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# SHARDS OF MEMORY

*An Adventure for 4-6 characters of levels 3-5*



for the CASTLES & CRUSADES Game

MARK HUGHEY

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A Castles & Crusades® Adventure for 4-6 Characters of Levels 3-5

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# SHARDS OF MEMORY

*Shards of Memory* is an adventure for four to six characters of levels 3 – 5. A reasonable suggested rule of thumb is for the party to total about 18 to 22 total character levels. And while a good balance of classes is certainly advised, this is only a suggestion, not a deal-breaker. Castle Keepers should of course feel free to adjust the amount of creatures in the provided encounters to be challenging, but not overwhelming, for the mix of characters the party has.

This adventure is meant as a springboard adventure for the *World of Phantasie Campaign Setting* (really super-blatant plug), and is purposely left to some degree open-ended, the better to allow inventive CK's to make it usable as a good starting point for any new campaign, regardless of world. The Northern Earldoms can just as easily be shunted into TLG's Airdhe or your favorite published or homebrew campaign world-- Camyrleigh is a medium-sized walled city, the provincial see of the earldom of Calomshire, and Ellham itself is a small farming community in western Calomshire.

However, because the adventure was created specifically with the World of Phantasie setting in mind, there are some minor inconsistencies that should be noted: The main adversarial race in this particular adventure is an *oroc* (*AUR-oks*), which are dark-skinned, tribal and brutish, and for the most part, about human-sized, although some are larger (see the cover illustration). The orocs in World of Phantasie get their origins, naturally, from the very same orcs you are probably used to from, and you can easily use the same stats for orcs in *Monsters & Treasure* for those of orocs in a pinch.

## INTRODUCTION

The party awakens after an explosion in the Chamber of the Dread Circle, where the Griffon Head Legion cut through the lead elements of Kagoroth's advancing irregulars (which have swooped down from the North and West) to stop him from his goal of opening a gateway to the Abyss to recruit still more dark forces for his army of conquest. Although the Legion's actions were ultimately successful-- Kagoroth's spell was interrupted at a crux point in the casting, and he himself escaped, wounded-- the cost was dire: the battle cost them their leader, the hero Josa Ironhand, and the vast majority of the Legion itself. And although the party is fortunately alive, they awaken to find themselves apparently behind enemy lines.

The dying Josa tells the characters that they must get out from behind the lines, and make their way to Camyrleigh, three to four days distant, while the army is in disarray. He asks them to tell Shire Robert of the battle and the plight of the free lands, and asks as a personal request to get his ring to his wife, Dumielle. The party will need to fight through the remnants of the army's stragglers to escape the Hall of Malkentnor, and then sneak or fight their way through Ellham to make their way through the eastward road to Camyrleigh.

## BACKGROUND

### THE BRASS CIRCLE

For many long years, those who were known as the Brass Circle stood for something more than simply the successful adventuring troupe they already

were. With humans, elves, a dwarf, a gnome and a halfling all among their members, they were a shining example that the varied races could indeed work together, in a spirit of trust and fellowship, toward a greater good. Their exploits became more than the fanciful stories told by the bards, they became the things of legend-- their tales told and retold especially in the Northern Earldoms, where two of their number, the humans Josa Ironhand and Kagoroth the Archmage, were born and raised.

Kagoroth and Josa were steadfast comrades almost from the first; the warrior and the mage could combine steel and spell with wicked efficiency, moreso as Kagoroth grew in power. And the mage hardly had complaints about any of the other members of the Circle. But from the moment the elfmaiden Bellamore joined, Kagoroth's heart was instantly stolen. Gentle and beautiful, with bright blue eyes, fair skin and hair like a midnight sky, Bellamore was a cleric of Arianna, the goddess of love and healing, and her dedication to the healing arts quickly helped prove to everyone that she would be a valuable and welcome asset to the Brass Circle.

To Kagoroth, however, she was more than simply that. She was, in his view, a paragon-- an ideal of beauty that he knew he might never hope to attain but pined for all the same. As the months and years passed and the Circle's adventures continued, he loved her from afar, cherishing every moment he talked to her, every moment he was able to be near her. They discussed philosophies, shared the stories of their homelands, and just talked, and time and again, Kagoroth forced himself to hide his feelings behind the mask of uncare so that no one else would be able to tell how much the human's heart hammered for the elfmaiden.

But one person began to notice all the same. When Bellamore joined the Brass Circle, she did so alongside her brother, Belas, an archer of great renown. Belas watched the human and his keen eyes saw past the carefully cultivated facade of professionalism, to the fire of passion beyond, and-- finding the very idea of love between the two repugnant-- decided to act. He started casually, at first, by finding reasons to sit in with his sister on their conversations, and over time began to show less subtlety-- physically interposing himself between them when he deemed it necessary. Belas slowly made his opinion of the mage clear, while Kagoroth could only simmer and seethe as Belas impeded every potential moment alone he and the beautiful elfmaiden might have had.

Matters came to a head soon afterward. After a successful raid of a Gul'kani coven, the Circle stopped overnight at an inn and Belas, perhaps drinking too liberally in celebration, accosted Kagoroth as they were heading to their room and began to dress him down, admitting glibly to his interference. His sister could and would never care for him, he said, and the mage was a fool for thinking otherwise. And even if she was foolish and vulgar enough to fall for a short-lived wretch of a man, her people would stone her if they ever found out-- no good elf would wish to see her taint the pureness of her elvish blood with that of a mongrel human.

Kagoroth snapped, and in an eruption of rage, he called forth his magic and brutally slew the elflord.

The Circle was broken. Josa Ironhand called for Kagoroth to stand down, and the wizard merely glared at him, and loudly damned all the elves and their pure blood, and swore he would see them all cast into the fires of death before her called upon

another spell that spirited him away. The group disbanded shortly afterward-- some headed for their homelands, some looked simply to settle down, some were never again as fortunate. The stories of the breakup of the Brass Circle were not as privy to the ears of bards and are not so retold.

## KAGOROTH UNLEASHED

Kagoroth spent his next few years traveling, a twisted shadow of the man who was once considered a hero of the highest order. After long years of study, his power growing and darkening with the help of artifacts and illicit magics meant to prolong his life by stealing others', he began to hatch the germs of a plan that would shake the roots of the elves' Worldtree to its very foundations... he would find a way to end their precious pure bloodline himself.

But for his plans to be put into motion, he would first need an army. The orocs of Cheshane were, in his mind, the obvious starting point. The orocs were largely tribal and familial, their peoples kept in check by the constant clan-to-clan infighting that made them a minor threat to the lands to the south, rather than the serious menace they would be should they unite under a single leader.

Kagoroth would become that single leader. And slowly, in bits and pieces, his plans would begin to come to fruition....

## THE GRIFFON HEAD LEGION

Over the years that followed the breaking of the Circle, Josa Ironhand settled back down in his home in the Northern Earldoms, married, and led a relatively successful and humble life. After retiring from the life of an adventurer and sword-

for-hire, he began to use his name and his prestige to act as a diplomat, to try to sort out and deter the constant border skirmishes and internecine warfare that plagued the Earldoms for the past few generations from his keep in Ballard's Bluff.

Much older now, the brown of his hair becoming grey and the strong face growing careworn with age, he nonetheless remained in fine health and was vigilant for the day when his one-time comrade-in-arms would return to make good his threat.

When word came to him from scouts in the north that a good many orocs of Cheshane were acting in a manner that seemed to suggest they were uniting under a single banner, he immediately took notice. And when those same scouts informed him that a scouting arm of that oroc contingent was headed south toward the Earldoms under the lead of a single human mage, Josa began to understand where Kagoroth had gone. Gathering up as many sellswords and soldiers as he could in a short time, he dubbed them the Griffon Head Legion and gave chase through the western portion of the Earldoms until he found the trailing elements of Kagoroth's wing trying to make a stand at a set of buried ruins near the border of Calomshire and Greymoor.

The ruins were that of an ancient temple of the god Ehdrasim. But in an ironic twist, the temple to the god of light was built above a set of natural caverns which had been used in black rituals to communicate with other-planar beings and summon them to do their bidding. The caverns were known as the Halls of Malkentnor.

MAP 1:  
HALLS OF MALKENTNOR  
LEVEL 1 (UNDERGROUND)



## PART ONE: BLANK SLATES

### GETTING STARTED

The party will awaken in the Chamber of the Dread Circle within the Halls of Malkentnor, with little to no knowledge of how they arrived there. Much of that information can be spoon-fed to them when they find the body of the dying Josa Ironhand near the circle of broken shards of crystal that was the Dread Circle, as he will have important information about how they attempted to stop Kagoroth and were partially successful, to pass along before he himself passes. The PC's have lost their short-term memory, but all of their abilities and knowledge of one another-- assuming they knew each other beforehand-- should be intact.

There is a reasonable chance that any of characters may be wearing some means of a heraldic Griffon's Head, Josa Ironhand's own heraldic device. There is also a good chance that a party bard will have heard of Josa, Kagoroth, and the Brass Circle.

The main goal of Part One is for the PC's to escape the Halls, preferably with everyone intact, all the while letting no Orocs or creatures escape to warn their fellow Irregulars stationed in and around Ellham. There is no particular timeframe, but the decision to leave the underground ruins shouldn't really be much of a choice at all.

During this adventure, there will be points where Castle Keepers may want to award extra experience for achieving certain goals, or simply helping to move the adventure along. Although a good rule of thumb would be no more than 250 XP per

achievement, CK's can adjust that amount to their tastes. In Part One, feel free to award experience for any of the following:

- Taking on Josa's quest to return the ring to his wife
- Agreeing to tell Shire Robert (the Earl of Calomshire) about the threat in his borders.
- Getting the +1 Spear from the sub-captain Grannem
- Getting the Holy Symbol of Ehdrasim from Saint Ambrey's tomb.

## THE HALLS OF MALKENTNOR – LEVEL ONE

### 1. CHAMBER OF THE DREAD CIRCLE

Read the following to the players:

*Drip. Drip.*

The sound of distant, echoing water plinking on stone is what first stirs you, but soon after that, the sharp pains in your body bring you to fuller wakefulness. That and the smells.

The sharp tang of brimstone assails your nostrils in the darkness, just beneath the sickening odor of burning flesh and leather. The longer you lie there on the stone floor, the more other scents begin to pick themselves out in your mind: the dust of fallen rocks; fetid, musty air; and further away, fresh corpses; blood. Some of that is yours, you dimly realize, feeling some trickle from fresh cuts and scrapes on your skin. You shake your head and feel a sprinkle of rock dust fall from

your hair to the dirty ground you lie upon.

You don't remember ending up on the ground, and fight to recall what happened, what you were doing, how you were wounded... and you come to the slow realization that you have no idea.

Undaunted, you pick yourself up to try to get a feel for your surroundings. It is only as you try to lift yourself up that your hand touches a broken body next to you: a human in ruined chainmail with half his body blackened and charred, the deathmask of his face is a twisted image of unimaginable pain. Then you see he is lying next to another, a young man in leathers whose wide unseeing eyes seem to indicate his disbelief that the jagged, bloody wound in his chest killed him. Shadows dance as the dim firelight from some of the still-burning corpses around you reveals still more mangled bodies-- both human and non--strewn around; dozens, perhaps, many dead with the common wounds of battlefield brutality, some burned, and more than one in manners that defy description: one set of bleached bones lies twisted in an otherwise relatively well-worn suit of scale mail, one corpse of an elf whose wide eyes, blanched features and horror-struck expression almost suggest she was frightened to death.

Your eyes slowly begin to adjust to the darkness and the dim firelight, and you discover that you are in an immense cavern, shaped more or less like a huge inverted bowl. Looking upward into the darkness of the ceiling, you can see the rounded points of stalactites far above, but there is seems to be a lack of the usual cave formations-- stalagmites, draperies and such-- on the floor of the cavern. Just debris, scattered pieces of rock and bodies. Lots of bodies.

