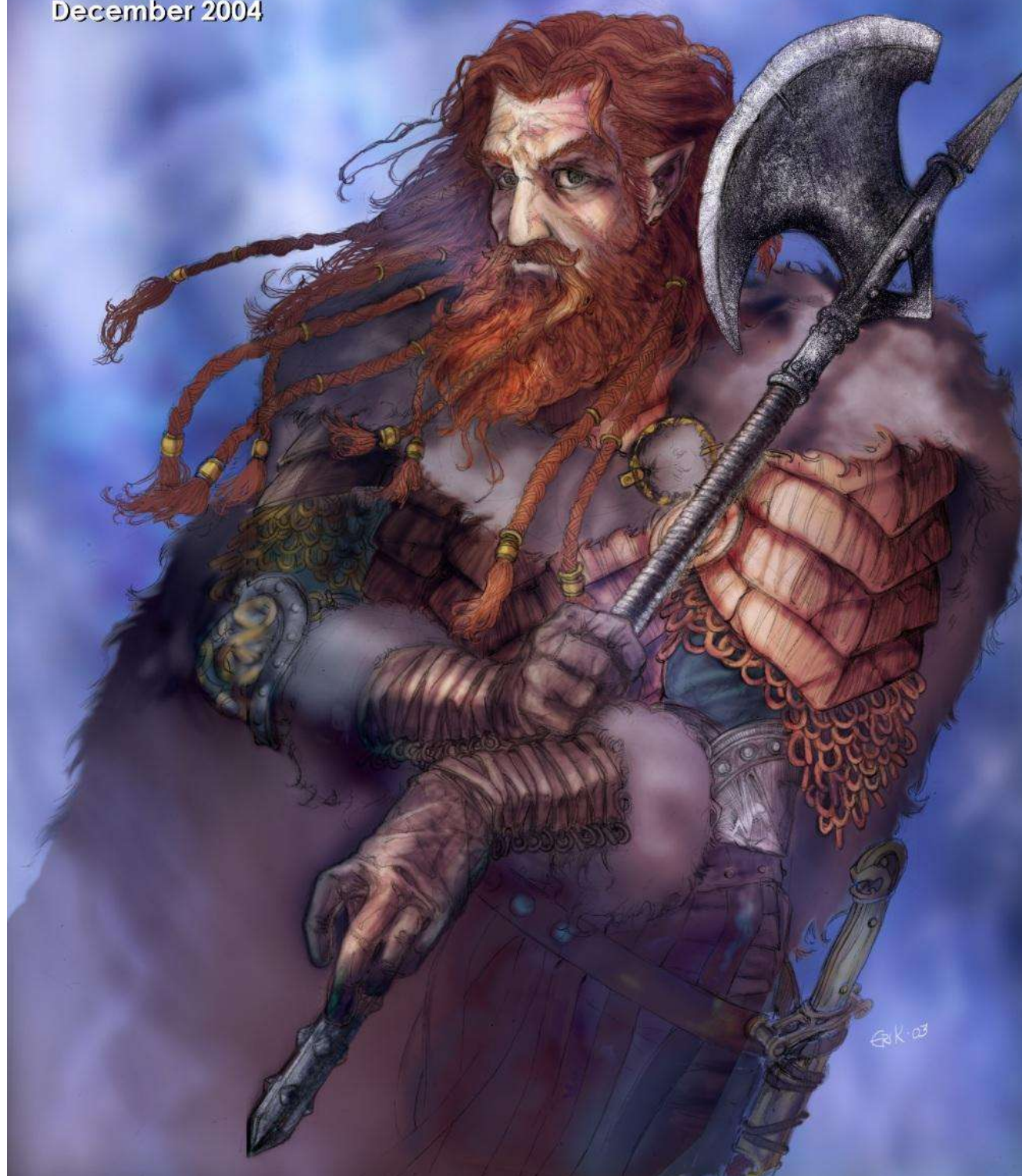


Footprints

Number 3
December 2004



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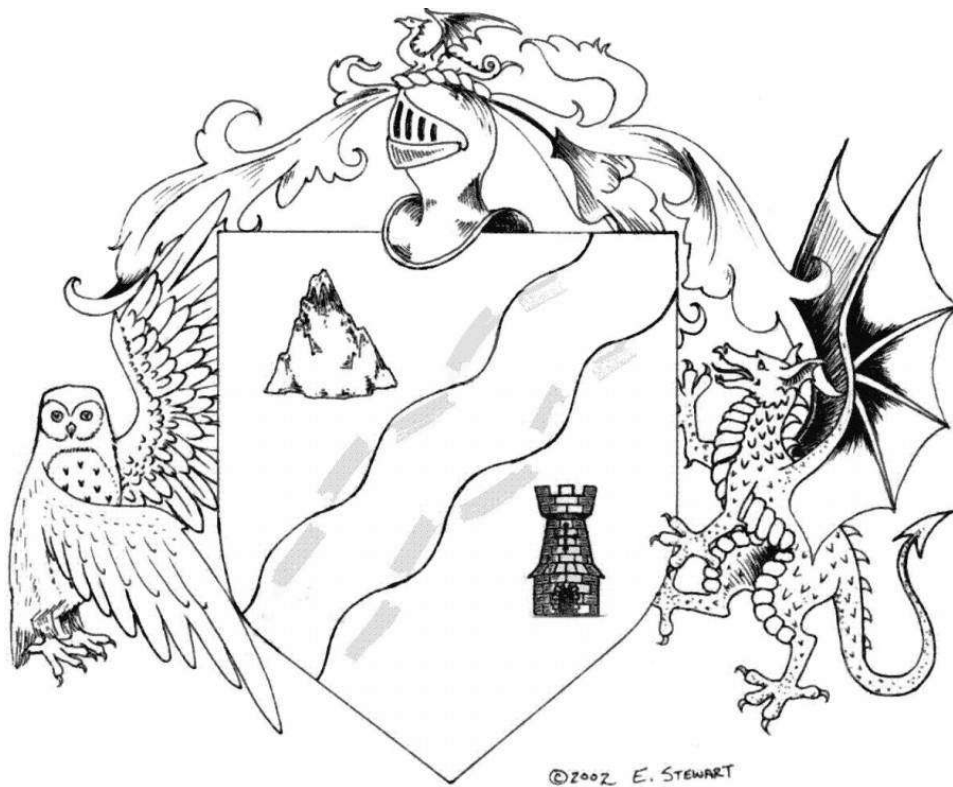
% in Lair:

We've got *game* this issue... or at least, a module. Look just one page further on to see Trenton Howard's **Stop the Goblin Raid**. If that's not enough, the very next item is our printing of the two second place Nasty NPCs, The Thing and Delorn: two interesting fellows to spice up your campaign. Add in a trio of new Wandering Monsters and you should have plenty to keep your players busy!

We have something for you players, too... a new player character race, the **Retherians** by Jared Hallett. Or if you can't find an old-school game near you, perhaps Dave Munnerlyn's article on Play by Email games may be just what you need.

Mix in Lorne Marshall's review of UK4 When a Star Falls and several pages of cartoons for a well-rounded ezine... I hope you all enjoy reading this one as much as we did assembling it.

Chris Gommerman



Stop the Goblin Raid

An AD&D Adventure by Trenton Howard
For 5-8 characters of levels 1-3

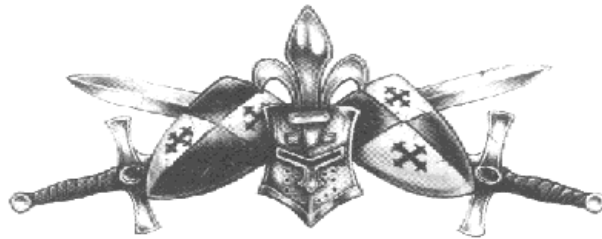
Story for the DM:

Goblin raids have put the Elven city of Kyrimi in dire need of help. They will be looking for any PCs that can help. Strange killings in the forest of Tengar have made trade impossible with other cities. The PCs should be asked to investigate the killings so that trade can continue. Alyissid, an evil 5th level clerical worshiper of the Rot Lord, is behind the Goblin raids. She has been sacrificing victims from the caravans in order to raise a small force of undead. The goblins are a scouting and distraction force to weaken the city first before the undead invasion (the coup-de-grace).

Notes for the DM:

The City of Kyrimi despises all evil creatures and will react negatively to a half-orc, whether or not his intentions are good or evil. Start the PCs in or near the city, giving them a compelling reason or rumor to be in the vicinity. The DM should attempt to get the PCs to investigate the city, perhaps with additional rumors or NPC interaction. When they arrive, the elves will be suspicious of the PCs until they understand that they are there to help. Guards may block entrances or ask questions to determine the PCs' intentions.

Kyrimi is a small city. Before you begin the module, you may wish to create your own rough map of the city. Use the details below to help you map the important sections. Discourage the PCs from going to the undead cave first; block it with thick overgrowth or something else. Keep the evil boss and the undead a secret as long as possible. Good Luck!



The Elven City of Kyrimi:

There will be between 20-30 Elven guards at the city limits at all times (1st level fighters, AC: 6, HP:11). They will be armed with longbows and long swords. This city is well-guarded with constant patrols. The PCs will need to climb rope ladders to get into the tree-homes. Any elves in the party will be allowed entry to the local shops and homes without question, assuming they appear to be of good alignment. Non-elves may be treated with suspicion.

