding cells, currently empty, make up the right side of the room. The odors of blood and death can be smelled from the neighboring chamber down the hall where healers work to save the fortunate gladiators who have survived the day's trials so that they may fight again.

Two Ogre guards stop in front of the group's cell door. They argue loudly about the party's chances in the arena. The one thinks they may have a chance, the other is willing to bet his entire month's salary that "Savagius and Tyrannicus slay them in record time." Moments later, the door opens and the characters' belongings are thrown on the floor. The only items missing are coins, gems, jewelry, books, scrolls, potions, and magic items recognized to have long-range attacks. (Cassandrix has Object Read them in advance.)

Full armor, shields, weapons (including magical), and magic items applicable to hand to hand combat are all returned. The characters have 30 minutes to "suit up" and pray to their gods. If somebody refuses to dress and/or refuses to fight, he is physically tossed into the arena whether he likes it or not. Wizards and Warlocks are gagged, given a weapon, and instructed that this battle is by weapon, no spell casting allowed (yes, the person can remove his gag, but the obvious use of magic will instigate the addition of a spell casting opponent, like an Earth Elemental or Ogre Witch).

The group is sent out into the arena. As their eyes adjust to the light, they can hear Optimus addressing the capacity crowd.

"Citizens! Today is indeed a special day. For today you shall witness this small band of spies, captured by Commander Regius, fight for their lives in the Arena of Death!"

A cascade of cheers erupts from the crowd and continues until Optimus gestures for silence.

"These enemies of the Empire will match their might against our two undefeated champions, Savagius and Tyrannicus! How can two of our fearless gladiators defeat so many? Because they fight with justice on their side. May the Wolfen Empire forever endure! Let the games begin!"

The field of combat is soft sand with large blotches of discoloration from the blood of previous battles. Two huge, 20 foot (6.1 m) doors swing open to reveal a pair of hideous, mutant Giants – Gigantes – fully arrayed for battle. They are *Savagius* and *Tyrannicus*, the reigning champions of the Prime Arena.

Note: The sand on the arena floor will impair the player characters' movement, reducing speed by 20%, and making them -1 to dodge. The two seasoned gladiators do not suffer from these penalties.

Game Master Note: Conduct the combat just as you normally would. The two Giants fight till the death, or until Optimus or Cassandrix stops the contest. Remember that the wanton, unfair, use of spell magic by the heroes will cause the Earth Warlock to send his Earth Elemental in to even the odds. It can be a Minor or Major Elemental depending on the judgment of the Game Master; just be fair, the characters should have a fair chance of winning.

Savagius

Savagius is a blue-gray behemoth with huge yellow fangs and a mane of black hair. He is an eighth level Gladiator and has never lost a battle as a team with Tyrannicus.

Alignment: Miscreant Evil Gigante.
Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 3, M.A. 8, P.S. 27 (Supernatural), P.P. 24, P.E. 28, P.B. 10, Spd. 24
Hit Points: 71, **S.D.C.:** 121. **P.P.E.:** 60.
Experience Level: 8th level Gladiator.
Special Abilities: See the invisible, additional pair of arms, thick lumpy skin.
Attacks Per Melee: Eight!
Bonuses (includes attributes): +7 to strike, +9 to parry, +6 to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +14 to damage, +2 to roll with impact, +7 to save vs magic and poison, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor. Disarms on a roll of a Natural 18, 19 or 20, +1 to entangle, and body flip/throw does 2D6 damage.
Damage: Restrained punch does 2D6, full strength punch does 4D6, power punch does 1D4x10, but counts as two attacks – plus P.S. damage bonus (14).

Poisonous Bite (Special): 2D6 plus the victim must save vs poison (roll a 14) or suffer an additional 3D6 damage.

W.P. Paired Weapons: All weapons; for each attack, Savagius will use two of the four weapons at his disposal to make a paired weapons attack.

Weapons: Spiked club (4D6 damage +P.S. damage bonus), magic battle axe (4D6 damage +P.S. damage bonus and returns when thrown), magic cutlass used as a dagger (2D6 damage but can cast the spell Fly as the Eagle twice a day), and a small metal shield (does punch damage when used to hit an opponent).
Armor: Giant-sized double chain mail: A.R. 15, S.D.C. 75.

Tyrannicus

Tyrannicus is an exceptional warrior and a favorite of the fans. He uses his tail, speed and weapons skills to his earliest advantage, usually leaving his fire breath as a surprise attack.

Alignment: Miscreant Evil Gigante.
Attributes: I.Q. 7, M.E. 4, M.A. 6, P.S. 31 (Supernatural), P.P. 17, P.E. 30, P.B. 10, Spd. 24
Hit Points: 75. **S.D.C.:** 175. **P.P.E.:** 50.
Natural A.R.: 12
Experience Level: 9th level Gladiator.
Special Abilities: Scaly skin, additional eye, long, heavy tail, fire breath (20 ft/6 m; 3D6 damage per blast).
Attacks Per Melee: Seven.
Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +6 to strike and parry (with arms or tail), +4 to dodge, +17 to damage, +4 to roll with impact, +5 to pull punch, +8 to save vs magic and poison, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, +30% vs coma/death.
Damage & Other Combat Info: Restrained punch: 2D6, full-strength punch: 5D6, power punch: 1D6x10 (counts as two attacks), bite (large, flat teeth): 2D4, tail slap: 6D6, disarms or stuns on 18-20, W.P. Paired Weapons (all), plus entangle and body throw/flip (4D6+17 damage).

Weapons: Tyrannicus' primary weapon is his indestructible spiked mace (1D4x10 damage +P.S. bonus, and magically enchanted "thunder hammer" effect – the crowd just *loves* the booming sound). He also fights with a large shield that can be used to bash (does punch damage when used to hit an opponent), and return when thrown. It gives him an additional +4 to parry.

After the Battle

If the characters are defeated, Optimus will spare them so that, "they may experience the agony of defeat again and again, and knowing that it is I, Optimus, who holds their lives in his hand. When I allow it, only then will they know peace in death." They will be stripped of their weapons, returned to their cell, and made to fight another day, soon. G.M.'s choice if they fight the same pair or somebody new.

If the characters win, Optimus will leap from his seat, give the thumb's up signal that the Giants should be spared, and shriek, "Throw them in the dungeon! You'll pay dearly for this outrage." The group will be stripped and taken back to their cell.

Of course, they could try an escape (again), but flying would appear to be the only way out. If they did get out, the previously discussed scenario of a manhunt would unravel. Meanwhile, attacking Optimus or Cassandrix would create a fight right in the stands, and if the group killed one or both, they would again be hunted, and if captured, they'd like be executed by beheading.

The Visitor

Late the next evening, the adventurers are be visited by *Commander Regius*. He is alone and carries two sacks.

If the characters were defeated in the arena, he will say, "I offer your freedom from certain death in the arena, but there is a price."

If the characters have been victorious in the arena, he will say, "You are great warriors and deserve more than a dishonorable death in the arena or dungeon. I can free you, but I must ask of you a great favor, for I am as good as dead if Optimus or Cassandrix still live by morning."

This is the deal: Regius will let them out of their chains, give them their belongings as well as food and four healing potions (all other possessions are long gone unless you, the G.M., put them in Cassandrix or Optimus' room), and arrange to have the guards removed from their posts, provided the group promises to kill Cassandrix and Optimus *tonight*. The deed must be done tonight or he must leave them to their fate. Regius will further explain that if they fail, he and the many loyal soldiers who have helped to arrange their escape will be executed. He explains his motives as follows:

"Life in Prime was good. Governor Optimus was a bit extreme and sometimes unreasoning, but no worse than others I have seen who let power go to their head. Then that witch Cassandrix arrived. She has slowly taken Optimus' mind from him, turning him into an insane puppet that dances on her invisible strings. In the past few months, my best men have mysteriously vanished. Cassandrix attributes it to desertion, but I know this is not true. They were my best, and were like brothers to me. Optimus accepts her answer of desertion and replaces my lost men with Cassandrix's loyal Coyles. It seems that anyone who opposes her views disappears or has an accident.

"Then there are the games. You saw it. The horror, the bloodlust. At one time the games were sport, never to the death and used to keep our troops in tip-top condition. To test new weapons and the troops' mettle, not to commit murder. I am surprised that I haven't ended up in the games myself. I guess her Coyle lackeys are still too inexperienced to lead the troops.

"I fear the witch is simply biding her time. She craves power and revels in the pain of others. I think she hastens the day when humans and real men (meaning Wolfen) will clash. The arena has been a useful tool in whetting the appetite of the people for war. All I hear is how the humans burn our farms, butcher our children, and use us as slaves like domesticated animals. Revenge is next, and that means war.

"I have no desire to see my people die in a war that neither side is yet prepared to fight. When that day comes, it will be because the Imperial Senate so decrees. Not because some bitch in a border town manipulated it."

Regius goes on to explain that it has been Cassandrix's Coyles, dressed in soldiers' garb, that have been raiding Sarathen and a dozen other human border settlements like it. He also suspects Coyles are gathering some 50 miles (80 km) north of Prime. One scout reported unusual numbers of Coyles in the area before he disappeared. Cassandrix's scouts report that all is normal. He would report to the Senate or the Imperia, but knows that he would never make it there alive. Cassandrix has secluded herself far from his reach and surrounds herself and Optimus with her Coyle minions, or Regius would gladly kill her himself. If asked about Cassandrix's multi-evil eye death that she used on the villagers, he will comfort them in that she can only perform that magic once a month, or so he thinks. **(G.M. Notes:** Any truth detection done to Regius will show that he does not lie. Magic or psionic scans show a good alignment and a troubled soul.)

If the group agrees, he'll free them, but only after he has made them swear on their honor that they will try to do as he has asked. Regius leaves them, saying, "Good, my friends, good! You are wise and brave warriors. You will be rewarded, if not in this life, in the next. Rest assured, if you are successful tonight, all in the Empire will hear of the non-Wolfen heroes who offered their lives in the name of peace and . . . friendship."

Of course, an unscrupulous group can use this opportunity to flee the city and be too far away to hear the death screams of Regius and his loyal soldiers that will surely come with the dawn.

If the group keeps their word, they find easy passage out of the dungeon, out of the arena, and into the residence of Governor Optimus (Cassandrix resides here too). This is the end of Regius' influence. Once the group steps inside that door, they are in the domain of Cassandrix.

Both Optimus and Cassandrix live on the third floor of the building. The Coyle guards on the first two floors are already dead, the handiwork of Regius and his men. The third floor is accessible from the main, wide stairs (Regius has suggested these, because they are poorly guarded; no one expects an assault in peacetime), the back stairs (these are guarded by 10 Coyles and near the kitchen, so others may be present), or by flying to a window, but Regius suspects the roof is guarded by a pair of *Gargoyles* summoned by Cassandrix (see page 314 of the **Palladium Fantasy RPG, 2nd Ed.** for Gargoyle stats.)

At the top of the main stairs are two Coyles in standard gear. Stealth or magic could knock out these guys without rattling the doorknobs of the grand double doors that lead to the bed chambers. Inside is one of the slumbering Giants from the arena, magically healed (G.M.s can pick whichever one they want. If the Giants were killed, then substitute a big, mean Wolfen, or maybe an Algor Giant or a Troll. Cassandrix loves Giants). The group has initiative and first shot at this bozo because he's asleep, but he wakes up swinging.

The noise of combat will certainly alert Optimus, who is in the huge chamber to the right. There is no response from Cassandrix's room on the left.

Optimus is guarded by six Coyle soldiers (use the stats offered earlier in this adventure) who will fight to the death to protect him. They do this because they do not wish to face Cassandrix if they fail. The sound of battle draws another 2D6 Coyles charging in from other rooms. Same basic stats as the previous.

There is also a 01-50% chance that one or both of Cassandrix's summoned Gargoyles will fly to the window to see what's going on and join the fray.

Optimus is dangerous, since he is insane and firmly believes that he is destined to rule. He remains completely calm as he walks forward, dressed in his white silk nightgown and armed with a shield in one hand and a broadsword in the other. Before he strikes he'll say, "This is madness. Don't you realize that I can not die?" Then he'll charge forward, fighting like a madman.

Game Master Note: Optimus is totally insane. He believes all the lies that Cassandrix has psionically put in his head. Consequently, he'll do and say things in the heat of battle that a sane person would never do. He will ignore pain as if he really does-

n't feel it. This will keep him moving until 40 points below zero Hit Points. When he hits 30 or so below zero, he'll suddenly stop fighting, drop his sword, and walk toward the balcony. Dreamily, he'll say, "Hear them? They call my name. They call me, and I must go to them..." And with that, he steps off the balcony, falling to his death. So ends the reign of a madman.

Optimus (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Miscreant Evil Wolfen.
Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 6, M.A. 15, P.S. 23, P.P. 19, P.E. 23, P.B. 17, Spd. 21
Hit Points: 54. **S.D.C.:** 40. **P.P.E.:** 4.
Experience Level: 8th level Noble.
Attacks Per Melee: Five.
Bonuses: +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +8 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +16% to save vs coma/death, and +4 to save vs magic and poison.
Other Combat Info: Karate kick: 2D4, roundhouse kick: 3D6, backward sweep, critical strike: 18-20, W.P. Paired Weapons (all), body throw/flip (2D6 damage) and disarm.
Weapons: Silver plated broadsword (3D6) and shield (can bash for 2D6). Optimus will use these as paired weapons.
Armor: None.
Magic Items and Other Equipment: None.

Cassandrix (Quick Stats)

Cassandrix is not in her room. The door is barred, but its flimsy lock is easily forced (20 S.D.C.). At the threshold of the door is a circle drawn in blood. It is a harmless nonsense thing put there to scare away intruders. The characters will have no reason to suspect that it is harmless unless one of them is a Summoner. Risking life and limb by running or flying over it should net the first person to do so a bonus of 100 experience points.

Her bed chamber is divided into three areas: 1) Her bedroom, 2) her study, and 3) a room filled with five interconnecting circles. She is present in none. There are all kinds of odd items in here, a veritable mini-alchemist's shop for a Summoner. The most valuable items are: Two pairs of Faerie wings, jewelry worth about 30,000 gold, a bottle of 20 lotus petals (worth 100 gold each from an alchemist, but the group might get 20 each), and a box of gold coins worth 5000. There's lots of other stuff from perfume and silks to tongues and toenails.

Suddenly, the circle room glows and Cassandrix appears with her Coyle lieutenant, *Pylon*. (**G.M. Note:** Pylon and Cassandrix appeared via a teleportation circle. She'll need the Faerie wings to use it again.) If the characters are hiding or out in the hall fighting, Cassandrix steps out of the circle matrix and then the room, to investigate (probably turning psionically invisible). She is overconfident and deluded with the dream of power. This gets her to foolishly join in the combat. Pylon will fight to the death for the woman he calls "his Queen."

What happens next depends on the Game Master, the players, and the roll of the dice. Does she die? Will she defeat the group (she is a powerhouse and vicious)? Does she flee into the night or teleport away? (Not if the characters bar her path or have the Faerie wings.)

If Cassandrix escapes, she will flee when she realizes that Optimus is dead and Regius is on to her. She will not risk returning to Prime, however, she will continue her quest for power, which may lead her to another city, and another adventure in the group's future. Perhaps she even ventures to the Imperial City? The latter is not likely, nor is Cassandrix arrogant enough to try to usurp Imperial power – at least, not quite yet. She is more likely to journey to the Eastern Territory to see how easily humans are manipulated into war.

If she is killed (not likely, Cassandrix is a survivor), her evil stops here and the world will be a safer place, but Cassandrix does not die easily.

Cassandrix Stats: Unlike many of her lazy Coyle kin, she is ambitious in the extreme. She has studied long and hard to master her psionics and the mystic art of circle making. Cassandrix

has used that knowledge to quench her desire for power. However, she has found that the more power she attains simply increases her appetite to acquire ever more. In recent months her appetite has grown insatiable. Her goal: To rule an Empire . . . and perhaps, the world.

Alignment: Diabolic Evil Coyle. This She-Wolf is ruthless and cruel. Life has little meaning to her. People merely represent pawns and playthings that she can use in her schemes. Non-Canines are seen as sheep waiting to be led to the slaughter.
Hit Points: 41. **S.D.C.:** 30. **P.P.E.:** 180. **I.S.P.:** 232.
Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 22, M.A. 11, P.S. 13, P.P. 21, P.E. 14, P.B. 12, Spd. 10
Experience Level: Fifth level Mind Mage and third level Summoner.
Attacks Per Melee: Five.
Bonuses (includes attribute bonuses): +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +2 to roll impact, +2 to pull punch, +4 to save vs psionic attacks and all forms of mind control and possession.
Magic Knowledge: All symbols, all power words, recognize wards 90%, all protection circles, all summoning circles, and the following power circles: Animate Dead, Healing, Knowledge, Pain, Teleport, and Power Matrix.
Psionics: Healing: Attack Disease, Bio-Regeneration (self), Deaden Pain, Detect Psionics, Healing Touch, Increased Healing, Lust for Life, Psychic Diagnosis, Psychic Purification, Psychic Surgery and Suppress Fear.