Further ahead of you, through the mass of unmoving bodies, faint glimmers of purplish light catch your eye, near ground level.

You pick yourself up, trying to remember where exactly you are, the last place you remember being, and what brought you here in the first place, and cannot bring a ready answer to mind no matter how you try.

At this point, first off, take a breath. That's a lot of reading. Right after that, there will probably be a lot of questions. The most prevalent may be "what do you mean, I don't remember where I am? How does that work?"

The easiest explanation is that the warped magic caused by the explosion of the Circle of Malkentnor caused the PC's to undergo some temporary short-term memory loss. It is by no means permanent, and they can begin to piece together bit by bit what happened by some of the varied clues left around, and Josa Ironhand (*Area 1A*) can help fill in a few blanks, if they ask him the right questions.

The bodies lying all around the circle are the bodies of the two 'armies' (calling them armies might be a little of a stretch considering both sides together numbered only in the hundreds) that fought in this immense cavern of the Halls of Malkentnor. PC's will note that the vast majority of the remaining bodies are human, with a scattering of Oroc, elf, dwarf, goblinoid and a couple even odder instances (ogre or troll) mixed in. Close-eyed characters will notice that two symbols, a Griffon's Head and a bloody red hand, are the most notable among the heraldry. Many of the more 'civilized' races will be wearing some sort of tabard or talismanic icon of a Griffon's Head-- any martial PC in the group has a



50% chance of wearing a similar item).

Looting the bodies in the cavern is a somewhat sickening and certainly time-consuming process, filled with a lot of blood, slickened black flesh and gore, but it can be done. Most of the armor is blackened or broken, so much so that it is almost certainly unusable. Constructive characters can probably field-strip three of the chain-mailed humans to salvage a decent set of chain mail. If the party (or its thieves) spends time looking (depending on the situation, this may require an Intelligence check at a Challenge Level of up to +5), they will find a well-designed (but non-magical) short sword with a stylized grip (15 gp value), and a pouch containing 6 gold pieces and 10 silver on one less-riddled body of a young man.

If any character checking the bodies makes a successful Wisdom check, they realize that the faint purplish light in the above text seems to be emanating from something on or around the ground near the center of the cavern. If they make their check by more than 5, they also something a humanoid shape on the floor of the cavern seems to be moving there as well. If they choose to investigate, see area 1A.

With a little investigation, they can also tell there appears to be only a single exit from this cavern. If they choose to investigate it, see area 1B.

### 1A. THE BROKEN CIRCLE

In this area, embedded into the rough ground is a circle of purplish crystal shards that still faintly glimmer with an inner light, dimly illuminating a roughly ten foot area around the circle itself. Close inspection reveals that the crystals are each

shattered and cloven, and a Wisdom check can yield that it seems as though some force from within caused them to break. The area around the circle is littered with broken shards of crystal. After ten minutes, the glimmering will lessen and the light will only be enough to illuminate a five foot radius. Five minutes after that, the glimmering will trickle out, leaving that area in darkness enough that only extranormal vision will allow for visibility without bringing a torch or one of the burning corpses over to take a closer look. The closer any of the PC's are to the area, the better the chance they will see a human wearing torn and bloodied scale armor lying on the floor just outside the circle of crystals. This person is Legion Captain Josa Ironhand, hero of the Brass Circle and commander of the Griffon Head Legion. He is feebly moving, his breath coming shallowly, and he's trying to keep some of his insides in after taking a terrible wound to the stomach that cleaved his armor and rent his stomach. The floor below him is stained with his blood, as is his armor and the side of his head.

If any of the PC's get within twenty feet of Josa, he will lift his head with a great deal of effort, and his hand will move feebly toward the sword on the cavern floor beside him. After a moment, recognition will alight in his eyes, and he'll give a wan smile to the PC(s). He will attempt to motion them over if they seem to hesitate, and focus on the lead character.

The middle-aged man lies on the ground amid the broken shards of crystal, his shattered body housed in shredded scale armor and covered in a torn and bloodied tabard whose silver griffon-headed insignia is almost indistinguishable against the fresh crimson stains. His greying brown hair is matted with blood, and his face looks as though at one time it may have been

handsome before age and battle took its toll.

His hand relaxes from the hilt of his sword as his eyes slowly shine with recognition. A tired but ultimately triumphant smile creeps to his lips.

“Ah, (Insert names of the closest characters, and include short breaths between each couple of names!)” His breath comes in shallow rasps, and he gives a small laugh, punctuated by a soft cough. “I thought... I thought I was... the last one. Thought... there was no one... left, but you... you survived, true gods bless you! Some of the... Griffon's Head Legion... still lives.”

His eyes close for a long moment and exhales; it sounds like a dying sigh. “We stopped him. It took... every last man... but we stopped him. Melcanth is safe... for the moment, at least.”

His head lolls over, and his eyes glaze for a moment before they fix on you. “But he escaped... damn it all. I'd hoped... this would be... the last battle.”

“But no... it's just... *my* last battle.” He coughs again, and blood trickles out of his mouth.

Josa's injuries are mortal, and he will refuse any attempts at aid. Once he's explained the situation, he'll say (truthfully) that his wounds are too grievous to waste healing magics on, and that in fact is the case. The warped magic that exploded from the Circle of Malkentnor has eaten away at his exposed insides, which will retard any attempts at healing magics. And while his body is far too broken for him to be able to resist anyone forcing healing upon him, he will flatly tell any clerics that he can already feel his life draining away and that the PC's will need their magics for their escape

from the caverns far more than he would just to stabilize. Within the few minutes he has left, he can answer a few short questions, but he won't be able to give an extended amount of exposition. He may only just begin to understand that the PC's have lost some of their memories in his last few moments. Among the things he can answer:

*Where are we?* “You don't remember? How could you not? It was a battle for the ages, my friends. The bards will sing of the Battle of the Halls of Malkentnor, my friends, and you will have the honor of being there to hear it sung. May they speak well of the Legion, and of Josa Ironhand, its leader.”

*What happened?/Did we win the battle?* “We did what we had to. Kagoroth brought one of the wings of his inhuman army-- the Blood Hand-- here, deep into the heart of Melcanth. It was a master stroke, worthy of his mind. We believe he made a pact with demons in exchange for power, and that he would honor that pact by unleashing the denizens of the Abyss here in the Halls of Malkentnor, and while they caused havoc here in the midlands, he would sweep down with the lion's share of his armies from the far north-- Orocs, ogre-kin, trollborn, Gul'kani, scrag and the like. I caught wind of it almost too late, and raised what we could-- less than a hundred fifty head under the Griffon Head banner, to spearhead into the caverns and stop him. We did what we had to. The circle was broken, the portal reversed. We managed to wound Kagoroth and break his concentration at a crux point in his castings, and many of the Blood Hand was dragged to the Abyss by the demons as they were pulled back. He escaped, but we stopped him. The cost was terrible, though. So very dear.”

*Who is Kagoroth?* “Ahh, since you're pretty new to

the Griffon's Head, I'll give you the benefit of the doubt. Kagoroth and I were once brothers-in-arms in the Brass Circle, and he was already a powerful wizard back then. But there was a falling out. He left us before the Circle disbanded, and I always feared that he would begin to gather more and more power as he grew in his Art. He has found new allies that share his desire for power, and I tremble for the future of all Melcanth."

*What lies beyond here?* "You must take great care when you leave the chamber of this Hall and make your way to the surface above and the Northern Earldoms. Although we have managed to break the casting and send Kagoroth and the remains of this wing fleeing, they held much of the surrounding land before we arrived, so you are almost certainly behind enemy lines... and surely even here, there are still stragglers around who would like nothing more than to kill any humans they come across, especially ones who caused them such a defeat."

*What must we do to defeat Kagoroth?/What must we do next?* "Few knew of the Legion's plans, sadly, or the danger Kagoroth represents. Those few living members of the Brass Circle may know more about a way to bring about Kagoroth's ultimate defeat, but they have gone their own ways. For now, you must get word of this battle to those whom it would do the most good. The lord of Calomshire, in Camyrleigh, appears to be a just and dutiful man; he would be well to know of this tragedy. "

*How do you know me?* "Of all the Griffon Head Legion, you were among the last to join my call, and I fear there was little time to get to know you well before we marched for the Earldoms. I know little of you besides your names, the fact that you showed skills that made you worthy, and that you joined me in our cause willingly."

*What are the Northern Earldoms?* "A land of changing borders and lordly squabbles. The Northern Earldoms have had petty skirmishes since long before I was born, and they have only gotten worse since the high king of Melcanth has fallen so gravely ill with no heir. Many of the lords think believe that if they control the heart of the Earldoms they may be named the next high king."

If the PC's ask Josa questions other than those, he will answer, but his answers will be a little on the vague side, and after a few short minutes of questioning, he exhales heavily and shakes his head, feeling his time is soon to be over. When that happens, read the following:

Josa's eyes close and his breath escapes him in a slow exhale, and you feel sure the older man has passed, but then his chest rises slightly with breath and he opens his eyes once more to seek you out.

"You must promise me one more thing," he says softly, his voice little more than a whisper, barely audible over the crackle of small flames and the patter of rock dust from overhead. He slowly pulls a ring from his finger: a silver ring, with interlocking chains of gold etched around the band; the face of the ring bears the signet of a griffon's head, screaming in defiance. He lifts it to you, his hand visibly shaking. "My wife, Dumielle, will want to know what became of me. She is in Camyrleigh as well; the road there is likely dangerous, but if you should eventually find your way there, you must give this to her and tell her I died well."

Allow one of the PC's to make a response that he or she takes the ring. Once they have done so:

As though the ring was all that kept him alive, Josa sags back to the ground, his eyes seeming now to look faraway into the darkness. A small smile creeps to his face, and his voice strengthens for a moment, sounds clearly. "Alas, here falls Josa Ironhand. Belas, Malchien, Einar, Azlia, Bellamore... I was right, all of you. I die with my sword ungirded."

As though those words sapped the rest of his strength, his chest falls once more, and you hear the whisper of the death rattle escape his throat. His eyes continue staring, but there is no more light behind them.

Bard PC's may make a Bardic Lore check to recognize the names Josa Ironhand, Kagoroth the Archmage, or the Brass Circle, from various stories and bar-tales they may have heard. The other names that Josa rattles off as he dies are also members of that group.

If the PC's decide to strip Josa of his remaining items, they will find the following:

The sword he held until the last is a well-balanced, masterwork but ultimately nonmagical falchion. The cup hilt and guard are decorated with inlaid flowing-- almost scriptlike-- etchings; the blade itself is similarly etched. It is a fine weapon, one that could easily take a dweomer someday. Among his other effects are a letter to his wife, which shares a heartfelt worry that he will never see her again and that if he should fail, he fears that she will be next. By the description in the letter, the PC's can discern that she is either younger or longer-lived than he, that in his mind at least, she is beautiful, and that she has dark brown hair and green eyes. Also, in a dark-brown leather pouch he carries coins

totaling 30 gp and 8 sp.

## 1C. THE WAY OUT?

A natural fissure in the wall here seems to be the only point of exit from the cavern, leading into a curving corridor of natural rock. The floor seems to slope upward very gradually into the darkness beyond.

The bodies thin out here; most of the corpses here appear to have been killed in more mundane fashion, by swords, flails and arrows.

Characters who listen very closely (CL 4 to a Wisdom check or Listen ability) can hear the sound of movement further on up the tunnel. As they get closer, they can tell it's the sound of soft grunts in a non-Common tongue, as well as possibly the sound of armored bodies being dragged.