1. Barracks: 50 Guards reside here (see above). The ladder to this area will be guarded by 2 elven guards, and none of the PCs will be allowed entrance. In the tree are 10 long tables and 50 chairs. Along the walls are weapons such as swords, bows, crossbows, magic swords, etc. Any person caught stealing the weapons will be escorted from the forest and slain if they trespass again. If this happens, the only way to redeem themselves is to accomplish the mission.

2. Captain's Barracks: This tree is home to the Captain and 9 guards. No one will be allowed to enter this building. Five of the guards in the tree will be standing guard outside on the ground. The guards are 2nd level fighters (AC: 2, HP:13, #ATT: 2). Each carries a long sword +1, and a longbow with 20 +1 arrows. The captain is a 3rd level fighter (AC: -2, HP: 29, #ATT: 2). He carries a +3 long sword and a longbow with 12 +2 arrows. He wears elfin chainmail +1. In the captain's private room there is a bed and four chests:

- Chest 1: Locked and trapped with a poison gas spell (10' radius). Save vs. poison. Inside is a long sword +2.
- Chest 2: Locked and trapped with a poison needle. Save vs. poison or die in 1-4 rounds. Inside is a longbow +1.
- Chest 3: Locked and can never be picked. Only a command word opens it. Inside are four labeled potions: Potion of gaseous form, potion of healing, potion of speed, and a potion of sweetwater.
- Chest 4: Locked and trapped with an acidic gas that will cause 4-48 points of damage to anyone 5' in front of it. It opens with a command word. Inside it is a scroll of fireball.

3. Elven Home.

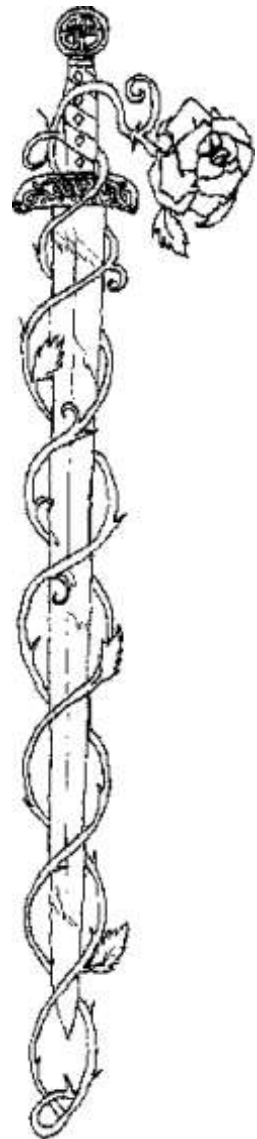
4. Elven Home.

5. Workshop: Do not let PCs in here until after they meet with King Arbados. In this tree, there is a long table filled with weapons of different sorts. Working at the table is an elf craftsman. He is a 1st level fighter (AC: 6, HP: 5). He carries a long sword. He will only sell items to elven-kind.

6. Healer: Inside this tree resides an elf healer. The only items of note are a long table with an orb on it. The healer is a 2nd level cleric (AC: 5, HP: 14). She carries a footman's mace. Her memorized spells are: cure light wounds and detect evil. She has three scrolls ready at all times: cure light wounds, detect magic, and hold person. She will gladly heal any PCs that need healing as long as she knows they are helping the city or if an elf travels with the party.

7. Royal House: PCs will only be allowed into the guest chamber where they will be watched by a pair of 3rd level elf fighters (AC: 2, HP: 25). Each carries a +1 long sword. The guest room is a small 10' by 10' chamber.

Here, the party may seek audience with King Arbados. He is a 4th level fighter (AC: -2, HP: 36) He carries a +3 long sword and wears +1 elfin chain mail. He will tell them about the problems that have been occurring in the Forest Of Tengar. The king feels that if the party were to kill the goblin leader, it would end the threat. He should emphasize how important trade is and that the raids seem to be increasing in frequency and severity. He will reward the PCs with 300 gp to investigate the caravan disappearances and abductions in the forest, and 500 gp more for the goblin leader's head.



The Forest of Tengar:

Wandering Monsters (daytime): 1 in 8 chance. Use a d6 to determine the type of monster. Check every mile.

Monster	No. Appearing	AC	HD	# Attacks	Damage
1. Fire Beetle	1-4	4	2	1	2-8
2. Giant Ant	1-6	3	2	1	1-6
3. Goblin	1-10	7	1/2	1	1-6
4. Hobgoblin	1-6	6	1+1	1	2-8
5. Gnoll	1-4	7	2	1	2-8
6. Badger	1-2	7	1+2	3	1-2/1-2/1-3

Encounters at Night: 1 in 8 chance. Use a d6 to determine the type of monster. Check every 4 hours if still or every mile if traveling.

Monster	No. Appearing	AC	HD	# Attacks	Damage
1. Zombie	1-6	8	2	1	1-8
2. Wolf	2-8	7	2+2	1	2-5
3. Black Bear	1	7	3+3	3	1-3/1-3/1-6
4. Ghoul	1-4	6	2	3	1-3/1-3/1-6 + paralyzation
5. Bombardier Beetle	1	4	2+2	1	2-12 + Acid
6. Skeleton	1-8	7	1	1	1-6

Wilderness Encounter Areas:

1. A foul smell comes from this campsite. The only thing that remains here are the bones of some humans and two tents that have been ripped to shreds. Three barrels are near the tents. Inside each of them is a rotting humanoid head. Any PC(s) with 9 CON or lower who uncovers the awful contents will start to vomit uncontrollably for 1-4 rounds.

Monsters: 4 skeletons will rise from the pile of bones when the barrels are searched. (AC: 7, HP: 6 each) Each carries a short sword.

2. A broken down caravan wagon is all you can see. As you start to walk closer, you notice this wagon was on fire and still smoking. Human corpses litter the ground around it.

Inside the wagon is a locked and trapped chest with a poison needle. Failing to remove the trap will require the opener to save vs. poison at +6 or die in 1-4 rounds. Inside the chest are 2 healing potions (light blue), 1 dose of Keoghtom's ointment and 150 sp.

Monsters: 5 goblin raiders (AC: 7, HP: 4). Three are wielding short swords, two of them are armed with light crossbows. Each carries a pouch on their side with 1d6 SP.

Goblin Cave:

There are no wandering monster encounters in this cave.

1. Guard Room: This room is cut out of natural stone. There is a barrel in the NE corner and a long table and two chairs in the NW corner of the room. The barrel contains nothing but drinking water.

Monsters: 4 goblin guards (AC: 7, HP: 4 each) wielding short swords. Each carries a pouch with 1d4 SP. Accompanying the goblins are a pair of hobgoblin overseers (AC: 6, HP: 8) armed with battle axes. The hobgoblins each carry a pouch with 1d6 GP.

2. Torture Chamber: This room contains various instruments of torture. Past victims lie dismembered on the floor. There is nothing of value in this room.

Monsters: 1 hobgoblin torturer. (AC: 3, HP: 9). He wields a massive whip (damage: 1-3 + stun for 1-4 rounds) and a long sword. He carries a pouch with a bloodstone worth 10gp, and 5 gp. in coins.

3. Storage Room: In this room, there are boxes, barrels, and crates that line the walls top to bottom. This appears to be some type of storage room. There are grains, meats, and different types of ale in this room. If PCs decide to check it out, the food looks edible but will cause the PCs to get very sick in 7-12 rounds. The ale is also of poor quality.

4. Jail: In this room, chains run along every wall and a musty stench envelops the room. On the northern side is Barbados, a 2nd level human Neutral Good thief (HP: 9 S: 14 I: 11 W: 9 D: 17 C: 13 Cha: 8). After he is freed, he will thank the party and will ask to join the PCs in their quest to kill the goblins.

Monsters: 4 hobgoblin jailers (AC: 4, HP: 7 each). They each wield battle axes. Each carries a pouch with 1d6 GP.

Pit trap: If PCs are walking to area 5 there is a 2 in 6 chance that each of the PCs will fall into the pit. The pit is 10' deep and PCs will take 1-6 damage from the fall but they can climb out pretty easily (walls are rough and there are a lot of footholds). Triggering this trap will cause the goblins from Area 5 to come and attack the PCs.

5. Guard Room: In this room, there are four chests in each of the four corners. Chest #1 contains 20 GP, Chest #2 holds only rotting meat; Chest # 3 contains 120 SP; Chest # 4 is trapped with a sharp needle (1-4 hp damage). In this chest is a wand of illumination with 5 charges left.

Monsters: 5 goblin archers (AC: 7, HP: 3) each wielding a short bow. Each carries a pouch with 1d6 SP.

6. Spider's Den: In this natural cave is a pool of water that takes up the whole western side. This pool of water is about 10'-20' deep at its deepest and 5' deep in the shallowest parts. If the PCs decide to check the water they will see a golden shimmering object at the bottom (a gold chalice worth 500 gp).

Monsters: A giant spider lives here and will descend upon the PCs when they look into the water (AC: 4, HP: 25).

7. Ogre's Chamber: There is a foul smelling pile of hay, which is the ogre's bed. There is nothing of value in this room.