Physical: Alter Aura, Death Trance, Impervious to Cold, Impervious to Fire, Impervious to Poison/Toxin, Mind Block, Resist Fatigue, Resist Hunger, Resist Thirst, Summon Inner Strength, Spontaneous Combustion, Telekinesis, and Teleport Object.

Sensitive: Astral Projection, Clairvoyance, Empathy, Meditation, Mind Block, Object Read, Presence Sense, See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Dimensional Anomaly, Sense Magic, Sixth Sense, and Telepathy.

Super Psionics: Advanced Trance State, Bio-Manipulation, Catatonic Strike, Cause Insanity, Cure Insanity, Group Mind Block, Hypnotic Suggestion, Induce Nightmare, Insert Memory, Mental Illusion, Mentally Possess Others, Mind Bond, Mind Wipe, Psi-Shield, and Psi-Sword.

Weapons: A pair of delicate looking enchanted war clubs (thin, mace-like or scepter-like items). The silver one does 2D6 damage to mortals, 4D6 to animated dead and demons, and 6D6 to the undead. The bronze one does 3D6 damage and can cast any or all of the following spells once per day: Globe of Daylight, Fuel Flame, Fire Ball and Circle of Flame. She also has a pair of small, silver daggers (1D4+1 damage) concealed in her clothes or belt.

Magic Items: Cassandrix wears a strange magical necklace that makes her impervious to psionics. Once per month it can be used to amplify the effect of a single psionic power (any) to affect up to five people instead of just one. This is how she killed five villagers at once with a potent Bio-Manipulation/Evil Eye: Death (it affected five instead of one).
Armor: Cloak of Armor (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 150).

Lieutenant Pylon (Quick Stats)

Pylon is an ugly, evil cuss who lives for Cassandrix's attention. He dreams of a day when Cassandrix sits upon the Imperial throne as Empress, and he might serve her as the Imperial Champion, *Supremitor Pylon*!

Alignment: Miscreant Evil Coyle.
Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 15, M.A. 15, P.S. 24, P.P. 24, P.E. 24, P.B. 15, Spd. 24
Hit Points: 60. **S.D.C.:** 45. **P.P.E.:** 12.
Experience Level: 6th level Soldier. He has recently been appointed second in command to Commander Regius.
Attacks Per Melee: Six.
Bonuses (including Attributes): +1 on initiative, +7 to strike, +2 to disarm, +8 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +3 to pull punch, +9 to damage, +18% to save vs coma/death and +5 to save vs magic and poison.
Other Combat Info: Karate kick: 2D4, axe kick: 2D6, roundhouse kick: 3D6, backward sweep, tripping/leg hook. All jump kicks. Critical strike: 18-20.
Weapons: Runka pole arm (3D6 damage) and a magic saber (2D6, plus shoots a fire ball 3 times per day; 4D6 damage each).
Armor: He wears magical, lightweight plate armor (A.R. 17, S.D.C. 160).

The Wrap Up

After the characters fight with Cassandrix, Regius will have them whisked away in a covered wagon that will drop them off near the border of the Eastern Territory. He provides a month's worth of food, wilderness supplies such as water skins, flint, rope, a tent, and a horse for each (even if they didn't have one to begin with) plus 500 gold (that's all he had).

The Bones of Belimar

An adventure setting and source material

By Kevin Siembieda

What happens when you cross travel-weary adventures, a town in need of some heroes, a brewing battle between good and evil and a mysterious menace lurking in the nearby wilderness? Adventure, brother, adventure. And the Bruu-ga-Belimar Mountains offer plenty of adventure opportunities.

Bruu-ga-Belimar means the "Bones of Belimar" in Wolfen. Belimar is a Dwarven god in the Pantheon of Northern Gods. He symbolizes strength and rune magic and the mountains named after him are said, according to ancient legend, to house several of his secret rune and magic workshops hidden among the most towering and desolate mountain peaks. Not that anybody has *ever* found one of them in 10,000 years. Still, rumors and legends of lost rune weapons, forbidden magic and Dwarven treasure laying hidden in the Bruu-ga-Belimars persist and draw many a hopeful adventurer to the mountains (and often to their doom). Similarly, rumors persist that ancient Dwarven cities, strongholds and treasure troves are hidden in the mountains, despite the fact that ancient Dwarves are believed to have *never* lived in these mountains. Never, other than a few wandering adventurers, woodsmen, hermits and fugitives.

The Bruu-ga-Belimar mountains mark the southern border of undisputed territory held by the Wolfen Empire and what most humans accept as the foothills to the *Great Northern Wilderness*. South of the mountains is the hotly contested "Disputed Lands" that run from the mountains south to *Great River* and *Howling Lands*. (See the **Eastern Territory** sourcebook for details on these and other people and places in the Eastern Territory.) Ironically, while the Bruu-ga-Belimars mark one edge of the *Disputed Lands*, and are generally accepted as being "Wolfen Territory," neither Wolfen nor Human has shown much interest in the mountain range. This is understandable since the range is mostly inhospitable, ice and snow covered rock. Forest and meadows are found primarily in the foothills and valleys (where 70% of the Bruu-ga-Belimar natives live),

leaving most of the upper reaches of the mountains barren. Furthermore, no precious minerals or gems have been found within the rocky edifice and even Dwarves, Kobolds and Troglodytes (for the most part) have avoided making their homes here. This has left the mountains a mostly untamed wilderness that humans regard as treacherous and monster ridden. Then again, there isn't much of the Wolfen Empire that isn't wilderness and filled with "monsters," at least from the point of view of humans.

There are a few villages and trading outposts here and there along the major travel lanes and in lush mountain valleys and lowland forests, but that's about it. For beleaguered travelers, this means settling for the first place they come across, because there's no telling when another chance for shelter, food and (relative) safety, might come along.

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

Racial prejudice and old injustices may motivate some to violence, but there is no movement or policy about any social or racial group. Most ordinary folk are too busy trying to survive to harass or harm outsiders or other people over trivial matters such as race or upbringing. Still, race and origins can be a motivator for trouble. The majority of the mountains' inhabitants are the so-called "monster races," and though many tolerate others and avoid open conflict as they go about their business, there are those, both human and nonhuman, who *are* put off by one people or another. For some, the very presence of a hated people is provocation enough for acts of cruelty and conflict. There are also those who survive as raiders and bandits.

There is no official, central or Imperial government in the Bruu-ga-Belimar mountains. Each village, tribe or clan is usually quite independent, governed by a council of elders, or by a patriarchal family, or warlord or mage. Some can scarcely be called villages at all, because they are so small.

Inhabitants of the Bruu-ga-Belimars

Estimated Population for the Bruu-ga-Belimar Mountains

Note: Accurate numbers are impossible to calculate, so most of these are best guesses on the part of the Wolfen and could be off by 10-200%, up or down.

187,000 Humans (Combined)

122,000 Nomads, Mountain Men and Barbarians, considered Northern Wilderness Natives.

42,000 Eastern Territory Human Colonists

10,000 Western Empire Colonists (and Spies?)

6,000 Fugitives and Criminals from various southern kingdoms.

4,000 Bizantium Colonists

3,000 Lopan Colonists and Explorers

625,000 Canines (Combined)

400,000 Coyles

125,000 Wolfen

100,000 Kankoran

971,000 Other Races of Note (Combined)

300,000 Orcs

170,000 Goblins (10% are Hob-Goblins)

102,000 Ogres

100,000 Troglodytes (in the mountain itself; the actual number could be 2-10 times greater; nobody knows).

90,000 Trolls

60,000 Bearmen

40,000 Dwarves

10,000 Gnomes

70,000 Algor Frost Giants

12,000 Gigantes Giants (a recently growing population)

8,000 Cyclops Giants

5,000 Titan Giants

4,000 Danzi (in scattered tribes)

As well as various others in numbers much too small to count, including dragons, particularly Ice and Wooly Dragons, of which there are believed to be several hundred of each.

Appearance & Garb: Mostly furs, buckskins, and the garb of trappers, woodsmen, rangers, barbarians and adventurers.

Major Cities (i.e. with a population of 8,000 or more): None. The typical "town" or "village" in these mountains has a population of 50-500. Valley and foothill communities – typically agricultural based societies – may actually number close to one thousand. Note: None of these communities and tribes are considered an official member of the Wolfen Empire or any nation. Most are completely free and independent groups making it on their own the best they can and do not represent any of the nations or kingdoms of the Palladium World.

Government: Mostly tribal, family clans, and settlements with a lone ruler (usually the strongest) or town council.

Economy: Very little manufacturing. Most inhabitants live off the land. Trade is typically geared for locals (tribal nomads, trappers and adventurers) and based on farming, livestock, and the fur trade, with a little bit of mining, timber and fishing.

Education: Minimal. Less than 12% of the Bruu-ga-Belimar inhabitants can read or write, though most (90%) speak fluent Gobblely, Giantese (the tongue of Giants & Trolls), and Eastern Human at 90% proficiency or better, 60% also speak Wolfen and 50% speak either Western or Elven – 20% speak 1D4 additional languages with Dwarven and Western Human being the most likely. Formal "trade skills" are usually based on the needs of the clan/tribe/community with most being oriented toward gender (i.e. males tend to be hunters and warriors, females tend to be gatherers, healers and caretakers). Wilderness and warrior based O.C.C.s are the most common.

Religion: A wide range of faiths are found in the Bruu-ga-Belimars, including the worship of Algor Giants as gods still being practiced by primitive nomads and barbarians. The most popular gods include Algor the Northern Sea God, the entire pantheon of Northern Gods, Wolvenar specifically, Od specifically, Belimar specifically, the Pantheon of Rurga, Rurga specifically, Dragonwright, Elemental Forces (particularly the Wind and Ice), Druidism and the occasional cult or tribe of Deevil or Demon worshipers.

Military Resources: None. Only whatever the town, tribe or clan has available to it, typically a group of warrior-hunters plus

a wise man/psychic and/or one or more Shamans, Druids, Witches or practitioner of magic in positions of power. Towns may have a volunteer militia force, one or more champions/protectors or a sheriff and a few deputies, as well as townspeople who are likely to rally together (to some degree) in times of trouble.

Nomads

Mountain nomads are tiny communities of people who continually wander the mountain ranges. These are almost always a small band of males, females, and children, seldom exceeding more than 50 individuals. Some nomadic groups may be as few as a single family or friends numbering a paltry 4-16 members. A typical clan or family group contains 10-40 members. Most wander the mid- and low-lying parts of the mountains, venturing up into the higher reaches of the mountains only in the summer and when weather permits. The tallest peaks are avoided year round because there is little reason to go there. Wildlife suitable for hunting is minimal, the upper mountains barren, and its chief inhabitants monsters the likes of Dragons, Gryphons, Peryton, Winter Storm Ice Demons, Elementals and others best avoided. Even Frost Giants and Wooly Dragons are seldom found above the mid mountains. Besides, life throngs in the forested lower regions where all sorts of game animals (sheep, mountain goats, elk, moose, deer, rabbits, beavers, quail, geese, etc.) are plentiful for all to hunt, humans and nonhumans alike.

Nomads (and most inhabitants of the Bruu-ga-Belimars) live off the land by hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering fruit, vegetables, and roots. Nomads are almost always passive, non-violent people who will try to avoid trouble/combat at all costs (remember, they are usually family groups). They will, of course, fight to defend themselves and the rest of the clan, and will do so quite fiercely, and have no qualms about shows of force, but they don't provoke conflicts and would rather run away than tempt fate with combat. These people do not like the confines of civilization and despite the hardships of their chosen wilderness lifestyle, it is the way of life they enjoy.

Although accustomed to the mountain wilderness, only a few members are actually skilled Rangers or Druids. In game terms, the overwhelming majority of nomads should be considered the *Vagabond or Peasant O.C.C.*, while perhaps as many as 20% may be of the Ranger O.C.C. (that would be six people in a band of 30) and less than 5% a Druid, Shaman or Warlock. That having been said, most nomadic clans will have 1-3 spiritual leaders or advisors who are usually one of the following: *Shaman, Druid, Warlock* or *Psi-Healer O.C.C.* The occasional other psychic or practitioner of magic may also hold such a position. Priests representing a formal religion are virtually unheard of among nomads and other tribal groups. Non-human nomads may have any of the above O.C.C.s for their spiritual leader or wise man, as well as the possibility of the *Witch* or *Necromancer O.C.C.* Such characters are believed to be linked to the land and have special powers and insight to help guide the clan/tribe/group. They may be young or old, male or female. Yet despite their powers, they are seldom the group's leader, but rather function as one of the group's advisors.

The leader of most nomadic groups is typically a strong Ranger or warrior type, because it is his job to quite literally *lead* the people through the wilderness and insure their survival (+10% bonus to the skills Land Navigation, Wilderness Survival and Track & Trap Animals, this is in addition to O.C.C. bonuses and is exclusive to the clan "leader"). It is the group leader who selects the best routes to travel, safest place to pitch camp, where to find game animals, what types of food can be found where, how long they should stay in any one place, and when and where to travel. A council of elders, however, usually handle issues of discipline, resolve disputes and hand out punishments for wrongdoings.

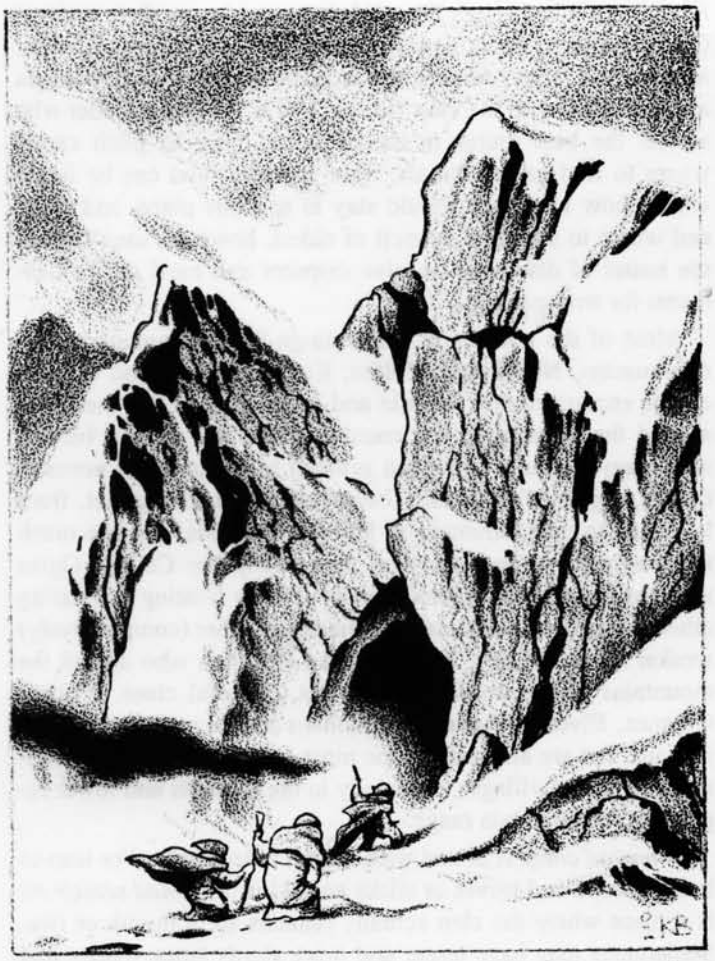
Most of the nomads in the Bruu-ga-Belimar mountains are non-humans. Nonviolent Wolfen, Kankoran, Orcs and Goblins can be encountered in the mid and lower regions and the forest around the mountains, but conniving Orc and Goblin bandits also roam this area and often *pretend* to be harmless nomads. *Coyles, Ogres, Trolls,* and *Giants* are found throughout, from lowlands to mid mountain to higher elevations, and are much more aggressive and war-like, particularly the Coyles, Ogres and Trolls, some of whom actually live by hunting and eating other humanoids, particularly humans and other (comparatively) weaker races. Wolfen, Kankoran and Bearmen who inhabit the mountains tend toward self-sufficient, peaceful clans. Wolfen, Gnomes, Elves, Dwarves and humans are counted among the nomads, but are also among the most likely to establish permanent towns and villages, especially in the foothills and lower regions of the mountain range.

A nomad camp is dotted with animal hide tents and/or lean-to huts of wood and leaves or sticks and skins. *A nomad settlement* is a place where the clan actually remains for a month or two. Settlements may have larger and more sturdy tents, tepees, and wood huts, and may even have some penned livestock and horses or pack animals, but not many. Livestock, horses, and even animal pets are too much of a liability because they require more food and care than the clan can provide, especially during the terrible winters. For the same reasons, slaves are never kept, and any nomads who take captives do so for only one of four possible reasons **1)** to interrogate and/or rob and release, **2)** to ransom for food, livestock or supplies (prisoners are released when the ransom is paid), **3)** as a temporary work force/helper/defender (usually in the summer when food is plentiful) and released when the work is done or winter threatens, or **4)** to be eaten as food within 3D4 days.