## 2. A FEW MORE CORPSES

The corridor opens into a fifteen foot tall small satellite cavern with a twenty-five foot wide expanse between walls. The smell of blood and death is fairly prevalent here, coming mostly from the six bloody bodies lying on the floor. Near the far side exit of the cavern, a quartet of thick-bodied humanoids with greasy black hair and an olive cast to their skin are dragging a couple more corpses toward a pile in the back corner of the chamber. From a cursory glance, it appears that the clothing and items have been rifled through the bodies in the pile.

There are, in fact, seven Oroc scavengers, but only four are actively pulling corpses around. If the

characters use stealth to scout the area first, they will see the remaining three off to the side of the cavern and not in as easy view. The four are busy trying to loot, but if the party is not quiet, they will drop the corpses and immediately attack-- and if the Oroc are given time to prepare, the remaining three will attempt to flank the party.

**OROC SCAVENGERS** (7) *These neutral evil creatures' vital statistics are: HD 1d8+2, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. Use the Orc stats from the Monsters & Treasure book, if necessary, and nudge up the stats for a group of orocs to 2 HD, or add numbers to later groups of the Oroc if the party is mowing through them). Three of the Oroc have short bows and will not shrink from using them. Otherwise, they have the more standard 1d6 damage shortswords.*

The Oroc have gathered a few minor belongings, but nothing of major worth. However, next to their pile of bodies, there is a scorched leather sack containing their take thus far: a fine steel dagger, 6 usable arrows and a few (4d10) copper and (3d6) silver coins.

### 3. SUPPLIES

This corridor empties into chamber twice as long as it is wide. The chamber's floor continues to slope gradually upward in the same manner that the last couple winding corridors have. Strewed near the walls of the chamber are what appears to be the remnants of a couple primitive carts that were used to carry supplies and for speed's sake have since been broken down and partially stripped of their wood. A few broken crates barrels and casks also sit on the ground near them. One of the casks has been broken open and a foul vinegary smell issues from that side of

the wall.

Most of the items contain nothing of particular value. The party can find a small stack of perfectly usable firewood near one cart, and one unbroken barrel contains some perfectly edible (if somewhat unappetizing) salted herring in brine. The casks contain wine, but it is a pungent, vinegary wine made largely from wild olives and flavored with tree sap. If the PC's are too loud, there is a 30% chance that more Oroc Scouts (4) from Area 5 will appear from the caverns ahead and harry the party.

### 4. LESS STALE AIR/CAVE CARVINGS

For the first time since you awakened you believe you can feel the featherlight touch of moving air here, although it carries with it the slight stench of decay. The chamber this corridor opens to is fairly unremarkable although your firelight picks out some primitive looking etchings in the natural stone walls.

The carvings are similarly unremarkable, made by bored Oroc as they waited to enter the "better" chambers below. Most are illegible, although some written in pictographic script obviously show that one carver or another thought they were more blessed in the pelvic region, or that they killed many humans. Some of the pictographs seem to have odd shapes: some walk on four legs, some are obviously much larger than others, and one even appears to have wings.

### 5. THE BREACHED WALL

This chamber continues to rise on the same gradual slope as the others have, although your eyes can pick out that the chamber looks a little

more hand-worked than any of the others you have come across. This especially holds true at the far end of the chamber, where it looks as though the far wall was at one time paved over with a thick stone wall. Part of that wall has been torn away, leaving a gaping entrance over ten feet wide, into the dimly lit chamber beyond. However, it is the group of humanoids standing at that entrance-- one shouting something in an unintelligible tongue at the others-- that grabs your attention first. Soon after that, you catch sight of a pair of stony-looking creatures that at first you mistook for piles of debris near the shouting one. But each begins to move on four rocky legs, padding with surprising quiet.

The shouting Oroc is Gurd'jek, a shaman, who has been tasked with getting the last contingents of stragglers out from the Halls. He is currently berating four of the looters to come along while the weather outside is in their advantage to move.

**GURD'JEK, OROC SHAMAN** (*This neutral evil tribal priest's vital statistics are: HD 8, AC 14 (hide + leather), hp 52, BTH +4 ; Dmg 1-6+2 (cudgel). His primary attributes are wisdom and constitution. The Shaman has access to the following spells: Magic Stone x2, Animate Dead, Bless (already used), Sound Burst. If brought below 50% hit points, he will attempt to back through the breach in the wall and escape, using his Animate Dead spell to raise zombies from the catacombs (See Area 6, below) to help delay the interlopers for him if he appears to have the time.*)

**OROCs (4)** (*These neutral evil creatures' vital statistics are: HD 1d8+2, AC 13, Dmg 1-6 (shortsword). Their primary attributes are physical.*)

**GUL'KANI, HOUND (2)** (*These neutral creature's vital statistics are: HD 3, AC 16 (18 vs*

*edged/piercing), Attacks: 2 Claws (1d8+1), bite (2d6). Their primary attributes are physical. See NEW CREATURES for further information.*)

The Oroc looters have a total of 25 gold pieces worth of coin and trinkets.

The Shaman carries a golden signet ring (40 gp) and a pair of heavy rubies (60 gp total) as his share of the looting. The ring is pristine, except for a smear of blood on it.

## 6. CATACOMBS

Unlike the caverns you've walked through, this large hall is quite obviously made of worked stone blocks. On either side of the hall, a short alcove leads to a brass doors stand-- discolored with age yet still imposing, although the one on the left appears ajar, breaking the mirror image. Just before and beyond the two doors, several pairs of square cavities are cut into the stone walls at equal distances apart. At the far end of the hall, a dim light from above causes enough of a subtle change in the darkness to make out a stairway leading upward. A noticeable scent of must and decay pervades the entire room.

If the pairs of square cavities (there are 14 in all, 7 on either wall) are investigated, the PC's will notice almost immediately that they are cut evenly, at about chest- and knee-level on a human. Closer inspection reveals that they are spaces to hold the dead... in fact, these are more likely spaces where the bodies of people important to the temple have been laid out. The remains of the dead here are in various stages of decay, from nearly skeletal to mummified, and in most cases, the bodies appear to have been rifled through and left in disarray. The scent of decay is a little more prevalent around

them. Small brass plates are attached to the walls beneath each square. In most cases, age, wear and outright vandalism have made the names illegible.

The ajar door on the left in the passage above leads to area 6A.

If the Oroc Shaman has escaped through here on the way upstairs and has had the time to do so, his *Animate Dead* spell has caused the two remains on the slabs closest to the stairs to awaken, and they will shamble from the shadows to attack; their objective is to delay, not necessarily kill, but if a PC dies, well, that's wonderful.

**ZOMBIE (2)** (*These neutral evil undead have the following vital statistics: HD 2, hp 12, 13, 16, 10, Dmg 1-4 (claws). Their primary attributes are Physical/Saves.*)

## 6A. PRIOR AND HIGH PRIESTS' TOMB

Although it was already ajar, the brass door creaks open with a sound of metal against metal that sounds gratingly loud in the echoing stone hall. Inside, the walls may have been colored with brightly colored art at one point in time, but now they are thick with cobwebs and dust, except for a small area where someone has cleared the dust to scratch a crude figure into the stone wall. The air smells fetid. Six stone biers are lined up more or less in the center of the room, each apparently designed to be topped with a stone or metal effigy. Four of them lie open now, their relief-covered lids dropped and broken so that greedy hands could get at whatever treasures lay within.

Multiple sets of humanoid footprints are easily visible in the thick dust on the stone floor, mingling together and crossing one another so

that the true number of grave robbers is impossible to count.

It is readily apparent that the Oroc squad (about a dozen) who came in here opened the tombs, ravaged the bodies inside looking for hidden treasure and, after finding nothing of value, lost interest.

## 6B. TOMB OF SAINT AMBREY

The brass door to this tomb is still closed, and is locked as well, but it is strangely unmarred, unlike the other door across the hall. A rogue's Pick Locks check at a CL of 2 (due to the age of the lock) will open it. If given time and there is no worry about the noise, it could also be bashed in. Once inside:

The brass door opens almost noiselessly, despite the age and obvious wear on the door. Once you step inside, it is somewhat surprising how well this room has weathered the years-- the paints on the wall murals have obviously faded, but the depiction of an old man holding a shining yellow lantern on one wall are remarkably clear, as are several scenes around it. There is a fine layer of dust on the floor, and a few tiny animal prints that you believe might be rats... other than that, the room appears almost pristine. However, that is the second thing you notice.

The first is the soft golden light that seems to emanate from the lid of a sarcophagus on a plinth in the center of the room. Against that light, you can easily see a marble relief sculpture of a person on the lid.

If they approach the sarcophagus:

As you get closer to the sarcophagus, you see that the relief sculpture depicts a man in ancient plainclothes, his eyes closed in eternal rest. The man's face is placid and careworn, and his hands are pressed together on chest as though to provide a resting place for the golden disc radiating the gentle light. The disc's face is embossed with a stylistic icon of the sun with four straight rays at the cardinal points and eight wavy rays surrounding them-- the icon is not dissimilar to some of the symbols in the murals on the walls of the room.

Any cleric, paladin or druid who has chosen any good-aligned god stands a chance know the symbol is that of Ehdrasim, the god of the sun and light, who lifts the lantern of the sun into the day sky until his strength flags and he must hide the sun in his cloak as night overcomes him. Any character who has chosen a god to worship may make a Wisdom check with a CL of -2 to realize this, as well. There may be more of a penalty if they worship an evil or neutral god, at the CK's discretion.

Characters who can read can make out the script scrolled around the sepulcher, which says "Saint Ambrey, most devoted of Ehdrasim. May his light ever guide you upon your way."

The glowing medallion is Saint Ambrey's *Holy Symbol of Ehdrasim*. Clerics of any good-aligned deity who keep it on their person receive a +1 to any Turn Undead attempts. Any good character who touches it can feel a soothing calm overcome them, although they receive no other benefits.

This room can be considered a sanctuary, as well. Provided they close and lock the door, no creatures, wandering or otherwise, will bother the characters while they are in St. Ambrey's tomb, and they may use it as a place to rest and recuperate.