Monsters: The ogre, Gralock, is guarding the secret door to the goblin leader (AC: 4, HP: 35). He wields a giant club (for 3-12 (d10+2) hp of damage).

8. Goblin leader's Chamber: This door can only be opened with a magic word. The secret word is "Grignoot" which means "master" in goblin language. In this huge room is a massive throne at the north end with a large chest next to it. This chamber is lavishly furnished with goblin-sized chairs and couches. Hanging on the walls are three bows and two crossbows. On the walls are many portraits depicting great goblin leaders. One of these pictures has a gold frame worth 50gp. In the chest is 300cp, 200sp and 100gp and 10pp, a wand of enemy detection with 10 charges left, and a suit of human-sized +1 plate mail.

Monsters: The goblin leader (AC: 4, HP: 10) wields a huge battleaxe for 2-8 hit points of damage. He carries a large pouch with 22gp inside. He has 8 hobgoblin bodyguards (AC: 5, HP: 9 each) Each bodyguard wields a battleaxe for 2-8 points of damage and carries a pouch with 2d10 gp.

9. Wall Trap Room: This room is completely bare except for the chest near the eastern wall. The chest is empty.

Trap: When PCs get near the chest the wall, blocks of the wall will collapse upon the party, causing 1-8 points of damage within a 6' radius.

10. Gnoll Quarters: In this room there are three barrels in the NW corner and five sacks in the SE corner. The barrels contain spears, and the sacks contain rotting meat. There is nothing else of value in this room.

Monsters: 5 gnolls live here (AC: 5, HP: 13). They each carry a halberd. Each carries a pouch with 1d10 gp and one carries a scroll with the magic word that will open the door to area 8.

Undead Cave:

No wandering monsters will be encountered here. In order to enter PCs must pull all four levers to open the doors to area 8. The levers may be pulled in any order.

1. Skeleton Room: This room is knee deep in rotting bones and slimy water. It reeks horribly in here. The secret door has a lever. If pulled, a grinding noise will be heard from somewhere in the complex. One lock to the door at Area 8 will be unlocked. In the bones of the skeletons there is a shiny brass key for area 5 (25% chance PCs will see it).



Monsters: 10 skeletons will rise when the PCs try the door at the other end (AC: 6, HP: 6 each). They carry short swords.

2. Coffin Room: This room is lit by an eerie blue glow emanating from a long sword atop a pedestal. The sword is +1 but when touched the coffins will open and their occupants will attack. Other than the sword and coffins (4 on each wall), this room has nothing else in it. There is nothing of value in the coffins.

Monsters: 8 ghouls (AC: 6, HP: 10 each).

3. Zombie Room: This room has many things in it, including a portrait on the western wall. The portrait is a picture of a woman wearing black. A legend at the bottom reads, "Alyissid, Lady of Pain and Misery." If the PCs touch the painting, they will open a secret door behind it, which holds yet another lever. When that lever is pulled, they will hear another grinding noise somewhere in the caverns (another lock to area 8 is undone). When the PCs enter this room they will notice several human corpses litter the ground.

Monsters: There are 10 zombies on the ground that will rise when the party reads the words on the bottom of the portrait (AC: 8, HP: 11 each).

Spike Trap: When PCs walk up to the picture and touch it a spike will come up from the floor and cause 1-12 points of damage.

4. Potion Room: In this room, there are three tables, one each in the north, east, and west ends. On the north table is a cauldron and three vials of light blue liquid (*potions of healing*). On the western table, there is a cauldron and a jar of yellowish paste (*a potion of speed*), and on the last table there is a large book. This spellbook contains the following spells:

1st level spells: light, erase, and magic missile

2nd level spells: detect invisibility, mirror image

Monsters: A 3rd level human Lawful Evil magic user (AC: 8, HP: 9) He carries a +1 dagger, a pouch holding 12 gp in it and a wand of wonder with 2 charges left in it.

The magic-user has the following spells memorized:

1st level spells: magic missile (x2)

2nd level spells: mirror image

The mage has a quasit familiar (AC: 2, HP:15).

5. Wight Room: When PCs approach this door, they see elven writing on the door, saying "Do not enter, if you care for your life." The door has no door handle. If the PCs search, they will find two key holes to the left and right of the door. The keys to open this door are in Areas 1 and 7. In this room, there is a large sarcophagus on the eastern wall. The sarcophagus is locked with two huge metal clasps. Only a combined strength of 30 can break them. When the clasps are broken, six skeletons will smash through the wall next to the sarcophagus and attack. The secret door in this room holds another lever that will unlock the third lock to Area 8 (causing another grinding noise somewhere). In the sarcophagus is a +1 hand axe, a suit of platemail +1 and one of elfin chainmail +1.

Monsters: 6 skeletons (tougher than normal: AC: 5, HP:10). Each wields a long sword. After the skeletons are defeated, the wight will rise from his tomb (AC: 5, HP: 27). NOTE: this wight can be hit by normal weapons.

6. Resting Room: This area is a resting room. PCs will feel safe resting here. There is only a bed and a table in this room. No monsters will attack them in here because it is protected by a spell against the undead.

7. Statue Room: In this room are three statues. One is in the NE corner, one is in the SE corner, and one is in the SW corner. If the statue by the secret door is moved to the empty area (which is really a pressure plate) the secret door will open. If any other statues are moved to the NW corner, a trap will be triggered. In the secret door is another lever to unlock a lock to area 8, (another grinding sound will be heard somewhere).

Magic Missile Trap: If any statues are moved except the one by the secret door, three magic missiles will be shot from the statue by the secret door into the person moving the statue.

Monsters: In this room is a 3rd level Lawful Evil cleric (AC: 2, HP: 20). She carries a +1 mace. She carries a pouch with a silver key for Area 5.

She has following spells memorized:

1st Level: cause light wounds, cure light wounds (x2)

2nd level: hold person

With her, she has five ghoul bodyguards (AC: 5, HP: 13).

8. Ceremonial Chamber: This room is pitch-black. Torch illumination is barely enough to see. In this room are five hexagon-shaped altars dedicated to the Lord of Rot. On the middle one is a female elf, still alive. If any PCs enter the room, she will start screaming for help. The PCs will feel a distinct emanation of evil as they enter. Several maimed bodies, previous victims of the sacrifices to the Rot Lord, lie on the floor decapitated. A woman dressed in black stands in front of the pedestal with a dagger raised. The PCs may recognize her from the portrait in Area 3.

Monsters: Alyssid is a 5th level Lawful Evil elf cleric (AC: 0, HP: 39). She wields a dagger of soul draining (treat as a +2 dagger, on a successful hit it drains all life from the victim unless a saving throw versus death magic is made). Anyone slain by the dagger will become a zombie under her command in a single round. The dagger, a gift from her dark god, will disintegrate once Alyssid dies. She carries a pouch with a ruby (150gp) and 150gp in coins. She wears a +1 cloak of protection.

Alyssid has memorized the following spells:

1st level spells: cause light wounds, cure light wounds (x2)

2nd level spells: hold person (x2)

3rd level spells: animate dead

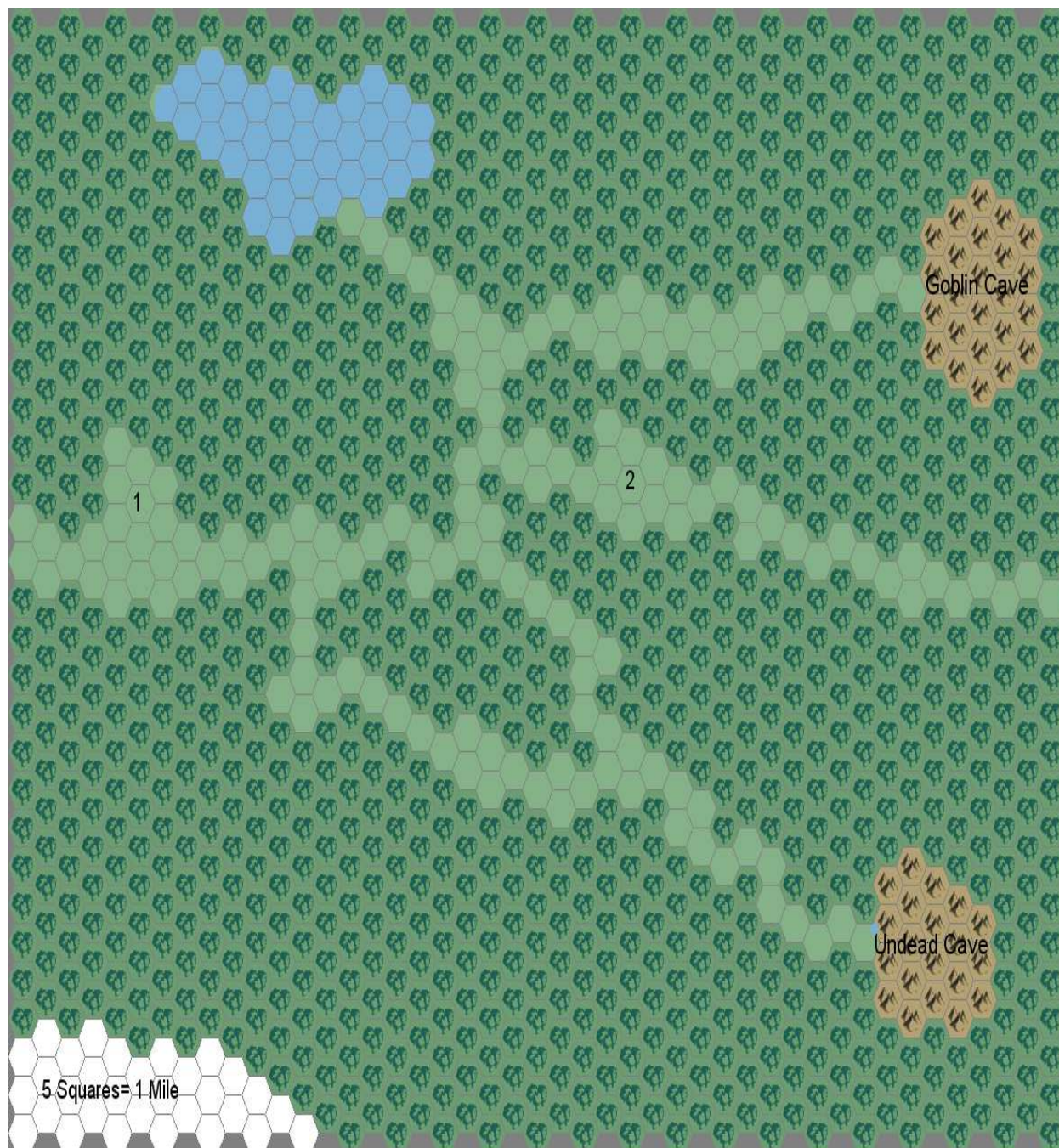
She is accompanied by 3 ghosts (HP: 19).