Mountain Men

Mountain men also wander these ranges trapping animals for fur and living off the land. They are certainly nomads but do not travel in groups. They usually travel alone or in pairs or threes. It is the rare group of hunter-trappers/mountain men (typically the Ranger or Long Bowman O.C.C.) that travel in a troop of four or more. A majority of mountain men are humans, with Bearmen, Wolfen, Ogres, Trolls, Kankoran, and Orcs next in line, and in that order. Though the Elven Ranger and Long Bowmen are quite famous in the region, they are more common to the lowland forests and foothills rather than the mountains themselves.

Human and *Wolfen* huntsmen can be encountered throughout the full range of mountains. (Bear in mind that their numbers in are few the vastness of the mountain range and one ranger may



not see a fellow huntsman, clan or tribe for months at a time, even a year or more.)

Ogres, Trolls and *Giants* are found in higher altitudes and away from human and Wolfen settlements.

Bearmen and *Kankoran* are the epitome of the lone hunter/mountain man, and are found in both the forest and most remote regions (typically hunt alone or in pairs). Both are incredibly hardy and skilled hunters who love the solitude and freedom that the unpopulated mountains provide.

Orcs, Goblins, Coyles, and *Gnomes* tend to be group oriented, so they gather and travel in nomadic clans, tribes or hordes. They are seldom encountered as lone hunters.

All mountain men share a dislike for civilization. The encumbrance of laws and social etiquette, and the confinement of a village drives them crazy, though they don't mind visiting for a few days or even weeks, drinking, dancing, roughhousing, spending their money, and being with other people as long as they can come and go as they please. They are generally tough loners who pride themselves on their physical might, hunting prowess, forest savvy and independence. They come down into the towns and villages a couple times a year to sell their pelts, restock on supplies, for a little companionship, and when a winter is particularly savage. Except for an occasional mountain man's jubilee, these stout fellows seldom gather into any kind of formal group.

Tribes

First of all, we must define the difference between a tribe and nomads. Nomads are always small clannish groups rarely exceeding more than 50 people. They wander all over the mountain range yet claim no one place as their home. **A tribe**, regardless of its size, is almost always territorial. That is to say, that while a tribe may wander for miles and miles, there is one particular area or range they consider to be "theirs." This is true even if that land is *shared* by other creatures or even other tribes. For example, a tribe of Ogres may live in harmony with a *noncompeting* tribe of Kankoran who also live on "their" land. The Ogres live and wander throughout the region, as do the Kankoran. Both parties avoid frequent contact with one another, and both probably consider the territory to be theirs. Both tolerate the other because both stay out of each other's way. Neither destroys the land, nor threatens the other in any way. Basically, both tribes coexist in the same land but leave it unscathed so each can enjoy its harvest. However, if a tribe of Coyles or Orcs should do more than pass through, and/or defile their territory or molest the people of the region (i.e. the Ogre or Kankoran tribe), it is an act of war! Depending on the circumstances, this unwelcome "invasion" by an "enemy tribe" may invoke the ire of only the Ogres, or both Ogre and Kankoran may join forces to expel the invader and then go their separate ways.

Another difference between nomads and tribes is that tribes are usually indigenous to the area, meaning that they are creatures native to that land with a long ancestral history and a sense of having the right to live on (if not actually own) the land they consider theirs. All the mountain tribes are composed of races that have inhabited the *Great Northern Wilderness* for thousands of years. In most cases, their respective tribe has lived in their particular area for countless generations. They share a common ancestry and a common culture.

Tribes are also usually larger groups of 100 to 400 people (1D4x100), with a more formal governing body and a social caste. A *chief* or headman speaks for the tribe, acts as its official leader and enforces tribal law and customs. The chief is often an inherited position; i.e. the son of the chief is the heir to leadership of the tribe just as his father before him, as it has been for generations. The hereditary chief is groomed from birth to lead his people (as are his brothers and, to a lesser degree, cousins). A chief is usually a male, especially among warrior tribes, but a female may also be chieftain depending on the social status of women in the tribal community. However, not all chiefs are born into the job. Some tribes have a trial by combat or test of strength and/or cunning to select a new leader. Others select their chief by election or a chief is picked by a council of elders. Still others may use divine insight in which the chief is selected by the shaman or priest after a long period of fasting and meditation.

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

As for the rest of the tribal society, there are typically the hunter/warriors (usually the males), the caretakers (usually the females), the elders (who have earned the right to be supported by the tribe through years of service, and some of whom may

now serve as advisors), a council of elders (advisors), a war chief (strategist and leader of the warriors whenever the tribe or their territory is threatened), and a spiritual leader (Shaman, Druid, psychic, etc., the same as nomads), in addition to the headman/chief.

A tribal village can be comparatively small and resemble a large nomadic encampment with tents and lodges (usually true of summer camps), or it can be a village with large wood, clay, or stone huts and cabins (usually true of winter camps). The village is like any other villages composed of homes, gathering places, trading posts, corrals, and so on. The types of buildings depend on many elements, including how long the tribe has lived at that location, its prosperity, the size of its population, lifestyle, and the type of creature.

Some Examples:

Ogres tend to establish villages with large stone, wood and clay buildings. They raise horses and livestock, so they often have corrals, pens and slaughterhouses, as well as a large parcel of land they consider to be their grazing lands. An Ogre tribe can range in size from 200-1200, but they are so ornery and competitive that, with rare exception, they break up into much smaller communities with 40 to 160 members. Ogre tribes also like to subjugate other races as a labor force or slaves. These servants are inevitably Orcs or Goblins, or both, and may include other races such as Coyles and humans. In many cases, the Orcs and Goblins are willing servants, offering their services in labor and defense in exchange for the protection and resources of the Ogre community. Or they may be true slaves conquered by the Ogres and forced into servitude. Thus, a typical Ogre community usually has twice as many Orcs and/or Goblins as Ogres (i.e.: 40 Ogres means 80 Orcs live in the same village, and they live to serve the Ogres).

Kankoran and Bearmen, on the other hand, have small tribes that rarely surpass 500-800 total members and live in tiny tribal communities of 20-120. The buildings are simple wood huts and lodges built among the trees and therefore unobtrusive. The simple lifestyle reflects the two races' closeness to their environment and primitive culture. They never take slaves though members of other races are sometimes *adopted* into the tribe as full members with all the same rights as the Kankoran or Bearmen. However, 99% of the tribe will be of that same species.

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

Coyles are, by nature, group oriented and usually gather in nomadic clans and larger tribes. They are found mostly in the forests and hills around the base of the mountains. None are known to inhabit the upper reaches of the mountains themselves, though the Coyles often send raiding parties to plunder other mountain tribes and travelers as well as human settlements and military forces in the south. They are a constant source of trouble to the Eastern Territory and those living along the east coast of the Inland Sea. Coyles have no regard for other races or their tribal borders, not even the Wolfen. Consequently, they will travel into any area to do or take whatever they want. Large groups of young warrior males have been known to massacre entire villages or take on Wolfen and human soldiers to simply prove their manhood. They are regarded as plundering barbarians and are hated almost as much as humans by mountain natives. A Coyle in the mountains can only mean two things: There are other Coyles nearby, and trouble is brewing.

Wolfen, for the most part, have given up their tribal and wilderness ways, but there are still tens of thousands who prefer to follow the old ways and live free and independent of the Wolfen Empire. These characters are typically found in the Bruu-ga-Belimars as lone hunters, nomadic clans and independent villagers. There is no "official tribe," though some of the largest nomadic clans number into the hundreds, and there are entire Wolfen villages and towns. However, most Wolfen are not overtly aggressive, even toward humans, and though Wolfen brigands, bandits, rebels and raiders exist, most individuals and clans fight only in self-defense.

Algor Frost Giants. The Bruu-Ga-Belimar mountains are one of the last domains of the Algor Frost Giants. The decision of this once proud and noble warrior race to join the side of the Elves in the ancient Elf-Dwarf War has haunted them through the ages. They, like so many others, were all but obliterated as a race during the war. Today, they live in seclusion high in the snow-capped mountains in the north. Among their own people they are kind and compassionate, extremely patient with the young, and caring of the aged. The adults usually mate for life and the family bond is strong and loving. Thus, here in the mountains, they may be encountered as lone individuals, clans of 1D4x10 and entire tribes or villages of 4D6x10 members.

Unlike Trolls and Ogres, they seek no vengeance against Elves or Manlings (as they call humans), but seek only to be left alone. Oh, there is resentment for both Elves and humans, but the Giants realize that to vent their anger and pain is to destroy themselves. Don't let this gentler, rational side to these behemoths fool you, the Algor harbor an unrivaled hatred for Elves. A hatred that has been passed down from generation to generation, for the Algor were duped by the Elves to fight at their side, only to be used as pawns thrown out to destruction without a thought or a care during the war. Dwarves are loathed almost nearly as much, and "Manlings" stand third in line because they have allied themselves with both enemies and seem to carry on their tradition of arrogance and destruction. As a result, the Frost Giants may not go looking for trouble, but tolerate little from these three races when they enter their domain. The slightest infraction, an act of aggression, a dishonest action, or a snotty remark, may send an Algor into a killing rage. The perpetrator(s) of said deed will pay dearly, probably with his life. Those who choose to defend or protect the offender also suffer their wrath. Often, humans, Elves, and Dwarves are warned to stay away from an Algor lair. Only the most humble and submissive actions will enable a human, Elf or Dwarf to survive an encounter with Algor Giants without bloodshed, and even this is no guarantee.

A typical Algor village contains 20-80 members, the largest, over 200. It is the rare exception that harbors more than this. However, it is not uncommon for them to share their village with friendly Trolls, Wolfen, Ogres or other Giants. These non-Algorian members of the village seldom surpass the number of Algor, however.

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

The Giants have a fairly sophisticated society and hierarchy. The leader is always a warrior chieftain, but there is also a council of elders and at least one man of magic, typically an Air or Water Warlock, Wizard, Mind Mage, or Druid (they tend to avoid Summoners and Diabolists). The warrior chieftain is a Knight, and the elite male defenders are also Knights. Other warriors tend to be Rangers and Soldiers, while the remaining males and women are craftsmen, caretakers and healers.

The Algor speak *Giantese/Troll,* the universal Giant tongue, and Gobblely, but 60% also speak Elven and Wolfen fluently. Only 20% can speak one of the human languages, and fewer still (10%) can read any language. They are fair craftsmen, competent hunters, and excellent warriors. **Note:** The Algor are impervious to the cold, so they are often seen wearing little more than a loincloth even in killer winters. Also the Frost Giants have a natural defense in the form of damaging *Frost Breath.*

A Typical Frost Giant Warrior

Alignment: Any; but usually Scrupulous (10%), Unprincipled (25%), Anarchist (30%), or Miscreant (25%).
Average Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 6, M.A. 6, P.S. 20, P.P. 13, P.E. 15, P.B. 9, Spd. 6
Average Size: 16 feet (4.9 m) tall and weighs 1000 pounds (450 kg).
Average Hit Points: 30 to 50. **Average S.D.C.:** 75-90.
Average Level of Experience: 1D4+3
Average O.C.C.s: 30% of males are Rangers and 50% Soldier O.C.C.s.
Natural Abilities: Superior physical strength and endurance, nightvision 60 feet (18.3 m; can see in total darkness), good overall vision and hearing, impervious to cold.

Frost Breath (special): Range 30 feet (9 m), inflicts 4D6 points of damage. The first breath attack per melee round counts as one extra attack. Frost breath can be used twice per melee round, the second breath strike counts as one of the character's regular melee actions.

Bonuses: +1 to strike with Frost Breath during hand to hand combat, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, plus those gained from attributes, O.C.C., and skill bonuses.

Magic: By O.C.C. only; Wizards, Witches and Warlocks are the most common.
Psionics: Standard, roughly the same as humans.
Common Skills of Note: Scale Walls, Track & Trap Animals, Skin Animals, Land Navigation, Hand to Hand: Expert, W.P. Large Shield, W.P. Large Swords, W.P. Pole Arms, W.P. Ball and Chain, and W.P. Blunt. Typical secondary skills include one or two additional Languages, Carpentry, Racial History, and Sense of Direction.
Average Number of Attacks Per Melee: Five attacks per melee, plus Frost Breath once per round.
Favorite Weapons: Pole arms (giant size,5D6 damage), large swords (giant size, 4D6), mace and chain/flail (3D6).
Description: Towering muscular, white or pale blue-skinned Giants that resemble humans (only 3 times as big). They have white or golden hair and dark eyes. The men often grow beards and mustaches and have shoulder-length hair. The women have long, flowing hair that often extends to their waistlines. Young and attractive Algor Giants are sometimes mistaken for Titans.

Politics at work: Humans enemy, Wolfen friend

Most of the nonhuman races share a dislike and intolerance for humans, Elves, and Dwarves, and tend to view all "civilized" folk as arrogant and weak, but also treacherous villains. Many of the so-called monster races, such as Orcs, Ogres, Trolls, and Giants, see the mountains as *their* last domain and resent intrusions by humans and their allies. Their hatred for these races can lead to easily provoked attacks and sometimes, wholesale slaughter. The monster races see themselves as protecting their land and their people from human invaders. Humans see such warfare and brutality as wanton evil and savagery from monsters who seek only to destroy human life. Neither sees the self-perpetuation of the tragedy of their actions.

Wolfen are more readily accepted by the other nonhumans for three reasons: One, they are not human – they too are clearly "monsters" by human standards. Secondly, they will generally acknowledge and respect the rights, traditions and laws of other people (unlike humans who tend to take what they want, especially from "monsters"). An unvoiced third reason is that the Wolfen Empire has not officially tried to force the scattered people of the sprawling Bruu-ga-Belimar mountain wilderness into the fold, and has left them alone unmolested. And lastly, they too, are *natives* indigenous to the region, unlike humans, Elves and Dwarves who are seen as "outsiders" and "invaders" from the south.

Ultimately, the Wolfen's own inhuman nature and tribal origins enable them to be a less threatening power and more sympathetic characters, but even their presence is not overly welcome – especially the presence of officers of the Wolfen Empire. Independent Wolfen are one thing, the Empire is quite another. Still the Wolfen have been cunning enough to use the hatred toward humans and human folly to their advantage. By acknowledging these tiny clans and tribes' wishes for autonomy and not invading their land, they have made friends, not enemies. They have even come to the protection of the mountain people by fending off marauding hordes of human settlers and Coyle hordes come to claim or ravage the land. To further emphasize that they are friends, they are swift in spreading the word of human atrocities and invasions, and the Wolfen Empire's efforts to stem the tide of humanity that threatens to wash over the Disputed Lands the Bruu-ga-Belimars border. It is on everybody's mind that should the humans invade and settle the Disputed Lands (where many of the mountain people have friends and family or go hunting), the next region inline (what they see as the human's path of conquest) are the mountains.

Advice to travelers from an old Wolfen

"Hurt ya real bad. Yep, the entire mountain range is just filled with danger. Passes through the range have been known to close within hours due to blinding blizzards and avalanches. When visibility is good, snow blindness and ice crevices are only minor hazards compared to the Frost Giants an' other beasts that don't take kindly to intruders, 'specially human intruders.

"Why, if it weren't for the stories of lost Dwarven treasure an' rune magic, I'm sure few human folk would venture into these parts. What's thet? Oh, the treasure. Well, legend has it thet a long time ago, back when the Dwarves were a mighty race, great treasures of gold and silver and precious gems was dug out of the mountain and hidden in secret subterranean caves.

"Not only would it be safe from bands of thieving Elves an' Goblins, but also from some of the not-very-honest humans who were starting to spring up everywhere back then.

"I seen lots of treasure hunters come and go, but I ain't never seen any treasure. Those who return at all, come back empty handed, save fer tales of Giants and howlin' winds.

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

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

– From the recollections of Ithak

A few infamous towns

The following are two notable (dare we say, notorious) mountain communities that welcome travelers and adventurers. Each offers a base camp and a jumping off point for any number of adventures in the Bruu-ga-Belimar mountains, Disputed Lands and even Phi and Lopan, as well as the Wolfen Empire and Eastern Territory. These places (along with some adventures) originally appeared in the **Further Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** sourcebook, still available from Palladium Books as a first edition sourcebook, easily adapted to the Second Edition of the Fantasy RPG.

The Village of Wrijin

"Welcome, Travelers! You are now entering the Village of Wrijin, where the food is hearty, the fires are warm, and the fellowship genuine. All peaceful, friendly folk are invited to stay here, work and trade to their liking. Ruffians and villains of any sort will be escorted to the village outskirts."

So reads the simple wooden sign that hangs from a large pine tree as one enters Wrijin. This is one of the few places where the heroes can feel at home, and where life is as gentle and easy a pace as the Northern Wilderness will allow. As the verbose sign suggests, this friendly little village think of itself as "civilized." Certainly it is the last point of what passes for civilization in this part of the mountains.