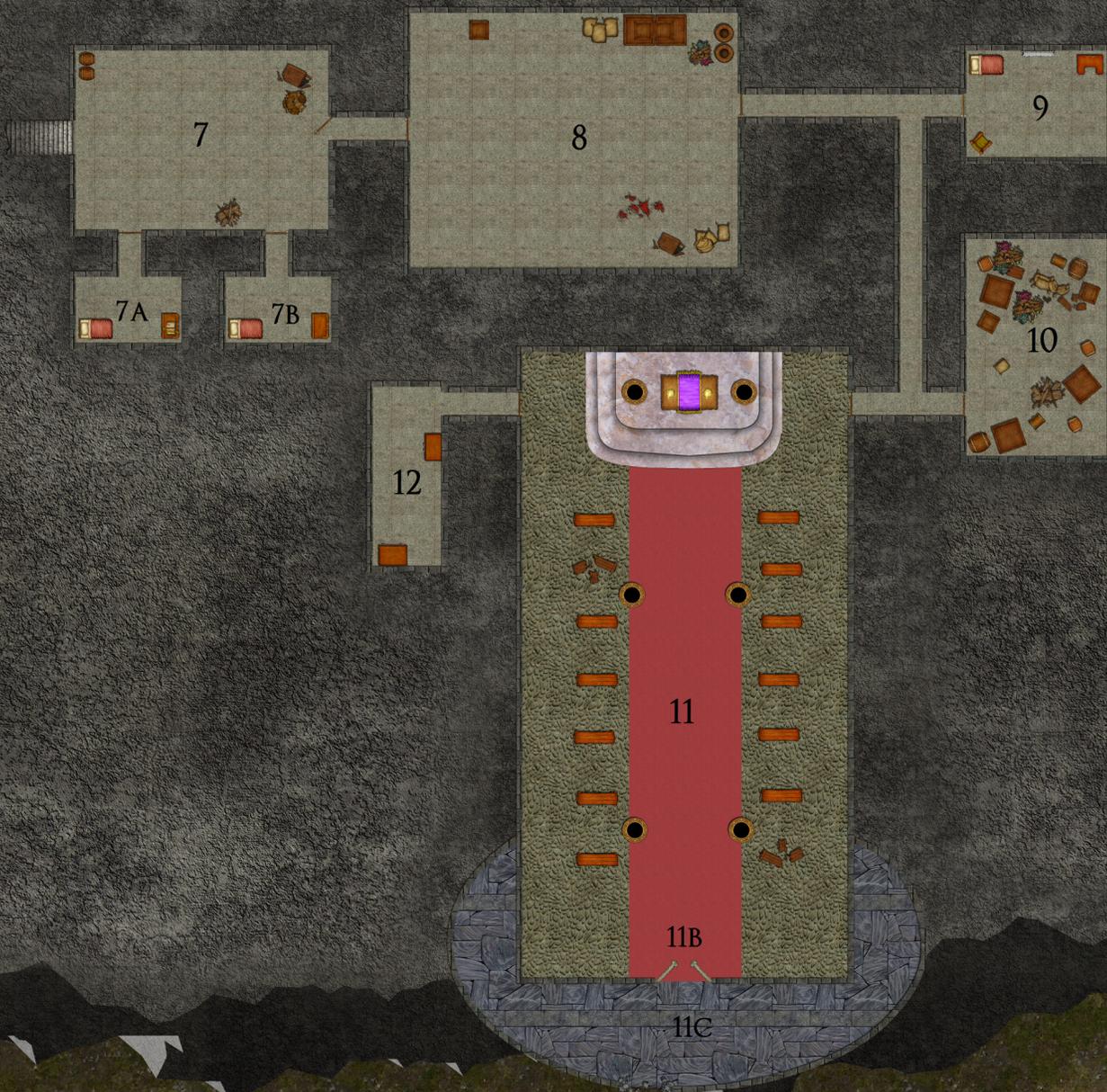
## 6C. STAIRWAY

The set of worn ancient stone stairs leads upward to a battered doorway. Sickly grey light seems to come from the entryway above, illuminating the spidery cracks in the stonework of the steps.

Although the stairs look ancient and worn, they are very sturdy. If the characters chased away the Oroc Shaman and are careful enough to listen closely as they ascend the stairs, they will hear the excited jabber of voices... and if they take too long, the five Orocs from Area 1 of Level 2 will come and attack on the stairs, as well, preferring to attack before the party gets upstairs and can use their greater numbers. The Oroc Shaman will also attempt to harass them with distance spells, if he has any remaining (especially *Soundburst*).



MAP 2:  
HALLS OF MALKENTNOR  
LEVEL 2 (UPSTAIRS)



## THE HALLS OF MALKENTNOR

### LEVEL TWO

#### 7. OFFICE

If they have not already attacked thanks to the escaping Shaman, five Orocs (5) and one wounded ogrekin will attempt to raise the alarm if the PC's make their way up the stairs. If the Shaman from earlier (Area 5, downstairs) has escaped up here, he will make his last stand here, as well. The warrior Orocs' armor marks them as members of the Blood Hand, but the heraldry on their armor looks slapdash. The Ogre-kin (half-ogre) is large, but has no particular markings on his armor. He looks as though he is favoring one side, and indeed, was wounded in the battle below. Read the description below only once the battle has been won.

**OROCS (5)** *(These neutral evil creatures' vital statistics are: HD 2+1, AC 14, Dmg 1d6 (sword). Their primary attributes are physical.)*

**OGRE-KIN** *(This chaotic evil creature's vital statistics are: HD 4, AC 15, hp 21; Dmg 1d10 (Slam) or 1d8+4 (longsword). His primary attributes are physical.)*

The stairs have led upward to a dusty stone room whose corners are utterly thick with cobwebs and whose stonework is crumbling here and there, as though the entire structure has sunk several feet in the last few years. Water damage is noticeable in scattered places, especially in one corner, and this room has a bit of a mildewy scent to it. Scattered bits of paper

and old books lie on the floor, much of which appears to have charred edges, as though they were used for a hurried fire that never completely caught.

In a corner of the room, a few dusty barrels rest beneath a pair of bookshelves where a few sets of tattered books still sit, their moldy covers mostly worn away. Two heavy oak doors which appear to have weathered the passage of time fairly well stand closed on a nearby wall.

Most visible in this room, however, is the mural on the opposite wall. At one time it must have been brightly colored, but time and the water damage have faded the paints. Still visible are scenes of men and women in lightly colored garb in various scenes of daily life, including dancing in a circle beneath a brightly painted, iconic sun.

Most of the paperwork that lies on the floor is nothing of particular interest: some are carefully kept ledgers of expenditures and cost accounting. Most of the remaining books have been burned. A few ledgers and such may still be available, but nothing of interest. What may be of interest is the wetness to the North wall. That side is closest to the Dolway Run, which is swollen by spring rains. The barrels at one time held wine, but they have since leaked their vintage away.

The mural may especially be of interest to those of a religious nature. Those who spend a short time studying the mural may judge that the scenes depict religious rites of passage with a successful Wisdom check. Clerics, Paladins and Druids may make this check with a +2 to their roll.

## 7A. BRETHRENS ROOM

A pair of moldy bunks take up the majority of one wall of this small spartan room. A small desk sits in the opposite corner of the room from the bunks and a cobwebby footlocker sits open by the end of the lowest of the two bunks, empty. Here and there small centipedes, silverfish and other bugs scurry toward the large cracks in the stonework walls. Rock dust, small bits of debris and more cobwebs seem to be the only further ornamentation.

A few scattered bits of paper near the desk give the indication an acolyte was either copying or writing a treatise on the sunbringer, Ehdrasim, and his relation to the other gods in the Triad of Light. The room has been mostly picked clean, but carefully searching PC's can find a small black leather pouch wedged into one of the larger wall cracks. The pouch contains a pair of lockpicks and two small gemstones (*tigereye, 9 gp; eye agate, 13 gp*)

## 7B. BRETHRENS ROOM

A pair of moldy bunks take up the majority of one wall of this small spartan room. A small desk sits in the opposite corner of the room from the bunks and the broken remains of a footlocker and its musty contents lie by the end of the lowest of the two bunks. Large cracks, some nearly a foot in width, spider their way along one wall. Rock dust, small bits of debris and more cobwebs cover the floor. A slender leatherbound book lies beneath one of the desks.

The book has obvious signs of water damage, and its pages are very nearly rotted away. The book is little more than an acolyte's private journal, which may give a little flavor to the happenings at the Abbey, and life among the monks, but probably nothing of other interest. Among the remains from the footlocker are a pair of acolyte robes, once a bright yellow and now discolored to a dull yellowish-brown by mildew.

A group of ten rats will scuttle out of the large cracks in the wall and attack only if anyone attempts to reach into the cracks. They will retreat back to the cracks if approached with any strong show of force.

**RAT (6)** (*These neutral creatures' vital statistics are: HD 1 (d4), AC 13, Dmg 1d2 (bite). Their primary attributes are physical.*)

## 8. SUPPLY ROOM

This room appears to have been the scene of some sort of struggle. A few cloth sacks lying in the corner are split open as though someone or something fell upon them. In the other corner of the room, a broken table lies on its side in the sullen torchlight. The dim light from those torches also brings out the crimson stains on the stone walls and floors, and six bodies-- five humans and a gnome-- lie strewn out on the floor. The lingering stench and the congealed blood pooled beneath them seem to suggest they have been lying there for some time.

The sacks in the corner are filled with grain, much of which is spoiled and damp; anyone going to investigate the sacks can make a simple Wisdom attribute check to tell that the wall next to the sacks (the north wall, according to the

map) has indications of the same water damage as the previous room.

The six bodies all are dressed in varying styles of damaged and bloodied armor, and each bears some symbol on them that marks them as being members of the Griffon Head Legion. The gnome wears a surcoat over his leather armor; anyone checking him closely or making a standard Wisdom check as they search the room realizes that there is an odd lump near his chest. Inside the surcoat, in a cleverly hidden inner pocket, there is a very finely crafted golden ring decorated with winding ivory embellishments in the shape of tiny sprigs of ivy, folded up in a scrap of blue cloth. (The ring is magical, and will detect as such with a faint dweomer. It is a *Ring of Feather Falling*.)

There are no planned encounters, here; however, if the Oroc's in Area 7 raised an alarm, there may be up to six more Oroc's here. If this has been a cakewalk for the PC's so far, that number can be raised.

## 9. ABBOT'S CHAMBER

This room would probably appear to be quite plush if not for the state of dank disrepair it is in. A comfortable chair and four-posted bed sit against one wall, and might even look inviting if not for the heavy layers of dust, cobwebs, and fallen rock dust upon it. That debris and age has paled the red cushions on the chair and the burgundy canopy and coverlet on the bed to a dingy pinkish-grey.

The left hand stonework wall is shiny in places with dampness, and the floor is discolored with puddled water. On that wall, centered between

a broken desk and the bed, a tapestry hangs. The cloth gives off a musty smell of mildewed fabric, and the dyes in the threads have largely bled and run, but it is still obvious that it depicts a wise-looking older man wearing white robes with gold trappings and holding aloft a bright golden lantern.

Again, if the characters look closely at the north wall on the map (the wall with the discolored tapestry) they will see the telltale signs of water damage; in fact, in this room it is far more noticeable than any of the others. The tapestry depicts the iconic version of Ehdrasim.

If they look closely, the PC's can see an area on the floor where an outline in the dust gives the indication that there may have been a footlocker there. The item appears to have been moved fairly recently.

## 10. STORAGE

Old broken crates, barrels and rubbish litter the floor of this large room. A fine layer of rock dust and cobwebs seems to cover everything; as you watch, a six inch section of the ceiling falls into the room with a clatter, bringing with it a shower of more dust. The sound of soft chattering seems to accompany the fallen rock. The ceiling is pocked with large holes and cracks, black against the darkened stone and wasted timber bracings.

Although the room is filled with a lot of junk and rubbish, there are a couple items of worth here. A rotting bag with 76 gp and 28 sp can be found if the PC's search through the room with enough alacrity (WIS check at +2). More careful

searching yields a fine masterwork warhammer (+1 to hit) concealed in an old barrel. However, searching through the rubbish stirs the creatures that have made this room their home.

There are eighteen fairly large rats who will skitter around through the broken crates and rubbish, naturally drawing the attention any PC's who rummage around in the room. Although they will attack if they are cornered, the rats are not the real threat here. A round after the PC's begin rummaging, four medium spiders will drop from some of the holes in the ceiling, looking to single out a character for an easy potential meal to drag to their webs, later if necessary.

**LARGE RATS (18)** *(These neutral creatures' vital statistics are: AC 13, HD 1 (d4), Dmg: 1d2 (bite). Their primary attributes are physical)*

**MEDIUM SPIDERS (4)** *(These neutral creatures' vital statistics are: AC 15, HD 3, Dmg: 1d6 + poison (bite), SA: Poison, Web. Their primary attributes are physical)*

## 11. TEMPLE PROPER

Grey light seeps in from the back of this cavernous chamber, causing you to blink involuntarily at the sudden wash of light that doesn't belong to a torch. As your eyes adjust, you realize this was obviously once a grandiose temple sanctuary, with a partial dome roof supported by six huge fluted columns that stretch to the ceiling twenty-some feet above your heads. You can even imagine that at one time there would be sunlight shining through the open spaces in the ceiling to fall on the marble altar on its raised dais, or highlighting the brightly painted wall behind it with its

immense iconic sun, and the luminous yellow tapestries flanking it.