Conclusion:

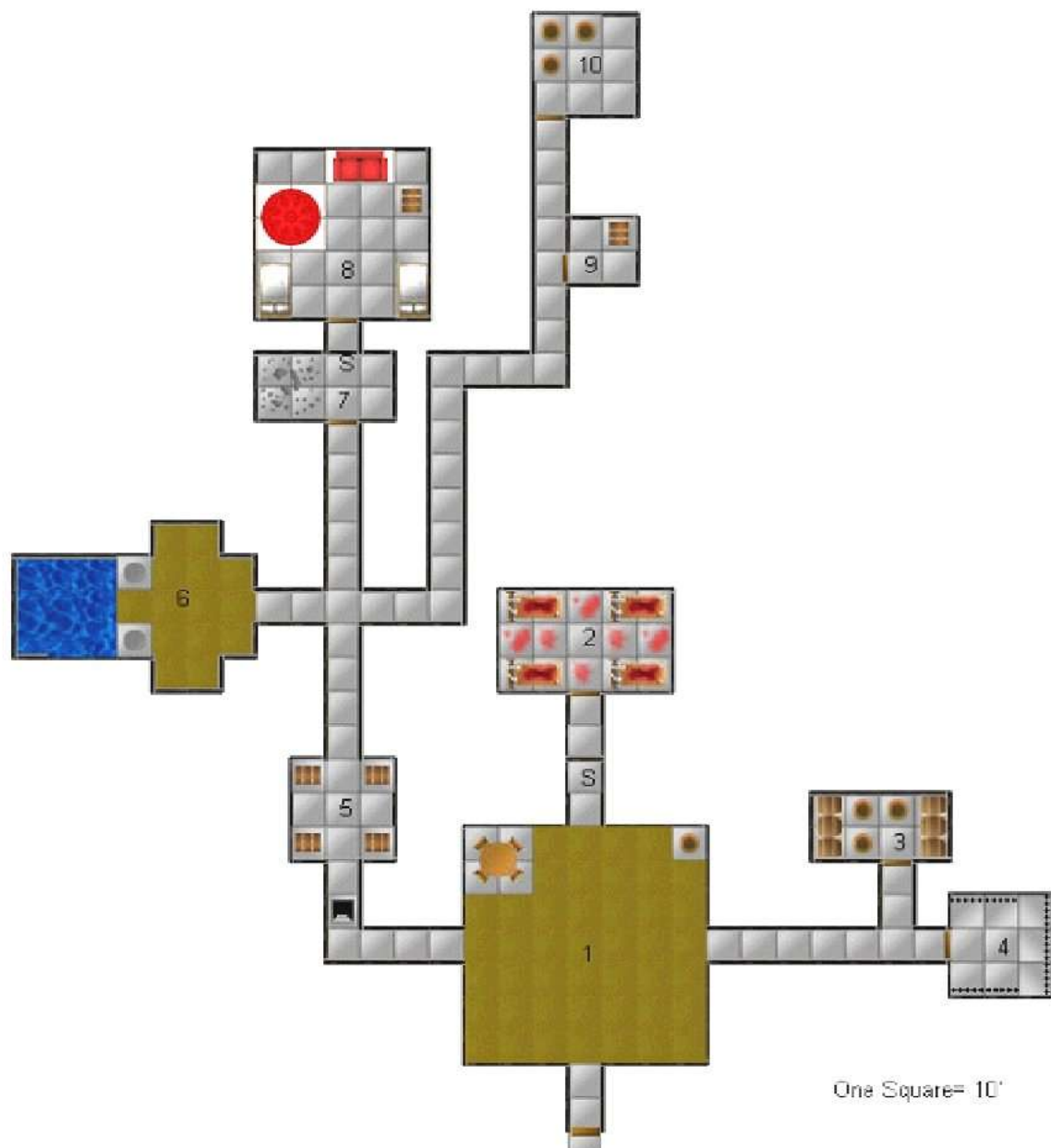
The party should attempt to free the elven maiden and leave the cave. 1-4 rounds after Alyssid dies, her body will turn to ash. 1-4 rounds after that, the cave will start to collapse. If the party stays in the cave, they will have a 20% chance per round of getting hit by falling rocks (1-6 damage each). The PCs should receive an extra bonus for saving the elf maid. Perhaps she joins the party for future adventures?

Stop the Goblin Raid Maps:

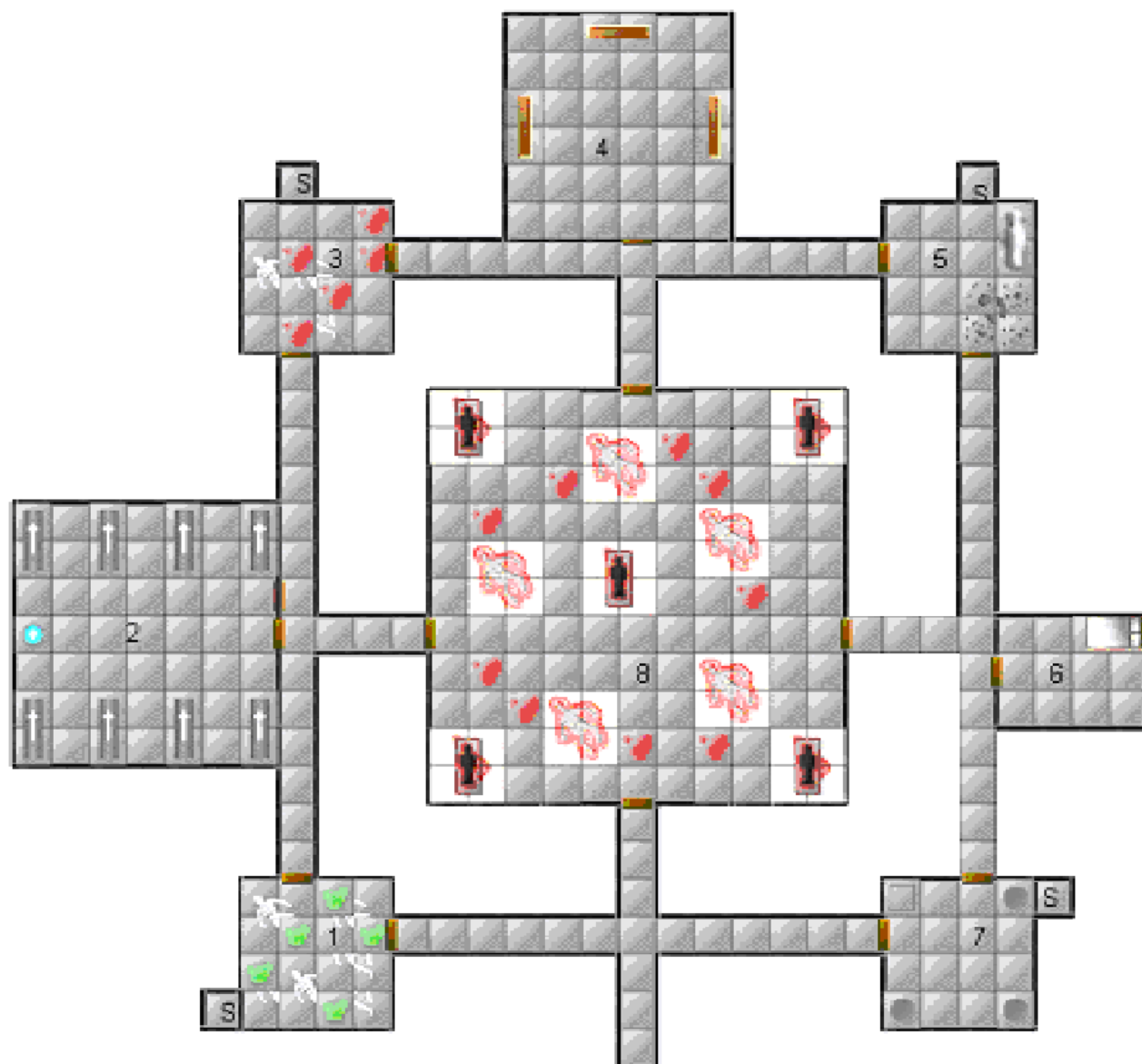
Tengar Forest:



Goblin Cave:



Undead Cave:



Entrance

1 Square= 10'

The Nasty NPC Competition

Here we go again, with the two second-place winners in Dragonsfoot's Halloween 2003 Nasty NPC competition. Enjoy!

