

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

2nd Edition

Supplement

Wild Things

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Ettercaps & Spiders

Terrain: Heavy woods
Total Party Levels: 24 (Average 4th)
Total g.p.: 3,360 gp

Set Up

- While trudging through a thick, heavy forest, the PCs come upon a very old trail marked with a small stone. The stone has several faint runes scratched into it. The runes are elvish, and indicate that there is an elven outpost further down the ancient trail.

- A druid asks the party to fetch her some rare plants and herbs which grow wild near an old, abandoned elven outpost. The herbs are used to create a salve that neutralizes poison in the same way as the fourth level priest spell *neutralize poison*. The druid gives each PC one vial of the salve as a reward, provided that they successfully get the plants. She gives the PCs a map of the general area, which is a day's march to the north. The PCs should look out for an old elven trail.

- Rumor tells of an ancient, abandoned elven outpost that lies at the end of a trail. The trail is marked with a small stone with elven runes carved into it. The outpost is reported to contain an elven treasure hoard, originally kept there for safekeeping until a particular crisis blew over. It supposedly has never been reclaimed. (This is an exaggeration. The elves left a few things, but hardly enough to qualify as a "hoard!")

The Lair

The trail is extremely old, and some parts of it are overgrown with brush. Many tracks of different game animals, particularly deer and wild pigs, crisscross the area. For movement purposes, the trail is to be considered Rugged terrain (see the Encumbrance and Movement rules in the *Wilderness Survival Guide*). The trail is 15 miles long. A proficiency check is required every turn to keep on the trail. The DM should roll this check for the tracking player. Failure does not mean that the PC can no longer see the trail, rather it means that he believes the trail goes in a direction different from the actual path.

A smart PC with direction sense can use this proficiency to verify that the party is on the right track. This proficiency check should also be made by the DM.

Aside from the risk of getting lost, the trail is otherwise not too bad. A stream well populated by fish flows perpendicular to the trail at the seven mile mark, and there is an abundance of game animals and birds. DMs can determine the weather using the Weather Charts in the WSG, but it is recommended that the adventure begin with clear, comfortable weather and little wind.

Random encounters should be rolled for every mile of the path, the last roll made when the group is one mile from the outpost.

There are many edible plants along the path, but none are of the variety that the PCs are looking for if they have been sent to look for herbs.

Two miles from the outpost, tracking checks reveal a marked lack of animal tracks. If herd animals are encountered from this point on, a proficiency check using animal lore reveals that the creatures anticipate danger and are avoiding the area in the direction of the outpost.

If the PCs are using mounts, these animals begin acting up once the PCs get to within one mile of the outpost. All mounts become nervous and excited, requiring a proficiency check in animal handling for each animal to be calmed down. This can only be tried once per animal. If the check fails, the animal refuses to go any farther. Should the check succeed, the animal continues onward but additional animal handling checks must be made every turn.



Any animal, wild or domesticated, that is spoken to by magical means says the same thing: "Much blood...fresh... much blood...fresh...death..."

When the small outpost is finally in view, the PCs see that it is built from the trunks of huge oak trees. The structure is a 20 foot by 20 foot cube with a single door located in the middle of the south wall. Two arrow slits flank the door, which is ajar. The other walls each have three arrow slits. A 20 foot high observation platform rests atop the building's flat roof. Many plants grow around the building. A few even can be found growing right in the outpost's threshold. There is a tiny clearing 25 feet in diameter that starts from the outpost's door (the path is on the opposite side of the clearing).

The entire building is covered in moss and ivy, with long vines trailing off the eaves. Three large oaks grow a scant few feet from the north, east and west walls. The trees are over 100 feet high, and their branches overhang the little outpost. The entire area is silent, no bugs peeping or birds chirping. The air is still.

PCs who were sent here to look for plants must make herbalism proficiency checks to identify the right plants. They are growing at the bases of the three oaks, in the threshold of the building, and in a spot exactly halfway across the clearing. There are sufficient herbs to brew 24 poison-neutralizing potions.

Any successful tracking attempts reveal numerous large arachnid tracks, and three sets of humanoid tracks, the latter being unidentifiable as to race. The tracks go in and out of the building.

The outpost's interior is uninspiring. The floor is thick with dust. Spiderwebs hang from the walls and ceiling. The interior is one large room, any partitions having fallen down or been taken as firewood ages ago. There is a trap door on the ceiling, which leads to the watchtower.

A group of four giant spiders lurk deep in the webs and they are hungry. There are no bones or husks around to give their presence away.

Giant Spiders (4): AC 4; MV 3, wb 12; HD 4+4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison and webs; ML 13; AL CE. These arachnids are the pets of the ettercaps.

The PCs could always just set fire to the building, which destroys all treasure in the secret recess in the floor. If the PCs do use this unsportsmanlike tactic, consult the fire rules in the

Ettercaps & Spiders

Wilderness Survival Guide. Remember that the entire building is made of wood, the webs inside are flammable, and there are trees and plants touching the building. Things could get out of control very quickly.

In the northwest corner of the outpost, a trap door lies concealed in the floor (Treat this as a secret door for any detection attempts). The trap door is four by four feet.

Below the trap door is a recess, within which is a beautiful sheathed *long sword +2 flame tongue*, a suit of elf sized *elven chain*, a *shield +2* with a realistic oak leaf painted on it, a *longbow +1*, a quiver of 12 *sheaf arrows +1*, and a steel coffer. The coffer is locked.

Inside the coffer sit a dozen emeralds worth 100 gp each, a platinum headband set with a single emerald, total worth 2,000 gp, a silver holy symbol of Solonar Thelandira (elven god of archery) worth 25 gp, two jars of *Keoghtom's ointment*, and a *magic missile scroll* written at 10th level ability. The coffer has a false bottom. The space holds a scrap of parchment with the word "aloria" written on it (the command word for the sword).

A three by three foot trap door is located in the middle of the ceiling. It is presently closed. There is an old locking mechanism, but it has not been used. There is no ladder to facilitate access to the trap door.

No matter how the PCs get to the trap door, an Open Doors roll has to be made to open it. After all, it has not been opened in centuries. When the door is opened and PCs begin moving through it, they are attacked by a group of huge spiders that lurk here amidst the dead branches on the roof.

Huge Spiders (6): AC 6; Mv 18; HD 2+2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Surprise and poison; ML 8; AL N. The spiders leap out of the dead branches, in hopes of surprising the PCs (-6 on PC surprise rolls).

The observation platform is an old, rickety structure, overgrown with plants. Due to the great number of trees in the area, the view is severely limited. It is apparent that the forest was much thinner during this outpost's heyday. A ladder still stands to provide access to the top of the platform from the outpost roof. The observation platform itself consists of a six by six foot floor with four posts that support an equal sized roof. There are no walls.

If more than 300 pounds of weight is placed on the platform, there is one chance on a d6 that the entire platform comes tumbling down. The three oak trees are within arm's reach of the platform. PCs can attempt to grab hold of a branch and travel along the length of one of the trees. This requires a climbing proficiency check. Using the guidelines set forth in the WSG, consider the surface Rough slope, Severe.

If the PCs remain inside the outpost proper, the ettercaps and their remaining spider allies seal the adventurers' doom. If one or two PCs are kept outside the building as guards, the ettercaps send two giant spiders to silence them. This includes making an attempt to gag the guards using spiderwebs. There is one ettercap lurking in each of the three trees that surround the outpost. Each one lairs deep in the heart of the branches, about 75 feet up from the ground.

Two giant spiders live with each ettercap, acting as bodyguards and "watchdogs". For battles in the trees, the spiders will always be encountered before the ettercaps.

Once the ettercaps realize that their actions have not been seen, they and their giant spider allies spin thick webs and seal off the entire building, choking every slit and exit with a large amount of sticky webs. They begin with the front door, proceed to the ceiling trap door, then finish with the arrow slits. In essence, the monsters turn the building into a giant cocoon.

The entire dastardly deed takes one turn to accomplish. It takes three Strength rolls to break a door free of the webs. During this

time, of course, the spiders can sense the vibrations along the web and rush to attack the PC who is attempting to break out. The ettercaps wish to just let the PCs starve.

Conscientious DMs should warn PCs that if they attempt to burn their way out, they may just succeed in setting themselves on fire as well. All of the webs will catch fire and burn down the outpost with the PCs still inside.

Should the PCs not fall for this trick and instead figure out that something truly nasty dwells in the three oaks, the ettercaps have their traps all set up in their respective trees. Finding them requires either a successful findremove traps or detect snares and pits.

The west oak has a series of trigger branches set up at its 50 foot mark. If a PC grabs one for leverage, it gives way. The branches are connected to large, thick, but supple branches that are held in place under great tension. Pulling a trigger branch releases the larger branch which acts like a giant broom. PCs must make either a climbing proficiency check or roll half their Dexterity or less, lest they be swept right off the tree. A nasty 50 foot fall awaits those who fail either of these rolls. Each PC takes 2d6 points of damage from the sweep plus 5d6 falling damage.

The branch is set to break off on impact, sending it hurtling down on the PCs. The branch weighs 200 pounds. Once on the ground, each PC must make a Dexterity ability check or take an additional 2d6 points of damage from the falling branch. If a PC is hit by the branch, there is a chance (50%) of being pinned.

The north oak has a net of webs set up at its 40 foot mark. Each PC must make a Dexterity ability check or be stuck. Once the trap is sprung, the resident ettercap and his spiders attack.

The eastern oak has a series of false branches that are nothing but large masses of sticky webs with twigs and leaves covering them. These branches are located at the 45 foot mark in all directions. Touching one of these branches results in the victim being held fast as if in a spider web. Each PC who reaches the 45 foot mark has four chances on a d6 of being stuck fast. The ettercaps use the opportunity to attack anyone who is not stuck, then turn their attention to the helpless victims.

DMs should note that the traps are set up at the right height for PCs who get the idea to invade the trees by climbing up the observation platform and shinnying up one of the overhanging branches.

Ettercaps (3): AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA Poison and webs; ML 13; AL NE. Though only two ettercaps at the most are ever encountered in an area, the third ettercap is just passing through and is staying for just a few weeks. This is the ettercap in the northern tree, as is evidenced by the simplicity of his trap.

Giant Spiders (6): AC 4; MV 3; wb 12; HD 4+4; hp 36; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison and webs; ML 13; AL CE. These spiders are the special, well-fed and cared-for pets of the ettercaps, hence their full hit points per hit die. The slaying of any of these spiders moves the ettercaps into a fighting frenzy.

The ettercaps and spiders themselves do not have any treasure. However, the monsters have slain a few victims (though they did not use the outpost trick). Any PC who feels so inspired can search the area for possible cast-off treasure. The entire area is about 1600 square feet. For every 100 square feet searched, there is a 5% chance of finding one of the following: rusted *short sword (+1+3 vs. lycanthropes and shapechangers)*, *sling of seeking +2*, *wand of metal and mineral detection* (8 charges left), an old pouch with 10 gp, an old pouch with six agates worth 20 gp each, a brass ring with mysterious runes on it (5 gp), and a *buckle knife +4*. Each item can be found only once!

If the PCs were sent here to fetch the plants, they are to be rewarded according to the terms set down in the Set Up. If the PCs set the outpost on fire and the druid is informed of this, the PCs lose their reward, though they get to keep their lives.

Manticores & Griffons

Terrain:	Mountains
Total Party Levels:	40 (Average 5th)
Total g.p.:	3,632 gp

Set Up

• The same druid who sent the party looking for rare herbs has another task for the players. The druid has recently happened upon a clutch of griffon eggs (two to be exact). The eggs have to be returned to their proper nest, which is located high up on a mountain. As far as a reward is concerned, the druid cryptically declares that such things will come in time. What the PCs do not know is that the druid gave the griffons half a treasure map for safekeeping, and the creatures will relinquish it to whoever returns the eggs.

• While travelling through mountainous terrain, the PCs see a group of four manticores killing two griffons in a spectacular mid air battle. The griffons appeared to have been defending something in their nest. Something large. Something which catches the sun's rays and dazzles the PCs. Something golden. The nest is set high up a mountainside, something which requires a dangerous climb. Whatever the thing is, it must be big if it can be seen from so far below. After the manticores kill the griffons, the horrid batwinged things fly off.

The Lair

The griffon lair is not the primary issue here. The manticore nest located on the same mountain but on the opposite face is the issue. The griffon nest is set on the eastern face of the mountain and is quite a sheer drop. The manticore nest is on the western face, where the mountainside is a bit better suited for climbing.

DMs should consult the Climbing rules in the *Wilderness Survival Guide*. The east face of the mountain should be considered Normal slope, severe. The west face is Rough slope, severe. If the PCs ask, the north and south slopes are both Cliff, smooth, no ledges. All surface conditions are rated as Non-slippery. If the DM is using the weather rules and changes in the weather occur, the conditions could change.

Speaking of weather, gusts of wind of 5-60 (5d12) miles per hour are frequent hazards. These gusts of wind come from nowhere and last for 2-20 (2d10) minutes. The WSG gives rules for moving and fighting in windy conditions.

There is one insidious feature to the east face of the mountain: at the 5,000 foot mark, the surface becomes Cliff, smooth, no ledges. This lasts for 1,500 feet. PCs must go around to the west side if they want to have favorable conditions again.

PC with the mountaineering proficiency are a valuable part of the group, as are rogues and their climbing ability. DMs should make a careful note as to what equipment the PCs are carrying, not only for the purposes of determining encumbrance (the PCs will be lifting themselves and their heavy equipment up the mountain) but also for determining what climbing options are open to the PCs. After all, it is hard to use grappling hooks to climb the mountain if no one brought any.

Both lairs are located at an elevation of 7,000 feet. The manticores use a cave that is well-concealed until the party is almost on top of it. The griffons' lair is an open-air nest with a few hardy trees for shade and protection from rain. The mountain itself is 14,555 feet high, with a dense fog covering the last 2,000 feet.

At the 4,500 foot mark, on the west side of the mountain, there is an empty cave 80 feet in diameter. This would be a perfect place for the party to rest. In fact, the cave shows signs of having been used long ago as a rest stop of some sort, judging by the very old remains of campfires and the nearly worn smooth runes scratched into the cave walls. A successful read languages roll reveals the following message: "Borhald the Ranger passed here. Venture not any further up the great mount. 'Tis not the domain of man but of winged creatures."



The cave has no inherent dangers, though PCs who stay in it overnight have a 10% chance of spotting 1-4 manticores on a nocturnal hunt. Each manticore has a seven in 20 chance of spotting the PCs in the cave, though the chance is doubled to 14 if the PCs have a brightly burning campfire in the cave. If the PCs have taken extra precautions to conceal the cave or themselves, the chance of being detected drops to two in 20. Initial manticore range from the cave is 500 feet. Initial altitude from sea level is 4,700 feet.

Manticores who spot the party begin a dive for the cave entrance, firing off one volley of spikes to "soften up" their victims. They fly right into the cave, claws flailing. Consider this a charge, with the appropriate bonuses and penalties. If the monsters are outnumbered two to one or more, they fight their way back to the cave mouth and take to the air again. Otherwise, the manticores attack the PCs in hopes of securing a good supply of fresh food.

If there are any halflings or gnomes in the party, a manticore may attempt to grab one and fly out of the cave. Once outside, the horrible beast drops the demi-human from the great height in hopes of killing the victim, then swooping down and collecting its ready-made meal.

Manticores (1-4): AC 4; MV 12, Fl 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA Tail spikes; ML 14; AL LE. These creatures have no treasure on them; this is a food raid. They are not from the nest on this mountain, but from an adjacent peak. This entire area is infested with manticores, most of which are recent arrivals, moving in on what has been griffon territory until recently.