But that was long ago. Now it is all in rack and ruin; the bright paints on the wall are faded and chipped, the tapestries ratty with age, the altar cloths decayed and the stone beneath cracked and splintered. The remaining benches that once stood proudly astride the fifteen foot-wide central aisle are rotted and broken, and look as though they would collapse under the weight of anything heavier than a child.

And on top of that, everything here has been vandalized.

The smell of blood and offal comes to you after the door is opened; it comes primarily from the front of the room, where the enough blood has been spilled to leave thick crimson trails down the side of the marble altar stone... crimson which has not yet faded to brown. Behind the altar, the back wall's faded colors are stained and splattered with red, with a crude blood drawing of a grotesque-- and very unmistakably female-- form, with hooked chains extending from her arms and legs. The drawing stretches up enough to blot out the lower half of the iconic sun.

A clatter of metal on stone and a thick, guttural noise suddenly draw your attention to the very back of the temple. There, dark against the greyish light coming through the immense double doors are several familiar shaped humanoids. One in particular gestures off in the distance, barking something in a staccato tone of voice you take to be displeased. The others-- a dozen in all-- are leaning on their spear hafts and grumbling among themselves until an even larger form steps into view. Bipedal, he moves

with a the grate of stone on stone, and the tone of his voice matches it as he joins the lead Oroc in reprimanding the foot soldiers.

The Oroc have defaced the temple to Ehdrasim, turning it instead into a twisted shrine to an orcish goddess-spawn named Chu'dekra. The Gul'kani sub-captain is perfectly fine with this; he's more upset that their troupe has been told to wait out until all the stragglers have been fished out from the underground areas. The Gul'kani's name is Grannem, and he wields a +1 spear, but is far from unarmed should he lose it. While Grannem is the sub-captain, he leaves the day-to-day gruntwork of leading the soldiers to Churk, a better equipped Oroc fighter. Both Grannem and Churk have their backs to the entrance the PC's are entering, but if the PC's attempt to make their way closer to the entrance, and make no move to stay hidden, the Oroc pikemen will notice them. Even if the PC's make no move, one of the Oroc may still notice them, but only on a successful WIS check. However, if the PC's take pains to stay hidden among the benches, altars and columns, they may be able to achieve surprise.

Once Grannem is made aware of the PC's, he will order the orocs to attack and take to the air himself, swooping to attack with his spear. Bows and other missile weapons will be most effective on him even with his higher AC vs piercing weapons. If dropped by 25% of his hit points by attacks, he will land and finish the fight on foot alongside his men. He does speak a crude form of Common.

**GRANNEM, TEPHEST GUL'KANI SUB-CAPTAIN** (*This lawful evil creature's vital statistic are: HD 5+1, AC: 17 (19 vs edged/piercing), hp 42, Dmg 1-6+3 (Enhanced*

*Spear) or claw (1d8+2) + bite (1d8), Special: Fly. His primary attributes are physical; See NEW CREATURES for more information)*

**CHURK, OROC THUG (1):** (*This neutral evil Leel 4 Oroc Fighter's vital statistic are: HD 4+2, AC 14, hp 28; Dmg 1-8+2 (Axe); His primary attributes are physical.*)

**OROC PIKEMEN (12)** (*These neutral evil creatures' vital statistics are: HD 1+1, AC 12, Dmg (Spear): 1d6. Their primary attributes are Physical.*)

Grannem's spear is a well-kept *Spear +1*. He took it as a spoil of war from one of the many humans his coven has overrun. In addition, he carries a silver ring whose face is inset with sapphires (75 gp value), 157 gp value in coins, a non-magical but well-made helm (15 gp), and a *potion of blur*.

Churk also carries two *potions of cure light wounds* as well as 53 gp in a pouch on his person.

The remaining Oroc have 1d12 sp each and their spears, which are in fair and serviceable condition. Five of the twelve pikemen also have short swords of average quality.

## 11B. GREAT DOORS

The impressive double doors that stand open at the back wall of the temple are easily nine and a half feet tall. Although the wood is obviously in disrepair, the heavy doors still show hints of their former glory. The iron hinges and banding each have a looping, decorative silver inlay-- that may explain why one hinge brace is noticeably absent from the door. Then too, perhaps only one was taken because it took such work to get it loose.

The PC's can blow through a few hours breaking off the hinges and tapping out the silver from the hinges and banding. A Standard Wisdom check will tell a knowledgeable character such as a thief or a dwarf that it'll take about 2 hours of work to do, counting pulling the heavy doors down, and will net about 25 gp worth of silver (which would have to likely be melted down and recast to be any good). However, if they would like to do it, by all means let them do so.

### 11C. ANTECHAMBER

Between the temple entrance and the outside stands a large, more or less empty antechamber.

The outer wall of this chamber is cracked and crumbling. There are gaping cracks through which light bleeds, and what may have once been an entrance has become a twelve-foot wide breach in the stone. However, those cracks gives you your first breath of fresh air and your first sight of the sky in some time.

The sky beyond the wall is slate grey and rain-heavy. Fat droplets splash in standing puddles outside. They also cleanse the blood from some of the bodies, both human and oroc, that lie in the thick mud. There's a slight chill in the air, like the breath of new spring wind on wet skin. Here and there you catch sight of small patches of ground-hugging fog in the space between the rises and hills that surround you.

You can hear the sound of falling rain on the grass and thick leaves all around, but over that, the rushing sound of a swollen stream nearby.

But even the rain-laden grey clouds cannot

dampen your spirits, at least for the moment.... you've escaped the Hall with your lives, and can truly begin the trek to finish Josa Ironhand's dying behest.

From the outside, the temple is apparently partially buried, and its front walls are embedded into the hillside, like a barrow entrance. A Wisdom check could lead the characters to the realization that the temple may have sunk or become covered during quakes and/or flooding, over the course of many human lifetimes. The bodies have had their possessions already rifled through, and it is pretty obvious the two groups were fighting across every few bare feet of ground.

The stream is actually called Dolway Run, (a tributary of the Yessilmora River) which flows from north to south, and it is less than a quarter mile away. The run is flooding its banks, and its swift current and depth would make it very difficult to ford here. However, the characters can see farmland across the stream.

If the party wishes to wait out the rain, it begins to slacken in an hour or two.

### 12. SANCRISTRY

A robust chest of drawers and wardrobe are the most notable furniture in this room. There is a feeling of serenity in this place, and it seems that-- unlike everywhere else-- this room has managed to largely avoid being despoiled.

A silver holy symbol of Ehdrasim is among the items that can be found if the drawers of the chest are sifted through. Unlike the golden one from Saint Adolphus's Tomb, this one confers no

magical bonuses, nor does it glow. Among the other items are a pair of old but well-maintained robes of lighter blue and yellow, and a prayerbook. Also available are eight vials of scented oils (these will burn, but they are not specifically lamp oil, but instead anointing oil – 5 gp apiece), a silver incense burner with its openings shaped to look like miniature suns, (5 gp) and a handcarved box with a few loose chunks of coal for use in the braziers. The wardrobe holds some similarly old and well-worn robes, mostly of lighter colors, and characters who look close may find that it has a false board in the bottom-- inside the cavity hides a small velvet pouch with 15 gp, 72 sp, and a man's gold ring with a symbol of the sun on its facing side.



# MAP 3: ELLHAM AND SURROUNDINGS



## PART TWO: SIGHTINGS IN ELLHAM

### INTRODUCTION

The PC's by this point have managed to make their way through the Halls of Malkentnor and the Temple of Ehdrasim above it, and will now need to find their way to Camyrleigh.

Camyrleigh is to the east of where they've found themselves; by traveling north along the banks of the Dolway Run, they will eventually find the main road through Calomshire that leads the way along the easiest route to Camyrleigh.

To do so, they will travel through the middle of the roadside hamlet of Ellham, a small farming community that was in the way of the advancing Orocs and is now held by some of the stragglers led by Hebreck Waxham, a human mercenary who gathered them up and called them the Irregulars. They are using this as an open invitation to murder, steal and take away the vast majority of the townsfolk as spoils of war before heading back north to Cheshane. While getting to Camyrleigh is the main goal, their former legion commander would definitely frown on his men just bypassing the plight of the residents of Ellham, simply because their little village happened to be in the way.

Of course, the characters may feel free to completely ignore the plight of the few surviving townsfolk still in Ellham-- and even suggest that, after all, their goal is to get to Camyrleigh-- and if so, the Castle Keeper is perfectly within his rights to allow them to do so. He is also perfectly within his rights to allow for every potential

enemy in Ellham to ambush the characters on their way through town, too, because sometimes getting someone to do the right and good thing requires a vicious kick to the head.

As in Part One, the Castle Keeper may feel free to award extra experience for characters. The CK can feel free to offer bonus points to the PC's for any of the following:

- Giving succor, money or assistance to any of the refugees or townsfolk.
- Protecting the refugees and bringing them to Camyrleigh.
- Killing Kergh, the Trollborn warrior.
- Killing Hebreck Waxford, the human leader of the Irregulars and his hill giant muscle.
- Finding the directions to Camyrleigh and making their way there.

Part Two of the adventure assumes that the party has completed the earlier quest and escaped the Halls of Malkentnor. However, if the players need to be brought up to speed, or new players have joined (for instance, at a Convention setting) feel free read the following to do so:

Standing in the rain, just at the entrance to the forgotten temple you emerged from, you are overcome with a sense of tempered relief. It seems forever ago that you were called to arms under the legendary hero Josa Ironhand, organized with haste to stop an advancing army of creatures-- and if the rumor can be believed, their leader, another legendary hero of the so-called Brass Circle, the dark mage Kagoroth-- from pillaging the civilized lands of the Northern Earldoms and perhaps even far worse.

According to Josa himself, the mage planned to open a portal to the abyss with the hope of honoring a pact made with demons, to free them upon the unsuspecting lands of the earldoms and perhaps all of Melcanth. And while they created a whirlwind of panic and feasted upon the unfortunates they came across, Kagoroth's armies of ogekin, trollborn, Gul'kani and the united Oroc clans would sweep down from the north to crush what remained. Josa Ironhand almost learned of the plot too late, but when he did, he hastily cobbled together what bodies he could, promising glory, honor or gold to help save Melcanth from this threat. You were among those who answered the call.

Rushing on a forced march to the western edge of Calomshire, you and your cohorts fought your way through the ruins of a long-buried temple to the crypts far below, and beyond. Fighting with all the desperation and strength that one could hope for against an implacable foe, the Griffon Head Legion managed to break through the force guarding the Halls of Malkentnor, and in a battle deep in the bowels of the earth, the unthinkable happened-- the hastily outfitted army succeeded in dealing Kagoroth a tremendous blow to his plans, disrupting the spell at the crux point of its casting, causing the portal to reverse itself. Demon, human and humanoid all paid the price. Kagoroth escaped, along with some of the Red Hand, one of the wings of his army.

And now, alone, out of the hundred fifty head of the Griffon Head Legion, you have managed to survive, with the final objectives of Josa Ironhand burned into your mind as you breathe the outside air once more: to eventually return to Camyrleigh and tell the lord there of what happened, and also

return Josa's ring to his wife with the tale of how he died.

## SURROUNDING ENVIRONS TO ELLHAM

### A. THE BARROW

When the party exits from the temple, read the following:

The grey, cloud-thick skies seem to loom over you as your footsteps splash into the squelchy grass. The downpour has greatly dwindled, but here and there droplets fall on you, as though it is dying slowly. Looking back, you see the entrance to the temple partially buried in a hillside, as though years ago it sank partially beneath the loam and now it stands like the entrance to some forgotten barrow. That seems fitting, for there are numerous corpses here, human and oroc, all with obvious wounds from battle.