The Thing

by Christopher Tichenor

Race: Alien
Class: Fighter / 8
Age: ??

Str: 18/00
Int: 18
Wis: 15
Dex: 11
Con: 16
Cha: 3

HP: 60

Weapon Proficiencies:
Laser Blaster, Light Sword, Club, ??
Languages: Does not speak

Background / details:

A crash-landed pilot from another planet, the Thing appears to be a huge, ugly human close to 8 feet tall. In actuality, he is a mass of plant-like tissue. As such, bludgeoning weapons do no damage against him and piercing weapons only do 1 hp of damage per hit. Slashing weapons do full damage, but may (50% chance) dismember a portion of The Thing. If this occurs, within 24 hours, the dismembered portion will grow into another Thing identical to the first, unless it is destroyed by fire. His barky hide gives him a natural AC of 2.

The Thing is immune to cold based attacks, but takes full damage from electricity and fire based attacks. The Thing regenerates all damage except fire and electrical based damage at 3 hp/turn. Sleep, charm, hold, and other mind-controlling spells have no effect on the Thing, but those spells affecting plants do.

Stranded and bereft of his high technology items, the Thing must make do on this primitive planet. Fortunately, there are plenty of stupid humans and demi-humans full of nutritious blood to feed upon. His goal is to find a proper isolated spot and begin to reproduce, and then overrun the world with his progeny.

He reproduces by spraying spores on the ground and then incubating these spores with the blood of a man-sized being, usually hung upside down over the spores on the ground. One man sized-being will feed 50 spores. Spores will grow to full-sized Things in one year's time.



The Thing is very strong, very smart, and quite crafty. He attacks by ambush, when his opponents are unaware or in a position of weakness. Otherwise he will avoid larger, stronger parties. He prefers to bludgeon his opponents into unconsciousness in order to retain most of the blood in the body. The Thing has nothing but contempt for other races. He simply sees them as bags of blood to feed himself and his young.

If The Thing is defeated, more may come... Keep watching the skies.

Delorn

by Quinn Davis (Dave) Munnerlyn III
aka "Lothar TNVI"

Race: Human
Class: Fighter/Thief (8/10)
Age: 38
Alignment: NE

Str: 15
Int: 11
Wis: 10
Dex: 17
Con: 13
Cha: 12

HP: 60

Weapon Proficiencies:
Bow, Longsword, Morning Star
Languages: Gnome, Elvish

Background / details:

Delorn was your typical adventurer, perhaps a bit more successful than some. A little too good at finding adventure as it turned out.

He began his career as a young Neutral Good fighter, advancing through a few years of dungeons and catacombs filled with all kinds of horrors. He eventually decided to undertake a more cushy profession, and joined up with another band of young adventurers as a thief (i.e. security bypass and inventory redistribution specialist).

More years passed, and the group became skilled and well known, not to mention overconfident. They decided to undertake an adventure into the Abyss itself, to retrieve some lost artifact.

The details are sketchy; Delorn can't recall most of his life before that final adventure, nor can he remember anything that happened in the Abyss. Not that he'd want to. The group was ambushed. They had been fed false information by a demon in human form on the Prime Material.



Out of a group of six only he was spared... if that's what you want to call it. The others were promptly eaten, but the demons had a game to play with Delorn. They twisted his mind, turning him into a selfish, bitter man, willing to do whatever it takes to get what he wants.

They let Delorn go then, and gave him passage back to the Prime Material. Unknown to him however, they sent out the first Hunter. This was their game: A hunter demon would be let loose upon the world to search for Delorn, to hunt him down and kill him and anyone near him.

The first catch was easy; Delorn never suspected he was under pursuit. He was out with a lady he fancied, taking her home by a different way than usual... for he had plans of his own. The Hunter was waiting for them in the dark alley Delorn had chosen. Their screams pierced the dark night as the Hunter ended both of their lives. By the time the city guard arrived, the Demon was gone. They found only the body of Delorn's lady escort.

Delorn reawoke, naked in a land far away. He knew now that he was the hunted. He's tried to hide everywhere he can think of, but the Hunter always finds him eventually. He doesn't try to seclude himself, not caring if anyone else gets hurt. He hopes that maybe someday the Hunter will choose the wrong place to attack, and someone in the vicinity will be able to defeat the demon. In the meantime he searches for a way to finally win the game himself.

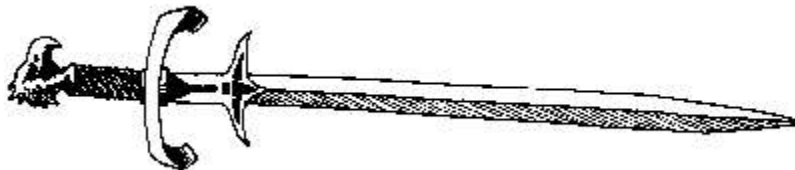
Delorn has few possessions of his own. A year at most passes between the times when the demon catches up to him, not long enough for him to rise himself up from destitution in a strange land. Every now and then he does steal himself something helpful.

Despite his age, Delorn remains in excellent health. The demons have elongated his lifespan, in hopes of extending their little game. He doesn't dare commit suicide, or otherwise have his life naturally ended for fear that doing so will send his soul right back to the Abyss for an eternity of torture. He believes that the only way to save his soul is to win the game.

He continues his search for a way to foil the demon. He suspects that if he can kill the Hunter, or have it killed, that the hunt will end and he will be left in peace. Or maybe the trick is to elude the demon for a certain period of time.

A different demon is sent with each conclusion of the hunt. Eventually the demons may tire of their sport; but so long as the hunt continues, neither Delorn nor anyone around him can ever be safe.

The actual rules of the Demon's Hunt game are left up to the DM. It's assumed the PC's will be tasked somehow to free this wretched person from his curse one way or the other. Of course they may have to deal with Delorn's twisted and dangerous personality in order to discover his secrets.

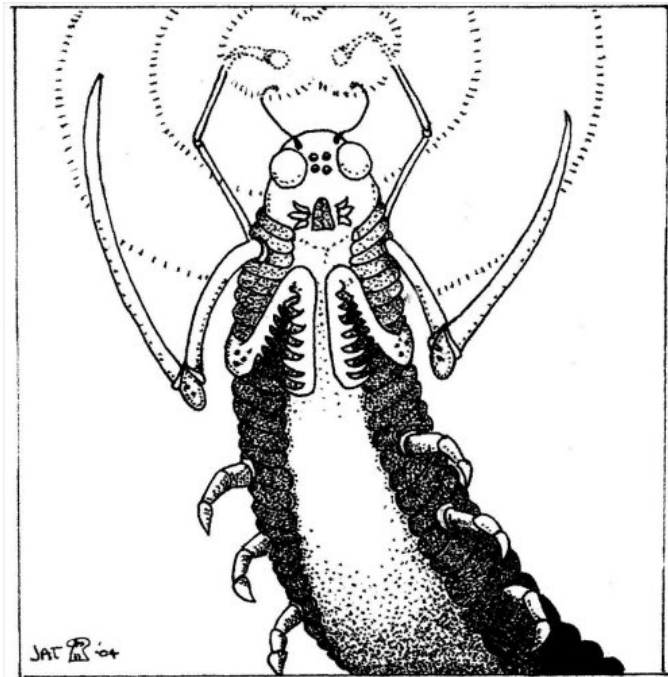


Wandering Monsters

Gigger

Quinn Davis (Dave) Munnerlyn III
aka "Lothar TVNI"

FREQUENCY:	Rare
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3 body/5 legs
MOVE:	15"
HIT DICE:	4
% IN LAIR:	0%
TREASURE TYPE:	Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8/1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Blindness
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
SIZE:	M (5'-6' long)
PSIONIC ABILITY:	Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil/Nil	



The gigger is a giant segmented centipede-type creature. Twelve long legs carry it swiftly along its wetland home. It can climb trees at the same rate it moves on the ground, but it avoids swimming because its breathing organs are on the underside of its body. The insectoid creature's exoskeleton is white and soft at birth, but hardens within 24 hours, and takes on a green hue in two weeks. Four arms are attached just behind its head, two of which are equipped with bright bioluminescent tips, which are covered with an exoskeleton "lid." The other two arms end in sharp, barbed spear-like appendages.