If the PC do not camp out in the cave, DMs should inflict them with the 1-4 manticores anyway, making it an outdoor encounter somewhere halfway up the mountain. Do not roll random encounters on this mountain! This place is under control of the manticores, with occasional clashes with the former residents.

The environment around the griffon nest is rough rock with three stubborn trees growing up behind the nest, their branches spread as a "canopy" 30 feet above the nest. Approaching the nest is a dangerous affair; the terrain is classified as Smooth slope, moderate.

The griffon nest is a round structure 40 feet in diameter and 16 feet deep. The nest is made up of leaves and branches (espe-

Manticores & Griffons

cially from the adjoining three old trees), and bones of cattle and game animals. A *staff of striking*, a *wand of enemy detection*, a *rod of smiting*, and a bone scroll case are mixed into the building materials. The items can be found only if either magic is detected for, or the PCs roll an ability check using half their Wisdom. A successful check means that the PC in question finds one of the above items. The bone scroll case contains a scroll of *protection from undead*.

The western section of the nest leads into a 20 foot semi-circular depression in the mountain's face. Settled snugly in this depression are two griffon eggs. Each egg is 18 inches long, 10 inches wide, and weighs 25 pounds. Both eggs will hatch in a fortnight. Scattered in the depression are 26 gp, 22 pp, and a pretty aquamarine worth 500 gp.

A large (128") golden statue sits on the rim of the nest. It is hollow, and made of brass with a thin gold overlay. It weighs 75 pounds, and sits on the rim of the griffons' nest. The gold can be scraped off (this takes two hours), netting the PCs 100 gp. The statue depicts a robed woman with a crown of leaves, holding a sickle in her right hand. It is a druid, the same druid that sent the PCs to return the eggs, if that Set Up was used. (NOTE: No matter which set-up you use, the druid's relationship with the griffons is clear. This statue is a gift from the druid to the griffons. Defacing the statue in any way automatically incites the griffons' wrath!)

The griffons are not present if the PCs climb up to the nest in the daylight. They are off hunting, but return five rounds after the PCs arrive.

Griffons (3): AC 3; Mv 12, Fl 30 (C); HD 7; hp 56; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-16; ML 12; AL N. There are two females and one male. The male is the last surviving griffon of its gender in this area. It is battle-scarred and tough, being the dominant male of this pride. This majestic creature is concerned for the pitiful remains of his pride.

If the PCs were sent to return the eggs, they had better speak up quickly either by spells or by hand gestures. The battle-hardened (perhaps shell-shocked) griffons are enraged at seeing intruders in their nest.

If a rapport is somehow set up with the griffons, the male expresses his concern for his mates and the eggs. The area is overrun with manticores, the worst being the ones on the other side of the mountain. If that pack were exterminated, the manticores on the other mountains would think twice about coming around to this mountain again. The PCs should feel free to step in at this point and offer their services. The three adults even volunteer to take three riders over to the manticore nest.

Bear in mind that if the PCs try to persuade the griffons to give them their eggs, under no circumstances will the griffons part with them. These eggs are the only hope the griffons have of repopulating the region.

The manticore nest is located on terrain classified as Normal slope, severe. The lair is a circular cave 135 feet in diameter, with an entrance 40 feet wide. There is a 30 foot drop from the entrance to the cave floor, while the ceiling is set 90 feet from the entrance.

The floor is littered with bones of humans, griffons, and livestock. In a grisly imitation of other evil creatures who hoard magic and treasure, a three-weeks-dead manticore rests atop a pile of valuables. Needless to say, the cave smells terrible.

There is a 75% chance that the manticores are "at home", regardless of the time of day. If they are not present, the beasts are out hunting, and return in 2d10 minutes. The only living creatures are the three eight-month-old manticore cubs prancing around the lair.

Manticore Cubs (3): AC 4, MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1-2; ML 4; AL LE. The cubs have the faces of

little boys, bearing a disturbing resemblance to schoolyard bullies. Like bullies, they attack until one cub is injured, then turn tail and run to the farthest point of the cave.

When the two mated pairs of manticores return, they are infuriated to find humans and demi-humans in their lair. If the cubs have been injured or killed, the manticores will be in a homicidal berserker rage, increasing the monsters' base morale as reflected below.

Angry Manticores (4): AC 4; MV 12, Fl 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 51, 50, 42, 38; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; ML 14 (18); AL LE. If the PCs are planning on using the griffons to conduct an aerial battle against the manticores, the DM should be aware that the manticores attack from the southwest in a diamond formation, cruising at an altitude of 7,300 feet. DMs should check the WSG section that deals with flying mounts.

The manticores are not interested in verbal communication of any sort. They want blood.

The treasure hoard of the vile beasts (once the rotting manticore carcass is removed) consists of a heap of 3,440 sp and 2,724 gp, all mixed together. Buried at the bottom of this pile is a *shield +1*, a *cloak of elvenkind*, and a suit of halfling-sized *leather armor +2*.

If the manticores are indeed defeated, the griffons are grateful. Regardless of the PCs' success in either of the "egg" Set Ups, the male griffon shows the PCs a leather pouch that is secured around the creature's neck, and tells them to remove open the container.

Inside the pouch is a map to a treasure hoard. The griffon tells the PCs that the map is now theirs. This is the reward that the druid spoke of. The griffons know the druid personally, since she was the one who set them up on this mountain a decade ago. The creatures have a fierce love for the druid, and convinced her to give them a likeness of her for their nest.

If the PCs rode any of the griffons in battle against the manticores, make a reaction roll for each steed using the Indifferent column. Do not include any bonuses or penalties except for the pride leader, who gets a +4 modifier. If a Friendly result is rolled, that particular griffon offers to serve as a steed for the PC who rode him or her in battle.

For further adventures, the PCs could be sent by the druid to find out just who caused the manticores to swarm over the mountain range. Did some evil wizard summon the creatures to the area to act as guards for his complex, also hidden in these mountains? Or were the manticores driven out of their old stomping grounds by an even bigger threat? Only time and the DM will tell.

White Dragon

Terrain: Arctic (all terrain)
Total Party Levels: 88 (Average 11th)
Total g.p.: 38,325 gp

Set Up

- As the PCs are struggling through a howling blizzard, they catch a fleeting glimpse of a vast castle seemingly made of solid ice. The structure is set upon a hill. Lying next to this beautiful building is a vast white lump, definitely draconian in shape.

- In the course of their travels through the frozen wastes of the North, the PCs come upon a small town, protected by a large wall. A huge snowstorm looms on the horizon. It arrives in seven hours. Patrols make frequent rounds in the town, and watch-towers bristle with spearmen and archers.

The tavern talk is about Old Frostjaw, a male white dragon of colossal size. As the oft-quoted proverb goes, "With every blizzard comes cutting wind, bone-chilling ice, suffocating snow, and the freezing death of the White Wurm". Old Frostjaw, White Wurm, White Dragon, Icicle Teeth, Freezing Death With Wings, all names that mean the same thing: a huge white dragon that attacks the town whenever a snowstorm hits. The dragon has been doing this for centuries. Its treasure hoard is considered beyond counting.

The town is not part of any kingdom, so it cannot appeal to a Crown for protection. Several bands of adventurers have been asked to go slay the beast. The groups either flat-out refused, went to the lair and returned in full retreat terrorized (and less a few heroes), or went to the lair and never returned. The last group, a band of eight adventurers, set out three days ago. If the PCs are willing, they will be provided with a map and sent on their journey.

- While plodding through a snowstorm in a frozen arctic waste, the PCs see a group of eight statues in the distance. Drawing closer, the PCs discover to their horror that they have stumbled upon a party of eight adventurers, frozen solid with their death screams still showing on their faces. A proficiency check using healing reveal that the group died sometime between yesterday and eight days ago.

Whatever attacked them did so from the sky, for the vast majority of the victims are looking upward. If any PCs are feeling rather ghoulish, all of the victims' items are ruined. The victims include a heavily armored dwarf male, a robed human female, a male gnome in leather armor, a female in plate armor wielding a bastard sword, a holy symbol emblazoned on her breastplate (paladin), a male human in furs and wielding a battleaxe, a female halfling in leather armor, a male human in clerical garb, and a male elf in chainmail, frozen in the act of firing a bow.

The only salvagable item is a piece of leather hide parchment on the paladin. It is a map showing a small town (see second Set Up), and a series of hills to the northeast. Anyone with the direction sense proficiency can read the map and tell where things are located, provided a proficiency check is made (with a +3 bonus to the proficiency). The town appears to be half a day's march, the hills a six hour march. There is a single word scrawled over the hills on the map: "Wurm".

DM's Information

Though white dragons are the least intelligent of dragonkind, this fellow has had an unusual run of good luck. First of all, the dragon has a scarlet and blue spherical ioun stone orbiting his head. This boosts his intelligence by one point. Secondly, the dragon found a *gem of insight*, which increased its intelligence again by one point. Thirdly, the dragon came upon a *Tome of Clear Thought*, which he read, and gained yet another point of intelligence. The end result is a white dragon with great wisdom



and an intelligence score of ten. PCs who dismiss white dragons as stupid nasty brutes are in for a horrible surprise. This dragon has gained brains and is ready to use them.

The dragon's favorite raiding tactic is to attack during a snowstorm. The great beast is less affected by the high winds and driving snows that hamper the human and demi-human defenders of the town. Furthermore, the terror that accompanies a wild, raging storm is the perfect supplement to the paralyzing feeling of dragonfear. The town defenders' morale is at a low during the storms and raids.

The town has a militia of 50 humans and 50 dwarves. The humans wear studded leather, and carry long bows, flight arrows, short swords, spears, and daggers. They are first level fighters with eight hit points, all of varying good alignments, and an eight morale rating.

The dwarves have chain armor, battleaxes, light crossbows and bolts, and short swords. They are second level fighters with 15 hit points, all of lawful good alignment, and a 12 morale rating.

PCs who advocate taking command of the militia, setting up a defense and waiting for the dragon to come to them, may do so. The AD&D Battlesystem™ rules can be used to resolve the battle. If this tack is used and the white dragon is slain, the PCs are in for a rude surprise if they think that the lair is now unoccupied.

Old Frostjaw, being an intelligent white dragon, no longer does his own raiding. He has made an agreement with another white dragon, in which the lesser intelligent dragon goes on raids planned by Old Frostjaw. The two creatures split the spoils and the dumber dragon goes back to its own lair. Frostjaw has no intention of leaving his hoard unguarded for a measly mouthful of cow!

The other dragon is called Bloodblizzard, and he is not as old as Old Frostjaw. The townsfolk are not aware of the duplicity, as it is rather difficult for one to tell white dragons apart in a snowstorm while one is being breathed up on.

Bloodblizzard (Not very smart adult white dragon): AC -1; MV 12, Fl 40 (C), Br 6, Sw 12; HD 13; hp 75; THAC0 7; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1-6+6/1-6+6/2-16+6; SA Breath weapon 6d6+6, dragonfear 20 yards save at +2; MR 10%; ML 16; AL CE. Bloodblizzard has an effective intelligence of five. He is stupid, brutish, and easily manipulated or confused. Bloodbliz-

White Dragon

zard dwells on a hillside 40 miles north of Old Frostjaw, and has no treasure whatsoever (Frostjaw conned him out of it).

The Lair

Travel to Old Frostjaw's lair is a daunting undertaking. The snowstorm impedes progress as well as potential combat. No random encounters need be rolled for the trip, since no sentient creature is about to intrude on the domain of a white dragon.

Using the weather system outlined in the Wilderness Survival Guide, the storm is classified as a Severe snowstorm. Effective temperature is 25 degrees Fahrenheit. There is a strong wind blowing in from the north, at 50 miles per hour. This unusual storm lasts for 15 hours and dumps one and a half inches of snow per hour. Consult the WSG for wind chill, movement and combat penalties, and other possible environmental factors. PCs with the weather sense proficiency can have the DM roll a proficiency check for them to see if they can ascertain the storm's statistics. The DM should make the check secretly, giving the PC a false reading if the check is not successful ("Oh, yeah, you can tell that this storm will let up in two hours or so...no problem. You're sure of your instincts on this one...").

Regardless of which Set Up is being used, the storm is already over Old Frostjaw's lair. As mentioned before, the storm lasts for 15 hours over any given area. If the PCs are still in the area when it blows over, DMs can either roll for new conditions, or use the following: as the storm blows away, skies turn crisp and clear though the temperature drops to 10 degrees and the wind shifts to the southwest at 30 miles per hour, with occasional gusts to 50 miles per hour. Bear in mind that the 10 degrees temperature is the daytime temperature. It gets worse at night.

When the party comes to the hillside that Old Frostjaw prowls around, they can make out the following when they get into visual range. There is only one feature that breaks up the white monotony of the arctic landscape: a gently sloping hill which ascends to an apex of 750 feet. Atop the hill are a castle made of solid ice, and a menacing draconian shape that appears to be sleeping next to the castle. The top of the hill covers a space about 100 yards in diameter. The party is facing the western slope of the hill.

The castle made of solid ice stands on the peak of the hill. The structure is 80 feet high, and has an area of 1,000 square feet. A single open entrance on the castle's western wall is the only way to gain entry. The walls are topped with icy parapets, and a 100 foot high tower stands at each corner. Though the entire structure is made of ice, PCs cannot see through many of the walls. There appear to be several unmoving, indistinct shapes beyond the walls.

The draconian shape is about 90 feet long. It does not move when the PCs approach, and with good reason. The thing is made entirely of snow. This is Old Frostjaw's idea of a decoy and a joke. The snowdragon is set up 100 feet south of the castle.

The castle has no roof. The interior is nothing but an oversized maze with an occasional blast-frozen victim set up as a gruesome decoration. Old Frostjaw loves swooping down on the castle and breathing frost down on the adventurers who are trying to negotiate the maze.

The maze leads nowhere, and its exact hallways do not matter. The initial hallway which starts off at the entrance goes 70 feet into the castle (heading east), then branches into a north-south T-intersection. From there, the hallways twist and turn randomly at 20 foot intervals. The ice walls disorient would-be explorers' senses of direction. PCs swear that they see things moving out of the corners of their eyes. Proficiency checks using either tracking or direction sense are needed every round in order to keep the party from getting lost. Once lost, the PCs can attempt to retrace their steps or get their bearings once per turn, again

using tracking or direction sense, but at a -2 penalty to the skill.

PCs who climb to the top of the hill and look down the other (east) side see a vast structure set up 100 feet from the bottom of the hill's eastern face. It appears to be a chaotic jumble of great stones and massive tree trunks (obtained from someplace far from here, no doubt) frozen together into a gigantic cone-shaped pile 200 feet high, and 400 feet at the base. This is Old Frostjaw's lair.

Access is gained by climbing up the pile and entering through the hole at the apex. The hole is 95 feet wide. Use the climbing rules in the WSG, treating the surface as Rough slope, moderate.

Inside this huge ice cone lies Old Frostjaw. It is difficult to see him because of his coloration against the snow-encrusted walls of the lair. Infravision cannot spot him, for he loves to use snow as a blanket. In fact, if the PCs climbed up the cone, Old Frostjaw felt the vibrations and has taken steps to conceal himself. He lies in wait, absolutely still under a layer of snow.

Old Frostjaw (Venerable White Dragon): AC 8-5; MV 12, Fl 40 (C), Br 6, Sw 12; HD 17; hp 119; THAC0 3; #AT 3+special; Dmg 1-6+10/1-6+10/2-16+10; SA breath weapon 10d6+10, dragonfear 40 yards save at -2; Spells: *Magic missile*, *color spray*, *taunt*; MR 30%; ML 16; AL CE. Old Frostjaw is a formidable opponent who revels in his new found intelligence. Though the dragon is probably smarter than any other white dragon in existence, this still does not mean much. However, it says much to Old Frostjaw, who has become overconfident of his mental prowess. This dragon will actually talk to PCs if the opportunity arises (he speaks Common)! This may be his downfall.