Wrijin is nestled along one of the one of the few known (and safe) roads threading through the Bruu-ga-Belimar region. The road, if it can be called that, is some 1,000 feet (305 m) from the outskirts of town. A smaller, but well traveled path leads into the heart of town. As visitors approach, they'll see an occasional wood house peeking through the light woods. Many of the trees have obviously been cut down for construction and to make the village more accessible. There is no outer wall or other obvious defenses erected anywhere around the settlement. It would seem these people have never faced the kind of trouble that makes other settlers fortify their borders.

In terms of location, the village is right in the heart of the Bruu-ga-Belimar region, within relatively easy traveling dis-

tance to the Algorian Sea, the Bruu-ga-Belimar Mountains, the Disputed Zone to the south and the greater Wolfen Empire to the north.

Though Wrijin is hardly a major stop, a fair number of Rangers and Merchants make their way through here. For them, Wrijin is sort of a "best kept secret" – the kind of place where outsiders are welcome to make the village a temporary home base, so long as they don't put too big a drain on the community or cause serious trouble. For adventurers and heroes, making Wrijin a momentary home away from home might not be a bad idea, and the locals will even tell them that! The people of Wrijin are open and friendly. They welcome visitors, since outsiders often bring hard to get goods to trade, unique services, news from the outside world and exciting tales of adventure – the good folk of Wrijin *love* stories of adventure. Though Wrijin is self-sufficient, their isolated location makes them feel like they are a million miles from the rest of the civilized world. Stories and news from visitors help them feel more connected to civilization, and help alleviate that feeling of isolation. Besides, one of the beloved elders has made storytelling an art form and instilled in most of the residents a thirst for adventure stories and interest in the wider world at large. Visitors are their window to that wider world.

The village proper is a small cluster of a dozen or so buildings, with numerous homes a bit farther away on the outskirts of a clearing in the woods. The population is large for a village (around 350-400 people) and uncharacteristically friendly for these parts. The racial breakdown is approximately 60% Wolfen, 20% human, 10% Orc, and 10% other (Goblin, Coyle, Ogre, etc.). As one might expect, humans tend to be friendly toward other humans, Wolfen toward other canines, and so forth, but everyone is pretty tolerant and polite, even to those who might be enemies. Visitors are encouraged to stay in the main part of town and not to invade the privacy of the homes that surround it.

Wrijin is an honest, law-abiding, gods fearing village that does not need a police force to keep the peace. The residents are close knit and caring, so any ill will from an outsider directed toward one of the villagers quickly causes half the population to rise up in his or her defense. Acts of violence and racial harassment of any villager are not tolerated. Troublemakers, thieves and loudmouths can quickly find themselves being tarred and feathered or beaten and tossed out of town. Serious criminals are likely to find themselves dangling on the business end of a rope or Wolfen sword.

Village Elders & Ithak. The village is governed by a council of elders consisting of four Wolfen, a human, an Ogre, and an Orc, but the real leader of the village, the one to whom all of the townspeople look to for wisdom and advice, is a garrulous old Wolfen named Ithak, the Storyteller.

Ithak (pronounced "ith-ack") is a gregarious, pot-bellied, Wolfen ex-soldier and a storyteller of great renown. He has traveled across the wilderness, fought with the Imperial Army, and seen many wondrous and horrid things. In addition to his personal escapades, he has collected an endless array of stories, yarns, rumors, myths and legends about the Wolfen, the mountains and the surrounding region. If someone needs to know something about the mountains or current events, they speak to Ithak. If any one person could embody the spirit of Wrijin and all of its people, it would be Ithak, who many locals consider to be the heart and soul of the community. Ithak is not a member of the Council of Elders, and, as such, has no legislative power, but the reality is people tend to come to Ithak with their problems for an informal sit-down to figure out some way to resolve them before getting the Council involved. Moreover, Ithak is so wise, well-liked and respected, that his voice and opinions carry more weight than the entire council put together. Surprisingly, there is no bad blood between the Council and Ithak, since Ithak never issues demands or proclamations and casts no judgments on anything. He just shares his vast experience, views and insight with people and lets them take their own course of action. As a result, the only times people come to the Council with their problems is when they are facing a genuine personal crisis or the matter involves the welfare and safety of the entire community.

Even those without problems are bound to run into the old storyteller at some point during their stay in Wrijin. Adventurers who are notorious for immediately seeking out the nearest watering hole when they enter a new settlement are likely to encounter old Ithak within hours of arriving at Wrijin. Many folks consider the old Wolfen to be the village's unofficial *welcoming committee.* Given his knack for detecting troublemakers, he is also the unofficial eyes of the law, either welcoming (and sizing up) newcomers by sharing a meal and/or drinks with them, or suggesting most convincingly to potential troublemakers that perhaps they should grab some food and be moving along. *Now.* Though Ithak is old, he has a presence and reputation about him that can make even the most hardened rogues think twice before crossing him.

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

Ithak, the Storyteller (Quick Stats)

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

If asked about the massacre of the Algor Range Huntsmen and the creation of the Wolfen Empire, his mood darkens a bit and his eyes become wet and sad. "Yes," he'll say, "I remember it. The butchers took my father's life, and the life of a brother I never met. Our new nation is a wonderful thing, but we paid for it, all of us, and I paid with a father and a brother. If you would, let us raise a glass to the lost, and when we've had our drink we'll turn our talk to brighter things and happier times."

He arrived at Wrijin some 40 years ago, meaning only to stop for a few days and then continue on, but he liked it so much here he just never left. Nobody knows how old he is, not his granddaughter, not even Ithak himself. When asked about his age, the cagey Wolfen grins and confesses, "I don't rightly know. Some days I feel like a pup, other days as old as the mountains." From his appearance and exuberance one would think him to be no older than 40 or 45 years of age. However, it is said that he arrived in the village when he was in his late 30's, which would make him ancient by Wolfen standards, about 78 years old. Those who remember that day insist that Ithak has scarcely changed a hair, except for adding 80 pounds (36 kg) to his weight and a few streaks of gray. The jaunty old fellow has an unquenchable love of good ale and beer and a notorious sweet tooth as is evident from his belly. The women often bake him fruit pies (berries of all kinds are his favorites) and give him jam and home brewed ale as a gesture of gratitude for looking out for their children and other acts of kindness.

Although nobody has ever seen him raise more than a staff to protect himself, Ithak is reputed to be a great swordsman. One story that the cheerful Wolfen never tells himself, but other Wrijin villagers are only too happy to recount, is the time, about 15 years ago, a band of Coyles abducted two of Wrijin's Wolfen women. Every able-bodied man in the village immediately assembled and went off to pursue the villains. Though their hearts were in the right place, these farmers and craftsmen had little chance of finding their loved ones before the Coyles had their way with them. Ithak stayed behind. A good thing too, because an hour later a traveler arrived with news of the Coyles' exact location (in the opposite direction of the villagers in pursuit). Ithak told the two oldest boys still in the village to run and find others and send them in the right direction. Moments later, the old Wolfen emerged from his home wearing his tarnished soldier's helmet and his traveling furs. At his side hung a seldom seen pair of swords, one large and one small. To make a long story short, when the village men caught up with Ithak, the six Coyle raiders laid dead in the blood-soaked snow of a recent melee. Six others had fled to the hills. Ithak's clothing dripped with blood and gore. For the most part, the women were well and unharmed. They had been bound and blindfolded so they had seen none of what had transpired, though they would later say that they heard Ithak's unmistakable laugh, followed by shouting and the sounds of battle. Ithak's greeting to the village men, "Ah, the proverbial cavalry has arrived not a moment too soon. Good, the ladies and I will need your assistance back down this damnable rock before the snow starts. Now please, tell me one of you has a keg of brew. My tongue is especially dry."

Ithak reports that he encountered two brave woodsmen who took pity on the village's plight and joined him in tracking and rescuing the women. He credits them with the slaying of the abductors, but the rescued women folk and village men swear they saw neither sign nor hair of any other warriors. Slaying six Coyle bandits is an amazing feat for a young Wolfen warrior let alone an aged one like Ithak.

Note: These facts and figures are known only to humble old Ithak who pretends to be much more lethargic and mild mannered than his true abilities and past make him. Then again, he has nothing to prove and seeks serenity in his final years.

Alignment: Scrupulous.
Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 18, M.A. 21 (and gets more likeable every day), P.S. 19, P.P. 20, P.E. 12, P.B. 12, Spd. 15
Height: Eight feet (2.4 m) and weighs 588 lbs (264.6 kg).
Age: Estimated to be around 78-80 years old, which is positively *ancient* by Wolfen standards. While there are other villagers to corroborate his advanced age, the old coot certainly acts half his age and is as strong and healthy as an ox.
Hit Points: 72. **S.D.C.:** 40. **P.P.E.:** 12.
Experience Level: Unknown to most he is an 11th level Soldier and 6th level Scholar.
Attacks Per Melee: Nine!
Bonuses (including attributes and combat skills): +1 on initiative, +6 to damage, +5 to strike (+8 with a sword), +6 to parry (+10 with a sword), +3 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.
Other Combat Info: Snap Kick: 1D6, backward sweep, tripping/leg hook. Critical strike: 18-20. W.P. Paired Weapons (all). Body throw/flip. Disarm.
Skills of Note: Languages: Wolfen, Gobblely, Giantese/Troll, Human Northern, Human Eastern, and Basic Math, all at 98%, Elven at 75%, literate in Wolfen 80%, plus Land Navigation, Wilderness Survival, Military Etiquette, and Recognize Weapon Quality, all at around 85% to 90% and Hand to Hand: Expert, Boxing, W.P. Sword, W.P. Knife, W.P. Targeting, W.P. Shield and W.P. Paired Weapons.
Weapons: Currently uses a wooden bo staff (3D6 damage, oversized) and is skilled in the use of all staves. However, tucked away are his old soldiering swords: matching pair of swords, one giant size broadsword (3D6+6 damage) and one largish size short sword (2D6 damage). Both are enchanted to be indestructible, +2 to strike and return when dropped or thrown. They are also both of exceptional balance and weight and are used by Ithak as paired weapons.
Armor: Prefers padding and soft fur (leather) armor, i.e. his "traveling furs," A.R. 10, S.D.C. 45 (special construction). Also from his soldier days is a full suit of Wolfen size scale mail, A.R. 15, S.D.C. 75, but it is too small for the robust Ithak of today.

Brrt the Blacksmith

For every light there must be some darkness, and for every hero there is his sinister shadow waiting somewhere for a chance to make trouble. For Ithak the Storyteller, that person is *Brrt the Blacksmith*, Wrijin's top metalworker. Though Brrt's skills have made him an indispensable part of the community, he is a dark-hearted rogue who despises Ithak and takes no pains to conceal his feelings. He believes Ithak is a fake and a blow-hard, and that all he does is flap his gums all day long so other people will buy him food and drink. Brrt is especially well known for saying, "The only reason why people keep giving that windbag drinks and dinner is because the only time he shuts up is when he's feeding his face!"

The real source of all this trouble is Ithak's granddaughter, the lovely, young Wolfen maiden *Kithkerrigan* (or *Kith* for short). Brrt has a big soft spot for Kith and has repeatedly tried to court her. Every time though, she has politely refused him, and the combined weight of all of those rejections has turned Brrt bitter inside. While his unrequited love for Kith makes Brrt mad at the whole world, he has special venom for Ithak the Storyteller, because he is the maiden's grandfather and he is certain the old Coot has "advised" her to rebuff him. Actually, Kith has never asked Ithak's advice on this matter, but Brrt is convinced otherwise.

Unbeknownst to the rest of the village, however, Brrt has snapped, and he seeks cruel and even murderous retribution for Kith's constant rejections. Seething with hatred for Kith (who has never wished Brrt ill, and, by the way, she has never been mean or unkind to him, she just never had any romantic feelings for the fellow), Brrt is trying to figure out the most fitting and painful revenge he can inflict on the sweet girl and loveable Uncle Ithak. In fact, he thinks he has decided on a sinister plot he cooked up a few months ago. Soon, very soon, he will put it into motion, and when he does, Kith, Ithak and the rest of Wrijin will be sorry they ever laughed at Brrt the Broken-hearted. *"Oh, yes, they will all pay, especially that tramp, Kith. She will pay most dearly of all . . ."* **Game Master Note:** Exactly how all this manifests itself is left to you, but it could turn into one heck of an adventure. (For one possibility, see the original **Further Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** sourcebook, involving Toromek the Insane.)

Brrt The Blacksmith (Quick Stats)

Brrt is a cantankerous Wolfen (Iron Claw Tribe) with a great dislike for humans, Ogres, and Coyles. If he had his way, he'd only associate with Wolfen and Elves. He is also a trifle greedy and has a vindictive streak. Covered with dark, curly fur, he tends to wear only a leather apron and shorts even on the coldest of days. He enjoys haggling, and will never simply sell something when he could get a good, loooong barter out of the situation. He is no longer a stable person, and flies into angry rages and tantrums when he can't get his way. Non-Wolfen who anger Brrt can expect a tongue-lashing if not an outright brawl. The Blacksmith definitely has an anger management problem.

Race: Wolfen (Iron Claw Tribe).

Alignment: Anarchist with strong leanings toward Miscreant. Once he puts into motion his plans for revenge against young Kith, his alignment will have slipped entirely to Miscreant.

Hit Points: 60. **S.D.C.:** 45. **P.P.E.:** 14. **I.S.P.:** 39.

Horror Factor: 12

Height: 9 feet (2.7 m) tall and 560 pounds (252 kg) of muscle!

Age: 48; pretty old for a Wolfen, but not out of the game just yet.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 22, M.A. 8, P.S. 26, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 8, Spd. 18

Experience Level: 8th level Blacksmith and pretty good in a fight.

Attacks Per Melee: Five.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +9 to damage, +2 to roll with impact, +2 to pull punch, +4 to save vs psionics, and +5 to save vs insanity (oops, guess he missed that save).

Other Combat Info: Snap kick: 1D6. Critical strike: 19-20. Body throw/flip.

Skills of Note: Languages: Wolfen, Gobblely, Giantese/Troll, all at 98%, Eastern Human at 55%, Basic Math 80%, Sculpt and Whittle 90%, Carpentry 85%, Hand to Hand: Basic, Wrestling, Swim, and W.P. Blunt.

Psionics: Brrt is a minor psionic, not that he realizes it. He uses his psi-powers instinctively whenever he needs them. His powers are limited to: Resist Cold, Resist Fatigue, and Sense Magic.

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

Armor: In combat, Brrt wears a suit of plate armor that is completely weightless and noiseless (A.R. 17, S.D.C. 200). Better yet, the armor will magically re-size itself to fit any wearer from a Gnome to a Troll!

Magic Items: Items in Brrt's personal collection that are not for sale under any condition include three glowing red shields (all different sizes), a silver shield with the emblem of the sun on it (can do a Blinding Flash 3x per day), a suit of Wolfen studded leather that is impervious to fire, a javelin that returns when thrown, and an indestructible wooden quarterstaff.

Places of Note in Wrijin

Although Wrijin is not exactly a large village, it has a fair number of places player characters will probably encounter during their stay. These include:

1. The Grint Family Goat Farm. The Grints are a family of three brothers, Drath, Ersnt and Faffer, their wives, Isa, Molth (sister of Brrt the Blacksmith), and 13 offspring, including 9 boys and 4 girls (all Wolfen of the Iron Claw Tribe). They own about 60 milk goats, 80 sheep for wool, and another 500 goats and sheep for eating, plus 40 ducks and a couple of dozen egg-laying chickens. They also have two fine plow horses and farm a few acres of land for potatoes, wheat, and cucumbers. The two older boys, Sath, aged 16, and Roor, aged 13, often give their Uncle Brrt a hand at the stables, and they have also picked up Brrt's disdain for Ithak and Kith.

2. Mrrigot's Boardinghouse. Mrrigot is the sister of Brrt the Blacksmith (and Molth Grint) and, much to his dismay, operates a boardinghouse open to travelers of *any* race. In fact, she is known for freely accepting humans, Ogres, and Coyles, all of which may find difficulty acquiring a room elsewhere in town.

When her place is full she has been known to insist that Brrt put travelers in his stables (at half price, although Brrt may extract the remaining payment or other reasonable gratuity or services for his inconvenience, like shoveling horse droppings, pitching hay, chopping wood, etc.). Mrrigot is a sweet, 100% honest, compassionate, gods fearing Wolfen female who has a kind heart as big as the Northern Wilderness. She feels bad for weary travelers who have no place else to go so she opens her home to them. Her family is grown and has moved away so she has five Wolfen size bedrooms available. Often she'll divide the 15x20 foot (4.6 to 6.1 m) rooms into smaller areas or rent space as a sort of communal sleeping place, putting up as many as 8-12 human-sized people in a single room, and never rents a room to less than four humans (or two giant-sized people) unless there are no other travelers in need.

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

3. Brrt's Smithy and Stables. For visitors to Wrijin, Brrt's Smithy and Stables is a good place to buy supplies, feed and board their animals, and to have their weapons and armor repaired. He also offers a wide range of basic adventuring staples (rope, spikes, leather goods, smoked meats, etc.) as well as weapons and armor (nothing heavier than Scale Mail, though). Brrt is an experienced blacksmith and skilled in repairing armor, weapons, metal items, and shoeing horses. He stables livestock for six gold a night (20 if owned by a human, Ogre, or Coyle), which includes a feed of hay and water; oats or better feed will cost an additional 5 gold (triple for you know who).