Combat:

A gigger initiates its attack by lifting the lids on its light-producing arms and focusing the illumination into a target's face. The light renders any opponent blind for as long as the light is focused on the opponent (as the 2nd level magic-user spell *blindness*). A saving throw vs. spells may be attempted each round, but one such roll must be made for each blinding attack in effect that round; so if a single gigger is attacking a single character, that character must roll two saves each round. The gigger can focus each functional light arm on a different opponent, if it so wishes. The creature will then attempt to impale any blinded targets on its spear arms. A creature killed by a gigger will be carried off to a safe place and consumed immediately. A favorite tactic of the gigger is to lie in wait camouflaged in a tree, striking its prey as it passes beneath. The gigger will only attack at night when its blinding arms are most effective.

The gigger's arms can be attacked at AC 3, and each one can take 5 points of damage before it is rendered useless. This damage does not count against the creature's hit point total. Any successful attack on its legs at AC 5 will sever one leg, again with no loss to its total hit points. After losing three legs, its movement drops to 12". After losing five it can only move at a rate of 6"; loss of six or more legs immobilizes the gigger.

Habitat/Ecology:

The gigger is a solitary hunter, roaming marshes and wetlands seeking out food. It will only seek out others of its kind for mating; giggers have been known to eat other giggers. They do not make lairs, but often choose to rest in treetops. They typically prey on giant frogs, fish, or the occasional alligator. They are not shy about attacking a party of adventurers hoping to make a quick kill and getaway.

If a gigger manages to kill or render a target unconscious it will immediately break combat and attempt to retreat to a safe area where it can consume its kill. Even though they are not used in combat, a gigger's mandibles can crush bone, so meals are usually totally consumed. The monster will discard all metal objects. Softer inedible material such as leather is ripped to shreds to get at the meal underneath.

Giggers molt once every three months, replacing any lost limbs in the process. For 24 hours after molting they are Armor Class 7 over their entire body.

A slain gigger's exoskeleton quickly dries out and becomes brittle, rendering it useless as armor, but the luminous bladders in its light arms are prized for making light-related magic.

Allaru

by John A. Turcotte

FREQUENCY:	Rare
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVE:	6"/24"
HIT DICE:	4+4
% IN LAIR:	30%
TREASURE TYPE:	R, S, T
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-8/2-8/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil
SIZE:	M
PSIONIC ABILITY:	Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil/Nil	

The allaru are evil spirits clothed in flesh. Together with their masters, the uttuku (q.v.), the allaru vie against their enemies, the lammasu and shedu. Allaru are intelligent and wicked. They seek to lead good persons astray and further the goals of evil.

In their true form, allaru appear as huge eagles with the head of a fanged human of evil countenance. They may *polymorph self* at will to human or demi-human form, and this is how they are usually encountered. An allaru will only reveal itself when attacking or to crow its triumph.

An allaru may use the following spell-like abilities, one at a time, one per round, at will: *cause fear*, *darkness*, *detect good*, *detect invisible*. Once per day, an allaru may use the following spell-like abilities: *charm person*, *know alignment*, *mirror image*, *protection from good* 10' radius. All spell-like abilities function at the 5th level of experience. In addition, allaru use spells and affect undead as 5th level evil clerics. Allaru have an innate form of *tongues*, and can speak the language of any human or demi-human encountered.

Allarus may only be struck by magic weapons. They are immune to fire-based attacks, poison, paralysis, petrification, polymorph and death magic. They are kept at bay by a *protection from good* circle and suffer 2-8 hit points of damage from a direct hit by holy water (1-4 hit points from a splash). They may not enter consecrated ground. They can be turned as *special* on the clerics' turn undead table.

Description: In their true form, an allaru's body is that of a 4' tall bird of prey with a 12' wingspan. Their feathers are a sooty gray in color with red pinfeathers. Their eyes, teeth and talons are all jet black.

Uttuku

by John A. Turcotte

FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVE:	12"/18"
HIT DICE:	6+6
% IN LAIR:	20%
TREASURE TYPE:	G
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-10 and by weapon +3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	25%
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil
SIZE:	L (8' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY:	Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil/Nil	

The uttuku are powerful evil spirits who roam the Prime Material plane seeking to persuade those of good alignment into committing evil acts. They are cunning and devious. They often impersonate powerful and influential clerics of good in order to lead the unwary astray.

In its true form, an uttuku appears as a giant with the head of a fierce lion, the horns of a bull, and enormous feathered wings. An uttuku can *polymorph self* at will into the form of a human or demi-human of either gender. The voice of an uttuku is pleasing and fluid, allowing it



to cast *suggestion* at will. Uttukus have an innate form of *tongues*, and can speak the language of any human or demi-human encountered.

At will, an uttuku may use the following spell-like abilities, one at a time, once per round: *bestow curse*, *charm person/monster*, *darkness 15' radius*, *protection from good 10' radius*, *telekinesis 2500 gp weight*, *teleport* (no error). All at will abilities function at the 9th level of experience. Once per day, an uttuku may utter an *unholy word*. In addition, an uttuku may cast spells and affect undead as a 9th level evil cleric.

Uttukus are struck only by +2 magic weapons or greater. They are immune to fire-based attacks, poison, paralysis, petrification, polymorph and death magic. They take one-half damage from cold-based attacks. Holy water inflicts 4-10 hit points of damage per direct hit (2-5 hit points of damage from a splash). They may not enter consecrated ground. They are considered "special" for purposes of turning on the clerics' turn undead table.

If forced into combat, an uttuku reverts to its true form. It can either bite or gore (never both) in addition to using a weapon. Uttukus favor huge maces and ankus-like weapons. Uttukus inflict +3 on damage with a melee weapon due to their great strength.

Description: In their true form, uttukus have dusky skin. Their wings are white with silver pinfeathers. They stand 8' tall and have a wingspan of over 20'.



Retherians

by Jared Hallett

Attribute: min-max

STR: 10-18/00

DEX: 4-16

INT: 4-16

WIS: 5-16

CON: 12-19

CHA: 3-12

Attribute Modifiers

STR: +1

DEX: -1

INT: -1

CON: +2

CHA: -2

Special Abilities

Night Vision

Limited Regeneration

Regenerative Abilities

Retherians regenerate at a rate of 1 HP every 9 Turns.

They cannot regenerate lost limbs, though if the limb is recovered, casting a *cure wounds* spell holding the severed limb to the stump, it can be reattached (*cure minor wounds* for hands/feet, *cure light wounds* for elbows/knees, and *cure moderate wounds* for arms/legs).

They are still brought to "death's door" by being reduced to 0 HP, though they last 2X longer than normal (instead of being dead at -10 HP, they die when they reach -20).

Possible Classes and Maximum Level

Cleric: 8

Druid: 14 (rare, recommend NPCs only)

Fighter: 12

Ranger: 6

Thief: 6 (Multiclass only)

Possible multiclasses

Fighter/Cleric

Fighter/Thief (emphasis on Fighter, Thieving skills are secondary, allowing armors equivalent to scale mail)

Cleric/Thief (rare, recommend NPCs only)

Disadvantages

- Retherians eat 50% more than Humans in a normal meal. A "bare bones" meal would still approximate a Human's full ration.

- Retherians require an extra 2 hours of sleep to function normally (if a Human needs 8 hours, a Retherian needs 10 hours of uninterrupted sleep).

- Retherians can only use specially designed armors, as their size prevents them from using armors designed for the "small ones" (referring to pretty much everyone).

- Retherians are treated as "Large" creatures when determining weapon damage.

- Retherians cannot use "undersized" weapons like daggers or darts.
- It is difficult to distinguish between Retherian males and females, the only distinguishing feature being that females have longer hair.
- PC Retherians cannot be of any Evil alignment (NPCs can, but they are EXTREMELY rare). If ever a PC becomes evil, he immediately loses all levels in any class but Thief and he is cast out from Retherian society.

Advantages

- Retherians are master artisans. They are second only to Dwarves in stonework and Gnomes in the manufacture of mechanical devices. They are second to NONE in the crafting of weapons and armor.
- Retherians live to approximately 500 years of age.
- Retherians are able to wield what would normally be a two-handed weapon in one hand.
- Retherians gain +2 HP at first level
- Retherians are immune to fear.
- Retherians are able to see just as well in starlight as they can in daylight. They still cannot see in complete darkness, however.

Society

Retherians live in a tribal, honor-based society. They seek glory for themselves and recognition for their clan in many tasks, most notably on the battlefield. They look for any competitive task to undertake, from farming the most wheat, to smithing the best weapons, to killing the most enemies. They will never resort to trickery or subterfuge to complete any task, as such things are "dishonorable" and do not reflect a person's true skill. Their clans are often named after their home (Blackrock clan, Stone Hills clan) or for a distinguishing feature of clan members (Darktooth clan, Hellscream clan) and are led by either a Council of Elders or a single Warchief. Any decision or action, from any Retherian, can be challenged to a Trial By Combat for any reason. To refuse such a challenge is both an insult to the challenger and a great dishonor upon the one who refuses.

Trial By Combat

The Trial By Combat is one of the most important rituals in Retherian society, being both a way to enhance one's honor and to establish position in the tribe.

Issuing The Challenge

Upon the issuance of a challenge to Trial, two things must be decided. The person issuing the challenge has the right to choose the venue, or location, the battle is to take place. The recipient of the challenge is allowed to decide whether the challenge will be with or without armor or weapons (or both).