Old Frostjaw's treasure includes the *ioun stone* that orbits his head, the *gem of insight* (can be used again since it was used by the dragon 52 years ago), a *bastard sword*, *frost brand*, *long sword*, *flame tongue*, *spear +3*, *shield +2*, *plate armor +2*, *chain mail +3*, *dwarven chain mail +1*, *two rings of warmth*, a *ring of feather falling*, a *necklace of adaptation*, a *staff of curing*, a *figurine of wondrous power—onyx dog*, an *amulet of inescapable location*, *boots of the north*, and a *potion of extra healing*. Additionally, the dragon has 4,500 sp, 1,800 pp, and 12 diamonds worth 1,000 gp each. All of this treasure is frozen in a semicircular hollow 25 feet deep.

The treasure is buried under at least 10 feet of ice, making it difficult to find. Each PC must make an ability check using half of his Intelligence. A successful check means that someone has noticed some dark shapes in the ice, though exact forms cannot be made out. Detection spells would be useful here.

One smart thing that Frostjaw did was to create an escape tunnel from the cone. A circular area 70 feet in diameter exists in the eastern section of the lair floor, which is made up of nothing but packed snow, no ground underneath it. It takes at least 500 pounds of weight on the circle area for it to collapse.

The hole is an opening into a tunnel that goes down vertically for 90 feet, then becomes horizontal, stretching eastward for 180 feet, slowly rising to the surface. The tunnel opens out into the fresh air, though it is covered from casual eyes by a layer of icy snow.

Old Frostjaw has also secreted a minor treasure stash near the secret exit, as an emergency nest egg. Stored inside a 60 pound *bag of holding* are 1,000 pp, 2,000 sp, a matched set of a dozen diamonds, each worth 1,000 gp, a *potion of ESP*, *potion of longevity*, a *ring of shooting stars*, a *wand of conjuration*, a *talisman of Zagy*, a *scimitar nine lives stealer*, and a *helm of opposite alignment*.

If the PCs wish, they may be informed about the second white dragon, perhaps by Old Frostjaw himself. It must be stressed that Bloodblizzard does not have his own treasure. Frostjaw's hoard includes the lesser intelligent dragon's fortunes.

Orcs, Orog and Half-Orcs

Terrain: Desert
Total Party Levels: 32 (Average 4th)
Total g.p.: 61gp + 500 gp per PC

Set Up

- A merchant company hires the PCs to act as advance scouts on a caravan route that goes through a desert. What particularly interests the merchants is the Slaker Oasis, located three days from the caravan's starting point. The oasis is a popular stopover for caravans, and though it is neutral ground, unscrupulous elements have been known to seize control of the water for brief intervals, charging exorbitant rates to thirsty travelers who wish a drink.

The PCs will be paid 500 gp each, 250 gp now and 250 gp when the caravan catches up to the adventurers several days from now. The merchants want the PCs to ride as far as the oasis and keep it secure until the caravan arrives. Besides the gold, PCs are allowed "salvage rights" on any valuables found on any outlaws or monsters slain in the process of securing and/or defending the water.

- The PCs are in the desert looking for an ancient lost temple. As they travel across the wasteland, the adventurers see a stone marker lying partially buried in the sand. The stone's surface is covered with runes, in an ancient form of Common. A successful Read Languages roll, a proficiency check in ancient Common (if anyone chose that specific language), or at the very least an ability check using half of the PC's Intelligence, reveals that water and an outpost of some sort lie one day's ride to the south.

- The PCs are traveling through a desert, though they have no particular goal or aim that needs addressing in this locale. They are merely going from point A to point B, and using the desert as a traveling route.

The PCs come upon a stone marker written in modern common which points out the presence of an oasis about a half day's ride to the south. The sign is riddled with black-tailed arrows. Also, approximately 40 sets of human-sized footprints proceed toward the oasis. No tracking proficiency check is needed to see the tracks. If the PCs wish to determine who made the tracks, a proficiency check using a halved tracking proficiency score reveals that the creatures were doing a forced march, and they were not quite human.

Anyone checking the arrows need only roll an Intelligence ability check to see that the missiles are of goblinoid manufacture.

The Lair

Before the PCs get to the oasis, they must deal with one of the harshest facts of life in the desert: the climate. The effective daytime temperature is 90 degrees Fahrenheit, with no wind and no humidity. Consult the *Wilderness Survival Guide* for effects of high temperatures. Nighttime temperature drops to 50 degrees.

Two hours before the PCs are slated to arrive at the oasis, a sandstorm hits. For five hours, winds come roaring in from the east at 50 miles per hour. PCs would do well to seek shelter. The terrain is rather flat, with only an occasional lonely dune to break up the monotony of the landscape. There is a 15% chance of finding a dune, though such a check can only be made once every three turns of actual travel. PCs who have the survival, desert proficiency are sorely needed in this environment, especially to find water. The WSG has tables for the chances of finding water in any terrain.

If the PCs have mounts, there is yet another problem to overcome: Non-camels panic in the sandstorm, requiring PCs to calm them down. PCs with animal handling skill are best used here.

There is another group caught in the sandstorm, a squad of orcs that have come from the oasis and are here on patrol. The



PCs catch sight of the orcs right before the storm hits, and they have an option of trying to press forward and attack. The orcs are busy trying to entrench themselves in the sand and await the lifting of the storm, unless they have spotted the PCs, in which case the humanoids attempt to close range and attack, sandstorm notwithstanding! The probability of the orcs spotting the PCs is 55%. Use the Visibility Range section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to figure out who sees what.

Orcs (8): AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword), 1-6 (arrows); ML 12; AL LE. This patrol is armed with long swords, short bows, and 24 flight arrows. The arrows are blacktailed. The orcs and the PCs are 1500 yards apart 20 minutes before the storm arrives in the area.

If any PC has the presence of mind to capture an orc alive and attempts to extract information either magically or by intimidation, a successful attempt reveals the following. The orc is part of a war party that is currently occupying the oasis. There are about three dozen orcs, including a sub-chief, a pack of orogs, and a half-orc cleric. The group is set up in some ruins next to the oasis. The war party's original goal was to raid caravans, but the sub-chief got the group lost two weeks ago. In that time, 42 orcs died of thirst, and 23 died of excessive whining (at the hands of other orcs). The orc prisoner has no exact numbers (he's just a foot soldier).

After the storm blows over, the PCs may continue on their way to the oasis. Remember that the storm lasts for five hours, and keep track of the time of day.

The oasis itself is a large body of fresh water that is fed by an underground stream. The pool is oval shaped, 100 feet long and 60 feet wide at its widest point. A dozen palm and date trees grow along the banks of the oasis. The terrain is flat, so PCs have little hope of spying out the oasis from the safe vantage point of a convenient sand dune. DMs should keep in mind the amount of daylight and the weather conditions in order to determine visibility for both sides.

The PCs initially approach from the north. There is a stretch of ancient wall ten feet high and 90 feet long, which stands between the PCs and the north side of the oasis. On the west bank of the oasis stands an old building 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and ten feet high. The building's east wall is a pile of rubble, but the other three walls are intact. A pair of orogs guards the fallen east

Orcs, Orog and Half-Orcs

wall.

Another building stands on the south shore of the oasis. This building is 70 feet long, 35 feet wide, and 15 feet high. A large heap of rubble marks where the south wall once stood. Another pair of orogs stand guard at this rubble-wall.

Southeast of the oasis, a series of four tents and six lean-tos are set up. A cook fire pit lies in the middle of the jumble of shelters. An orc battle standard stands defiantly in the middle of the camp. All of these things have been put back up after the storm passed by. Obviously the orc warband weathered the storm fairly well.

What the PCs cannot see is that a dozen orcs are on standby behind the ruined wall. Furthermore, one orc sentry sits in each tree, each one scanning an assigned compass direction. They can signal to the 12 orcs lurking behind the wall whenever intruders are sighted. The orcs on duty ready bows and arrows, and the sentries quietly spread the word throughout the encampment by use of hand signals.

The orc sub-chief uses the building on the west bank of the oasis as his head quarters and sleeping area. The half-orc shaman uses the building on the oasis' south edge as his own sleeping area as well as a makeshift shrine to Grummsh, the chief orc god.

The eight orogs are split into two groups of four. One group is responsible for guarding the sub-chief, the other group watches the priest. Each group sleeps in the building of its respective charge.

The regular orcs have to be content with using the few tents in their possession, as well as building lean-tos. Consider the tents to be Adequate, Large shelters, and the lean-tos to be Poor, Medium shelters, using the Portable Shelters rules found in the WSG.

The entire war-band is here to recover from their trek in the desert. They plan to move on once they find some victims to help them replenish their food, gold, and equipment stocks. The sub-chief is hoping for a caravan to pass through here soon.

Orcs (36): AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword), 1-6 (arrows); ML 12; AL LE. There are always 24 orcs awake. The remaining 12 are sleeping in the tents and lean-tos, unless of course the oasis is attacked. The orcs have no treasure.

Orog (8): AC 4; MV 6; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (two-handed sword), 1-6 (arrows); SA +1 to damage; ML 14; AL LE. The orogs are the personal guards of the sub-chief and the priest. These brutes are fanatically loyal to their charges. The orogs have no treasure.

Tomarg Backhand (orc sub-chief): AC 1; MV 9; HD 5; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+2 *long sword* +2, 1-4+3 (*dagger of venom*); ML 16; AL LE. Equipment: human sized *studded leather* +2, *shield* +3, *long sword* +2, *dagger of venom* +3, vial of poison Type P (ten doses), a *ring of fire resistance*, and a *potion of heroism*. Tomarg is a veteran campaigner who has increased his skills beyond what a normal orc could hope to aspire to. He got his last name from his favorite manner of disciplining troops, answering an insult, disagreeing with someone, or showing his displeasure. Tomarg is a military genius who made just one big mistake: trying to cross a desert without proper preparation.

Khark Godspeaker (half-orc cleric): AC 4; MV 9; C 5; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-4 (*staff of the serpent*); ML 17; AL LE. Equipment: human sized *scale mail armor* +1, *staff of the serpent (adder)*, *ring of spell turning*. Spells: first level—*detect good*, *command*, *cure light wounds*, *protection from good*. Second level—*hold person*, *silence 15 foot radius*, *know alignment*. Third level—*animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *prayer*.

Khark is a cleric of Grummsh, the chief orc deity. As a sign of devotion, Khark removed his own right eye. The priest is a

fanatic, and he starts many of his sentences with "Grummsh has declared...." Currently, Khark is the most popular figure in the war-band despite his half-orc heritage. It was Khark who predicted that the orcs would find water, and sure enough they did. Everyone forgets that Khark said the same thing every day: "Grummsh has declared that today water will be found."

The orc battle standard set up in camp gives the orcs a +1 to their attack rolls and morale checks. The standard represents the Bloody Blade, the tribe from which this war-band comes. The orcs protect the battle standard with their lives.

Although the orcs anticipate raiding a caravan, they are certainly willing to attack a handful of adventurers. The orcs will attempt to take prisoners, since slaves are always a good source of income. Tomarg and Khark are not in the mood to parley.

When the battle is joined, all of the orcs participate. The sub-chief and the priest certainly fight, but their orog squads remain close at hand. The regular orc forces attempt to use arrows until the invaders are within melee range. As mentioned before, the orcs may try to feign ignorance of the PCs' presence, lulling the PCs into a state of complacency until the intruders are within medium range of their short bows. If the PCs charge the camp, yelling bloodcurdling screams and waving weapons, the orcs will attack. The orcs' pretense happens only if the PCs attempt to sneak up on the oasis.

The interior of the sub-chief's building is a sandy-floored ruin with a bedroll in the corner farthest from the entrance. The orogs' four bedrolls are located just past the entrance. Tomarg has a treasure stash under his bedroll, consisting of a burlap bag with 50 gp and 220 sp. This is all that remains of the war-party's fortunes. There is also a large clay pot with six pounds of figs, picked from the trees growing at the side of the oasis.

Like the sub-chief, the priest has a bedroll in the farthest corner of his building, and four orog bedrolls are near the entrance. The priest's building also has a mound of stones resembling an altar. A single blood-red eye is scrawled on the front on the altar. This is the shrine, such as it is, to Grummsh. Due to Khark's efforts, the building is encased in an evil aura of divine origin. Consequently, all good-aligned PCs suffer a -1 penalty to their attack rolls and saving throws. Destroying the altar removes the evil presence.

Neither building has windows, furniture, interior walls or partitions. What Tomarg and Khark are unaware of is that both buildings have trap doors in their sand-covered floors. These trap doors are located in the center of each building's floor, and both trap doors lead to lower building levels. What the orcs have come upon is not a couple of ruined one-story buildings, but rather the top floors of larger buildings that are part of a lost city, buried under the sand centuries ago!

If the PCs are defeated, Tomarg attempts to take them alive. Once captured, the PCs are tied up and tossed into Khark's quarters. The orcs then wait for the caravan (which arrives in 2-5 days). They attack, slaughter the merchants, salvage the loot and break camp, taking the PCs with them, hopefully to a slave market. DMs can play through the rest of the desert trek, and even what happens to the PCs in the city.

If the PCs defeat the orcs, the caravan arrives as mentioned above. The merchants pay the PCs the rest of the money, and ask if they would like to accompany them on the rest of the journey as security. PCs who accept get another 500 gp, and are treated to a two week trek through more desert before a trade city is reached.

As an alternative to either idea, the DM could develop the lost city upon which the PCs are standing. The battle of the oasis may very well be the beginning of an entire desert campaign set underground!

Red Dragon

Terrain:	Mountainous
Total Party Levels:	36 (Average 6th)
Total G.P.:	Special
Total Magic XP:	Special

DM Introduction

"Fire Mountain" has been designed for a party of from 4 to 8 characters, each ranging from 4th to 8th level. While the DM is encouraged to modify the adventure for any level of adventurers, as the antagonists within can be of any level required, it is important that the party not possess too many magical items that might allow them to whip through the adventure too easily (i.e. *flying carpets*, *wings of flying*, etc.).

The adventure stresses mountaineering skills and the wilderness non-weapon proficiencies described in depth within the *Wilderness Survival Guide*. Only qualified party members with at least some of these appropriate non-weapon proficiencies should be hired for the mission. However, the two remaining town council members might be desperate enough to hire anyone who is brave (or foolish) enough to challenge the perils of Fire Mountain.

Alternately, a skilled and adventurous group of rogues might also have a better than average chance of reaching the peak of the mountain, as their climbing skills and similar talents can substitute for the mountaineering proficiencies in most cases.

While the adventure requires some preparation in advance, the additional job of tailoring the adventure for all possible adventuring groups should go easily for the DM.

In any case, the locales featured within this adventure give the DM plenty of opportunity to use almost all of the rules and skills described in the *Wilderness Survival Guide* in an in-depth adventure setting. Naturally, how much detail and danger is added to the adventure depends solely on the preparations made by the DM beforehand.

A. The Set-Up

- The ideal scenario for beginning the adventure should have the party hired for this mission, based on their impressive mountaineering and adventuring reputation. The town council of Dragon's Peak, unofficially renamed Dragon's Bane, is looking for someone to recover the treasure horde of the great dead dragon, Inferno, located somewhere high atop nearby Fire Mountain. No one in the town is skilled or brave enough to take the dangerous (yet highly profitable) job, so outsiders must be hired. The party gets half of whatever they bring back down the mountain. See Encounter E for more details.