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

While Brrt's services and merchandise are top-notch (well, for this part of the Northern Wilderness, anyway), the wily Wolfen is an accomplished haggler and is especially skilled at overcharging humans, Ogres and Coyles. If offered 20 gold pieces for an item worth about that price, he'll immediately demand 200, and maybe, after a *long* session of bartering, settle for 50. Only characters with high Mental Affinity (M.A. over 15) are be able to make him stop before he has bargained the party down to their underwear. However, Brrt is fair when he is dealing directly with fellow villagers, Wolfen, Kankoran and Bearmen.

Brrt does have a weakness for magical weapons and armor, and is often willing to make exceptional deals for them. He can tell at a glance whether the object is truly charmed (thanks to his psionic abilities), though the extent of the spell is beyond him. Thus, a shield enchanted to glow can be passed off as a glorious barrier to all dragons' breaths. Actually Brrt will be almost as impressed with a shield that only glows. He loves magic weapons of all sort! Remember that he does own a smithy, and can quite easily test if something is "unbreakable" or "impervious to fire." He may be enamored with magic to the point of foolishness, but he is not stupid.

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

Brrt does have a few magic items for sale.

1. Matching sword and helmet. Both items positively shine if Sense Magic is used. Both are nice workmanship, and will only be sold as a set. The Magic Helmet is enchanted to keep the wearer at a constant warm temperature no matter how cold it is around the wearer. It works only when worn on the head and only while the matching sword is on the body/in the hand of the person wearing the helmet. Neither the helmet nor the person wearing it radiates heat so others can not be warmed by standing near him. However, the person will be pleasantly warm to the touch and therefore can melt snow after a few minutes if he lays directly on it. The helmet has an A.R. of 10 and 200 S.D.C. The helmet fits most humans, Elves, Kobolds, and Dwarves.

The magic sword works its magic only when the person using it also wears the helmet. It is activated by holding it pointed upright toward the sky. It immediately begins to glow, and becomes red hot in less than ten seconds. Hot enough to light firewood, straw or cloth. However, it is not a flaming sword and does no additional damage from the strike (normal damage is 2D6). Nor is the glow bright enough to see by (only radiates a few inches of light). It cools down at the same rate as it heated up, within 10 seconds, when held with the point downward or horizontal.

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

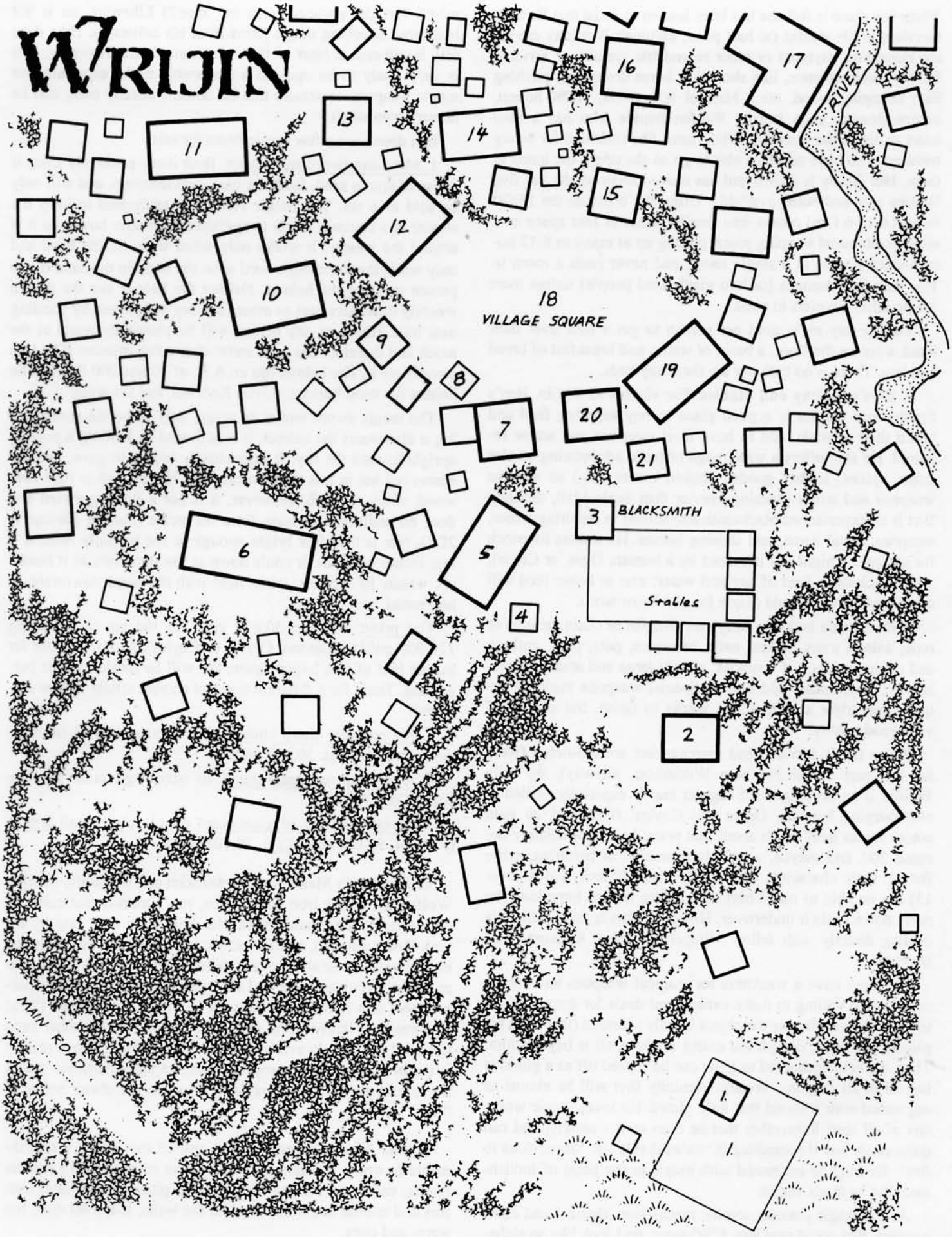
2. An eternally sharp knife. 1D6+3 damage and +1 to strike when thrown. Cost: 30,000 gold.

3. A glowing red metal shield. Its only magic is the glowing color. Cost: 800 gold.

4. Weightless suit of giant-sized double chain mail armor. (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 166). Cost: 50,000 gold.

4. Jazzkkrt's Meat Market. Jazzkkrt and his family of eight Wolfen, all of the Iron Claw Tribe, run a market that caters to the needs of the mountain traveler (mountain men stop by often). Dried, smoked, pickled, and salted meats can be purchased here at very reasonable prices (standard book prices). The meats are mostly venison (deer and elk), sheep/goat, rabbit, and squirrel. Beef is a rarity and not much liked by the villagers ("Uk! Too mushy! Hardly worth chewing..."). Bear on the other hand is a treat, but is only available from time to time. **Note:** Jazzkkrt is the brother of *Hurrn* who operates the slaughterhouse and is the cousin to the *Grint brothers* who run the sheep and goat farm.

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


WRIJIN
RIVER
18
VILLAGE SQUARE
BLACKSMITH
Stables
MAIN ROAD

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

The inn is owned by a partnership of Wolfen and Orcs and is operated by a staff of 6 Wolfen males, 4 Wolfen females, 5 Orc males, 7 Orc females, and 3 Goblins. Most of the town's people stay away from the inn to avoid conflicts with strangers. All travelers are welcome except humans, Ogres, and Coyles.

6. Hurrn's Slaughterhouse. The slaughterhouse is where livestock are butchered and prepared. Fresh meats, soup bones, and organs are available at low prices (one third book prices). The meats are mostly venison, goat, sheep, rabbit, squirrel, and sometimes, bear, beef, and possum. The Hurrns also skin and prepare animal hides, as well as sell and purchase particularly nice furs. The Hurrn family is Wolfen and includes *Grandma Hurrn*, *Uncle Strrv* and *Aunt Mayvv*, *Hurrn* (the father), *Fyth* (the mother), three sons, three daughters, and seven cousins. The family's prized possession is a giant-sized meat cleaver of Dwarven manufacture that inflicts 4D6+3 damage per strike. If only the family knew the weapon was once used by Western slavers to slaughter Wolfen back in the old days, they might not be so fond of the device.

7. Grinfyll General Store. This is a friendly, brightly colored place where the village women often stop to chitchat as much as to buy things. There is always a pot of herbal tea brewing for neighbors to sip. The store owners are the three cheerful Wolfen lasses known as the *Grinfyll Sisters; Coaliia, Vaanata & Yearsaa.*

The store sells everyday articles such as rope, string, jars, jugs, pots, cutlery, dishes, glasses, sewing needles, thread, fishing hooks, blankets, bolts of fabric, furs, capes, ribbons, tablecloths, and so on. Food items include spices, teas, herbs, pickles, jams, honey, canned vegetables, fresh baked bread, goat's milk, and cheese.

Outdoors equipment includes rope, climbing spikes, mallets, hand axes, knives, snare wire, small animal traps, backpacks, sacks, snowshoes, scarves, gloves, mittens, and tent material. Mountain climbing equipment includes 100 foot long ropes (cost 25 gold pieces each), pitons (metal spikes with loops for rope, costing one gold each, 10 gold for a dozen), a hammer for driving pitons (cost 4 gold), heavy blankets (cost 8 gold), parkas (30 gold for human size or smaller, 40 gold for up to the size of a medium Wolfen, 50 gold for big Wolfen or larger), flint and tinder (one gold), pairs of fur gloves (8 gold), and snow goggles (6 gold; eye coverings with only small slits in them, preventing glare off ice and snow from causing snow blindness; much superior to the homemade kind, which are usually made from bark or strips of cloth).

A complete *Mountain Kit* of two 100 foot ropes, 24 pitons, a piton hammer, 2 blankets, a large parka, flint & tinder, a pair of fur gloves, and a pair of snow goggles, all packed into a knapsack with 3 torches (each can last up to 1 hour), and some dried food (10 days 'starvation' rations; not filling, not tasty, but chewy enough for a starving Wolfen, and enough to stay alive); the whole package comes complete for just 120 gold pieces.

In addition to operating the store, the three sisters also do sewing (all have the Sewing skill, Secondary, 3rd level). They'll make repairs, do a bit of alteration (modifying clothing that is too small or too big), and even stitch together skins or leathers into blankets, capes or simple coats. They charge 4 gold an hour for their services. Yearsaa, when she doesn't have any other work, makes Aco dolls, which she sells for 6 gold, or simply gives away to any baby or young child who doesn't have one.

8. Karthan the Shoemaker. A small family of humans are the village shoemakers; Karthan, his wife Annata, and their teenage children Gregor, Kelvo and Thea. They are friendly and good craftsmen capable of mending shoes, boots, purses, belts, and most small leather goods. The father and his two sons can make the finest shoes, boots, and moccasins in the region. Prices are extremely reasonable for the high quality. The youngest son is secretly working on a bizarre new form of rubber-soled footwear that would be really be ideally suited for running (he makes the "rubber" from coagulated animal fat). His father finds Kelvo's idiotic ideas a complete waste of time, as well as a waste of good materials.

9. Wrijin Furs. A pair of Orcs, *Mote-Eye* and *Twitcher,* and their Goblin servant, *Kuhr,* run this establishment (although it's common knowledge around town that some Wolfen from the Seahawk Tribe is the real owner). It is a small shop that trades, buys and sells furs of all kinds at around half book prices. These are just the treated furs/skins and not finished articles of clothing. Fair prices for good quality furs. They will purchase raw furs (skinned off the animal) at one quarter the selling price, or treated furs for one half the selling price (many trappers will treat the fur, scraping off the blood and meat, then drying them with hot sand, before bringing them in for sale). For example, in a city a treated Otter fur might cost 16 Gold, while here at Wrijin Furs it's just 8 Gold; they'd buy a treated Otter fur for 4 Gold, or an untreated one, still bloody from being skinned, for 2 Gold.

Travelers often visit this place before leaving town, since their furs are about the best kind of cover one can ask for to brave the Northern cold out in the boondocks. Also, in addition to being useful, the furs can be sold at a nice profit if the travelers end up in a big city, especially to the south or west.

10. Skaarg's Boardinghouse. This is another place where visitors can hang their hat for 10 gold a night. The rooms are smaller and dingier than the Visitor's Inn and the food is of disgusting quality. However, it opens its doors to all travelers, even humans, although the latter must pay 20 gold a night. Non-humans get priority in service and available space. This means that humans can only rent a room on a daily basis and only as long as there are no worthier non-humans who need a bed. For example, if all rooms are filled and a tired Wolfen or Goblin shows up, the human will be evicted to make room for the Wolfen or Goblin. Not even a bribe will prevent the eviction; this is part of the proprietors' way of getting even with "arrogant, petty, little humans."

The proprietors are a motley bunch of scoundrels nicknamed **the Skeleton Crew**. These guys are just plain bad news, and the Wrijin Council of Elders is trying to figure out how to get them all out of town without causing a major fracas. The recent arrival of trustworthy adventurers could easily spur the Council to seek out the new visitors to take action on the Council's behalf to eject the Skeleton Crew from town without any trouble.

The Skeleton Crew consists of just under a dozen individuals: *Bone-Crusher*, *Bone-Breaker*, *Greela Greensleeves*, *Skull-Breaker*, *T-Bones,* a few Orc bouncers and a Bearman bouncer named *Shorty*. All are the best of friends and watch each other's backs constantly. All are Anarchist or evil, 4-6th level Thieves and Rangers. The Skeleton Crew has run the Boardinghouse for eight years now. Despite their evil, mean, or unethical natures, they run a fairly decent place. They know exactly how much they can get away with in the village without getting thrown out.

11. The Hunter's Lodge. This is a favorite men's gathering hall. Beer and ale are served along with non-alcoholic drinks. The villagers, hunters, mountain men and travelers come here to "warm their bones" and exchange tales of physical prowess, hunting, and current rumors and gossip. Women are not barred from the building, but have little reason to visit except to bring their husbands home. It is the site of sing-alongs, arm wrestling, dart & knife throwing, dancing and merriment. Strangers are welcome, but non-villagers are viewed with suspicion. If a visitor is looking for trouble, this is the wrong place. The men are likely to ignore even the worst insults and fight only in self-defense. If a fight breaks out the others will jump in to break it up. Outsiders looking to get in good with the locals can do so by beating the local champions at darts, wrestling, or a weird game called "mumblypeg," which involves two opponents throwing knives at each other's feet. Each contestant rolls to hit, as usual, only if they make their roll, they do not hit the other guy's foot, but instead miss it by a hair's breadth. The point is to intentionally miss the other guy's foot, but to get the knife as close as possible without causing a wound. The contestants may not move at all (doing so forfeits the game), and the loser is whoever quits or accidentally sinks a knife into the other guy's foot. Those who win this game by way of a wounded foot are typically treated to a drink on the house immediately afterwards. The current mumblypeg champion is a one-eyed human named *Geotten Pickering*, who is enjoying a 12-game winning streak.

12. The Church of The Northern Gods. This is the major church of the village (although many different gods are worshiped). It contains at least one statue, painting or relic for each of the Northern Gods, including Algor. The only thing of real value is a silver chalice formed in the image of Locknar and decorated with Faerie Folk, which is carefully locked away behind the altar and brought out only for special ceremonies (weight: 53 pounds/24 kg; value: 6,000 gold). The Church is run by a Wolfen woman (Oak People Tribe) named *Crreela*. She is middle aged, quiet, but strong and friendly. Part of her priestly duties include acts of healing and teaching, as well as helping as a midwife (women and livestock). She is a 6th level Priest of Light of Principled alignment, who is sworn to the service of Epim the All Mother. She is assisted by three acolytes; *Kurala,* another female Wolfen, 24 years old (2nd level Priest), *Urokia,* a 17 year old male human (1st level Priest dedicated to Belimar) and *Deelti,* a sixteen year old Wolfen male (not yet a Priest, but interested in the worship of Wolvenar).

13. Home of Crreela, Priestess of Epim the All Mother, and the Northern Gods. The kindly priestess sometimes opens her home to needy travelers, even Coyles, in exchange for chores around the house and church, like painting, scrubbing floors, weeding the garden, etc. Not a large place, but in the past she's allowed overnight visitors to stay, especially if they are fellow worshipers.

14. Rraoul The Carpenter. Rraoul and his four daughters are supreme carpenters. They have assisted in building half the homes in the village, mend fences, build furniture, make handles for axes and tools, and make wooden utensils (like spoons, spatulas, etc.) to sell at very reasonable prices. His cousin and his two boys next door are barrel makers. The girls are all close friends of the priestess, *Crreela*, and often help her at the church.