The land here is largely rolling hills, such as the one you just exited from. To one side, you can see the banks of a large, swiftly flowing stream. In high summer, it is probably not terribly wide, but the weather has made crossing it a near-impossibility... besides its swift current, the rains look as though they have turned the other bank into a marshy quagmire.

Any natural-predisposed character type (Ranger, Druid, etc) can make a standard Wisdom check to discover that the stream seems to run generally north and south, and that the prospects look better for a crossing if they follow along this side of the Run. If they continue north, eventually they will

begin to see signs of farmland across the stream, along with more fordable areas.

The bodies the PC's can easily find are geared as though they fought in a battle, but they have been rifled through already. They may be able to find standard gear (average weapons, standard equipment) but nothing of particular note, and only a few loose copper and silver pieces. Fighter and combat-centric sorts may be able to make out bits and pieces of the battle/tactics by looking at the layout of the bodies and hillsides. It appears that the lead elements of the oroc contingent arrived and attempted to establish a perimeter, but the human forces drove them back into the temple before they could get a solid foothold. From there, it's anyone's best guess, but it seems like there was intermittent fighting all the way to the crystal chamber. Any tracks (and with the sheer number of combatants, it is not at all hard to follow) that the PC's likewise find seem to largely lead down from the north, and can be followed back up to the road, where they split off at the bridge (Area C).

## B. WOODED GROVE

At last, the rolling hills begin to stretch out into a sweeping vale, and the spring sun begins to peek through the thick cover of grey clouds, warming you from the damp dreariness of the rain. Ahead, illuminated by the bleary sunshine, you see a copse of trees, a small grove of maples and aspen that stands out starkly against the nearby empty, rolling land.

And then you look again, at first thinking your senses are playing tricks on you... between the thick trunks you can still smell the telltale odor of burned wood. And although the spring wind may be playing tricks on your ears, you think you

hear something else, as well: rough-sounding voices, speaking a language you do not recognize.

The PC's are not hallucinating. As they close in on the grove, they will begin to hear rough voices more clearly and see figures among the remnants of a campsite in a small clearing between the trees. Smoke emanates from 2 nearby campfires that have burned until their wood is exhausted. It appears that the campsite was in the process of being abandoned by some of the straggler elements of Kagoroth's army who have remained around to loot bodies. Four oroc regulars and the ogre-kin acting as their leader are starting to sift through their ill-gotten gains as they prepare to move out toward Ellham. If interrupted (especially by people who wear the Griffon Head tabard) they will attack mercilessly, but the PC's stand a reasonable chance of gaining surprise if they are careful.

**LIPSCIT, OGRE-KIN WARRIOR:** (*This chaotic evil creature's vital statistics are: HD 4+4, AC 17 (chain + toughened skin), hp 32, Dmg: 1-10 (great-axe). His primary attributes are physical*)

**OROC SCAVENGERS (4)** (*These neutral evil's vital statistics are as follows: HD 1+1, AC 13, Dmg: 1-6 (short sword), Their primary attributes are physical*)

On their persons, the adventurers will find 45 gp and a couple choice items of jewelry (a banded ring of gold and copper with a trio of roses on its face (the symbol of the goddess Arianna, the Lady of Love and Healing) and a golden armlet. Each is worth about 10 gp on their own).

Also nearby, sharp-eyed or sensed characters (Wisdom attribute check at -1) will notice a hacked-up body partially hidden by the brush near

the campsite. The corpse is that of Javier Broune, a cornet (subaltern) for one of the knights of the Earldoms, Sir Michael Halliford. It has been dragged some distance, stripped of its armor and hidden into the brush. Javier was a favored messenger, and was sent by Sir Michael to assess the situation across the bridge and to seek out Josa Ironhand himself. Javier had done just that and was riding back when he unexpectedly ran into one of the scout wings of the oroc army and was waylaid. Although he gave a good account of himself, he was killed, stripped of his armor and left to rot.

Anyone searching the body will find nothing of value in his pouches, as the oroc scavengers have made their way off with everything; however, a close inspection will reveal he has two parchment scrolls tied to his leg beneath his breeches. One is a letter from Josa to Sir Halliford (detailed in **Player Handout A**). The other is a map from Camyrleigh to the Dolway Run Bridge (**Player Handout B**).

## B2. THE PATH FROM DOLWAY RUN BRIDGE

The dirt path that started out so wide and dusty has begun to winnow here. A few hundred yards to the west, as it follows a natural decline into a low-lying pasture, the trail peters out altogether, the color of well-worn dirt and mud giving way to unsullied greenery.

The path dies off, as though riders across the bridge make their own way into the wild. This is not wholly unexpected; the earldom of Greymoor, just west, boasts few large trading posts. It is unlikely, as anyone with tracking ability can point out, that an army traveled this way; in fact, if they found the

map to Camyrleigh in the grove (B), they will know they are traveling the opposite direction.

## C. DOLWAY RUN BRIDGE

The ground you've walked over has swelled up so gradually that it seems odd to your eyes that the stream is a good twenty feet down, but there it is. Ahead, however, a crude, lonely bridge of thick wood slats and crossbeams crosses that span to the other side. Wide enough for two horse-drawn carts side by side, it is simple and flat, boasts no handrails, frills or arched designs, apparently being created strictly for functionality and necessity.

Although the bridge probably does not look like anything special, it does not shake at all, even if the characters have come into possession of horses and carts. It is deceptively sturdy, and would require a lot of work to break loose from its moorings on the sides of the rise. The water is deep enough here that a character falling off the bridge would most likely not break their legs hitting the water.

PC's proficient in tracking can pretty easily take note that large groups of people, humanoids and animals have made their way over the bridge in the last few days, and the last have passed over less than two hours ago.

## D. LONE FARMHOUSE

Off to one side of the dirt road, the sea of unkempt wild plants gives way to freshly-tilled fields. Further ahead on the same side of the road, the blackened remains of a single, lonely farmhouse stand like a skeletal sentinel. As you get closer, you can see the half-burned remains of

a body strewn out on the front steps.

The remains of the farmhouse belonged to the Fremmel family, and the body belongs to the Fremmel's oldest son. A broken scythe lies near him. It is pretty apparent he was hacked to death and his body left to rot before the house was burned. Further investigation will lead the PC's to finding the corpses of the Fremmel father and one more brother, both beheaded. The animal pens behind the house were raided by the oncoming orocs, and the Fremmel mother and daughter were taken as spoils of war.

As near as this farmhouse is to the small town, this is perhaps the first sign that Ellham is actually occupied.

#### E. ELLHAM

*See TOWN OF ELLHAM Detail  
Descriptions*

#### F. THE FENS

The heavy rains have turned this low-lying area from a sturdy riverbank into a marshy bog. As you slog through the wet muck the best you can, the chill of the murky water cuts straight through your legs with every splash.

Moving through this area is done, at best, at half speed. There is every possibility that the characters may fall (possibly breaking or losing equipment) as they travel through here, at the Castle Keeper's discretion.

HANDOUT A

Note found on dead soldier:

*Sir Halliford,*

*We have reason to believe that we face an incursion far into the Earldoms' soil by the creatures from the north, perhaps coming from the ranges of the Tomirish Mountains or perhaps even Cheshane itself. Whatever the case may be, one thing has become terribly certain: unlike previous raids where a single tribal warlord wishes to show his strength, or a temporary truce has been established between rival clans, in this case there is a single, unifying power guiding these forces, and the Orcs are not the worst of their fell troops.*

*I have my own suspicions about who their leader is, and what their ultimate goal may be, but those can wait. For now, it is more imperative to gather what able swords you can to the hills across the Dolway Run bridge to combat this menace as soon as possible. My own legion from Ballard's Bluff has marched into the fray, but our numbers are not enough to hold them all back. Already scattered parts of Brement are razed, and the town of Ellham has been pillaged- I fear for her citizens; we must deliver them from this menace if we can!*

*Make haste, but be careful. Spies may be everywhere.*

*Yours in Gaelori,  
Josa Ironhand*

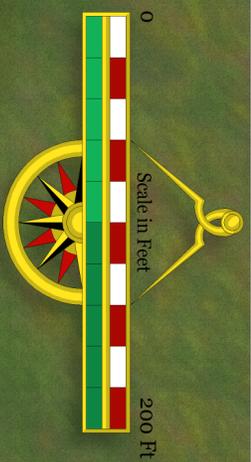
HANDOUT B:





# Map 4: Ellham

To  
Dolway River  
Bridge



To  
Camyrfleigh

## THE TOWN OF ELLHAM

### ARRIVAL

As the PC's get within a few hundred yards of Ellham, they will see the following.

The muddy dirt road winds gently through the farmlands on either side. In the fall, the tilled fields surrounding you might be filled with thick rows of wheat, corn, beans or barley... but now, the fields show just as much dark mud as green growth.

Beyond those fields, you can see a small wood plank house, and behind it a barn and granary, and further down the road, a few roadside houses. This appears to be nothing more than a small wayside farming town, probably a hamlet of a few close families, a quiet cozy place.

The spring wind rustles the high grass on either side, the only sound you hear besides yourselves.

Quiet. Perhaps too quiet, at that.

### A. HERMALAIN FARMHOUSE

The small wooden house before you is rather ramshackle, with simple rough-hewn walls that do not fit together especially well and would allow drafts in the winter were they not filled with clay and mud. The aged wooden door hangs slightly ajar, allowing you to see that some objects have been haphazardly tossed on the dusty plank floor.

When the PC's open the door, there can be no

doubt the house has been ransacked.

The house is only a little more than a large single room, with a stone hearth, a snug loft for the children. There can be no doubt it has all been ransacked, however. Crockery is overturned and smashed on the floor, a broken bench and some plates lie scattered there as well. The wooden table in the kitchen is discolored by thick dollops of dried blood, trailing down to its source, a thin middle aged man whose eyes are open and unseeing as he lies beneath the kitchen table, his throat neatly slit from ear to ear, probably by the skinning knife discarded by his side.

There is nothing of value in the house. The body is that of Lars Hermalain, the owner of the farm. He has been dead for some time; at least several hours. The blood on the table and skinning knife is dried.

The remaining structures of Ellham are listed for the inside only, unless otherwise noted.

### B. HERMALAIN BARN

The door of the barn squeaks open, letting the sunlight fall on a pair of stalls and a loft stacked with hay. Well-used tools and a pair of rusted pitchforks hang on the wall. From one stall comes the sound of growling, as a four-legged creature seemingly made of stone gnaws on the burst remains of a plow horse.

The four legged creature is an Aphis Gul'kani (hound), who will protect his meal and his territory, at least until badly wounded, in which case he will try to escape unless the door to the barn is blocked.

**GUL'KANI, APHIS (HOUND)** *This neutral creature's vital statistics are: HD 3; AC: 15 (17 vs edged/piercing), hp 20, dmg: 1d8+1, bite (2d6) (See New Creatures)*

Anyone who attempts to search the barn, especially the loft area, can make a Wisdom attribute or Listening check. Success indicated that they hear the sharp intake of breath and very muffled sobbing. They can pinpoint it to the loft, they discover that there is a refugee in the barn loft, a girl in a homespun dress, 15 year old Lottie Hermalain-- the daughter of Lars. She watched the orocs come and hid in the barn loft, then sneaked out from her hiding place only to find what happened to her father. She was fortunate in that the plow horse was a less troublesome meal, but has watched the Gul'kani Hound kill one of her family's horses, as well, and thwart any attempt at escape. She is a mess, and if the PC's take her with them to Camyrleigh, she will be much better off.

### C. GENERAL STORE

This structure looks as though it was a storefront of some sort; perhaps a general store. Now it appears to be pillaged. A few sacks of seed corn and flour lay strewn around one corner-- their contents spilling out and now food for mice. Bolts of cloth, sundry items and broken equipment also litter the counters. It looks as though whomever sacked the place did a thorough job.