- The party might also be just wandering through the area, on their way to another adventure, or returning from a great mission already accomplished. Even if they don't get caught up in the town celebration (see Encounter D), the town council, having recently fired the last group hired to deal with the dragon (see Encounter E) is looking for a few brave and skilled replacements. All the party needs is a genuine interest and some old fashioned daring and guts.

- The party may have heard of the recent demise of Inferno, and of the great celebration underway in the town of Dragon's Peak. If they're looking for one heck of a party, this is the place (see Encounter D)! Then, like above, the heroes might get the offer to salvage a real dragon's horde.

B. Arrival at the Valley

When the party arrives in Dragon's Peak, read the following description aloud:



A rather noxious smell is lingering in the air. The unpleasant scent of rotting meat is only barely concealed by massive clouds of incense and various smoldering woods.

Entering the valley, you see that a small peaceful town fills the green grass land before you. Strangely, the sleepy village is alive with a great celebration, even though the center of the city seems to have been utterly obliterated by some great catastrophe.

A huge blood-red carcass lies at the heart of the devastation, and a ring of raging bonfires encircles the remains of what must have been a great winged beast, an ancient dragon to be sure.

A signpost ahead of you once read "Dragon's Peak," but has since been crossed out. Now the words "Dragon's Bane" are chiselled roughly into the wood.

The dead dragon at the heart of the festival is no less than the great red dragon Inferno, a monstrous beast that no knight had ever vanquished, before now.

The entire kingdom is buzzing with the news that Sir Ivan of Thremp, a relatively unknown knight before now, was responsible for the great deed. The festival is in his honor, and even the king is rumored to be sending emissaries to the event.

C. Introducing...Sir Ivan, the Brave?

The party can follow the narrow path down into the village, until they encounter Sir Ivan and his misbegotten band for the first time. Read:

Riding thunderously out of the city is a group of knights and squires, mounted astride a dozen coal-black horses.

The lead knight's armor is black, chased in gold, and his full helmet has dragon's teeth for horns. Surely, this is Sir Ivan himself, and his brave band of followers.

Unfortunately, Sir Ivan is not slowing down, or even moving to get out of your way. His band is bearing down on you quickly.

Red Dragon

Sir Ivan is fleeing the city in disgrace and the party happens to be in his way. The path is narrow and if the characters are on horseback, they have to ditch into the woods nearby to keep from colliding with the errant warlord's followers. Each character's horse takes 1-3 points of damage from the briars in the woods.

If the adventurers are on foot, they must also leave the path, but can do so safely, without injury to themselves. Otherwise, anyone who doesn't move out of the way is trampled for 2d6 points of damage by the horses.

If the party attempts to engage or otherwise stop Sir Ivan's band, the knight and his followers only ride away as fast as they can.

Should the party successfully block the path (DM's discretion), Sir Ivan claims rudely that he is on "orders from the king" and threatens to call the king's guards on the "trouble-makers." Refusing to remove the blockade forces Sir Ivan and his band to pass through the briar patches to escape (see notes above).

Under no circumstances should the party be allowed to engage Sir Ivan and his men in combat. That should be saved for later in the adventure. Even if Sir Ivan is forced to flee, he does so quickly, looking cowardly and ignoble in the process. He has more important things to attend to (see Encounter G).

Since this warrior supposedly defeated an ancient red dragon (i.e. Inferno) single-handedly, adventurers of this level should be in no rush to tangle with him.

D. "Ding, Dong, the Dragon's Dead!"

When the party finally reaches the center of town, where all the festivities are focused, read:

The town square of Dragon's Peak has been converted into a bizarre funeral celebration, as raging bonfires surround the rather grisly remains of a dead red dragon. The fires are roasting the carcass, as well as keeping the rotting scent to a minimum.

Vendors are selling red dragon scales for souvenirs at 5 gold pieces each and dragon teeth at 10 gold pieces each. Slices of smoked dragon meat are more reasonably priced at 1 silver piece a serving.

Smashed beneath the dragon's corpse are the remains of a small church, its mangled steeple jutting out through the right wing of the dead behemoth.

The dragon's long tail has been tied to the balcony of the mayor's house nearby, and is adorned with flags and streamers.

The town of Dragon's Peak is a typical small village of about 1000 men, women, and children. The abundant rich farmlands throughout the valley are the only reason the citizens of the town have remained here beneath Inferno's lair, atop Fire Mountain. Despite the annual tithes to the monster, the town still manages to wreak a hefty profit from the rich volcanic soil, and even earned a fair bit of protection from the ancient wyrm's reputation alone.

Prices in Dragon's Peak should be about twice the usual for any newcomer (every merchant knows the locals) as the rush of souvenir seekers and tourists have brought about a veritable boom to the local economy.

Otherwise, the happy town is normal and friendly. If it wasn't for the remains of the great red dragon lying in the middle of the town square, Dragon's Peak would be just another peaceful town.

E. Then and Now

After the party members have purchased a plentiful collection of dragon souvenirs, drunk from dragon mugs filled with dragon

ale, and eaten more than their human share of dragon steaks, the local Minister for Finance (i.e. the town banker's new title) approaches the party with an offer.

A portly gentleman wearing a red dragon scale on a gold chain about his neck approaches you with a much-too-friendly smile.

"You are the salvage team, yes? The ones who are going to get the dragon's treasure for us? Yes?"

If the party members were hired for this mission already, then they should follow the Minister to the Mayor's house for a briefing. If not, smart and/or greedy players follow the Minister anyway. If anyone honestly denies any knowledge of what the Minister is talking about, read:

"Oh, sure you are! You've had a long trip I'm sure. Come along now. All that gold is getting cold!

"Oh, I made a funny!"

If the party still refuses to follow the over-jovial man, the Minister walks off without them, looking around for another group of adventurers. Later on, the Mayor himself tries to hire the characters for the job. Note that it is up to the DM to prepare and role-play this encounter.

When the party arrives at the Mayor's house, his living room is made available and the characters are seated. The Minister of Finance sits proudly next to the Mayor's desk. Read:

A stately-looking man in his late 50s enters the room.

"So, you can climb a mountain," he begins, as he sits behind his desk.

"What we need here is a little discretion. You see, the townspeople wouldn't hear for any bad-mouthing of Sir Ivan, especially during the festivities. I'll tell them all what really happened in good time, but you see...it would be rather bad for business at this time.

"I'll let dear Trapper tell you the details down at the Trading Post, but for now, let me tell you what we know.

"Sir Ivan didn't kill this dragon. In fact, I suspect that two-bit swindler isn't even a real knight, just some guy with some fancy plate mail and a good speaking voice.

"We hired that charlatan to take out the dragon, and gathered all of our remaining gold for his reward. Inferno was starting to get more than a bit cranky in his old age, I think. Started burning crops and houses, even after we paid him well!

"We'd have none of that now. So it was time we tried getting rid of him ourselves. Only, the peaceful folk of Dragon's Peak are farmers and goat herders. No one in this small town can tackle that..."

With that, the Mayor steps over to window and points to a great mountainous peak rising thousands of feet into the clouds.

"That's Fire Mountain, mountaineers. At the very peak lies Inferno's horde, the profit of two thousand years of burning and looting, extortion and murder.

"We'll give you half of whatever you bring down, free and clear. No taxes from us or the king."

The Minister of Finance grumbles quietly off to the side. "Technically, it's all ours by land grant, and the king's...well, because he's the king.

"Even now his greedy little clerks are on their way. They'll never get up there, and that's why we need you.

"With Trapper as your guide, you are the only heroes brave and skilled enough to reach the top of Fire Mountain.

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"Return what you can quietly, and you'll be rewarded well. Betray us, or let anyone else know of your mission, and we'll let the king in on the whole deal. He's got long arms to catch you with to be sure. So, do we have...an agreement?"

If the party agrees, send the players off to the Trapper's Trading Post, Encounter F. If the deal is refused or the players don't like the terms of the arrangement, read:

"Well, that's the best offer we can make. It's our treasure after all. We just thought the risk was worth a hefty finder's fee. Naturally, we'd appreciate it if you kept your mouths quiet about all of this. We'll just have to wait for the king and his many powerful magicians to recover it all. Goodbye."

With that, the Mayor has them escorted out, and hires some local spies to follow the party, just in case they decide to head off on their own. For possible treachery by the Mayor, see Encounter V.

F. Final Preparations

Whether or not the party accepts the mission, if the characters want to get to the treasure horde, they have to enlist the aid of the local authority on Fire Mountain, a woman by the name of Trapper.

Trapper (female human 6th level ranger): STR 15, DEX 16, CON 17, INT 14, WIS 15, CHA 18; AC 8-2 (*elven chain +1, shield +2*); MV 12; hp 66; #AT 1 (*bastard sword +2*); Dmg 2d4 +2 (magic weapon bonus); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL LG; THAC0 15; carries a *bastard sword +2*, and potions of *extra-healing* and *flying*; wears a *ring of warmth*, *elven chain +1*, and a *shield +2*.

Trapper is a young, attractive woman who grew up on Fire Mountain with her father, a 9th-level druid. Despite the name, Trapper is not a poacher or a skinner of animals for profit; she's a ranger, raised to respect the forest and the animals that dwell within it. The name refers to the young girl's numerous non-weapon proficiencies in snare and trap-building which are legendary for their ability to nab even the craftiest of poachers.

Trapper's father died recently, when he attempted to calm Inferno down after one of the dragon's unexpected attacks on the town. For this and other reasons, Trapper feels entitled to a fair share of the dragon's horde as compensation, both for the loss of her father and in payment for his life-long service to the town. She also harbors a secret suspicion that Inferno had young dragons at the cave, but won't mention this uncorroborated guess to the party just yet.

If the party proceeds up the mountain alone, the DM should have the characters wander around aimlessly for a few weeks, before finally encountering Trapper, who is on her way to the cave herself. She is the only person who knows the secrets of Fire Mountain, and making it to Inferno's lair without her is impossible.

Importantly, Trapper never tells the party anything in advance, or gives them a map. She gave Sir Ivan a map and received a now-worthless marriage proposal for her trouble. She is initially very rude to any knights and paladins among the party, but might just succumb to her habitual weakness for men in armor again if the romance is role-played well. Otherwise, the DM should play her as an independent and strong-willed woman with skills and knowledge the party must rely on if the dragon's horde is ever recovered.

When the party members first arrive at Trapper's Trading Post (on the outskirts of town) and introduce themselves (either as

hired by the Mayor, or free-lance adventurers), read:

"Well, I saw the whole thing...the true demise of that blasted dragon. When I came down the mountain to tell that egotist...I mean Sir Ivan, he was running around claiming he killed Inferno!

"He tried to bribe me into keeping my mouth shut, so I kicked him in the greaves and told that sleaze of a Mayor. Well, they kicked Ivan out all right, and now I don't trust anyone, not even you. But part of that treasure is mine, and I'm not going up there alone."

Trapper doesn't reveal why she won't go up the mountain alone (i.e. what she's afraid of), and doesn't care if the party is in league with the Mayor or not.

If asked about the death of Inferno, the Mayor, the crushed church, or the Minister of Finance, Trapper starts talking about them all at once. Read or paraphrase as necessary:

"Well, this whole thing started when that crazy monster started flying about burning things. Inferno was burning houses and crops, and no one knew what happened.

"My father, rest his soul, went up there to talk some sense into that monster. He had some crazy notion the dragon was in pain or angry about something. He never came back down.

"I couldn't wait out the long night and began climbing up the mountain myself. My father had it easy. He could turn into a bird and just fly up there. Not me. I have to walk.

"Half way up the mountain, the storm hit. And what a fantastic lightning storm it was! I had to take cover, and dug myself into the ice pack.

"Everything was shut up in town, and even the animals made themselves scarce. But not Inferno. The crazy beast went out flying again, looking to burn the whole village down, I expect. I knew at once my father had failed and was probably dead.

"I watched in amazement as the immense monster started whirling about the sky with thunderous flashes of lightning blazing everywhere. Just then, a great bolt struck the town, probably right in the church steeple where it usually gets hit. It was so bright, the whole valley lit up, and I saw Inferno climb, stall momentarily, and then turn towards the valley.

"There was nothing I could do. The whole town was about to be obliterated and there was nothing in heaven or earth that could stop him.

"Ah, but there was some justice. A massive bolt of nature's purest energy struck the dragon dead on. All of the sudden, Inferno started falling almost uncontrollably. It must not have been dead, though, because it spread its wings out and started deliberately gliding towards the town.

"The vengeful monster plowed head-first into the center of town, destroying the church, and killing that creepy old minister, Father Unthro.

"He's still under there, you know. His two best friends, the Mayor and the Minister, haven't even tried to recover his body. Some friends, huh? They'd rather make a few gold pieces off of the dead dragon first.

"You know, Father Unthro might have been a little scary looking, but he must have been the only thing keeping his friends in line all these years. Now, those bums have a free and greedy hand throughout Dragon's Peak.

"Well, at least Ivan hit the road. I'm glad I routed him out before the town paid him his undue reward. My only worry now is that he's ahead of us. I foolishly trusted that slimy snake and gave him a map of Fire Mountain my father had made years ago.

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"I've been training his band for weeks as well, for their eventual assault on Inferno's lair. Now, there's no doubt they're heading up the mountain to get their own reward without our consent.

"You don't get a map, of course. I learned my lesson. So, let's get packing, 'heroes.' We have a long climb ahead of us."

The sooner the party gets out of here, the better. No matter how fast they get ready, however, it should take at least three days for Trapper to get the expedition in order. The DM need not role-play these details, but a sampling of information from the *Wilderness Survival Guide* might be in order here, either as first-time training or a necessary review.

Anything the characters need for the journey is theirs. If these are experienced players, the DM should let them choose and keep inventory of their own supplies, and then penalize them later on forgetting "the obvious necessities."

Trapper doesn't have weeks to train the heroes, and tells them they're going to have to learn "on the job." Depending on the skills and experience of the party, this adventure might turn out to be a very dangerous training exercise.

G. Meanwhile...High in the Hills

While the party is still getting involved in this affair, Sir Ivan and his rather disgruntled band of followers are already heading up Fire Mountain. Rather than worry about their precise actions on a day-to-day basis, the DM should simply refer to the following encounters for hints and possible encounters with these devious cavaliers along the way. Unless the party stops for a month or two during the trip, as long as they eventually reach the dragon's lair they still have a chance of thwarting the plans of Sir Ivan.

For now, a short history of recent events, from Sir Ivan's perspective, should suffice.

Sir Ivan of Thremp is a rogue knight (see DMGR2: *Castles Sourcebook* from TSR), having fallen from grace after repeatedly besmirching the names of fair maidens throughout his homeland (DM's choice). For political reasons, he was quietly banished from his kingdom. Very few people outside of his royal family know that he is not what he pretends to be, and Sir Ivan has used that to his advantage many times over the years.

While not wholly evil, Sir Ivan is fond of deception and scams. His recent attempt at taking credit for Inferno's demise was just the tip of the iceberg, and a shallow, ill-planned scam at best. It would have worked if Trapper hadn't already learned the truth and was honest enough to reveal it.

If Inferno hadn't died, Sir Ivan was planning to climb the mountain and bargain with, not kill, the red dragon. It was Sir Ivan's intention to offer the dragon twice the annual tithe in exchange for the dragon's slaying of the Mayor, the Minister, and the Holy Father (i.e. the triumvirate that makes up the town council of Dragon's Peak). Naturally, once they were gone, Sir Ivan would take over the town and arrange for the increased sacrifice to "calm the angry beast."

If the bargain didn't work, Sir Ivan planned to steal a few dragon scales from Inferno's lair, claim the reward from the townspeople using the scales as proof, and then flee the town with the money.