15. Home of Ramus, Village Elder. This revered old-timer is a 7th level Druid and considered to be one with the forest and wise beyond his years. He is of Principled alignment. He occasionally opens up his home to visitors, but only if they are Druids, or recommended by a Druid.

16. Alexander the Healer. This building is small and unassuming. It looks much like any one of the villagers' homes. Here lives *Alexander*, the only Elven resident in town. He is revered as a wise man and an honored resident. He heals injured villagers for free and animals for a small fee. Strangers and mountain men are charged reasonable, but much higher amounts for his services. He will heal and help all in need regardless of their race.

Alexander has a small garden where he grows herbs and assorted vegetables. Deep within his garden, however, Alexander has a secret plot of *Faerie Food.* How he obtained the seeds or knowledge to grow this stuff remains a secret, and is something the reclusive Elf would sooner take to the grave than disclose. The question is, what would the local Faerie population do if they found out an Elf knew how to craft their infamous vittles?

17. The Brewery. A large building at the edge of town employs numerous Orcs and Wolfen to work making ale and beer. Behind the building is an expanse of farmland where wheat, hops, and barley are grown. The head brewmasters are on the verge of perfecting a new kind of brew that if sold in the major cities of the world, would fetch 200-300 gold per barrel. It is to be called *Golden Jackal Pale Ale*, and the brewmasters hope to make a business selling it to villagers, merchants, and Ithak the Storyteller (who will probably end up consuming a quarter of the brewery's output over the course of a year).

18. The Village Square. This cleared area of town is the site of festivals, meetings, public ceremonies, and other village gatherings.

19. Wrijin Dance Hall. A large meeting place where families gather for festivals, or whenever there are a lot of visitors, to have dances, sing-alongs, prayer, performances (usually by visiting actors and bards), story telling, and other indoor events. Nobody seems to have noticed the bat that is always hanging in the corner, watching what goes on and then flying away afterward, off to an unknown place, perhaps to report to a master what it just saw.

20. The Old Oak Tavern. This is a small but friendly place with two huge fireplaces to curl up next to on a cold winter's night. The ale and beer are excellent, as is its famous rabbit stew (a pot is usually simmering in one of the fireplaces; 5 gold gets you a massive, Wolfen size, helping). The tavern is owned by a grizzled old Wolfen nicknamed *Big Snoot*, his young wife and two daughters. *Cousin Gruulo* and *Andrro* also live and work at

the tavern. The Old Oak is popular among the villagers and travelers alike. It is a place where friends and families can come for a delicious bowl of rabbit stew and good conversation. One of the main attractions is Ithak who has made the tavern one of his favorite haunts. He even has his own cushioned chair near one of the fireplaces. He can be found there weaving tall tales every evening and most afternoons.

21. The Algor Temple. This is a small, innocuous temple/church built in honor of the great god Algor, patron of the Algor Giants and lord of the mountains and maker of storms. A rough wood panel, about 10 feet by 10 feet (3x3 m), has been carved with an image of Algor rising from the sea and it's obvious that candles have been lit regularly on the green stone altar for many decades. It has no resident Priest, but Crreela or one of her Acolytes comes by at least once a day to clean up, collect whatever offerings have been left, and say a quick prayer. It is always open (there isn't even a lock on the door) and true worshipers of Algor will find a good sleep on one of the twelve big benches, but all others have difficulty sleeping or even resting in this place.

A Game Master Note on the "Friendly Females" of Wrijin. There are no 'professional' women (prostitutes) in Wrijin, and accusing any Wrijin female of any race of having "easy virtue" is a good way to end up with a knife in the gut or a head massage with an iron frying pan. However... Quite a few of the unattached local females have more than one suitor. For example, even Mrrigot, a good and pure Wolfen woman, has a Leather Back elder boyfriend (they've been seeing each other for almost ten years), a romantic liaison with one of the sub-chiefs of the Iron Claw forces, and has entertained a Lanipia recently transferred to the area. On the other end of the scale is the comely *Zephina* (P.B.: 11, with a, hmmm, how to put this, *bountiful* form), one of the Orc barmaids at the Visitor's Inn who now has, at latest count, 26 different suitors (of at least five different races, to the scandal of many!). Most of the time this is no big deal, but when two different boyfriends arrive in town at the same time, there could definitely be trouble... And any player character who gets involved with a Wrijin lass will, sooner or later, meet up with some of her other *gentlemen.*

Frequent Visitors to Wrijin

As you may have noticed, for a small village, Wrijin has enough accommodation to house quite a few travellers. Here are details on just a few of the regulars, along with some notes on when they might show up in town.

1. Leather Back Tribe. Herding thousands and thousands of 'beeves' (their own breed of short-horn, thick-furred, brown cattle), they stick mostly to the valleys, lowlands, and riverbanks of the region. For political purposes, the Wolfen Empire considers them part of the Iron Claw Tribe, but they're really much more closely related to the Sun Children. Their lifestyle goes back hundreds of years, with most Leather Backs able to list their lineage back at least 50 generations. This counting of ancestors is very important to Leather Backs, not just as tradition, but also as a way of identifying each other as relatives. Every other week, a small group (2D6+3) will wander in to Wrijin, either because of a problem (broken equipment, running short on some supply, or because of injury or illness), because they just happened to be in the neighborhood, or after they've come across something they can sell or trade for a couple of nights of good food, good drink, bathing and comfort. Three times at year, for various festival days, they'll show up in much larger numbers, filling Wrijin with up to 700 (1D6x100+100) extra rowdy, fun-seeking Wolfen.

Typical Leather Back Elder: It's highly unlikely that any Leather Backs will venture into town without one of their elders; someone seasoned through various battles and problems, and a natural leader. They've heard all the scams, and they take a dim view of anyone trying to cheat their 'boys.' **H.P.:** 40; **S.D.C.:** 45; **P.P.E.:** 15, with I.Q.: 1D6+10, M.E.: 12+1D4, M.A.: 4+1D8, P.S.: 20+1D6, P.P.: 12+2D6, P.E.: 20+2D6, P.B.: 2D4, and Spd: 16+1D6. In combat, most Leather Back elders have four attacks per melee, with +3 to Initiative, +5 to Strike, +6 to Damage, and +3 to Parry and Dodge. They are experts with cattle a whip (only 1D4 damage, but 8 attacks per melee!), and are competent with most Wolfen-sized military weapons.

Typical Leather Back Herder: Young, tough, and able to deal with a mess of ornery cattle, Leather Backs make good allies and mean enemies. Their main weakness is their ignorance of other ways. For them, Wrijin is the "Big City," filled with glamor and excitement (pitiful, ain't it?), and they'll believe just about any tall tale that they hear. **H.P.:** 3D6+15; **S.D.C.:** 40; **P.P.E.:** 3D6, with I.Q.: 2D6+3, M.E.: 2D4+5, M.A.: 1D8+4, P.S.: 4D6+6, P.P.: 2D6+6, P.E.: 3D6+10, P.B.: 2D4, and Spd: 2D6+8. In combat, most have two attacks per melee, with +3 to Strike, +5 to Damage, and +2 to Parry and Dodge. They are experts with a cattle whip (only 1D4 damage, but 5 attacks per melee!), and are competent with Wolfen-sized daggers, swords, axes and spears.

2. Iron Claw Tribal Patrols. Wrijin isn't considered part of the Iron Claw lands, but there are Iron Claw lands to the east, south, west and north. That means Wrijin is included in the Iron Claw military plans. At least a dozen Tribal Warriors pay a visit each month larger maneuvers of 300 or more Iron Claw Wolfen move through town a couple of times a year. At least once every year, a delegation from the Iron Claw, including both tribal and war chiefs, will come through on an inspection. **Game Master Note:** Whenever any Iron Claw units visit town, humans, Dwarves and other "outsiders" will be warned to keep their distance, stay in their rooms, and be very polite (being hauled in by the Iron Claw on suspicion of espionage isn't necessarily fatal, but it involves brutal interrogation, often with a bit of torture).

3. Nightshade Coyles. Where the Leather Back Wolfen run their cattle all over the lowlands of the Wrijin area, the Nightshade Horde of Coyles keep to the highlands, living in caves that their ancestors have inhabited for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. The Nightshade have their own dialect, and only one in ten of the Coyles have learned to speak the more 'standard' version of Wolfen. These more educated Nightshade Coyles serve as translators and negotiators for the others, so it's rare that a group of less than ten shows up in town. Almost all are worshipers of an obscure Cult that they describe as *Yssh'Gha*, which claims that the world is a part of a Tree God, called Yssh, and that everywhere in the forest there are ancient trees that have developed the god nature, Gha. Their rituals are elaborate and bizarre, often requiring them to fast and/or pray for days on end, or hang themselves, upside-down, from the upper branches of Gha Trees. Amazingly peaceful, for Coyles,

about the only way to provoke them to violence is by making fun of their religion, or to interrupt them during their rituals.

4. Iteeris Quatoria, Imperial Circuit Judge. 'Quatoria' refers to his position as judge in the Wolfen Empire (not his last name). Iteeris always arrives with at least two clerks, and a few well-armed Mulia Officers, as well as prisoners (Mulia) in chains (either recent convicts, or those who are scheduled to be released, being taken to their homelands) they who serve as protectors, jailers and, if necessary, executioners. While the most glamorous part of the judge's job involves serious crimes like murder and rape, most of the day-to-day work is involved in settling minor disputes about debts, trades, contracts, and divorces (yep, even in the Great Northern Wilderness, a divorce creates messy legal problems). At least a day of the judge's schedule in Wrijin will involve disputes over land (Note: while this part of the Wolfen Empire doesn't recognize private ownership of land, there are always disputes over who is entitled to what hunting and grazing grounds, and mining rights are becoming increasingly a problem).

5. Ghaugh'Nak, Human Priest of Chantico. Seven years ago, *Nak* was a 4th level Priest of Darkness, worshiping in the depths of the Yin-Sloth Jungles. As he puts it, "I failed my Master, I took what was not mine to take, and now I must prove myself... Prove that I am worthy, prove that I deserve my life, prove that Chantico is my true god!" A world away from any other worshipers of Chantico, Nak is trying desperately to start up a Wolfen Empire branch of the Cult. So far he hasn't managed to get a single convert. The Wolfen Army knows him, and every time they meet him, they escort him south and west, and away from any 'civilized' Wolfen communities. He keeps showing up in Wrijin, where he is treated as mostly harmless. He is particularly gifted at Exorcism (78% chance of success every 1D6 hours, and Nak will just keep trying, even if it takes days), and charges 500 gold for the service. He has **H.P.:** 29; **S.D.C.:** 16; **P.P.E.:** 21, with I.Q.: 7, M.E.: 31 (the source of his extraordinary skill at Exorcism), M.A.: 5, P.S.: 8, P.P.: 3, P.E.: 11, P.B.: 10, and Spd: 8. In combat, he screams, cries and strikes out in terror, -4 to Strike, and is totally helpless (probably why he is still alive, he's pathetic!). He has been robbed repeatedly, even to the point of being left naked in the wilderness. The only possession he has managed to keep is a huge volume of *Chantico Thought,* currently at 1,112 pages, heavily bound in a thick black leather cover, with waterproof flaps (anyone who takes the book from Nak will, after twenty minutes or so, hear Chantico, the god, asking, "I know you not, yet you carry my book. Are you ready to swear your soul to me?" — which means everyone who steals it dumps it).

6. One-Eye Selezau. No doubt this character is an odd duck. First, because he is an Elf (of noble lineage, no less) who prefers consorting with Wolfen, Orcs, Ogres, Goblins & Trolls. Second, because he has turned his deformity (he lost an eye hundreds of years before) into the full-time career of providing prosthetic appliances. Most of the year he stays in his workshop in the far north, fashioning glass eyes, false teeth, artificial hands and arms, and even the occasional replacement foot. Once a year, usually starting in late spring, he takes a long tour of his various 'clients,' fitting members of all races with the various bits of their bodies that need replacing, and then returning as the leaves turn in the autumn. He generally visits Wrijin twice a year, once on the way out, and again on the way back. In town he is always welcomed with joy and celebration ('One-Eye is coming! One-Eye is coming!' scream the children). Without fail he'll claim that he has no time, and that he's just passing through, but he never leaves in less than three days. He is very friendly with Ithak, but he spends most of his time with *Black-Blood,* an elderly Orc (82!) outfitted with one of Selezau's artificial hands, as well as one of his glass eyes. Stats are **H.P.:** 83; **S.D.C.:** 18; **P.P.E.:** 48, knows most Water and Air Elemental Magic spells. I.Q. 24, M.E. 20, M.A. 19, P.S. 12, P.P. 27, P.E. 13, P.B. 22, and Spd.16. In combat, Selezau can do 6 attacks per melee, with +7 to strike and +9 to parry and dodge. He's also +8 to save vs magic or psionics. He carries no weapons other than a few tools (tweezers, awl, flat-blade, screwdriver, etc.), none of which are suitable for combat, but he can use just about any human-sized weapon with no penalties. His only armor is a magical undershirt (A.R.: 15, absorbs damage each and every time he is struck, but only up to 7 S.D.C.), and he carries no magical items on his travels (he does, however, have quite the selection in his forest workshop).

Encounters Near Wrijin

Aside from encountering any of the regular visitors to Wrijin, when the player characters are on their way in or out of town, there are also a couple of other encounters which could make for some lively role-playing. Both the run-ins with Jepzin, a Troll who charges a toll for his bridge, and with Nilanta, the hunter from the Western Empire, have the potential of getting more interesting with each subsequent encounter...

Jepzin's Troll Bridge

A stout bridge of stone and wood seems the only way around *Jepzin's Gorge.* Avoiding the bridge would either involve climbing down the jagged 25 yard/meter steep walls, and then crossing the 20 yard/meter rapids, and then climbing back up again on the other side. Or going around, which would involve at least a half-day's hike. These facts, along with a lot of other details, are readily available from the proprietor of the bridge, Jepzin himself. Here's his typical speech:

"Look here, this good, strong bridge. I make it. It take me many years. Only fair you give me money. My bridge, so you pay. You no pay, you go around, long way. Or climb and maybe break leg. Maybe break neck. Maybe drown in river. Better you pay and use my bridge. Yes?"

Jepzin's standard toll is 10 gold per person. However, that's just his asking price. He generally tries to charge whatever he thinks he can get. From a rich-looking character he'll be pretty adamant about the 10 gold. If someone looks ragged or beat up, he'll drop it to 5 gold. If they look destitute, he'll go down to one gold. If the group claims not to have gold he'll take trade in furs, weapons, food or beverage. Bottom line, he expects something, and in the past he's settled for as little as an apple, or tearing a strip of cloth off a beggar's robe.

He's also in no hurry. If the group looks stubborn, he'll even offer to make tea (strong stuff, that Troll Tea, made of tree roots and ground up rocks, and non-Trolls will need to roll a 14 or better against their P.E. to gag it down). Rudeness in the way of racial or personal slurs against Jepzin will result in an increase

in price ("Fine! Trolls stupid. Trolls ugly. You right! Now cost double to use bridge!").

Anyone who pays is allowed to pass. Furthermore, Jepzin never forgets a paying customer. In the future he will more easily offer discounts, and he'll gladly stall attackers or pursuers who want to follow his favorites over the bridge.

Once Jepzin is paid, characters will be allowed to pass unmolested. Refusal will incite combat (and the Troll is not alone, although it may seem like it).

The Troll will not start a fight unless the character/group tries to continue without paying. The Troll will block the bridge entrance with his body and, if need be, with the blunt end of his giant pole arm. He doesn't want to fight or kill, he only wants to be paid. If the group insists on battle he will stand his ground and fight until subdued or killed. However, his two younger brothers will join in the fight. They get first strike, because they are magically invisible!

Jepzin the Toll Troll, towers 12 feet (3.6 m) tall and wields a giant runka (4D6 damage). He is a 4th level Mercenary; **Alignment:** Anarchist. **H.P.:** 39, **S.D.C.:** 76, **P.P.E.:** 10. **Attributes:** I.Q. 10, M.E. 9, M.A. 6, P.S. 20, P.P. 17, P.E. 18, P.B. 5, Spd. 11; **Attacks Per Melee:** 5. **Bonuses:** +3 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +7 to damage, and +3 to roll with punch or fall; +2 to save vs poison, and +3 to save vs magic.

***Forsbek* is Jepzin's next younger brother**, a bearded fellow who stands 10 feet (3 m) tall, and is armed with a gigantic morning star (3D6 damage) and sword (2D6 damage). He is a 2nd level mercenary; **Alignment:** Anarchist; **H.P.:** 26, **S.D.C.:** 60, **P.P.E.:** 8. **Attributes:** I.Q. 9, M.E. 7, M.A. 7, P.S. 19, P.P. 19, P.E. 20, P.B. 7, Spd, 13. **Attacks Per Melee:** 4. **Bonuses:** +2 to strike; +4 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage, and +1 to roll with punch or fall; +3 to save vs poison, and +2 to save vs magic.