Careful searching (10 minutes or so) by any PC will turn up any of the following items: 50' hemp rope, 10 yards of fabric (standard flax or linen), chalk, two small baskets, a hammer, 3 iron hooks, two vials of ink, a sewing kit, and a tinder box. Most everything else is either missing or broken

beyond reasonable repair.

There is no sign of the proprietor. He may have been carted off to slavery or killed and discarded.

### D. CLABBORNE FARMHOUSE

Before you even arrive at the door of the farmhouse, you can see a hacked-up body of a young man lying in the tall weeds. Next to him is the beheaded body of an oroc, and the axe that likely beheaded him. Apparently the young man gave a reasonable account of himself before falling.

As you study the two bodies, the sound of the front door opening brings you to alert. Standing there in the doorway, as surprised to see you as you are to see them, are two Oroc. One fumbles for his axe even as the second slams the door back closed.

The young man in the bushes is Arnhelm Clabborne. He rashly attacked the orocs after the Pulkin family was systematically killed (Area F).

*Encounters:* If the PC's break down the door (a standard roll to hit/strength check will do it), the two Oroc will try to attack. They are actually quite cowardly, but have been backed into a corner. They will attempt to flee through the window in the back wall if given time to think it through, and if they do, they will immediately hightail it for the barn (D3), and will surrender to the PC's if given the opportunity.

**OROC SCAVENGERS (2)** *(These neutral evil creatures' vital statistics are: HD 1+1, AC 13, Dmg: 1-8 (Axe). Their primary attributes are physical.)*

The Oroc have gathered a few minor belongings, but nothing of major worth. They of course have their axes, and in total, they have 30 silver pieces, a gem worth 10 gp, and a gold ring worth 12 gp in their possession. They were searching the house for food, and will loudly admit to it if they think it will save their skins.

## D2. CLABBORNE BARN/STABLE

Thin shafts of sunlight filter in through breaks in the slat roof, helping to illuminate the hay-covered ground. But you don't need them to see the shapes gathered around a makeshift table in the dim light. As soon as you open the barn door, you can feel other presences in the room, even before you hear or see them.

The smaller shadows grumble in the unintelligible noise you've come to understand as the Oroc tongue. But then a large shadow behind them stands up slowly... and then he seems to keep standing until he towers over you, green-skinned and gangly, yet with obvious thickened muscle. Motes of light flashes in his beady red eyes, just above his thin, crooked nose.

"More of the soljers me an' Magruar keep hearin' th' grunts frothin' themselves over." the brute grates in rough Common as he glances to one oroc in particular in chainmail, and then looks you over and points at one of your Griffon Head tabards with a yellowed smile. "I done killed four of yas Griffon Soljers. Yer not that tough. Cept your necks spatter a lot when yer head's popped off. Henh. Let's have some fun, boys."

And with that, he hefts a great-axe with one hand and brandishes it with practiced ease as the orocs advance.

**KERGH, TROLLBORN WARRIOR** (*This chaotic evil warrior's vital statistics are: HD 5+10, AC 17 (chain + toughened skin), hp 50, Dmg: 1-10+4 (great-axe); Special: Regenerate 1 HP/round. His primary Attributes are Physical.*)

**MAGRAUR, OROC LIEUTENANT** (*This neutral evil creature's vital statistics are: HD 2+1, AC 15 (chain), hp 14, Dmg: 1-8+1 (longsword); His primary attributes are Physical.*)

**OROC IRREGULARS (4)** (*These neutral evil creatures' vital statistics are: HD 1+1, AC 13, Dmg: 1-6 (short swords). Their primary attributes are physical.*)

If his men are defeated and he is wounded, Kergh will surrender as a ploy to try to regenerate himself and flee when given the opportunity. He will answer questions in a roundabout, circular manner, explaining that he's not actually in command in the town-- that honor falls to Hebrick, a human from Cheshane who has been in and out of the town since the occupation began. Either way, he says, the party won't survive a run in with Hebrick and his pet, Thrug. Even if pressed, he won't say much of anything more about them.

## D3. CLABBORNE GRANARY

When you open the door to the granary, you are greeted by the chitter of mice and the empty echo of the door opening. Much of the grain is gone, save a few scattered piles here and there that are currently feeding a few engorged rats that don't even bother to run when the sunlight falls on them.

The storehouse has been raided; unless the

characters want to fill their coffers with a little grain, there is not going to be much of anything to take here. Quick-witted characters might be able to realize that the granary has been raided recently. Tracks outside suggest that the granary is entered every so often and has been entered on and off recently-- mostly by the Oroc Irregulars, looking for hidden loot.

#### E. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE

By the broken slats and disrepair on the roof, and wild growth of weeds around this house, you estimate that it has been abandoned for some time; at least three or four seasons.

The PC's can easily find a nice storehouse of cobwebs if they look hard. Other than that, there is nothing of real importance at this house... it was, as it appeared, abandoned some time ago. Any liberated refugees will call it the old Hooper house, in reference to the older man who left the house a little over a year ago after his wife and child died of the wasting sickness.

#### F. PULKIN HOUSE

The half-burned house here has its door literally torn from its hinges and thrown into the front yard. Its roof may have once been thatch, before it and the entire back wall was consumed by fire. Perhaps the rains extinguished it, because it progressed no further than that.

A flurry of wings in the high grass off to the side reveals three bodies-- that of an older man, a younger man and young woman with enough similar facial features that you believe them to be related. All three have been mercilessly put to the

sword, and the ravens are already feasting on the wounds in their chests.

The three are the remains of the Pulkin family. Jereb Pulkin was the older man, the uncle who took his brother's son and daughter in after their parents passed and raised them as his own. Caleb Pulkin was a dutiful son, who hoped to someday open a business in Camyrleigh to make money to pay his uncle back for taking him and his sister in. Maude Pulkin was the daughter, who had fallen for Arnhelm Clabborne. Around her wrist, she wears a slender handmade leather bracelet with Arnhelm's name scratched into the leather.

#### G. FLASS FARMHOUSE

While it is obvious that many of the other houses in this village have been broken into, this one is less apparent. The single window on the front side is shuttered against the weather, and the door still stands solidly.

If no attempt is made to communicate with those within or take special care (i.e., by a thief opening the door slowly and carefully), the first person to enter the house will have a sturdy knife stick into the door right near his head, at the same time that a lot of whimpering and cries of terror assails their ears. The knife was thrown by Harriet Flass, a fair-haired woman who immediately holds her hands up to her mouth in terror and apologizes profusely as soon as she realizes the thing coming through the door is not an oroc... at least, provided that the person opening the door does not look like a mercenary sort. With her are two young girls, her nieces Jennie and Lauri Flass, and an older woman, Cora Hermalain, now-widowed wife of Lars (area A). If the PC's bring Lottie Hermalain (Area B)

with them, she and her mother will share a tearful reunion.

The women know that the army first raided the town of Ellham a little over a day ago, as they traveled on their way south, and have come from house to house as they see fit, raiding supplies and food when they need it. The women headed down into the cellar through a trapdoor in the floor and have only come upstairs for short periods when hunger has forced them to scavenge for what they could. They do know that one family tried to stand up to the orocs, and were killed in their own yard. They also know that many of the townsfolk they know have either fled or turned up missing, as did Willibald, Harriet's father, and Seth, her younger brother. They attempted to slip into the barn to get a weapon and have not returned... and the women fear the worst.

If the PC's ensure that these refugees get to Camyrleigh, they will be very grateful.

## G2. FLASS BARN

You can hear the grunts and rumbles of a pair of oroc voices even before you open the barn door here. It appears that whomever is in there is sharing a joke. It may be at the expense of the owner of the headless corpse that is attracting flies off to the side of the barn.

Just as you notice that, you hear a loud, drawn-out moan of pain from within the barn, and smell the telltale odor of burning flesh.

The headless corpse is male. This is Willibald Flass, the father of Harriet. He is a middle-aged man in simple clothing.

There are six orocs within, and four are having sport with Seth, a younger man of less than twenty summers. There is a farrier forge here, a small forge meant for fixing horseshoes, and they've put it to use, searing the young man with heated lances and scarring him permanently in the face and bare back. Their plans are to eventually kill him, but he is currently too young, filled with life, and therefore too fun for them.

The trio are not expecting any resistance from anyone and unless the party hamfists its way through the encounter, they should easily get surprise. The fifth and sixth orocs are in the back stall, attending to the Irregulars' two Worg mounts.

**OROC IRREGULARS (6)** (*These neutral evil creatures' vital statistics are: HD 1+1, AC 13, Dmg: 1-6 (short swords). Their primary attributes are physical.*)

**WORG (2)** (*These neutral creatures' vital statistics are: HD 4, AC 14, Mv 50', Dmg: 2d4 (bite). Their primary attributes are physical.*)

Killing the Oroc/Worgs and freeing Seth would allow him an eventual reunion with his sister Harriet (Area G).

## H. RICKARD HOUSE

Like a depressing number of the other houses, this one appears even at first glance to have been ransacked and pillaged with no regard for the occupants. The front door is hanging askew on one hinge, and a pair of benches have been tossed haphazardly into the front yard. The head of a woodcutting axe is buried in the exterior wall, next to the broken shutters it chopped at to get to the windows.

Again, the scene of utter pillaging seems to exist here. Very little of value remains unbroken, although a carved wooden tankard (2 SP) on the floor was curiously left untouched.

## I. SHERIFF

There is a small barred window on the side of this house. It may have at one time been the gaol, or a holding place for anyone who got out of hand. If so, then the wide-eyed corpse by the side of the road with the arrow neatly stuck into his forehead may have been acting as the town constable.

The body is Tangric Beadleman, who was acting as Hue and Call. He was a respected member of the community, but had no chance to do much beyond step out into the roadway. His house has been ransacked like so many of the others, and very little of value (a few sheets of parchment listing the low number of people 'penned' during his tenure, and other legal proceedings for instance). Tangric's house does have a makeshift cell, a thick wooden door has separated one back room from the rest of the house; it is empty, and although there is a lock on the heavy oaken door, no key can be found.



This house is so small that 'hut' seems more correct than 'cottage.' Nonetheless, it looks well enough cared for, and unlike many of the other houses, seems rather untouched.

The house's interior also appears to be largely untouched, although two bowls of half-eaten carrot

and parsnip soup sit spilled over on the kitchen table, their spoons discarded in obvious haste, as though the home's owners rushed away when they first heard noises in town. There appears to be nothing else of interest in the one-room domicile.

Once the party has come near the house, and begins to move on toward Camyrleigh, read the following:

Leaving the small house behind, you begin to follow the road leading out of town when you hear a sound of a loud, echoing grunt from the line of trees a few paces east of you, and have just enough time to look upward when you see a shape hurtle through the air over the treeline, scattering birds from their roosts in the branches. You realize it is a small boulder only as it sails just over your head and smashes into the roof of the hut-like house, scattering broken pieces of wood all over as far away as all of you, and causing one wall of the ramshackle cottage to collapse in upon itself. As you turn back to its source, you see a hulking shape stepping out from behind the cover of the trees, easily ten foot tall, wearing very primitive, ragged clothing. He smiles a thick-mouthed smile at you and pulls his tree-trunk-like arms into view, where you see that he is hefting another boulder.

You have time enough to register that before a group of humanoid footmen bursts through the trees as well, leveling spears and swords at you as they yell and rush your direction. Behind them stands a tall human in a plate breastplate and pauldrons, who points at the lot of you. "If you think you're leaving this town, you are gravely mistaken. Thurg, show them what I mean."