Then, the dragon died! Quickly, the knights claimed that they had battled the dragon that night high in the nearby hills, and that the sounds of the great battle were drowned out by the great thunder storm. The mortally wounded dragon, they claimed, fled from their assault and crashed into the nearby town.

No one in town questioned the lack of sword slashes in the hide of the beast, nor did they wonder about the huge black scorch

mark on the back of the dead dragon. Naturally, the beast was cut up quickly afterwards, and no one could tell what really killed the dragon after the first day.

However, Trapper saw what really happened and rather than fight the whole town or ruin their public reputation, the would-be knights headed off into the wilderness and decided to get the dragon's treasure themselves.

From these examples, the DM should have a pretty good idea what kind of a scoundrel Sir Ivan really is. His band of cutthroat thieves and mercenaries are an unsavory lot as well. It is this renegade band of knights-errant that represent the major non-natural danger to the party during this adventure.

H. Fire Mountain Random Encounters

Random mountain encounters are optional if the DM is stressing role-playing and delves in detailed mountaineering and wilderness survival gaming. Otherwise, the adventurers might be in need of a few interesting combats to liven things up. The DM should use the tables in the *Monstrous Compendiums I-V* for sample encounters on the glacier, lower mountain, and upper peak regions of Fire Mountain.

Note that use of the extensive weather tables in the *Wilderness Survival Guide* should add greatly to the challenge of this wilderness adventure. Many of the natural hazards within become infinitely more dangerous in the midst of a raging blizzard or killer freeze. Even spending a few minutes of preparation before the adventure begins, rolling up the weather for the next few weeks, should add immensely to the atmosphere, realism, and challenge of Fire Mountain.

Importantly, assume any hazardous weather hampers both climbing groups (the knights and the party) equally, so that neither side gets a clear-cut advantage courtesy of Mother Nature.

I. The Great Glacier

After the party is ready, the band has a few days of travel before they reach the base of Fire Mountain. Since this area is well-patrolled (by the local guard and formerly Inferno) the trip to the glacier should be uneventful. When the party does reach the location the DM has chosen for the glacier, read the following description:

The remains of a magnificent glacier surround the base of Fire Mountain. Throughout the hills around you are thousands of huge, rounded boulders, no doubt carried along by the ancient icy surge at the head of the immense ice flow.

A long valley of soft white snow leads up the southern face of the mountain.

From here, the players characters might have a chance to spot a few small black specks at the far end of the glacier, depending on any viewing devices (i.e., *eyes of the eagle* or a normal spyglass) they have brought along with them. These black specks are actually members of Sir Ivan's expedition. They should have at least a week's lead on the party at this point in the adventure.

The recent warm weather has made the glacier a dangerous place to travel. If the party does not suggest probing ahead with a long pole or staff, there is a 10% chance per day that the slowly melting crust of ice beneath the party gives way when it is crossed. Since Trapper will have insisted that the expedition members all be tied together, this might be the death of the party, or it might just save some unlucky party members from a long and possibly deadly fall.

The area that opens up is large enough for 1d4 party members to fall through. Roll randomly among the party to find the center of the collapse and then assign the remaining characters to whoever is tied next to this "trigger person." The DM should

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follow the Climbing rules for "Roping Together" on page 37 of the *Wilderness Survival Guide* in order to see if the free-falling party members can be saved, and whether or not they drag the rest of the party down with them! The snowy crevasse beneath the ice crust should be from 20-200' deep (2d10x10), but any characters who fall in here take only half the normal damage due to the soft snow at the bottom of the crevasse.

Getting back up is another matter entirely.

J. Crossing the Rift

Twelve days later, after the party has crossed the majority of the great glacier and ascended some 5000 feet, the expedition comes to a bit of a predicament. Read:

A great rift in the snow pack signifies the end of the glacier, and a chasm some 300' deep and 75' across is now in your way. Looking to the east and the west, the chasm narrows and widens chaotically. There seems to be no easy way across.

According to Trapper, the only simple way across the chasm lies to the east. Two days travel over the glacier leads to a natural ice bridge which has remained usable for decades. If the party proceeds that way, go to Encounter K. The chances for breaking through the glacier ice are doubled (i.e. 20% per day) along this crumbling route, if the party is not checking ahead. This great rift varies from 200'-400' deep (200' + 1d20x10'), should anyone fall in.

Otherwise, the party can cross with suitable magic spells or potions. However, Trapper might (at the DM's option) suggest "such powerful magicks should be saved for the more dangerous crossings ahead."

If the party does succeed in crossing the chasm at this point, the DM should continue with the ascent of Fire Mountain by going straight to Encounter L, skipping the Ice Bridge, Encounter K, altogether.

For the DM's information, Sir Ivan's party used a *potion of flying* here, sending one of their members to the other side of the chasm with a rope. After tying it to large rocks at both ends, they moved hand-over-hand across the chasm. If the party thinks of this option, refer to the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, pages 38-39, "Crossing a Chasm on a Rope."

K. The Ice Bridge

If the expedition decided to go the long way around the rift, the party eventually arrives at a beautiful, natural ice bridge. Read:

Spanning the 100' wide chasm of rock and ice is a magnificent natural ice bridge. It seems both strong and fragile at the same time, as its snow-covered transparent structure glistens in the sunlight.

At the base it rises steeply, almost perpendicular to the ground, while at the top it runs horizontally like a fallen tree.

The bridge is completely sturdy and safe. Only the party members could harm their own chances of getting across.

The snow is easily grabbed onto and while the bases are considered smooth surfaces for the purpose of climbing. The odds of falling into the chasm while ascending are slim (characters usually just slide back to the base). Even the upper bridge is some 5' across and can be walked along easily.

Anyone who tries driving metal spikes (i.e. pitons) into the ice bridge has a 1% cumulative chance of cracking the bridge permanently. Check each time a spike is driven in (i.e. 1% for the first spike, 2% chance for the second, etc.).

If the bridge does crack, each time more than 100 pounds of

weight is on the structure, there is an equal chance (i.e. 1% chance per spike) that the crack widens and the bridge collapses into the 400' foot chasm beneath. This base chance doubles for every 100 pounds of additional weight on the damaged structure at any one time (i.e. every 1% becomes 2% at 200 pounds, 4% at 300 pounds, 8% at 400 pounds, etc.).

If the bridge collapses, party members stranded on the other side are left in the same boat as they were back in Encounter J. It is up to the DM to decide if and where another way across the rift exists.

L. Up the Mountain

From here on up the terrain becomes rocky and treacherous. The slopes are classified as moderate (see *Wilderness Survival Guide*, Page 34), and most common monster encounters (see "Fire Mountain Random Encounters," Encounter H) should occur in this stretch of the journey.

The party spends upwards of two weeks traversing this region depending on breaks in the weather.

M. Dead Man's Cliff

When the party has completed scaling the first stage of Fire Mountain, read this description of the next hazard the expedition must face:

The mountainous slopes end at a huge cliff, rising some 200' into the air. The imposing edifice seems to be the only way up. A strange red pool is frozen solid at your feet.

Trapper informs the party that this formation is known as Dead Man's Cliff and is the major obstacle to reaching the upper peak.

For the DM's information, Dead Man's cliff is classified as a "Cliff, rough, no ledges, and non-slippery." For rules on climbing this type of surface, refer to the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, pages 34-35.

The pool is the blood of one of Sir Ivan's party who lost his footing here and fell to his death. A number of fellow climbers were also injured in the accident, and they are waiting for Sir Ivan's return at Encounter N, along with the corpse of their recently deceased comrade.

If the party has magic spells or potions they can use, Trapper suggests this as a good time to use them. However, she also emphasizes that the party should not take a week casting spells day after day to get up there. She politely reminds the characters that the blood on the ground came from somebody recently, and that the enemy is gaining ground every day this expedition waits. If the characters want any share of the dragon's treasure, speed is essential.

If the DM is using the weather tables, strong winds at this time should make the climb even more hazardous.

N. A Somewhat Suspicious Avalanche

At the top of Dead Man's cliff, the grade is still rather steep, and is considered to be "moderately rough and slippery" for purposes of climbing. There is a large amount of loose gravel and boulders here, and the party should be on the alert for any avalanches. In fact, one is on the way as soon as they catch their breath.

Some 300' up the slope are three of Sir Ivan's followers. One died in a fall while the other two were wounded while climbing Dead Man's Cliff. Sir Ivan supposedly left them behind so that they wouldn't slow his expedition down and then on the way back promised they would be picked up.

Actually, Sir Ivan (and the rest of the men) are privately hoping the cripples are killed by mountain lions or the weather, so that the healthy ones can keep the wounded one's share of the loot. In fact, even if Sir Ivan's followers win this little contest

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(i.e. the party is defeated in the caves, or never even makes it there), these men will "take a long fall off a steep cliff" nearby when Sir Ivan's murderous band returns.

Meanwhile, the two wounded members of Sir Ivan's band are desperately trying to keep the newly arrived party members from getting any further. They feel, quite wrongly, that they will be rewarded handsomely if they manage to stop the party from reaching the lair.

So, the two men are starting a little avalanche. When the party is finished resting after reaching the top of the cliff, read the following description:

Above you, a number of large rocks start tumbling down the steep gravelly slope. Certainly not a natural occurrence, the rocks seem to be flying off of an overhang of their own free will.

Unfortunately, the result is the same no matter why the rocks are coming, as the entire slope starts rumbling down the mountain toward you.

Avalanche!

The party members have two rounds to act, so it's not quite as bad as it seems. If PCs still have their *fly* spells or *potions of flying* up, they can simply move straight up into the air for safety. From that vantage point, they can surely see the culprits behind the avalanche (see Encounter O).

Safety can also be found to the west, where the sturdy stone refuses to slide, some 400 feet away. A light load, a quick movement rate and a good initiative roll are all that is needed now. Otherwise, anyone caught in the avalanche takes 4d6 points of damage from the rock slide, then falls the entire way to the bottom of Dead Man's Cliff (see Encounter M).

Even if the 200' fall doesn't kill them, deadly rock dust and debris chokes and crushes buried characters to death after 5 rounds. It will take 4-24 (4d6) man-rounds to free the victims from the debris, so any rescuers had better act fast and in unison. (For example, if the number rolled is 12, it would take one character twelve rounds to complete the digging. If four characters dug, they would complete the job in three rounds.)

O. The Rocky Ledge

At the top of the landslide is the ledge where it all started. When anyone reaches or manages to see the ledge, read the following:

Two armored warriors are leaning back against the cliff slope, on top of a large rocky ledge. On the ground in front of them is the lifeless body of another warrior outfitted in chain mail.

One of the living warriors is obviously suffering from a broken leg, while the other has his right arm in a sling. They are both armed and prepared to fight.

Mosta and Hyrun are ready to fight to the death anyone left after the avalanche. If they are clearly outnumbered, they pretend to be former followers of Sir Ivan, left behind to die when they were wounded helping their heartless master. They offer to join the party (as spies and saboteurs of course), if their wounds are tended. If the party falls for this, the *Wilderness Survival Guide* rules for "Medicine and First Aid" on pages 69-71 should be referred to now.

If the party doesn't buy it, casts *detect lie*, or whatever, the two men fight to the death, attempting to throw or push people off the ledge, down the slope, and over Dead Man's Cliff if lucky.

The three men's treasure consists of two sets of *plate mail* +1 and *shield* +1, *chain mail* +2, two *long swords* +1 and a *long*

sword +2, as well as four miscellaneous potions of the DM's choosing. They are carrying a total of 760 gold pieces in coinage in their packs as well as enough food and water to last two men for a month.

Encounter statistics for the two warriors are found in Encounter T, except that one of the warriors must fight the party from his knees, and the other is attacking with his off-hand (i.e. -2 to hit).

P. The Icy Peaks

After the party has had another week of very steep, very slow climbing up the icy slopes of Fire Mountain, the characters finally reach the last stop before entering Inferno's lair. Read:

Twin sharp rocky peaks rise ahead of you. Tied between them is a snow and ice covered rope some 40' long.

Beyond the second peak lies the open cave of Inferno, the great red dragon. Steam rises from within but the air is cold and wet here.

Because of the icy covering on the rope bridge, hand-over-hand movement is reduced to 20 feet per round. Every round a Dexterity check must be made to keep from losing one's grip. Refer to pages 38-39 of the *Wilderness Survival Guide* for more on this type of rope crossing.

Naturally, the rope bridge was left here by Sir Ivan's party. Unknown to the party, one of Sir Ivan's thieves fell to his death here, some 500' below.

There are no other encounters here.

Q. Inferno's Realm

This deep maze of dormant volcanic chambers is heated by super-hot vents of steam throughout. Inferno chose to "retire" here after centuries of good raiding and hunting in another kingdom, which enjoys a higher standard of living since the dragon's departure.

Little did anyone know that Inferno was actually the female mate of an even larger red dragon, known throughout the continent as Lugach the Red. Anyone who was just hoping for the ancient dragons to pass on without a legacy was sorely mistaken; three of their progeny still live within these caverns.

Near the entrance to the cave lies the charred remains of a druid. The dead man has been stripped of all of his treasure recently, by Sir Ivan's band of cutthroats. Trapper is moved to tears by the discovery of her father's body, and assumes incorrectly that Inferno was responsible. For more details on the events of that fateful night, see Encounter S.

The caves are a series of smooth tunnels leading down. The party can find the lair easily by following the only tunnels large enough for a huge dragon like Inferno to fit through. Otherwise, the DM should let the party be lost for awhile, until the characters eventually bumble their way onward.

There should be no random encounters in the lair, as there are plenty of prepared ones lurking within.

R. Children of Fire

When the party has stumbled along through the lair caves for a few turns, they are attacked by Inferno's children! Read:

Entering a large, steam-filled chamber, you are suddenly bathed in three blasts of searing dragon fire. A trio of red dragons, at least 50' long each, appear from the shadows. They continue their relentless attacks on you with their horrid fangs and razor-sharp claws.

The three dragons, Smelt, Forge, and Magma were driven off by the knight and his party days ago. They have since healed

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their wounds, and decided to lay an ambush for the knights when the band started to leave the lair. Unfortunately, the party got here first.

The young dragons are age 3, 2, and 2 respectively and are very hungry. It is these children of Inferno and Lugach that were responsible for the druid's death (see Encounter S).

Smelt (young female red dragon): AC -2; MV 9, Fl 3 (C), Jp 3; HD 11; hp 88; #AT 3+special; Dmg 1-10/1-10/3-30; SA 6d10+3 fire breath weapon, spells; SD immune to fire; AL CE; THAC0 7.

Forge and Magma (two very young male red dragons): AC -1; MV 9, Fl 3 (C), Jp 3; HD 9; hp 72; #AT 3+special; Dmg 1-10/1-10/3-30; SA 4d10+2 fire breath weapon, spells; SD immune to fire; AL CE; THAC0 9.

Unless the party uses the *create food and water* spell to drop a load of fresh meat in the room, the dragons are not likely to stop attacking. They believe the "humans" are responsible for their mother's death, and that of their young sister, Rage (again see Encounter S). Naturally, they are wrong on all counts, but they're too young to be making such decisions for themselves anyway.

If the young dragons are treated firmly, like bad children, the party might escape from here without further bloodshed. Otherwise, they fight until they reach half hit points and then flee from the caves. They wander the mountains alone for many months, or at least until their father returns (see Encounter V).

The young dragons have no treasure.

S. Tale of Sorrow

In an alcove easily visible from the chamber where the party fought the three young red dragons (Encounter R) lie the remains of one dead baby dragon. Rage, as it was called, was a newborn female and was accidentally crushed by falling rock during a recent earth tremor.