***Altarez* is the youngest brother**, a strapping brute standing 11+ feet (3.3 m) tall, who fights with a huge halberd pole arm (4D6 damage) and has a sword dangling from his side (2D6 damage). He is also a 2nd level Mercenary; **Alignment:** Anarchist. **H.P.:** 24, **S.D.C.:** 45. **P.P.E.:** 11. **Attributes:** I.Q. 13, M.E. 6, M.A. 8, P.S. 20, P.P. 18, P.E. 19, P.B. 9, Spd. 10. **Attacks Per Melee:** 4. **Bonuses:** +2 to strike; +4 to parry and dodge, +6 to damage, and +2 to roll with punch or fall; +1 to save vs poison, +1 to save vs magic.

Note: All wear studded leather armor under their furs, A.R. 12, S.D.C. 45. Forsbeck and Altarez wear medallions of invisibility (turn invisible 3x daily). Big brother also wears a magic fly medallion (Fly as an Eagle, twice daily).

Nilanta the Hunter

A bloody grizzly bear, limping and crazed with pain and fear, stumbles out of the brush, the green feathers of the hunting arrow embedded in its right shoulder clearly visible. It has been wounded by a hunter and is crazed with pain. The beast will attack anyone who gets too close, and if attacked will fight to the death. Mostly, it is just looking to escape.

What happens next is up to the player characters, but *Lord Sartest Nilanta* will appear only a few moments after the bear. Nilanta keeps his distance from the bear, but he also expects everyone else to leave it alone (unless treated, or killed, the bear will die of the arrow wound within 20 minutes). If questioned, Nilanta explains, "I've never needed more than one arrow to kill anything, and this beast is no exception. I'll follow it until it dies, and you would be wise not to interfere with my sport." Clearly, Sartest's idea of 'sport' includes a lot of unnecessary pain and suffering.

He is never really alone. At least two Wolfen Soldiers shadow him at all times (they've been assigned this duty by the Imperia, who wants to keep him safe), as well as Nilanta's hired local scouts, his bodyguards, and his servants. He maintains a camp with several tents, and a staff of an additional 6 guards and 12 servants.

Lord Sartest Nilanta. Representative of City Telago, and an Envoy from the Western Empire to the Wolfen Empire. While Sartest Nilanta has the credentials of an official embassador, and speaks of '...getting to know the Wolfen, so that we might one day have a true peace,' he's really only visiting the Great Northern Wilderness so he can hunt down and kill exotic creatures, the more exotic and unusual the better. Having hunted in the most extreme environments of the Palladium World, including the Yin-Sloth Jungles, on the heights of Mount Nimro, and even a short sojourn to the great wild forests of Dyval (see "The Realm of Dyval," in the Deevils' section of the *Palladium Book of Dragons & Gods*), he will pay well for tips that lead him to the most exotic animals. If the grizzly bear dies from the single arrow, he'll cross it off his list; otherwise he'll just go looking for another one. He'd also like to take a Tusker, a Scorpion

Devil, a Nipper Worm, a Snow Tiger (but only in winter, when its pelt is white and black), a Devil Digger, and a Wolverine, as well as anything else strange or unusual (note: while he won't admit it out loud, he's equally interested in sentient creatures, and would happily kill Emirin, Dragon Wolves, and even Unicorns).

Alignment: Diabolic. **H.P.:** 31, **S.D.C.:** 33. **P.P.E.:** 14. **Attributes:** I.Q. 19, M.E. 17, M.A. 18, P.S. 17, P.P. 21, P.E. 15, P.B. 15, Spd. 15. **Attacks Per Melee:** Five hand to hand attacks or 9 arrow shots. **Bonuses:** +6 to strike; +3 to parry and dodge, +4 to damage, +4 to roll with impact, +4 to pull punch, +5 to save vs poison, and +2 to save vs magic. **Special:** A master Bowman, he has a +6 to strike with longbow; +10 if given the time to set up a sniper shot (from concealment), with a +6 to damage (2D6+6) and either has a critical strike on 17 or better (does triple damage on natural twenty), or can choose to do a death blow on 19 or 20.

Badd Land

A bandits' paradise

Badd Land is the name of a rough and tumble town on the edge of the disputed Wolfen/human border. On a map it is almost on a straight line that ends 30 miles (48 km) east of Wrijin. However, in reality, it is a difficult journey down the mountain, through dense forest, up and around scores of hills and back up into the foothills of the easternmost mountain range of the Bruu-ga-Belimars.

Badd Land is a foul smelling, filthy trader town frequented by bandits, mountain men, and travelers who don't know better. For those looking for mercenaries for hire, workmen, thugs, bandits, or assassins, Badd Land is brimming with them. Likewise, gambling, gladiatorial games, and decadence of all kinds can be enjoyed for the price of a few gold. It is no surprise that the Skeleton Crew comes here regularly to fence stolen goods, buy poison, and engage in other unsavory and immoral pursuits.

The town boasts a population of about 400 permanent residents, but has another 200 transients passing through at any given time. The population is composed of every race imaginable, though predominately human. The population changes quite dramatically from season to season, but ranges around 40% human, 15% Wolfen, 12% Coyles, 11% Orc, 4% Ogres and 18% others (Bearmen, Goblins, Giants, etc.). The transient population of area rogues who visit the town are mostly Orcs, Goblins, Ogres and Coyles. The Eastern Territory tolerates the community because it gives humans a foothold on the disputed Wolfen border (and it is out in the wilderness). The Wolfen tolerate the town because it hurts humans more than anyone else, and gives them a place to put spies and keep abreast of rumors and gossip.

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

The constant ringing of bells announces the town long before it is ever seen, up to five miles (8 km) away. A muddy dirt and rock road leads to the town. There are no gates or walls, but two 40 foot tall (12.2 m) totem poles with the carved faces of demons and monsters mark the entrance. There is a large sign, lit by torches at all times, that reads: "The Badd Land."

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

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

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

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

It is the bandits and low-lives who visit Badd Land who represent the real danger. These miscreant fellows are generally mean and troublesome outlaws who view life as a rough and cruel place where the strong take what they want. Still, they are not fools and realize that Badd Land is one of the few havens they have in the region. As a result, they try to keep trouble to a minimum. Brawls are constant, but the offending parties usually pay for any damage. Murder and treachery are directed toward fellow criminals and travelers, not the townspeople. In fact, the gang leaders will often punish any man in their band who severely damages the town or harms a townsman. This all pleases magistrate Hurrbrrmnn very much, because his community prospers, they are kept abreast of all the latest gossip, and most importantly, he can grow fatter and lazier.

As a friendly and self preserving service, Hurrbrrmnn has instructed his people to warn him and the outlaws to any sign of trouble. This includes outside authorities such as the Wolfen or

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

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

while, the bandits conveniently fade into the forest until trouble is gone.

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

Spies from the Eastern Territory, Western Empire and other southern kingdoms are also believed to visit and even establish identities in Badd Land. Likewise, the Wolfen Empire is assumed to have its own spies in place to sniff out and liquidate foreign spies they deem too dangerous and to spy on the spies. Um, you get the idea.

Magistrate Hurrbrrmnn

Hurrbrrmnn is a Wolfen Mind Mage who has carved out what he considers to be his private little empire within the confines of Badd Land. He is a selfish cutthroat consumed by greed. He has found that bending with the wind is a sure-fire way to success. Despite anything he may say to the contrary, Hurrbrrmnn is a self-serving swindler whose only care is for himself. Everything and everybody is simply a means to an end.

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

Magistrate Hurrbrrmnn (Quick Stats)

Alignment: Miscreant Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 21, M.A. 11, P.S. 17, P.P. 12, P.E. 14, P.B. 10, Spd. 18
Hit Points: 49, **S.D.C.:** 30. **P.P.E.:** 5. **I.S.P.:** 189.
Experience Level: 5th level Mind Mage.
Attacks Per Melee: Five physical or psionic attacks.
Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to roll with impact, +2 to pull punch, +4 to damage, +3 to save vs psionics and +4 to save vs insanity.
Psionics:

Healing: Bio-Regeneration, Deaden Pain, Detect Psionics, Exorcism, Induce Sleep, Lust for Life, Psychic Diagnosis, Psychic Purification, Psychic Surgery, Resist Fatigue, Transfer I.S.P.

Physical: Alter Aura, Death Trance, Levitation, Mind Block, Resist Fatigue, Resist Hunger, Resist Thirst, Summon Inner Strength, Spontaneous Combustion, Telekinesis, Telekinetic Punch, Telekinetic Leap, and Teleport Object.

Sensitive: Astral Projection, Clairvoyance, Commune with Animals, Dispel Spirits, Empathy, Presence Sense, See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Dimensional Anomaly, Sense Evil, and Sixth Sense.

Super Psionics: Advanced Trance State, Bio-Manipulation, Bio-Regeneration (super), Catatonic Strike, Cause Insanity, Cure Insanity, Empathic Transmission, Group Mind Block, Insert memory, Invisible Haze, Mental Illusion, Mentally Possess Others, Mind Bolt, Mind Bond, and Mind Wipe.

Weapons: Flaming broadsword (human-size) 4D6 damage, silver plated throwing axe of exceptional Dwarven quality: 2D4+2 damage and is +1 to strike and parry. Also has a giant size mace (3D6 damage).
Armor: Leather of Iron (magic), A.R. 15, S.D.C. 120.
Note: Hurrbrrmnn commands a contingent of six guardsmen, all equal to elite Wolfen Legionnaires. In fact, these killers once served with the Imperial Legion, but they went AWOL and came to Badd Land to sell their fighting skills to the highest bidder. They fell in with the Magistrate and have stuck with the arrangement ever since.

The Crusaders

These fellows are Badd Land's "unofficial" volunteer police force. Since all the Magistrate does is take bribes and look the other way (he is really more of a mouthpiece to the Wolfen Empire in the hopes of keeping an Imperial Garrison from being installed in town, spoiling the fun for everybody), the people of Badd Land need somebody to do the policing for them. Enter the Crusaders, an independent bunch of self-styled "heroes for hire," although there is nothing particularly heroic about them.

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

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

Captain Sharhar (Quick Stats)

The leader of the Crusaders is a brute called *Captain Sharhar*, an Ogre with experience as a soldier in the army of the Wolfen Empire.

Alignment: Miscreant Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 10, M.A. 12, P.S. 21, P.P. 12, P.E. 18, P.B. 13, Spd. 29
Hit Points: 61. **S.D.C.:** 50. **P.P.E.:** 10.
Experience Level: 6th level Soldier.
Attacks Per Melee: Six.
Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike, +2 to disarm, +3 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with impact, +3 to pull punch, +8 to damage, +6% to save vs coma/death, and +2 to save vs magic and poison.

Other Combat Info: Karate kick: 2D4, snap kick: 1D6, roundhouse kick: 3D6, tripping/leg hook, backward sweep. All jump kicks. Critical Strike: 18-20.
Weapons: His main weapon is a flaming sword that does 4D6 damage, but he is also an excellent swordsman and uses pole arms. He also wears a pair of Gryphon Claw gloves (4D6) at all times.
Armor: Magically weightless plate armor (A.R. 17, S.D.C. 280).

Karm (Quick Stats)

Karm is Captain Sharhar's second in command. He is a weaselly human Assassin who is infamous for his use of poisons, drugs, and magic potions. His secret allegiance, however, is with the Gentlemen's Society. Captain Sharhar is honestly neutral, seeing the Crusaders as his own little empire. Those who protest too loudly about injustice often end up imprisoned or disappear.
Alignment: Miscreant Evil.
Hit Points: 44. **S.D.C.:** 29. **P.P.E.:** 10. **I.S.P.:** 50.
Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 11, M.A. 9, P.S. 14, P.P. 14, P.E. 14, P.B. 8, Spd. 17
Experience Level: 4th level Assassin.
Attacks Per Melee: Five.
Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike. +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact. +3 to pull punch. +4 to damage. +4 to disarm.
Weapons: Long sword (2D6) coated with a dose of Scorpion's Blood (save vs poison or suffer an additional 3D6).
Psionics: Major Psychic whose powers include Death Trance, Impervious to Cold, Impervious to Poison, Levitation, Nightvision, Summon Inner Strength and Mind Block.
Armor: Studded leather (A.R. 13, S.D.C. 38).

The Thieves' Guilds

There are three rival thieves' guilds. The biggest and most dangerous organization is known as the *Vipers of Panath.* Only slightly less powerful is the *Gentlemen's Society.* Finally, the newest group is a small band of mysterious newcomers known as the *Misfits*.

1. The Vipers of Panath are a group of nearly 60 scoundrels who mostly consist of very visible ruffians and thugs. They make no effort to conceal their trade or identity. The church of Panath and the neighboring saloons are their headquarters. Panath is the god of treachery in the Pantheon of Rurga, a group of Old Kingdom gods whose popularity has waned over the centuries. The Vipers of Panath can be hired for theft, kidnaping, torture, murder, and assassination. Most of its members are non-human scum, attracting a large number of Goblins, Hob-Goblins, Orcs, Kobolds, and Coyles. All members of the Panath guild proudly display a tattoo of a green viper on their left arm. A typical Viper is a 2nd to 5th level Thief or Assassin (roll 1D4+1 for a random determination of level) and they are always of evil alignment. There are also a few Wizards, Warlocks and a crazy Orc Shaman called *Hellfire* among their ranks. They are bullies and punks always needing to prove how tough or deadly they are. The organization is one of the most powerful and influential in town. The Vipers operate most of the gambling and prostitution operations. However, the group is more like a powerful street gang than an organized crime ring.

2. The Gentlemen's Society is the other major thieves' guild. Its nearly 40 members are affiliated with the church of Dragonwright, specifically the black dragon, *Styphon.* They too deal in theft, abduction, extortion, and assassination, but they are much more subtle and sophisticated about it. Their headquarters is a quaint, elite men's club on the other side of town. Its members are predominately Elves, humans and Wolfen, as well as a couple of notorious Gnomes and a Troglodyte Mercenary named *Sturge.* The Gentlemen are typically 2nd to 4th level Thieves and Assassins. However, the Gentlemen's Society also employs twice as many men of magic (mainly Summoners and Diabolists) as the Vipers. The subtle use of magic and poison has come to be their trademark. Although the Gentlemen's Society has about a third fewer members as the Vipers of Panath, they are equally as powerful.

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

3. The third thieves' guild is a little band of rogues who call themselves **the Misfits**. They are loosely affiliated with the temple of *Kirgi the Rat God*, but have no known headquarters in town. These mischievous fellows are master thieves, but rarely engage in murder, abduction, or blackmail unless it involves one of the other two rival gangs. The Misfits are reported to be less than two dozen strong. The founding members include an 8th level Ratling Thief from the Western Empire named *Pinch*, a 6th level Scarecrow Wizard (don't see *that* every day, do you?) known as *Old Crow* (the suspected leader), a 5th level Gnome Thief, a 4th level Coyle Thief & Ranger, a 4th level Ogre Thief, a 5th level Kankoran Druid, and a 4th level Emerin Mind Mage. Their gang of a dozen additional bandits consists of Wolfen and Coyles. Their main targets seem to be the two other thieves' guilds, but their attacks on the other guilds do not seem to be motivated by rivalry as much as they seem to be acts of vengeance!

The two major guilds, the Vipers of Panath and the Gentlemen's Society, are involved in a perpetual rivalry that borders on gang war. The mayor and his governing family are all that hold these two from completely massacring themselves. The appearance of the Misfits has complicated matters even more as they try to play one against the other.

The Badd Estate

This is the home of the town's founding family, a clan of Elves who definitely are *not* a bunch of people to mess with. The clan consists of *Grandpa Badd, Eallysa Badd, Laddimar Badd, Earlimar Badd,* and *Sarah Badd.*

Grandpa Badd (Quick Stats)

Grandpa Badd is utterly mad with megalomaniacal dreams of summoning demons powerful enough to scorch the entire

Northern Wilderness. He is said to have been a genius whose dabbling with the mystic art of Summoning twisted his mind. He soon became obsessed with Armageddon and gods. After decades of researching dozens of religions and hundreds of gods, he set forth to find the place that could accept all gods. His reasoning was that when the end of the world came, his community would be found pleasing to the gods and be spared. He led a little troupe of human settlers through the Eastern Territory and into the foothills of the Bruu-ga-Belimar. Here he founded the town known as Badd Land. Generations of equally crazed men of magic with a lust for power have turned the town into the den of iniquity that it is today.

Race: Elf.
Alignment: Diabolic Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 16, M.E. 19, M.A. 17, P.S. 10, P.P. 12, P.E. 13, P.B. 14, Spd. 8
Hit Points: 52. **S.D.C.:** 10. **P.P.E.:** 373.
Experience Level: 9th level Summoner.
Attacks Per Melee: One.
Bonuses of Note: +2 to save vs magic, psionics and insanity.
Weapons: He owns a vicious looking flamberge (3D6), but he mostly uses it for ceremonial purposes.
Armor: None.