Victory Conditions

A winner is declared when one of several events takes place:

- 1) One combatant exits (or is forced out of) the battlefield, usually a 10-20' circle.
- 2) One combatant is knocked unconscious or otherwise incapacitated.
- 3) One combatant concedes.
- 4) One combatant dies.

Physical Appearance

Retherians appear as extremely tall, very well-muscled Humans. They are between 7 and 9' in height, and, when fully grown, weigh in excess of 600 pounds. Their eyes are often either deep red or cold blue, with silver eyes being rare. Their hair ranges from light brown to black.

Known Languages

Any 1st level Retherian can speak: Common, Alignment, Common Retherian, "ClanSpeak" and the language of combative animals such as bears, wolves and badgers. "ClanSpeak" is a variant of Common Retherian (the language spoken by all Retherians) unique to a certain clan. Each Retherian automatically knows up to 3 of these dialects.

The Retherian F.A.Q.

What archetype does the Retherian fill?

The Retherian fills the role of the warrior. They fit best in the front line of combat, though they might not make the best party leader.

What relation do the Retherians have to Humans?

Though they look somewhat similar, Retherians have no relation to Humans. They are incompatible for breeding, and their physiology is completely different.

Are the Retherian clans nomadic?

On the whole, no. Though there may be a few without permanent homes, almost all clans have a set territory and permanent structures.

How many clans are there?

Short answer: Unlimited. Long answer: As many as the DM has need to create. The differences can be subtle or there may be no difference between several clans other than geographical location.

Can Retherians wear armors designed for other, similarly large creatures?

Generally, yes. Armors designed for Ogres, for example. Such armors might not fit correctly, but they could be worn.



You said that Retherians were good with mechanical things, does that mean they can build clocks?

No. A Retherian's hands are unsuited for such delicate work. I meant mechanical devices such as siege engines, drawbridge assemblies, that sort of thing.

"They are second to NONE in the crafting of weapons and armor." Does that mean they can create +1 weapons?

Skilled Retherian weapon makers or armorers can create up to +2 weapons/armors, but they are not magical. The pluses are a result of superior craftsmanship, unique blade designs, etc.

Do Retherians have a natural alignment?

Retherians are Chaotic Good by default.

Are Retherians widespread, or do they tend to be centralized?

Retherians are always centered on their respective clans. The clans, however, are scattered all over the world. Retherian clans can be found in desert wastelands, arctic tundra, and everywhere in between.

Since they tend to live in Retherian-centric communities, are they antisocial in regards to the other races?

No. Retherians will treat everyone as equals, with the exception of evil or dishonorable people.

When you say that Retherians will "cast out" evil Retherians, what did you mean?

I mean that no Retherian will ever befriend, deal with, or indeed even acknowledge the existence of an "outcast".

What do you mean by "immune to fear"?

Retherians are fearless. Retherian NPCs are immune to morale failure, and all Retherians are immune to fear-based spells or effects. They will be unaffected by a Brass Dragon's fear gas, or will automatically make their saving throw against the Illusionist spell *weird*, for example.



Online Gaming: Play by E-mail

By Quinn Davis (Dave) Munnerlyn III aka "Lothar TVNI"

Let's face it. Finding a group for your favorite out of print game these days is tough enough, but these aren't the days of yesteryear where we could gather in the basement (or in my case, my grandfather's workshop, not many basements in Texas you understand) on any given night with our pals and have a raucous night of gaming. Most of us are tied up with careers and families of our own now, so getting together is a hassle sometimes.

There has to be an alternative to make getting together easier right? Right! The Internet allows you and your friends to get together and have a game even when you're not able to be in the same place, and doesn't keep you tied down so much that you can't cook dinner, or do a bit of your house work at the same time.

There are several different types of online play, such as over an instant messenger, or by posting on a message board. I'll be covering the one I'm most familiar with, that being Play By E-mail or PBeM for short. PBeM is played, of course, by Internet e-mail, normally utilizing an e-mail distribution list. A distribution, or mailing list, is a central server that receives an e-mail, and then sends a copy to everyone who is subscribed to the list.

The GM's Role

The GM is typically responsible for setting up the distribution list, and arranging for everyone to subscribe to it. Plenty of options are available for a mailing list. If you're lucky enough to be running an e-mail server of your own, it's as simple as setting up a distribution group and assigning and giving your players access to e-mail accounts that you've added to the group. If you own a hosted domain, then your host likely provides a list server you can create a mailing list on, though depending on your host, it may be difficult to set up and get people on the list with this method. I myself use a free, and easy to set up mailing list offered at <http://lists.topica.com>. The free method has its drawbacks in that it supports itself through advertising and you get advertisements in your posts. Sign ups for your players are also a hassle, but that's the price you pay for convenience.

As a game list administrator you'll want to set forth certain rules for your players to follow. Set rules that will help the game run as smoothly as possible. Playing over e-mail can be a slow process, and losing momentum due to poor communication can derail a game. Require players to regularly send you updated character sheets so that you can check to make sure your copy and theirs match. Putting in place and enforcing a weekly minimum post rate helps keep things moving. Have Player Characters (PCs) keep private game mails off the mailing list by sending them over regular e-mail. It's an easy way to pass notes to the GM and players without anyone knowing. Sneaky! Keep rules disputes off of the list too. These suggestions, and other rules you decide to apply should keep things manageable.

Make things easier on your players. Be as descriptive as possible when setting a scene. Adding sight, smell, and sound into a scene is very important in the medium of e-mail. Try to provide a description that will let the player know where everything is in relation to the character, and if they ask for clarification, do your best to provide it. Your players are the ones that set the pace of the game. Most importantly give every player a chance to respond to your posts before you move forward. No one wants to feel left out of an encounter because it moved too fast for them to react to it. I suggest setting a routine 24-hour schedule for a game. Try to process the day's posts at the same time everyday to give everyone a chance to participate.

The Player's Role

The player's responsibility to keep the game running smoothly is at least as important as that of the game master. PBeM by its very nature is a slow medium of play. A few hours of game time can take months of real time to play out. This gives you plenty of time to think about your actions to put into your posts, but try to keep up with the list's minimum post rate.

Do everything you can to save time. When forming your posts try to take into account possible outcomes and put in "What if" scenarios into your posts if possible, so that the GM won't have to wait for another reply if such a situation does come up. Remember that playing by e-mail can mean abstract and differing views of where your character is in relation to the surroundings. Be as descriptive of your characters placement and movements as possible. The GM should be willing to give you a small graphical example of where everyone is if you ask for one.

When interacting with other players remember to be as clear as possible. You have time to word your replies carefully, so take advantage of that to help ensure that what you say isn't misunderstood. Go over your post several times before you send to make sure it conforms to the game's particular format and that it is as clear as you can get it.

It's About Style

Before you start your game you need to decide on a format or style of play. Whichever style you choose is up to you and your group. No style is really better than another, but of course, you may find one particular style fits your needs better than the others.

Many PBeM games are a freeform writing style with no dice rolls. The GM gives the players situations, and the players use pure roleplay to get through the game, with the GM interjecting as things change. The freestyle system offers faster play, but can be chaotic at times.

You may choose to have the players send the GMs their posts, then the GM "processes" the turn and sends the results over the list to the players who then send back their responses to the turn to complete the circle. In this style, either the GM makes all the rolls or the players make the rolls that involve their characters and show the results in their replies. A variation on this style doesn't use a mailing list at all, but sends all the e-mails privately. This means more work for the GM, in that they will need to add descriptions of what the other players are doing to each post, instead of the players being able to find out by reading other player's posts. This style can be very slow, but it offers the GM almost total control over the game, as nothing goes over the list that he or she hasn't read over and changed, if need be.

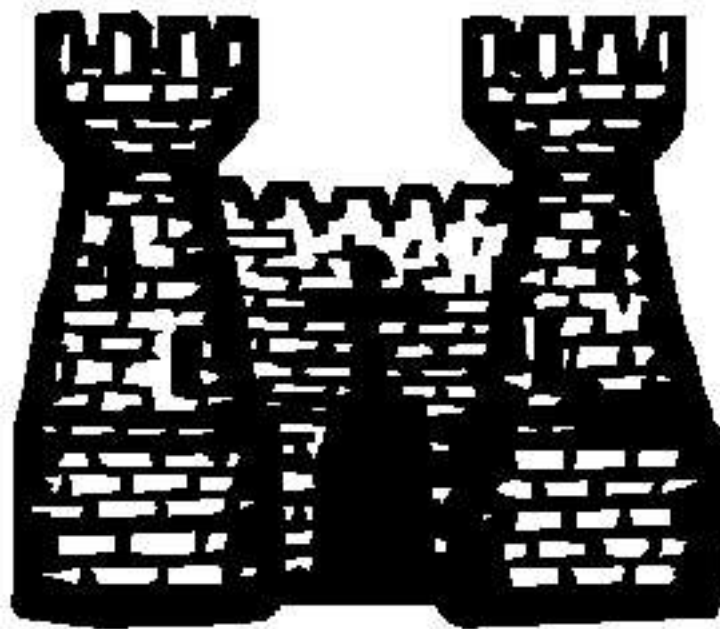
A style in between these two extreme examples, and the one I prefer personally, is a structured creative writing style. Players send e-mails over the list freely, but use "tags" to indicate where responses or actions are expected. The GM will use these same tags to indicate where he or she requires a response or action from the PC's. The tags consist of the tag itself <RESPONSE> or <ACTION> followed by the characters expected to give the response or action, for example, <RESPONSE/Player1/Player2>. This way there is no doubt as to who is being spoken to or who is involved in the action. Other tags can be useful as well. Out of Character tags can be used to denote non-character speech. A <RESULTS> tag is usually used when a player has the character inspect an object or area or performs some action such as searching for traps. The GM can make all rolls or the players can be allowed to make the rolls specific to their character. This style offers the players full control over their roleplay, but still allows the GM to change the posts as responses are made and situations change unexpectedly. The GM still has a lot of work to do, but doesn't have to make a response to each and every post between players.