Inferno, Rage's mother, went temporarily mad upon discovering that her baby girl had died and thus began the recent assault on the town. The townspeople, of course, didn't even know Inferno was a female, let alone that she had any children.

Trapper's father, the druid, knew something was wrong and came here polymorphed as a bird to see what he could learn. At the same time he found the dead baby, Inferno was just leaving to attack the town.

Following the dragon to the cave entrance, the brave druid turned back into a man and summoned a storm in a vain effort to turn the dragon back from its mission of murder. Unfortunately, the druid had made the mistake of assuming the dead baby dragon was Inferno's only child. Her rash young siblings surprised and killed the druid soon after he completed his spell.

Ironically, the druid's spell did save the town, in a way. The party should be able to figure out most of this story by just looking around the lair. If they need a little coaching, Trapper might mention that "the storm that night was completely unexpected and did arrive rather quickly."

Despite wrapping up the details of how this whole sad affair started, this room leads towards the great dragon's lair and the final encounters of this tragic adventure.

T. Re-introducing...Sir Ivan the Black

Hopefully, the party should be ready for a fight. If the party has been weakened too severely by the red dragons from the previous encounter, have Trapper suggest the expedition camp for the night before proceeding onward. Providing the party doesn't start waking the dead with wild abandon that night, the over-celebrating party of Sir Ivan won't know they have company until the party arrives on the scene.

In any case, the party gets the jump on Sir Ivan, so they'd bet-

ter make good use of their advantage. Although weakened in numbers and strength, and more than a little bit drunk (all attacks at -2 to hit), Sir Ivan's band of renegade warriors and thieves are no pushovers by any means. Read:

Carousing amidst a veritable mountain of gold, gems, and jewelry are a half dozen armored men. Sir Ivan's band of drunken scoundrels is casually filling sack after sack with the most precious of treasure and magic.

They seem completely oblivious to your presence at this time.

Note that the party does not see two of Sir Ivan's party right away. One of them, a thief, is hiding in the pile of gold and jewels, waiting to playfully surprise one of his friends. The other, a fighter, is sleeping peacefully down in a nearby alcove. When and if combat breaks out, these two additional warriors have their own personal agenda (see below).

The party should take a few minutes to prepare themselves with spells and potions before surprising Sir Ivan and his men. If they need a hint, Trapper politely informs the party that "Sir Ivan's men are real tough. Yes, even compared to you guys."

In fact, Sir Ivan's band could probably take the party out quite easily in a fair and equal fight. In their moderately drunken state, they should be easier to manage, but no pushovers. Even if the party stages their finest ambush to date, the battle should be a grand and deadly affair.

Similarly, if the party is discovered because of their own stupidity, or challenges the knights openly, the fight should be very costly to them indeed.

Sir Ivan of Thremp (male human 9th level warrior): ST 18/79, DX 17, CON 16, INT 14, WIS 15, CHA 18; AC -5 (*plate mail* +2, *shield* +3); MV 12; hp 96; #AT 2 (*long sword* +3); Dmg 1d8+9 (magic weapon, strength, and specialization bonuses); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL CN; THAC0 6; carries a *long sword* +3, and potions of *extra-healing* and *levitation*; wears a *ring of free action*, *plate mail* +2, and a *shield* +3.

Marcus and Allan (male human 6th level fighters): ST 18/01-50, DX 15, CON 15, INT 10, WIS 10, CHA 10; AC -1 (*plate mail* +1, *shield* +1); MV 12; hp 60; #AT 3/2 (*long sword* +2); Dmg 1d8+5 (magic weapon, strength, and specialization bonuses); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL CN; THAC0 12; each carries a *long sword* +1, and either a *potion of healing* or *oil of slipperiness*; each wears *plate mail* +1 and a *shield* +1.

Denes, Jurki, and Villem (male human 7th level thieves): ST 17, DX 17, CON 12, INT 11, WIS 9, CHA 15; AC -1 (*chain* +1, *shield* +1); MV 12; hp 38; #AT 1 (*long sword* +2); Dmg 1d6+3 (magic weapon and strength bonus); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL CN; THAC0 14; each carries a *long sword* +2, and either a *potion of extra-healing* or a *potion of invisibility*; each wears *chain mail* +1 and a *shield* +1.

After the combat begins, the thief in hiding (Jurki) moves in to backstab an unsuspecting character in the rear of the party (i.e. a wizard or cleric). Meanwhile, the sleeping warrior (Marcus) awakens two rounds into the battle, and immediately starts hacking the closest party member from behind. Since both of these men are admirable foes in their own right, the arrival of these two characters is optional in this adventure. If the party is doing very well, bring in the reinforcements. If the party is about to die, any additional overkill only spoils the tense excitement and danger of a closely fought battle.

If the party wins, the hoard is theirs for now (see Encounters U and V). If they lose, any party members left alive are given the chance to join with Sir Ivan or face immediate execution. If captives do not join up, they are not killed, but are instead loaded up with an inordinate amount of treasure, and driven like pack

Red Dragon

mules down Fire Mountain. The DM should prepare suitable opportunities for escape and/or rescue, in order to continue the adventure from here on in. Go to Encounter V for some possible alternate endings to the adventure.

U. The Dragon's Hoard

The party members can haul only as much treasure as their characters can carry safely. The DM should definitely refer to the *Wilderness Survival Guide* rules on Encumbrance, page 30, at this time, to keep the players from receiving too much of a good thing.

The treasure itself is nearly endless, but only the most powerful items and most valuable stones should be of importance to the party at this time. The DM should pick two magic items of significant value and power for each surviving party member. The type and nature of the bounty should be determined by the level of the characters and their performance during the adventure. Three miscellaneous potions, scrolls, and not-so-powerful magic items (i.e. *Quaal's feather tokens*, *figurines of wondrous power*, etc.) per character should also be awarded. The total value of all transportable gems and jewelry should be from 160,000-240,000 gold pieces, again depending on the level of the party members and the difficulty of their quest.

The players might correctly assume that this is great for a first trip, but they can always return for more. In a way, they are right. It is very likely, however, that the next time they ascend the peaks of Fire Mountain, they will wisely decide to return empty-handed (see Encounter V).

V. Conclusion and Further Adventures

Getting the treasure down the mountain should be a major feat in itself. The hazards braved earlier should seem twice as difficult when fully encumbered with treasure. The DM should remember to restock the mountain with new beasts, if the party faced such additional hazards on the way up.

Once the treasure is recovered, the Mayor and Minister take their cut (i.e. 50%) and leave the party with the rest. The king's agents arrive soon after and as long as nobody goes around flashing their new-found wealth, or bravely telling of their recent derring-do, the royal exchequer's office becomes no richer for the whole affair.

If the party did not return after going up the mountain on their own, or refused to take the mission in the first place, the local Mayor and Minister swear out false burglary complaints against the party members and attempt to make the king hunt the fugitives down. If the party is captured quickly, the characters are returned to the town for trial. The Mayor offers to let them go for only 75% of the recovered treasure. Otherwise, the adventurers can be assured of being put away for a very long time.

Should the party get greedy, and wish to return to Inferno's abandoned lair, the foolish heroes are in for quite a nasty surprise . . .

Within the last few days, Inferno's errant mate, Lugach, returns to Dragon's Peak only to find his mate (and possibly children) dead. If the children survived the ordeal, they tell "papa" what really happened. Otherwise, Lugach figures out most of it himself and comes to the logical conclusion that the human town nearby is somehow responsible. First, however, the great wyrm has had a long flight and needs a nap.

Whenever the party next arrives, Lugach will be asleep. This gives the party a fair chance to get in, see one monstrously impressive red dragon sleeping on his hoard, and safely choose not to bother the new stranger. If the party is feeling way too brave, and ignores the DM's best advice not to attack (i.e. Trapper runs away with terror in her eyes), then let them plan the ambush, initiate the assault, and die in horrible agony. Start a new campaign.

Assuming the party is smarter than the average bear, they finish the adventure better off than when they started and move on to newer and more manageable tasks.

Maybe they should keep one eye over their shoulder for a great red dragon who might just be coming their way.

After a few levels of adventuring, who knows? Maybe Lugach meets up with a strong band of heroes who know his lair almost as well as he does, and who have conveniently obtained the only red dragon-slaying two-handed sword in existence. They might even smell somewhat . . . familiar.

W. The Unpleasant Future of Dragon's Peak

Hopefully the players hear of the following events from a few drunken sailors many thousands of miles away from Dragon's Peak. However, since the party might choose to set up a base of operations in the town, or might just settle down for one reason or another, here are a few of the interesting things about to happen to Dragon's Peak.

Naturally, Lugach is the big "random factor" here. He's going to burn down a few houses to be sure, but eventually learns that his mate died of natural causes. The snivelling Mayor of former renown would bargain this information in a vain attempt to save his life.

In his generous mercy, Lugach offers not to kill everybody for hundreds of miles around if the annual tithe the town used to pay to his dear, departed Inferno is doubled. If his children were killed by the party, the tithe is tripled instead.

Remember all those new friends the characters were making? Well, hard times are about to befall Dragon's Peak, and the townspeople are going to be looking for a scapegoat or two. The Mayor is dead and the Minister was jailed by the king for fiscal impropriety (lucky man!), so who are they going to blame?

Might be a good time for a sea cruise . . .

Wemics, Lamias, and Thri-Kreen

Terrain:	Plains
Total Party Levels:	45
Total Magic X.P.:	7,700
Total gp X.P.:	9,700

Set-Up

- PCs encounter a young wemic cub being sold by slavers. They decide to return the cub to its tribe.
- PCs are given custody of a wemic cub and charged with returning the cub to its tribe.
- After battling slavers, the PCs discover a wemic cub among the captives.

The Slave Trader

The PCs encounter a travelling menagerie of unusual animals and monsters, under the ownership of Ivan Golightly. There are eight wagons, each carrying one or more cages. Each wagon has its own driver.

Golightly calls himself an "animal trader." He is taking this load off for sale in a distant city but he is willing to sell the PCs any creature they express an interest in. In truth, Golightly is a slave trader with a modest amount of ill fame. After "business difficulties" forced him to abandon his old trade and territory, he gathered what little remained of his fortune and gang, bought a load of animals and headed to other, hopefully less dangerous areas where no one would know of his past.

Due to Golightly's ill fame, any PC rolling his Intelligence or less on percentile dice recognizes Golightly's name and remembers there is a 400 gp reward for him.

Ivan Golightly: AC 7; MV 9; R4; hp 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (sword); AL CN; THAC0 19.

Henchmen (8): AC 8; MV 12; W4; hp 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (sword); AL CN

Among Golightly's captives is a wemic cub named Cattlechaser. In wemic terms, he is the equivalent of a twelve-year-old boy. Although Cattlechaser has been loudly demanding his freedom, he only speaks the wemic language. The wemic tongue sounds like normal feline growling, hence he has been unable to attract help. The trader understands a bit of wemic, but pretends that Cattlechaser is only a dumb brute. Since Cattlechaser has been captive for two weeks now, he has grown quite angry at humans in general, and the slave trader in particular.

If the PCs find a way to communicate with Cattlechaser, either through magic or knowledge of the wemic language, the cub speaks freely of his capture and his hatred for the slave trader. The cub has the traditional wemic arrogance and demands the PCs free him. Once this happens, he answers their questions, telling them the following:

"I am of the pride of Thundercloud Dragonfighter. My mother is Deerswift. I was hunting alone when I was captured by a band of humans. They sold me to this slaver."

If the PCs prompt him to remember more about his original captors, he sniffs the PCs and admits the captors did not smell like most of the humans he has since encountered. They had a stronger, feline smell. They also smelled of flowers.

He brusquely thanks them for their help in freeing him and tells them it is time he returned to his tribe. Unfortunately, Cattlechaser is lost and unable to find his way home alone, although he denies this. Due to the current hostilities, it is also unlikely he could make the trip without probably getting himself killed.

The rest of the animals of Golightly's menagerie can be of any type. Except for Cattlechaser, the rest of the creatures are nonintelligent. If released, they run off and return to the wild.

If the encounter occurs in an inhabited or patrolled area, a patrol arrives shortly after Cattlechaser is freed. The leader is aware of Golightly's reputation and commends the PCs for the capture of the infamous slaver. The patrol either arrests Golightly



or takes possession of his body (depending on the circumstances). If the PCs capture Golightly, the patrol leader writes them a receipt that enables them to claim the 200 gp reward at the nearest town hall.

The patrol leader is upset to discover the presence of the cub; he relates the following to the PCs:

"This bodes badly. The wemic nation are a proud people. They do not take well to the notion of wemics as human captives. This could mean war."

If someone brings up the idea of returning the cub to its tribe, the patrol leader expresses regret that he lacks the men for such a journey. If the PCs express any inclination to return the cub themselves, he shakes everybody's hands and gives them his profound thanks in the name of the local government. Although he regrets that he cannot offer them much help or a reward, he gives them a map and a pouch with 4 gp, 12 sp, and 23 cp (all the money he has on him). The map shows the local region, including a large area marked "Wemic Nation". Where the nation's territory overlaps the desert, there is an "x" and the words "abandoned fort" written under the name "Zinderneuf". If the PCs are reluctant to take on the mission, the patrol leader also suggests that the wemics might provide a reward for the cub's return.

The Wemic Nation Boundary

The area marked on the map is a large expanse of plains merging into desert. It is the known area traveled by the nomadic wemics. The area is also home to lions and thri-kreen. The nearby desert is home to a lamia lair.

The lamia are trying to incite a war between their neighboring races, the humans, wemics, and thri-kreen. The lamia hope to then claim the newly-depopulated areas (for more information, read the lamia section). Lamia disguised as humans captured and sold Cattlechaser. They also rearranged the capture site to make it appear that humans were responsible. The lamia's main tactics are killing wemics, humans, and thri-kreen and making it appear one of the other species was responsible, and charming humans and wemics into seeking out members of the other races to kill.

When the adventure begins, the wemics have called for a gathering of their nation to discuss the recent upsurge of hostilities

Wemics, Lamias, and Thri-Kreen

and debate possible actions. The prides and tribes are moving toward the rendezvous point.

The Massacre

Circling vultures and a plume of smoke lead the PCs toward a small ranch. All the buildings are in ruins; some of the wood is still smoldering. There are seven human bodies here, three men, two women, a boy (age 8), and a girl (age 5). All the bodies have been partially eaten.

If the PCs search the area, they discover the following:

- Leonine paw prints
- wemic-style beadwork (Cattlechaser can identify this as a warrior's medallion).
- A child's drawing showing crude figures fighting with figures that might be wemics, lamia, or even centaurs.

If the PCs ask if Cattlechaser recognizes any scents, he says the smoke in the air is blocking his nose. Cattlechaser is as appalled as the PCs about the carnage. He angrily refutes any PC accusation that wemics are responsible.

In truth, the lamia massacred the ranch occupants, then planted false clues implicating wemic guilt. The lamia were disguised as wemics when they attacked; thus the child's drawing is an accurate portrayal of what occurred. If the PCs have a means of speaking with the dead, the spirits of the slain can only recount what they knew when they were alive.

If the PCs camp overnight among the ruins, the apparition of the little girl, Mina, appears. She is a scared, pathetic child who does not know where her parents are and does not want to talk about what happened. If the PCs can coax her, she reluctantly tells them about the "lion men" who attacked the ranch. She then breaks into tears. If a PC cleric performs a funeral for the slain, Mina happily cries out "Mommy, Daddy!" and disappears, never to return.

The First Wemic Attack

The PCs encounter two wemic warriors. Unbeknownst to the PCs, these wemics fell victim to a lamia's Wisdom-draining magic. Both wemics have a Wisdom of 2 and the urge to "go kill some humans", as they were ordered to do by the lamia.