**MERCENARY** (*This lawful evil mercenary's vital statistics are HD 7+1, AC 17 (chain + breastplate), hp 56, Dmg: 1d8+3 (+1 longsword). His primary attributes are Strength, Wisdom and Dexterity.*)

**THRUG, YOUNG HILL GIANT** (*This neutral evil creature's vital statistics are: HD 8, AC 17, hp 60, Dmg 1d8 (2 fists), 2d8 (club). His primary attributes are physical.*)

**OROC REGULAR SPEARMEN (8)** (*These neutral evil creature's vital statistics are: HD 1+1, AC 13, Dmg: 1-6 (spears); Their primary attributes are physical.*)

**OROC REGULAR SWORDS (4)** (*These neutral evil creature's vital statistics are: HD 2+1, AC 14, Dmg: 1-6 (short sword); Their primary attributes are physical.*)

Thrug will attempt to stand back and chuck rocks or trees at the party, until it becomes impossible to separate the Oroc from the party, and then he will grimly wade into battle with his club and not take lightly to anyone who wants not to battle the big bad giant. Hebrick will bide his time and try to move forward to attack party members who are engaged and outnumbered already if possible, but he will not back down from hand to hand combat. Hebrick will call out orders to the orocs, and Thrug will help Hebrick to the best of his ability-- if Hebrick is hard-pressed, Thrug will try to disengage and attack whomever is

attacking him. Thrug will fight to the death to help Hebrick, but Hebrick will call for flight if he is dropped past half his hit points, or if Thrug is killed.

HEBRICK

WAXFORD,

HUMAN



## AFTERWARD: CRISIS POINT IN CAMYRLEIGH

Once the main leadership of the Irregulars falls, the surviving remnants of their host will slink their way back across the river and north, trying to make their way back to the trailing edge of the Red Hand as it retreats back toward Cheshane. Although the weight of their dead friends and neighbors is heavy, the refugees can be assured that Ellham is no longer occupied by the Orocs. If the PC's are willing to protect them along the way, the surviving refugees will gather up what they can and go to Camyrleigh to appeal for help to the Earl.

Travel to Camyrleigh should be a simple endeavor, by comparison. It will take the party a full day's travel to get from Ellham to Camyrleigh, and there will be no random encounters along the way to slow anything down, unless the Castle Keeper proposes otherwise (for instance, if they have utterly walked through the encounters in Ellham quickly). If they are traveling at an unhurried speed, as they may have to with the survivors, and camp at night, they should arrive at the gates shortly after noon on the second day.

When they do arrive at the large walled city of Camyrleigh, the gatekeepers will know the heraldic device (the stylized Griffon Head) of Josa Ironhand, as he is somewhat of a legend in these parts, so if any of the fighters are still wearing their tabards, if there is mention of his name, or if his ring is shown, the PC's will get exemplary treatment, especially if their story is corroborated by any Ellham refugees. The refugees will have managed to scrape up enough

money to stay at a boardinghouse, but consider awarding experience to any PC who gives them money to stay in better living arrangements. Once the PC's have met with Shire Robert, he will make the surviving townspeople one of his primary focuses, and ensure that they have proper quartering and payment for their losses.

The PC's can be pointed to where Dumielle, who is a beautiful and still vibrantly young brown-haired half-elf, is staying, in a fairly lush manor house near the city's Northern Commons, and will greet the characters. Once she has found what has happened to her husband Josa, she will force as unflinching an expression as she is capable of, and thank them, holding her emotions tightly in check until the party leaves. As the door closes, they will hear the unmistakable sound of her emotions taking hold, and she collapses, wailing in sorrow.

Once they have told their news to Dumielle, they will be messaged by Shire Robert (who owns said manor house) to meet with him the next morning. He will meet with the characters in a private meeting hall, along with his advisers and a few scattered people of importance throughout the town. The characters will have a chance to speak frankly about their experience, and the lord of Calomshire does not rush them, paying careful attention to every word. You can end with the following, or some variation thereof:

Shire Robert, the lord of Calomshire, appears to

be, as Josa Ironhand said, a fair and earnest man. He is also a young one, at no more than twenty-eight summers of age. He sits at the end of the long mahogany table, his hands folded before him, and listens to you tell him all. You relate of the battle in the bowels of the earth, the magical explosion that left your legion in tatters, the death of the brave Josa Ironhand, and the threat of the dark armies who now seem to be fighting as one cohesive union... an army who has retreated for now, but could return at any time.

There are mutters and murmurs among his advisers when you mention all of this, but when you relate that it is in fact Kagoroth who leads them, the room falls to eerie silence.

At first, despite your assurances, Shire Robert cannot bring himself to believe that a great hero of the famed Brass Circle has died, and still worse, that he has done so at the hands of another-- equally revered-- legend. It is like the tales the bards spin in the taverns have become hideously twisted and yet real. When you reaffirm that it was Kagoroth that the Griffon Head Legion fought, it is the only time he seems to lose his temper.

And then Dumielle stands.

Dressed in the traditional black and red of mourning, the dark-haired half-elf's beautiful young face is drawn in sorrow. But even her soft words resonate.

"My husband," she says, and then takes a moment to compose herself. Despite her grieving, her voice is almost preternaturally calm. "Josa... would not have given his ring to those he thought unworthy, to those who would

frivolously spread stories. If these brave souls wear the banner of the Griffon Head Legion and say that the Kagoroth of legend was responsible for leading the armies of the oroc clans, then I will personally vouch for their word."

Shire Robert nods. As Dumielle seats herself, he looks toward the wall, where a great map of Calomshire hangs. He stares at it for a long time.

"Forgive my anger. It is... difficult... to hear of your childhood heroes-- the legends of the tales you grew up listening to by a warm hearth-- and to find out that they are, in the end, human.

"My father told me it was not befitting of a noble to hear the tales of the Brass Circle, so I didn't tell him when I slipped from my bedroom and went to the local taverns to hear the stories the bards spun. I remember hearing of Belas Elvesblood and Malchien the Swift, and of Bellamore, who could make flowers bloom with her songs of the goddess. But mostly, I remember Kagoroth and Josa. how they were so different, and yet, could still be comrades, and accomplish the seemingly impossible together."

He exhales a breath and shakes his head dispiritedly. "And now it seems, I must also accomplish the impossible. Alone, the united oroc clans would be a terrible adversary. But if Kagoroth has united them with such creatures as the ones you describe, it may be that much more difficult. I can't shake the feeling this raid into the Earldoms is not his greater plan... even in the tales, he always scoffed at the idea of simple conquest."

"But the primary threat right now is the oroc armies. As they are united, so must the Northern

Earldoms be. We must put aside our petty disputes, our lust for power, and our perceived slights, for a better purpose... or we shall all certainly fall, one by one, piecemeal. I make this solemn pledge, then... I shall do everything in my power to unite the Earldoms and combat this menace."

Shire Robert looks at you all, his serene gaze taking you all in. "And for that, I may need your help."

But how will that come about? That, my friends... that is a story for another time.

Along with her personal vouch for their truthfulness, after the meeting, Dumielle will ensure that another gift makes its way to the party: each party member will be given an ornately carved wooden box, inside which rests a gold and jeweled griffon-head talisman, meticulously detailed to look like Josa's heraldic emblem, worth 500 gold pieces.

## NEW CREATURES

### GUL'KANI, APHIS (HOUND)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-8 (pack) or 6-36 (within lair)

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 3

**MOVE:** 40

**AC:** 16 (18 vs edged/piercing)

**ATTACKS:** 2 Claws (1d8+1), bite (2d6)

**SPECIAL:** Rocky Hide, Freeze

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Animal

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral to Evil

**TYPE:** Magical Beast

**TREASURE:** Nil

**XP:** 80+3



Gul'kani are a species of stonelike creatures which resemble living statues or gargoyles. Humans in the World of Phantasie, in fact, have been known to call them "Goylekin," a corruption of their actual name based on their resemblance to gargoyles. If that resemblance runs beyond simply the physical, it has yet to be determined, although they obviously share some abilities. Gul'kani tend to have a base dislike for human and other civilized sorts, often attacking outlying stone outposts, castles and keeps to slay those within, then claiming the locale as their own. It is not unknown for various ruins to act as a living area for multiple Gul'kani covens, each numbering up to 30 Gul'kani.

Although referred to (especially by humans) as 'Hounds', the Aphis are not specifically canine in shape. Instead, their looks tend to be decidedly varied from coven to coven. However, all Aphis are quadrupedal and lack the ability to vocalize language, and they are by far the most numerous of Gul'kani.

**COMBAT** – In combat, Aphis prefer to use their numbers to their best advantage, but because of their toughened exterior and weight, even a single one can be a daunting prospect. Aphis will use their bulk to knock foes to the ground, when possible, and latch on with their vicious bite. Their claws and teeth are sharpened stone, but more often it is the brute strength behind their blows that causes the most damage.

**Rocky Hide** – The skin of a Gul'kani is made of a hardened stony material that acts as natural armor and is difficult to cut, slice or stab through. A Gul'kani receives a +2 to their Armor Class vs. edged or piercing weapons. Bludgeoning weapons offer them no such bonus, as these sorts of weapons can crush the Gul'kani's hardened exterior in much the same way they can bony undead.

**Freeze** - A Gul'kani can hold itself so still it appears to be a statue. This ability proves especially useful in areas containing statues, ruins or locations in which their appearance as decoration seems natural, providing camouflage. This ability allows them to remain virtually undetected, and to surprise characters passing nearby.

## GUL'KANI, TEPHEST (BIPED)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-6 (solo/guard) or 4-24 (within lair)

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 5

**MOVE:** 40/60 fly

**AC:** 17 (19 vs. edged/piercing)

**ATTACKS:** 2 Claws (1d8+2), bite (1d8)

**SPECIAL:** Rocky Hide, Freeze, Fly

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** High

**ALIGNMENT:** Varies, but usually Lawful

Neutral to Lawful Evil

**TYPE:** Magical Beast

**TREASURE:** 1 / 2 in lair

**XP:** 120+2



The lesser form of bipedal Gul'kani, the Tephest are often both the muscle and the sub-leaders of Gul'kani covens. With their hardened, rocky skin that shrugs off swords and arrows, and their ability to fly, they make particularly ruthless warriors. While not as numerous as the Aphis form of the Gul'kani, they are far more intelligent, and while most are able to speak at least a crude form of Common and Gul'kani, some learn more tongues, still.

All Gul'kani are hatched as the quadruped Aphis. How Tephest are created is up for some debate, but the majority of sages believe that Tephest are created from the same Elemental rituals that elevates a particularly strong Tephest to becoming the more powerful form of bipedal Gul'kani, a Coven Lord. If so, it seems probable that Coven Lords themselves raise their own lieutenants from the ranks of their most loyal Aphis. While this makes the Tephest devoted to their covens and Coven Lords, Tephest are by nature ambitious, and power struggles among covens are often the norm.

**COMBAT** – Although Tephest can use weapons and are skilled melee fighters, they are often most adept at using their claws in conjunction with swooping attacks from above. They can carry the weight of a reasonable sized human and still maintain flight, so it is not above them to lift foes into the air and drop them to cause falling damage.

**Rocky Hide** – The skin of a Gul'kani is made of a hardened stony material that acts as natural armor and is difficult to cut, slice or stab through. A Gul'kani receives a +2 to their Armor Class vs. edged or piercing weapons.

Bludgeoning weapons offer them no such bonus.

**Freeze** - A Gul'kani can hold itself so still it appears to be a statue. This ability proves especially useful in areas containing statues, ruins or locations in which their appearance as decoration seems natural, providing camouflage. This ability allows them to remain virtually undetected, and to surprise characters passing nearby.

**Fly** – Gul'kani with this ability can fly, soaring with their powerful wings, in a manner much like the gargoyles they are often confused with.

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