Some aspects of the format usually remain the same over all styles. The GM should add a header to the top of each e-mail that the players should remember to include in their responses. The GM will update the header as time goes on and the players move around. A header generally includes basic information such as location, weather, date, time and a short description of the surroundings. The subject line of each e-mail should include a title that gives someone a basic idea of what is happening in the thread and a list of the names of all the players involved. Some players don't read every e-mail, just the ones pertaining to their character, so this is a signal to them that they need to read it. PBeM posts are typically written in Third Person Past Tense, but any writing style your group agrees on can be used.

Combat

Near and dear to every adventurer's heart, and often times the first question I'm asked about PBeM is, "How does combat work?" In the more structured formats of PBeM combat is done differently than normal play. You enter what I call an "encounter mode." A normal post should take up 10 minutes of game time, give or take, at the discretion of the GM. In encounter mode time slows down to no more than 1 minute per post. Characters can take a number of actions during this encounter mode equal to the number of attacks per round they get. Examples of an action include drawing your weapon, closing distance with an enemy, grabbing an item from inventory or making an attack. Actions during encounter mode are a judgment call by the GM. Obviously a character can close in to attack and draw a weapon at the same time, while taking up only one action, but drawing a weapon and attacking with one action is not permissible in most rules systems.

There you have it, playing by e-mail gives you a new opportunity to get your old group together or make a new one with friends who are spread out all over the globe! The emphasis is on imagination and writing style instead of on-the-spot, acting out roleplay. You'll find the online roleplay experience much different than sitting around the table. Some things you'll miss but some things you'll find better. Either way with a good efficient process you're going to have just as much fun!



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons First Edition Product Review

Module UK4, *When a Star Falls*

by Lorne Marshall

When a Star Falls was published in 1984, combining the efforts of author Graeme Morris, artist Jeremy Goodwin and cartographer Paul Ruiz. Taken as a whole, it is one of the most easily adaptable and playable first edition adventure modules TSR produced, being designed for a party of six to ten characters of the third to fifth experience levels.

The adventure is more or less standard in terms of its length; it runs 32 pages, inclusive of background material, new monsters and so forth. A particularly pleasing feature of the product is that all maps are printed on cover stock paper. It was necessary for the publishers to include a 'second cover page' to accommodate the additional maps (similar to what was done with the combination G1-G3 series). Compared with the pull-out maps or folded "poster" maps characteristic of later TSR products, the "second cover" maps are more durable and manageable in size. Sadly, no players' map is provided, but an overview map with lines to "sub-maps" gives the DM a sense of what the areas immediately surrounding the "dungeon" settings are like.

The greatest strength of *When a Star Falls* is its plot. While it may be a bit too scripted for more extemporaneous or independent Dungeon Masters, the story can be seamlessly dropped into an ongoing campaign with minimal tinkering. With the understanding that different adventuring groups will take different approaches to the adventure, a summary of the projected adventure plot follows.

The module focuses upon a group of sages who reside in the Tower of the Heavens, a remote fortress/monastery/library where books of prophecy are kept. The wealthy and powerful often visit these sages, both for advice from the books and for esoteric knowledge. All goes well until Shalfey, the highest-ranking sage and keeper of the books, reaches a blank page in one of the volumes (apparently, the books of prophecy were chronological and blank pages indicate no more prophecies, which is a financially dangerous thing for self-employed seers). The last entry in this book makes reference to a shooting star that could be traded with a race of dark smiths for another set of books.

Each sage at the tower has a group of four monks who serve as bodyguards. The High Sage Shalfey sends his monks to visit Derwyth, a local druid and astronomer, to ask if the druid could determine where the star landed; the monks were then to retrieve the stone, make the trade, and business would carry on as usual.

Of course, the monks didn't complete their mission. They were slain by a memory web, a unique monster that absorbs the memories of its victims.

Fortunately, the heroes come marching over hill and dale (the DM needs to decide why the party is in the area); they encounter and defeat the memory web. As the web dies, it emits all of its absorbed memories in a psychic shock wave, thereby giving the heroes knowledge of the monks' quest, where this Derwyth can be found, and where the Tower of the Heavens is located. The module assumes the party will simply pick up the mission where the monks left off; the DM may have to provide them with additional motivation.

In any event, the heroes proceed to the druid's homestead, where he computes the point of impact for the shooting star. The rock fell in a nearby mountain pass, a place inhabited by "devil-men," or Derro.

The falling star all but destroyed the Derro lair, and even wrecked the likeness of the Derro godling. The Derro were puzzled by what force toppled their deity and are dividing their time between studying the rock and digging out their relatives when the party arrives.

The Derro take a dim view of the heroes' intrusion, and there is some tough fighting in the structurally unsound halls. Some Derro use a special hook-fauchard to knock attackers off-balance, others use repeating light crossbows with poisoned quarrels (!), and a few Derro "students" (read as: armored magic-users) cast spells. Nearly all Derro have dexterity bonuses to armor class, and they are 30 percent magic resistant as well. It is entirely possible for a foolish or headstrong party to be destroyed in the Derro lair.

After obtaining the fallen star, the heroes must return it to the Tower of the Heavens. To do so, they must proceed through Therno Pass, where a tribe of human hunters and their giant beaver allies live. Apparently, having the Derro as neighbors has made the hunters a bit trigger-happy and the challenge facing the heroes is to make it through the pass without getting into combat. While players may laugh when you threaten them with the working end of a giant beaver, the THAC0 of 17 and 4-16 damage will take the chuckles right out of them.

When the heroes arrive at the Tower of the Heavens, they find all is not as it should be. They meet Hadley the ferryman, a dear friend of Shalfey. Since the heroes knew Shalfey's secret password (courtesy of the memory web), he shares recent events with the heroes.

Shortly after Shalfey sent his personal guard to retrieve the fallen star, the second-ranking sage, one Piyarz, declared that the high sage was dead and that he would assume leadership of the tower. That night Shalfey, who was presumed dead, contacted Hadley telepathically, placing the password and response in the ferryman's mind. Hadley thinks that Piyarz has staged a coup, and he is correct. He asks the heroes to overrun the tower guards, the monks and even the other sages themselves to rescue the high sage.

The tower layout is fascinating, but the combat designed for it lacks the seriousness of the rest of the adventure. The tower guards are armored *gnomes* – not exactly intimidating. The monk guards for the other sages fare little better, having poor armor classes and limited damage potential. The sages themselves, with the exception of Piyarz, also go down with barely a whimper.

Shalfey is, of course, thrilled that the heroes undertook his monks' quest and offers to reward them with magic items he keeps stored in a special *prismatic sphere* if they will carry out the final segment of the quest: carrying the fallen star to the smiths to trade for the new books.

The smiths are none other than Svirfneblin (the name is easier to say if you pretend to have a Swedish accent). The heroes must overcome a village of gibberlings with subterranean lizards en route to the forge of the svirfnebli and they encounter several deadly gnomish machines (called Maschin-I-Bozorgs) near the entrance. When the gnomes arrive to see what the commotion is about, they find the heroes and agree to trade for the books. After the trade, the gnomes decide to retreat deep into the earth with their newly gained treasure. They set all their machinery to explode, collapsing the descending corridor behind them. The heroes may leave with the books, but they can't follow the svirfnebli.

The heroes exit to discover that the noise of the collapse has attracted two red dragons (medium-sized sub-adults) to the scene. The dragons live nearby, and wait outside the forge much as a cat will wait outside a mouse hole. While there is some limited magical aid to be found within the un-collapsed portion of the forge, the heroes face a hard fight to escape.

Shalfey rewards the heroes when they return and the adventure ends.

Obviously, a certain level of judicious tinkering on the Dungeon Master's part is required for this adventure to succeed. The party needs a reason to be in the vicinity of the tower and even more importantly, the party needs to feel compelled to undertake the quest. For my group, the party needed to journey to the tower to get advice from a sage. They felt that the best case scenario would be that the sages would give them free advice for completing the quest and the worst scenario would be that the sages couldn't help the party unless the mission was completed. While all modules need adjustments for monster numbers and strengths, this writer found the adversaries to be either far too tough or not strong enough.

On the whole, though, the uniqueness of the story, the comparable ease of working the adventure into an ongoing campaign and the skilled placement of new monsters has made *When a Star Falls* a module I run for every new group of players and it is wholeheartedly recommended.



Not all fights involve monsters...

Pseudo Dragon

THE YAWNING TROG by Barabuz



"Time to fire the halfling bouncer!"

The Exhaling Bipedal Humanoid Life Form -TAFKaB



Androids Gone Wild

Siblings of the Stake by Elizabeth "Indigo Rose" Stewart