The wemics are extremely foolhardy and belligerent. They roar a challenge at the PCs and charge. Due to the wording of the lamia's command, the wemics can only attack human PCs. If any of the nonhuman PCs notice this or attempt to fight the wemics, one of the wemics tells them in heavily accented Common, "Don't interfere; we were told to kill some humans and that's what we're gonna do."

Wemics (2): AC 6/5; MV 12; HD 5+8; hp 20; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (claws), 1d 6 (club); AL N; THAC0 13.

Depending on how the PCs have treated Cattlechaser thus far, the cub either tries to stop the attackers, joins them, or just watches the whole battle in puzzlement.

In their addled state, the wemics are literal minded. If the human PCs die (or appear to), the wemics break off their attack and stagger off. They do not attack nonhuman PCs unless the PCs attack them.

If the PCs can subdue and interrogate the wemics, the wemics eventually remember meeting a lamia, whom they refer to as a bald wemic. She was the one who told them to go kill some humans. She smelled pretty, like a flower. If the PCs ask about the appearance of the "bald wemic", the wemics accurately describe the lamia, although they are unfamiliar with the actual name "lamia".

The Sandrunner Pride

The PCs are traveling over the desert when they spot a wemic war party in the distance. As the PCs move closer, they observe

the wemics are attacking a small group of humans. Before the PCs can interfere, the wemics grab the obviously severely injured but still living humans, then run off. If the PCs pursue, they are able to maintain intermittent visual contact as the wemics move among the dunes. If any of the PCs check for tracks, they notice that there is only a single set of tracks.

In truth, the wemics and their victims are an illusion cast by a lamia. The lamia's partner has cast a similar illusion for the benefit of a wemic war party, the Sandrunner pride. The Sandrunners are chasing what they see as a band of humans hauling away a severely injured wemic. The lamia and their illusions are running toward each other, hopefully with the PCs and wemics in pursuit. When the lamia meet, they hope to dispel their illusions, trigger their *rings of invisibility* and hide until they can secretly move away.

When the wemics catch sight of the PCs, they assume the PCs are the humans they were pursuing. If Cattlechaser is with the PCs, the sight of the young wemic confirms the wemics' suspicions. The wemics form a line and charge the PCs. During the battle, the wemics roar challenges and insults at the PCs, including calling them torturers and assassins. They do not listen if the PCs protest their innocence. During the battle, Cattlechaser is confused who to assist and sits the initial battle out.

Wemics (14): AC (males) 6/5, (females) 7; MV 12; HD 5+8; hp 26; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (claws), 1d6 (club), 1d6 (javelin); DS -2 initiative modifier; AL N; THAC0 13.

Unbeknownst to everyone, including the lamia, three hungry chimerae have spotted the combatants. The chimerae circle overhead until two of the combatants have fallen. At this point, the chimerae plunge toward the combatants, breathing flame from their dragon heads. The chimerae make one pass over the combatants, then land and start attacking. The first chimera lands near any PCs who have not joined the battle. The second chimera lands near any wemics who are not in the battle. The third chimera attacks the lamia (with surprise advantage). The chimerae are out to kill everyone, PC, lamia or wemic, and attack all with equal probability.

Chimerae (3): AC 6/5/2; MV 9, F1 18 (E); HD 9; hp 40; #AT 6; Dmg 1-3/1-3 (claws), 1-4/1-4 (horns), 2-8 (lion head bite), 3-12 (dragon head bite); SA 3-24 (breath weapon); AL CE; THAC0 11.

The wemics turn from attacking the PCs to attacking the chimerae, although if a PC attacks a wemic, the wemic fight back. If the PCs see this as an opportunity to escape, one of the chimerae leap in pursuit.

The wemics do not propose cooperation. However, if the PCs propose cooperation, the wemics agree, at least for the moment.

When two of the chimerae are down, the third attempt to leave. If possible, he springs into the air and breathes flame from above for the next three rounds, then leave if the PCs survive. If the last chimerae cannot fly, he attempts to run away.

When the chimerae are defeated, the wemics look to the PCs to decide what happens next. If the PCs attack, the battle continues as before. If the PCs want to parley, the wemics move to a defensive position and signal their willingness to talk. If the PCs suggest they have all been the victims of a hoax, the pride leader agree.

(DM's NOTE: In all this confusion, it is certain that either the PCs or the wemics will detect the lamia (or their remains), thanks to the surprise attack of the chimerae. No matter what their condition, the game is over for the lamia. The PCs can take them prisoner and interrogate them, or drag their corpses along to the upcoming tribal gathering as proof that the attacks are not of human origin.)

The PCs can win the respect and gratitude of the pride if the PCs heal any wemics injured in the three-way fight. If they do so and can persuade the pride that they were innocent dupes,

Wemics, Lamias, and Thri-Kreen

the pride leader suggests the PCs travel to the gathering of the nation and present their case to the King. The Sandrunners give the PCs general directions to the nation's gathering place, but refuse to let the PCs accompany them. "Each pride must make its own way to the gathering," is their response if the PCs ask to travel with them. They do promise, however, to spread word of what has taken place here to other wemic prides.

The Sandrunners also refuse to accept responsibility for Cattlechaser. The pride leader explains pragmatically that Cattlechaser is the PCs' responsibility ("You brought him, you take him") and that the presence of the cub may protect the PCs from being attacked on sight.

The Sandrunners allow the PCs to share their campsite for the night. The next day they depart.

The Western Tribe

The PCs encounter a wemic tribe, the gathering of 17 prides.

When the PCs arrive, they must stay outside until invited to enter. Cattlechaser leaves the PCs to speak with the chief. If the PCs attempt to follow or force their way inside, all 390 wemics of the tribe turn threateningly toward them.

If the PCs can persuade the guards to let them in, they are escorted to the chief. If not, Cattlechaser returns four turns later and escorts the PCs to the chief.

Before the PCs can speak, the chief tells them they are not of the tribe and that they must earn the right to speak. The leader of the PCs must fight the chief's chosen champion. Normally such challenges are fought with only the body's natural weapons (claws, teeth), but since the humans lack claws, the chief allows them to the right to request that the wemic champion refrain from using his claws. In either case, the chosen PC cannot use his armor.

If the PC does not request that the wemic champion bind his claws, this gives him greater stature, especially if he wins the tribal combat.

The combat lasts until either combatant falls unconscious. If the PC loses, the party is ordered to leave the area. If the PC wins, the chief roars out the declaration that the PCs, for this day, are of the tribe. He then listens to anything the PCs have to say.

He tells the PCs of the attacks on his people by both humans and thri-kreen. These attacks are without provocation, yet they have driven the wemic nation to the point of war.

If the PCs declare their intention of convincing the wemic nation that war is unnecessary, the chief states only the king can prevent the nation from going to war, regardless of what proof they have. If the PCs ask where they can find the king, the chief tells the party that his tribe is on its way to meet him now. The PCs may accompany the tribe, but he warns them that they shall again have to prove their right to speak.

The Wemic Nation

A total of 1560 wemics have gathered for a convocation of the wemic nation. The boisterous roaring of the wemics is audible long before the PCs spot the gathering.

The nation has gathered on a low mesa. The hide shelters of the assembled tribes and prides spring like leathery trees from the flat mesa. Wemics are everywhere, running, engaging in mock battles, or arguing at the tops of their lungs.

If the PCs are alone when they approach the nation, twenty wemic warriors block their path, then encircle the PCs. They do not attack unless the PCs try to go past them. The flowery scent of the lamia captives (or corpses) fills them with suspicion.

If the PCs are escorted by some of the wemics they had encountered earlier (excluding Cattlechaser), the wemic warriors form a corridor to steer the PCs into a spot on the edge of the



mesa. Young wemics dart around the PCs. If Cattlechaser is with the PCs, the cubs squeal greetings to him; he then spots someone he knows and breaks from the PCs. He disappears into the nation's throng.

The wemics tell the PCs to stay at this spot until they are sent for. Six turns later Cattlechaser and a band of ten wemics come to escort the PCs to a large clearing in the center of the encampment. There, surrounded by hundreds of onlookers, the PCs face the King, Desertlord, a large, powerful-looking wemic. He is flanked by his four chieftains, including the leader of the tribe the PCs had encountered earlier.

One of the chieftains speaks. He ignores anything the PCs have to say. He announces in Common that any of the nation's members may speak before the King, but that those who are not of the nation will remain silent. Outsiders may earn the right to speak by submitting to the Challenge. If they win, they are considered to be of the nation and they may speak before the King. He asks if the PCs want to submit to the challenge. If they say no, they are escorted from the encampment and told to leave. If they say yes, the wemic recites the rules of the challenge:

"One: All members of the challenging band must participate. An equal number of wemic challengers will oppose them.

"Two: No weapons or armor are allowed. Wemics must sheathe their claws.

"Three: No lethal attacks are allowed. However, it is acknowledged that accidental fatalities may occur.

"Four: Combatants may voluntarily withdraw or surrender from the challenge by sitting or lying down. Such noncombatants may not reenter the challenge.

"Five: This is personal combat. A combatant may not aid his comrades. However, a combatant may take the fight if his fellow combatant leaves the challenge.

"Six: A combatant who leaves the challenge ring is considered defeated, and may not reenter the challenge.

"Seven: When a foe is defeated, the victor may seek a new foe to fight. The challenge is over when only one side remains."

Wemics, Lamias, and Thri-Kreen

The four wemic chieftains fight the PCs. The wemic shamans participate in the challenge if the PC party includes priests or mages. The rest of the number is made of male or female wemics, depending on the PCs.

Once the rules have been read, the PCs are asked if they understand. The wemics answer only questions about the rules. The chieftain's interpretation is literal: anything not specifically forbidden by the rules is allowed. This includes magic and enchanted items that are neither weapons nor armor in their shape. Again, if the PCs refuse the challenge, they are escorted beyond the camp defenses and told to leave.

If the PCs agree to the challenge, they are led to a point 100 feet from the King. A band of wemics equal in number to the PCs forms at a spot halfway between the King and the PCs. The rest of the wemics form a ring 150 feet in diameter.

The PCs have ten minutes to prepare. When they signal they are ready, the challenge begins. The wemics form a line and charge the PCs. Each wemic seeks a PC they judge their physical equivalent. The chieftains seek out the visibly strongest PCs, the shaman and wotan concentrate on battling the PCs capable of spell use, and so on.

The Wemic King (1): AC 3; MV 12; HD 9; hp 52; THACO 13; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (claws), 1d6 (club), 1d6 (javelin); SA +2 to attack with any weapon; SD -2 initiative modifier; AL N

Wemic Chieftains (4): AC 5; MV 12; HD 6+4; hp 30; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws), 1d6 (club), 1d6 (javelin); SA +1 to attack with any weapon; SD -2 initiative modifier; AL N; THACO 15.

Wemic Shaman (male) (1): AC 6/5; MV 12; HD 5+8; hp 30; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (claws), 1d6 (club), 1d6 (javelin); SA Priest spells; SD -2 initiative modifier; AL N; THACO 15.

Wemic Wotan (female) (1): AC 7; MV 12; HD 5+8; hp 31; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (claws); SA Wizard spells; SD -2 initiative modifier; AL N; THACO 15.

If the PCs are Defeated

If the PCs are defeated, the Sandrunner chieftain steps forward. He tells the King of the battle with the chimerae, and explains the treachery of the lamia. The king tells the PCs that though they have provided the necessary proof to avert war, they are obviously not strong enough to aid the wemic against the lamia in combat. The chief of the Sandrunner tribe intercedes on the PCs behalf, saying that the PCs are only human (i.e., not wemics) and that although they were defeated in the trial combat, they more than proved themselves against the common foes. There will be much (sometimes loud) discussion among the chieftains and the King, but the King will be persuaded to allow the PCs to join the tribe as wards of the wemic nation. The PCs are given food, and the wemic shaman will provide magical help for healing any of the PCs' wounds.

If the PCs Are Victorious

The King walks toward the standing PC and, laying a hand on the PC's shoulder, roars out that the PCs are declared a tribe of the nation. The entire nation joins in a deafening roar of welcome as the PCs and the defeated wemics are escorted from the challenge ring.

The PCs are escorted to the Sandrunner encampment, where they are given food and help with their wounds.

That evening, the PCs are escorted to the King. There is a great feast to celebrate the inclusion of the new tribe. As equals, the PCs are now allowed to speak of anything before the King and assembled nation.

When the subject of the recent hostilities arises, the King freely admits the nation was convened to discuss going to war against

the humans. In light of the discovery of the lamia, it is obvious that is not the correct approach to the problem. The King charges them with taking this knowledge to the other nations of the region, along with an offer of alliance against the common foe. They are given until the full moon two weeks from now to return with emissaries from the other folk for a council of war. The wemics will take no action until then.

If any of the PCs were killed or severely injured in the challenge, a wemic replaces each PC who is unable to continue the adventure.

If the lamia were taken prisoner, they will never leave the camp alive. Over fifteen hundred angry wemics will see to that.

Starting Out

If no wemics have joined the PCs, one day after leaving the nation they are approached by a female wemic warrior, Slystalker. Slystalker is actually a lamia in disguise who wants to join the PCs learn what they or the wemic nation have learned. Slystalker tells the PCs she has been hunting on her own and, when she saw humans, she thought she would investigate. Slystalker acts very friendly and professes ignorance of any knowledge of hostilities between the lamia and the nation. If questioned about this, she explains she was spending the past month in solitude while contemplating the mysteries prior to her becoming a shaman. Slystalker acts horrified if the PCs tell her about the current threat of war. She demands to know what's going on, and plies the PCs for as much information as possible.

If the PCs mention the fate of the two lamia, Slystalker says that they "got what they deserved." When she is told of the PCs' mission, she voices suspicions about the thri-kreen. She refers to them very derogatorily and suggests that although the king knows best, "we mammals have to stick together." When Slystalker cannot find out anything more and feels she has sufficiently poisoned the PCs' minds, she leaves, saying she must return to the nation and make her report.

Despite her act, the lamia has two possibly fatal areas in her plan. First, she does not know the name of either the wemic shaman or mage. If the PC can trip her with this ignorance, she realizes the PCs suspect her. Second, due to close proximity to the captured lamia, the PCs have a small (10%) chance of detecting the flowery scent she exudes. If the PCs detect the scent, a successful roll to disbelieve (saving throw vs. spell) will break her illusion. She then tries to escape. If escape is not an option, she will engage the party in combat.

After the PCs have departed the nation, they will find they have gained a follower in the form of Cattlechaser. Cattlechaser secretly trails the PCs as they continue on their mission. There is a 10% cumulative chance each day that Cattlechaser reveals his presence. When the PCs let Cattlechaser know they have discovered his presence, he joins the PCs and refuses to go home. He also points out the PCs cannot spare the time to return him to the nation.

The Lost Patrol

The PCs spot a flock of vultures soaring in the distance. When they investigate, they discover the remains of an armed human patrol. There are eleven bodies with light, standard-issue armor and simple weaponry. All the bodies have been partially consumed and show signs of purposeful butchery.

The breastplates of two of them contain clues about their slayers. One has a thri-kreen arm spike imbedded in it; lodged in another is a broken thri-kreen throwing wedge.

The leader's corpse has better armor. In his pouch is his personal journal. The last four entries are of interest to the PCs. The first entry, dated three weeks ago, retells the patrol's orders to seek out and eliminate the thri-kreen raiders who have just begun

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to attack human outposts and caravans. If possible, the patrol was to determine why the thri-kreen have grown hostile.

The second entry recounts the discovery of four dead wemics and the scattered remains of two thri-kreen exoskeletons. The leader mused that the wemics may be persuaded to join the humans in an alliance against their mutual foe.