Eallysa Badd (Quick Stats)

The current mayor of Badd Land is *Eallysa Badd*, a power-crazy and long-term schemer. He dislikes humans, but is fond of Wolfen, since they tend to treat him like a god. Eallysa is a stately looking Elf with dark eyes and a crazed look. He is a patron of the Church of Darkness and rumored to be both a Summoner and Diabolist. Eallysa has run the town for 70 years and it is under his guidance that the Badd Land has added an additional score of dark religions and increased its population. A recluse, he is seldom seen on the streets. To get an audience with him is nearly impossible unless the subject involves great wealth, intriguing magic, or a pressing political matter regarding the town. Recently, he has signed a secret pact allying himself and Badd Land to the Wolfen Empire. Only Eallysa knows of the pact, his family and aides know only that he prefers the company of Wolfen over humans.

Alignment: Diabolic Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 15, M.A. 14, P.S. 13, P.P. 14, P.E. 10, P.B. 19, Spd. 11
Hit Points: 50. **S.D.C.:** 12. **P.P.E.:** 300.
Experience Level: 6th level Summoner and 5th level Diabolist.
Attacks Per Melee: Five.
Bonuses: +1 to strike. +2 to parry and dodge. +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact. +2 to pull punch.,
Other Combat Info: Snap kick: 1D6. Critical strike: 19-20.
Weapons: Four daggers (1D6) he keeps on his person at all times.
Armor: Soft leather (A.R. 4, S.D.C. 11).

Laddimar Badd (Quick Stats)

Laddimar Badd is the second oldest brother and the person who handles most town business. He is polite and friendly, yet there is an air of evil about him. Laddimar secretly mediates between the two rival thieves' guilds to keep their warring from getting too bloody and destructive. Both guilds pay the Badd family 20% of all monies they make.

Alignment: Miscreant Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 13, M.A. 13, P.S. 14, P.P. 21, P.E. 14, P.B. 22, Spd. 13
Hit Points: 55. **S.D.C.:** 40. **P.P.E.:** 150.
Experience Level: 6th level Knight, 2nd level Wizard.
Attacks Per Melee: Five.
Bonuses: +5 to strike, +2 to disarm, +5 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with punch, fall and impact, and +3 to pull punch.
Other Combat Info: Karate kick: 2D4, roundhouse kick: 3D6, tripping/leg hook, and backward sweep.
Spells: All common knowledge spells plus the following: Blinding Flash, Cloud of Smoke, See Aura, Climb, Turn Dead, Armor of Ithan, Invisibility: Simple, Blind, and Fire Bolt.
Weapons: Long sword (2D6), large shield (1D6); uses both as paired weapons.
Armor: Studded leather (A.R. 13, S.D.C. 38; would wear heavier stuff but it interferes with spell casting).

Earlimar Badd (Quick Stats)

Earlimar Badd is the youngest brother of the clan. He is a mean, bitter drunk who enjoys causing mischief for the town and his brothers, who he hates. He is an unpleasant, arrogant brat who thinks only of himself, power, and vengeance.

Alignment: Anarchist.
Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 13, M.A. 14, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 14, P.B. 24, Spd. 13
Hit Points: 32. **S.D.C.:** 30. **P.P.E.:** 4.
Experience Level: 5th level Noble with leanings toward thievery.
Attacks Per Melee: Five.
Bonuses: +1 to strike. +2 to parry and dodge. +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact. +2 to pull punch.
Weapons: Crossbow (2D4; 20 bolts) and broadsword (2D4+1).
Armor: Chain mail (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 44).

Sarah Badd (Quick Stats)

Sarah Badd is the wife of Laddimar and an open practitioner of sinister witchcraft. She has pledged her soul to the demon lord *Kubuera-Loe*, symbol of wealth and envy. In addition to her other Witch abilities, she is invulnerable to poison, and she has a Gargoyle for a familiar, which often takes the form of a house cat. Sarah is evil and craves power, more power than her husband and Badd Land offer.

Alignment: Diabolic Evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 12, M.A. 11, P.S. 14, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 28, Spd. 10
Hit Points: 33. **S.D.C.:** 230 (thanks to the Gift of Power). **P.P.E.:** 78.
Experience Level: 3rd level Witch.
Attacks Per Melee: Five.
Special Abilities: Sarah has all of the abilities conferred by a Witch's Major Pact, plus the following from the Gift of Power: Fly at will (Spd 104), automatically see the invisible and sense magic, and impervious to poisons, toxins, drugs, gases and disease.

Bonuses: +2 to strike. +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact. +3 to pull punch.
Weapons: Morning star (2D6).
Armor: Soft leather (A.R. 4, S.D.C. 11).

The Church of Vald-Tegor, Lord of the Undead

This is a large stone and marble temple with a tiny congregation of Goblins and Orcs, and a handful of humans. It is located near the old cemetery and usually looks abandoned. The only time that the temple seems to be alive is during the weekly religious ceremony and late at night, when lights can be seen lit around midnight lasting till just before dawn.

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

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

Jenny's

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

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

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

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

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

Rumors abound as to what goes on inside, as well as about what drove the Changeling insane. All the stories are far more wild than real life, but fiction has replaced fact. The fear and speculation is only accentuated in that nobody really knows anything about Toromek or why he does what he does. Then, on top of all this, horrific monsters have been known to be unleashed to terrorize the countryside, frightening noises are often heard coming from inside Jenny's, and people just disappear from time to time. Of course, all disappearances and strange occurrences within 50 miles (80 km) are credited to Toromek whether he is responsible or not.

The Truth About Toromek

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

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

Toromek's evil deeds forced him to flee Lopan or be killed. He took Jenny with him, confident that he could restore her sanity and build a new position of power elsewhere. However, such was not meant to be. The poor woman only got worse. In the end, she was more animal than Elven. Nothing he could do could restore her. Hunted and hated, he fled with his mad lover into the uncharted portion of the Eastern Territory. One night

Jenny escaped her bonds (she had to be secured to avoid hurting herself) and flung herself off a cliff. In the middle of nowhere, with minimal power, Toromek could not restore her to life. It was summer and the body decayed quickly, but still he carried her to every town and village he could find, begging that they help her, but she was beyond anybody's help. Soon his sorrow and frustration turned to anger. If they would not help they would die. Thus, he unleashed his demonic minions to slaughter entire villages, for by this point, Toromek was quite insane himself.

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

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

At last he is certain he has discovered the missing ingredient in his circle of life. He needed a "creature of the forest," young and innocent, yet vibrant with life. He has decided that means a virgin Wolfen maiden, and he will, sooner or later, kidnap some poor innocent thing to sacrifice her to his mad dreams of power and magic. With the sacrifice of a Wolfen maiden, his Jenny will be returned to him, alive and sane. Of course, he is always certain he has found the magic to resurrect Jenny and has always failed.

Toromek The Insane (Quick Stats)

Toromek usually appears as a tall, homely Elf with long black hair streaked with gray. His face looks tired and drawn, with big black circles hanging under his dark eyes. By human standards he looks to be in his forties. Deep down, he has come to despise the living and wishes to die himself. Thus, any confrontation with outsiders is likely to be to the death.

Alignment: Miscreant Evil Changeling.
Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 15, M.A. 15, P.S. 9, P.P. 9, P.E. 12, P.B. 22 (appears as 7), Spd. 10
Hit Points: 81. **S.D.C.:** 20. **P.P.E.:** 262.
Experience Level: 10th level Summoner.
Attacks Per Melee: Three; no hand to hand training. Or two by magic.
Bonuses: None.
Weapons: None.
Armor: You're kidding, right? The mighty Toromek wears no such thing!
Magic Items & Equipment: Mostly magic items and components that may have little value in the northern mountains. Toromek's treasure includes 10 potions (3 Charm, one Negate Magic, one Impervious to Fire, 2 Mute, 3 Tongues), a ruby ring that is also a charm of Protection from Undead, two vials of a paralysis drug, one dose of a sleeping drug, and one dose of a weakness drug. Toromek's supply of mystic components includes 24 lotus petals, a pair of Faerie Wings, 2 ounces of demon bone dust, gold dust (worth 1000 gold), silver dust (worth 250 gold), 100 gold pieces, and a silver cross. He also has a hand-held mirror, parchment, ink, and silver goblet (60 gold).

Cahh the Groveler (Quick Stats)

Cahh is Toromek's sycophantic right-hand man. He is also a Changeling, and he is totally loyal to Toromek, and willing to die trying to protect him. But if the Summoner dies, Cahh's courage will break, and he'll take flight. During the melee, the assistant will fight mainly defensively and always to protect his master or to escape.

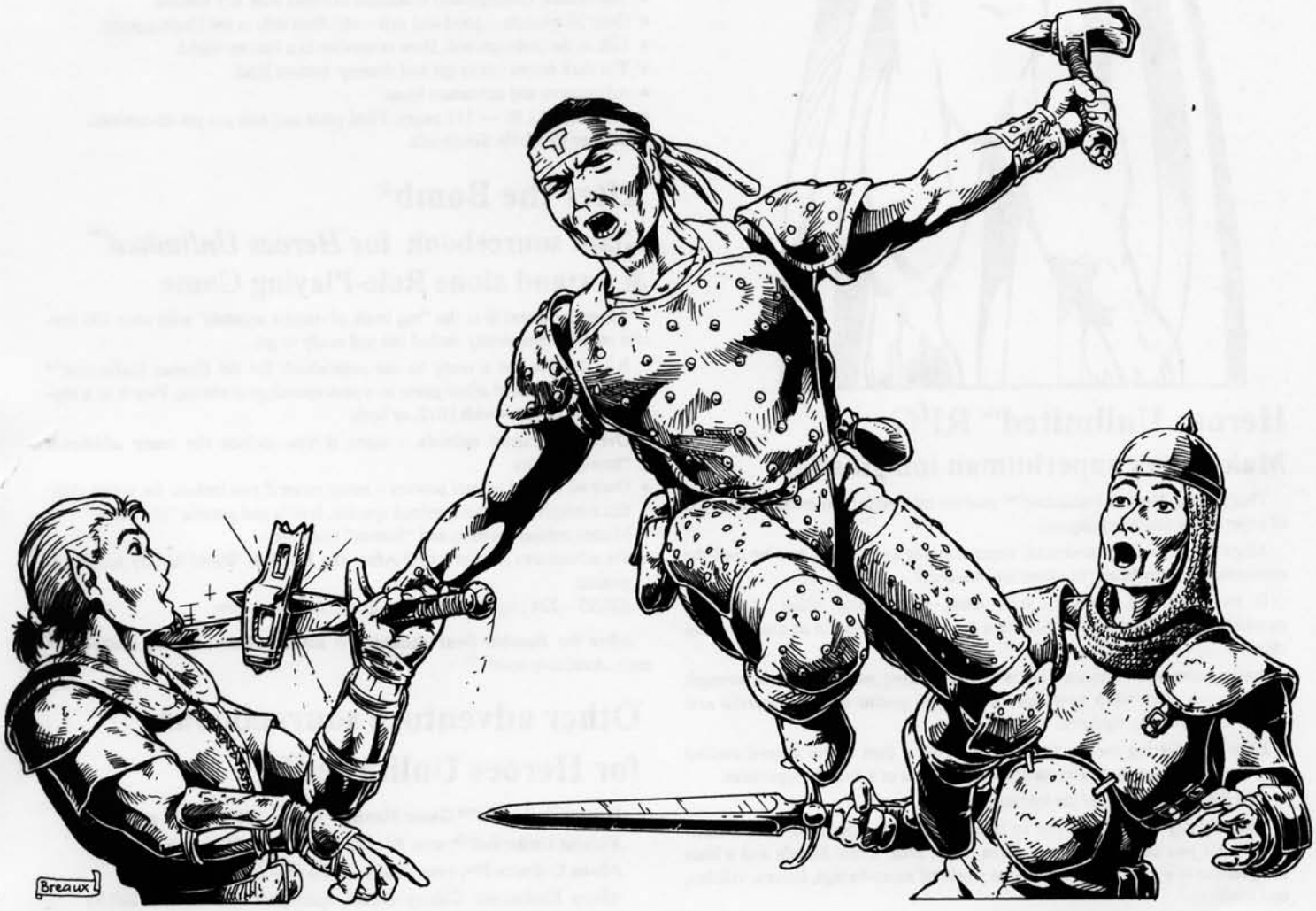
Alignment: Miscreant Evil Changeling.
Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 25, M.A. 20, P.S. 10, P.P. 12, P.E. 8, P.B. 7, Spd. 6
Hit Points: 19. **S.D.C.:** 25. **P.P.E.:** 10.
Experience Level: 3rd level Thief.
Attacks Per Melee: Four.
Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact. +2 to pull punch.
Weapons: Knives; has two throwing knives and two daggers (each does 1D6 damage), also has a war hammer (2D6 damage). Two of the knives are silver plated.
Armor: Studded Leather (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38)
Magic Items: Magic talisman of invisibility. He can use this up to three times a day, at up to an hour's duration each time. Cahh routinely uses this during combat.
Other Equipment: Cahh has a small pouch with 500 gold in it, plus a large coin of unknown metal and design. On one side is the silhouette of a double-headed dragon. On the other side is the silhouette of an ancient castle. The coin reflects no light whatsoever. To those with especially sensitive noses (like Wolfen), the coin's metal smells strangely like blood.

Demon Servants

If Toromek suspects trouble is brewing, or if he has time to prepare against an attack, he will summon demons. One Alu demon is his favorite minion, more powerful favorites include Gallu and/or a Baal-Rog. He never conjures more than four demons total, usually two Alu, a Gallu Bull and a Baal-Rog. All are old friends who cheerfully assist and fight for Toromek because he is such a wickedly fun psychopath.

A Final Note on Badd Land

G.M.s, feel free to keep using Badd Land as a spot for launching all sorts of adventures. The player characters, even heroes, should find it a useful place to fence stolen goods or booty found adventuring, acquiring limited types of magic items, poison, weaponry, and armor, as well as a source for the latest gossip and rumors, and sniff out villains, spies and invaders from the south, find work, etc.



While this place is corrupt and decadent, there are also some genuinely good and hardworking residents. Remember, the current power barons of the town are the Badd Family, the Vipers of Panath, and the Gentlemen's Society. These three are the big guns and the latter two presently acknowledge the Badd Family as the reigning power. The conniving and envious Sarah Badd could change this power structure somewhat, depending on how power hungry she gets and the opportunities that open to her. She is definitely not beyond conspiring against her husband with his younger brother or other powerful individual if it means usurping the rule of Badd Land. Likewise, the Misfits are another element that can radically change the town. Most likely, Eallysa Badd and/or one (or both) of the thieves' guilds hurt the founding members of the Misfits in some horrible way. Perhaps they killed their loved ones, imprisoned one for years, perhaps as a scapegoat/framed. Perhaps another was financially ruined or persecuted by the powers that be in Badd Land. At any rate, each has his reason to see the guilds and the Badd family destroyed. As for the Misfits, they might work best as a sort of "Robin Hood" outfit: mostly good and with noble purpose, but considered outlaws by the powers that be.

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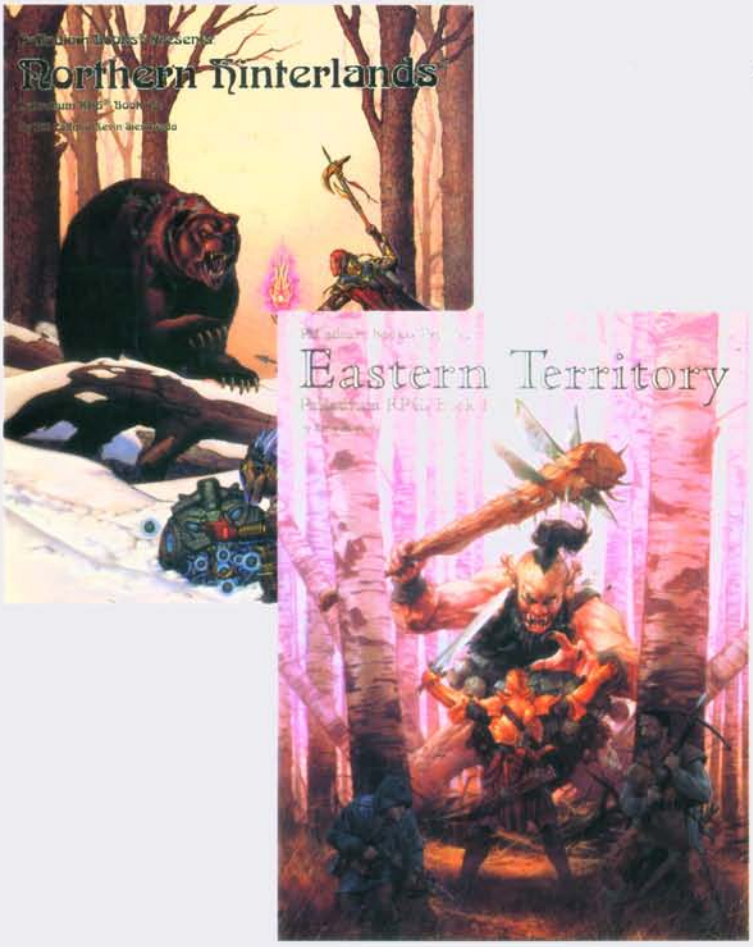

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