The third entry recounts the patrol's fight with a thri-kreen war party, in which all seven thri-kreen were killed and half the patrol were wounded. The entry concludes with the fear that, in their current condition, the patrol would be defenseless against another thri-kreen attack. There are no further entries.

The Cliffside Lair

A cave entrance is visible 60' up a cliff wall. A series of 9 small ledges, each separated by 10-20', lead upward to the entrance.

A band of 6 adult thri-kreen are in the lair. Their human captive, Jory, is a 12-year-old boy. He was squire and errand boy for the patrol discovered earlier. The thri-kreen paralyzed Jory and brought him here.

Jory (0 level young human male): AC 10; MV 12; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg (by weapon); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL NG; THACO 20.

Thri-kreen (6): AC 5; MV 18; HD 6+3; hp 35, 20, 17, 12, 9, 8; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4x4 (claws), 1d4+1 (bite), 1d6+2 (throwing wedges); SA paralysis poison; SD Dodge missiles on 9 or better; AL CN; THACO 15. Three of the thri-kreen are seriously injured. The thri-kreen are hostile but they do not leave their comrades to attack the PCs. If the PCs try to communicate with the thri-kreen, they are willing to talk, although with suspicion. They surrender their captive if bribed with a large amount of meat or if their injured friends are healed by the PCs.

They were recently attacked by a human patrol (actually *polymorphed* lamia). In the battle, half of the thri-kreen were killed. When the thri-kreen stumbled across the patrol (see Encounter 1) they attacked, killing all but the boy Jory, whom they took captive.

When the poison wears off and Jory can be questioned by the PCs, he confirms the journal's entries, and the last part of the thri-kreens' statements. If parley is successful, the thri-kreen explain that their prophet has charged them with the mission of finding out what has driven the humans to attack thri-kreen. Suspicious PCs who question the thri-kreen about the nature of their "human" attackers are rewarded when one of the party remarks that the attackers smelled almost like flowers, quite different from the normal human meat-scent.

The thri-kreen have no treasure except their tools and weapons.

DM NOTE: Jory is Cattlechaser's equivalent in age, development, and temperament. If Cattlechaser is with the PCs, he and Jory do not get along.

The War Party

Continuing through the desert, the PCs are stalked by a full-strength thri-kreen war party. This group has shadowed the PCs since they entered thri-kreen territory.

The thri-kreen are more interested in observing rather than attacking the PCs at this point. If the PCs attack rather than talk with the band at the cliffside, the war party do not assist their kin. They prefer to wait for a more opportune moment.

Thri-Kreen (12): AC 5; MV 18; HD 6+3; hp 40 (x2), 39, 38, 36, 35 (x2), 30(MU), 29(x2), 20 (x2); #AT 5 (1); Dmg 1d4 (x4 claws), 1d4+1 (bite), 1d6+2 (throwing wedges, polearms); SA bite paralyzes (save or paralyzed 2d8 rounds), spell use 1, 2 level ability; SD dodge missiles on 9 or better; AL CN; THACO 15.

When the thri-kreen finally confront the PCs, their response is based on the past actions of the PCs. If the party has attacked any thri-kreen they encountered, they are attacked without war-

ning. If the PCs have chosen to communicate with the thri-kreen, the war party attempts to parley with the PCs; two thri-kreen reveal themselves while the rest remain in hiding. The mage thri-kreen is ready with spells. If the PCs have avoided battle with other thri-kreen, the war party will openly approach the PCs with their arms outstretched in a non-threatening manner.

The war party is aware of the recent rash of hostilities involving humans, wemics, and thri-kreen. Although thri-kreen are individualistic by nature, this group, as well as the others, are in the service of the Voice of the thri-kreen. This being has decided that the prospect of open warfare is too dangerous to allow, and is therefore set on discovering the cause of the recent unrest and putting a stop to it. If the PCs can convince the thri-kreen of the lamia's responsibility, the thri-kreen will send a contingent of warriors to join the wemics and the PCs in a mutual assault on the lamia. They must first, however, present their case to the Voice of the Thri-Kreen.

The Voice of the Thri-Kreen

The war party leads the PCs on a march of around a day and half. Though the thri-kreen are the dominant species in this part of the desert, there are still other flora and fauna who share the desert with them (consult the Random Encounters, Subtropical Desert sections of the *Monstrous Compendium* for examples).

Eventually, the journey ends at a large (350') mesa. The mesa is featureless, devoid of cave entrances or cracks. The thri-kreen mage performs a ritual, and one round later a round opening appears in the mesa wall. The thri-kreen escort the party into the opening into what they refer to as the Chambers of the Prophet.

The party leader explains that in times of great turmoil, the thri-kreen call forth one who shares a part of the essence of all thri-kreen. This is the Voice; the one who can speak for and command all mantis-folk in times of great danger. These chambers are normally unoccupied until the Voice is called forth. He also states that she awaits them now in the warren's central chamber.

The group is led through a maze of passages. Everywhere, there are thri-kreen performing various tasks: carrying food, shepherding young, making tools and weapons. Those who have encountered thri-kreen before recognize this as highly irregular behavior for this nomadic, solitary people. The guide explains that in the presence of the Voice, the urge to fight and maintain territory is suppressed, allowing the individual thri-kreen to work together. He personally wishes that this could go on forever, for the feelings of unity he experiences are very pleasant, "as though the whole world belongs to my clutch."

Eventually, the group is led to a chamber that is guarded by two large thri-kreen. They ask for the group's weapons. The thri-kreen leader gives all his weapons to the two guards, indicating that the party must leave all weapons and items of power here. To do otherwise, he says, is to insult the Voice and be denied an audience.

When the party enters the central chamber, they see an area 300' in diameter, with a raised ledge (10') high and 40' wide at the far side. Standing on the ledge, in front of a cave-like opening, is a large thri-kreen, the largest any of the party have ever seen (14 feet). Her carapace is etched with strange, knotlike symbols in various bright colors. Some appear to be inlaid in silver and gold.

Thri-kreen Prophet: AC 5; MV 18; f 18; HD 8+3; hp 50; #AT 5 or 3; Dmg 1-4(x4)/2-5 or by weapon; SA/SD magic use at 7th level of ability, spell-like abilities of telepathy, empathy, dodge missiles on 9 or better; AL N; THACO 13.

She welcomes the PCs to her chamber on behalf of her people. If asked about her position, she explains that if she were human, she would be considered a queen. The difference, however, is that she leads the thri-kreen only for the duration

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of this emergency. When the crisis has passed, she will die, torn apart at the claws of her own people. She has already performed her other task, that of laying the clutch of eggs from which the next Voice of the thri-kreen will come. She has sealed the egg chamber, and hopes that maybe the next Voice will not be summoned for a very long time. Getting down to business, she commands the PCs to tell her of their mission, leaving out nothing.

If the party is truthful, telling her exactly what has occurred in the nation of the wemics and with the thri-kreen, she says that she is inclined to believe the PCs, but requires more proof before she will accompany them back to the wemic nation for a council of war against the lamia "infestation." If for some reason the PCs lie to her, or present a hostile front, she will fly from her perch, to land 10' from the leader of the PCs. She then uses her *hold person* (12th level ability) and *telepathy* faculty to get the truth from him. In either case, during the proceedings, Jory somehow sneaks past the PCs, the guards, and Cattlechaser, climbs the ledge and enters the cave opening!

The Spy

The sound of screams from the cave opening shocks both the PCs and the thri-kreen out of their negotiations. The Voice turns, flies back to the entrance, and dashes inside. The thri-kreen leader follows, telling the PCs that if they value their mission they will follow.

The PCs find the Voice of the Thri-Kreen stopped dead in her tracks, staring at the torn-up bodies of two thri-kreen. They apparently were guarding a plug of compacted sand at which Jory was tearing with a thri-kreen javelin when the Voice arrived. Jory turns to the PCs with tears in his eyes, screaming that the bugs killed his only friends and that he will have revenge. The Voice, however, takes this opportunity to leap screaming on Jory, killing him after a brief struggle. If the PCs plan to take revenge for this act, the reversion of "Jory's" body to that of a lamia quickly dispels any such impulses.

A Council of War

The Voice assures the party after this incident, she is convinced that the lamia are behind all the unrest and racial violence that has disrupted the desert. She bids the PCs enjoy the hospitality of the thri-kreen while she engages in contemplation. In the intervening two days, the PCs can interact with the thri-kreen of the warren, guided by the war party members. If so inclined, dexterous PCs can receive instruction in handling the famed thri-kreen throwing wedges.

After the PCs have been refreshed and their supplies replenished, they set out, along with the Voice and the war party, toward the territory of the lamia. The Voice assures the PCs that she has contacted the wemic king via mental telepathy. A force of wemics will rendezvous with them at the suspected lamia stronghold, marked on the map as "Zinderneuf".

The Lions

On their journey, the PCs encounter a pride of lions. The first encounter is with 1-2 lions, who keep their distance from the PCs. Additional lions join them at the rate of 1-2 per turn until there are twice as many lions as there are PCs. The lions continue to stalk the PCs, fanning out to flank the PCs and the thri-kreen. The first two lions reveal their presence and move toward the PCs. When the PCs react, the rest of the lions move in. For some reason, the lions seem to focus their attacks on both the PC leader and the Voice of the Thri-Kreen.

When half of the lions are dead or injured, the rest break off the attack.

Lions: AC 5/6 (males are AC 5 on their forequarters, AC 6 on the rear); MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 30; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10;

SA Rear claws 1d6+1 each; SD surprised only on a 1; AL N; THACO 15.

The False Lions

Two days after the PCs encounter the lions, the PCs spot six more lions in the distance. These lions keep their distance but they follow the PCs. If the PCs approach, the lions try to back off and scatter, then regroup to maintain their surveillance.

The lions are actually a pair of lamia maintaining the illusion of being lions to mask their true identities. They try to drive the PCs away from the desert fort that hides their lair. Each lamia is capable of creating the illusion of 1-8 lions; they may split up and each create an illusionary pride to give the PCs the idea they are threatened by a small army of lions.

If any of the false lions are killed, the illusion drops and the two lamia are revealed.

Lamia (2): AC 3; MV 24; HD 9; hp 46; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA Spells, Wisdom drain; SD Nil; AL CE; THACO 12.

Sandtown

The PCs and thri-kreen come upon a small town. Actually, it is a single street defined by the twelve buildings that line it. They are greeted by six armed men who demand the PCs give them back their daughters. They also demand to know why the PCs are "running with bugs."

The situation is very tense, as the men are armed with crossbows. The Voice of the Thri-kreen is silent, as these armed humans make it quite clear that they only will speak with the PCs. If the party explains their mission, one of the men mumbles something about "knowing that desert feller didn't look right."

If the PCs are non-threatening, the men will slowly lower their weapons and explain that one week ago, a well-dressed man rode through town and stayed over night. The next morning, he was gone, along with the town's young women. They tell the group the man apparently rode toward the Zinderneuf ruins. The largest of the men breaks down and cries, saying that they must have their daughters back, and if the PCs can help, they would be eternally grateful. They are poor, but if their children are returned, they will give the PCs whatever they can.

The Ruins of Zinderneuf

The PCs discover a derelict desert outpost. The outpost is marked "deserted fort" on the PC's map; the faded sign over the entrance reads "Zinderneuf". The outpost is a low-walled castle with a main building and five lesser buildings inside. The walls are intact but the two panels of the gate are missing. The panels are lying on the ground, and appear to have been ripped off their hinges by the company of wemics that are outside, screaming and roaring taunts at the lamia.

Cattlechaser immediately breaks from the PCs upon catching the wemics' scent, shouting that these are his people, the Dragon-fighter pride! As the PCs and thri-kreen approach, they witness the emotional reunion of the pride's youngest member with his family.

According to the wemic reports, the lamia lair is hidden beneath the fort. The lamia tried to hide most traces of their presence, but were flushed out by the wemics, who then laid siege to the fort. Two passageways lead to the underground lair. One is hidden in the basement of the main building; this leads to the Chamber of the Initiation. The other, beneath a rear watchtower, leads to the lamia hall. The wemic leader suggests that the thri-kreen and wemics remain outside to attack, harass and divert the lamia guards while the PCs slip inside.

If the PCs attack the fort in daylight, there is a 50% chance they are spotted by a lamia guard. The guard retreats to the base of the corner watchtower and observes the PCs while they investigate the fort.

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A search of the surface ruins reveals the fort has been picked clean of valuables. Also, there is a curious scent of flowers in the air.

If any PC has tracking ability, he can spot the human and lion tracks in the sand. The prints lead to either of the hidden entryways.

The lamia want the PCs to explore the entrances. Both are boobytrapped with a 6' horizontal row of spikes that does 6d6 points of damage to everyone caught by them. The traps are hidden by illusions cast by the lamia guard. When either boobytrap springs, it also rings a gong in the lamia complex below.

The Lamia Complex

If the surviving PCs descend by the stairway under the watchtower, they come to the main lamia hall. This arched circular chamber serves as meeting room, battleground, and feasting hall. The half-eaten remains of a horse lie in the center of the floor. Twenty alcoves line the walls; twelve of these are used as sleeping chambers for individual lamia. Three doorways are equally placed at intervals around the chamber. One of the three doorways leads to the Chamber of the Initiates, where the human women stay; the second leads to the Temple of the Initiation; and the third leads to the lamia nobles' chambers.

As the party looks around, they are surprised by a lamia noble, who teleports into the chamber and attacks. She lays into the party, unleashing spells of devastating effect (levels 2-8) until either none of the PCs remain, or she is defeated. In that case, the lamia noble bolts for the Chamber of the Initiates, ordering them to come out and attack (see below for Initiate statistics). She then retreats to her chambers.

Female lamia noble (1): AC 3; MV 9; HD 10+1; hp 57; #AT 0; SA spells, Wisdom drain; AL CE; THAC0 10.

The Chamber of the Initiates

The Chamber consists of a smaller arched hall lined with twelve alcoves. The hall acts as meeting place and communal room for the human women living in the lamia complex. The twelve alcoves are individual sleeping chambers. A doorway leads to the Temple of the Initiation.

The Temple is used for the ceremony in which human women are transformed into lamia. The Temple has a raised platform near the back wall, behind which are three doorways. The center doorway and the hallway behind it are rounded; it is used by the lamia nobles and leads to their chambers. One of the other doors leads to the lamia chambers; the other leads to the hidden entrance in the basement above. This is how all the Initiates first entered the complex.

Unless they are ordered into battle, the twelve current Initiates are in the main chamber when the PCs enter. The Initiates were all chosen for cleverness and use whatever strategies serve them best against the PCs. Depending on the circumstances, they might openly attack or pretend to welcome the PCs as rescuers, then attack when the PCs' guard is down.

Initiates (12): AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 4 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); AL CN; THAC0 20.

If the Initiates attack but are subdued, they rage like wildcats for the next day or two, after which they calm down and pretend to welcome the return to their homelands.

Chamber of the Nobles

These three rooms serve as the private quarters of the lamia nobles. They can be reached by a tunnel from the lamia hall or by means of the circular tunnel leading from the Temple of the Initiation. The anteroom is also the chamber where the newly transformed neo-lamia reside while not accompanying the nobles. Because the neo-lamia and lamia nobles must remain together

for the time of enchantment, the neo-lamia and lamia nobles do not leave this chamber unless threatened. The male and female lamia nobles, along with a neo-lamia, wait under cover of an *invisibility* spell to attack the PCs.

Neo-lamia (1): AC 3; MV 24; HD 9; hp 46; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA spell use (lvl 2-8); SD Nil; AL CE; THAC0 12.

Male lamia noble (1): AC 3; MV 9; HD 10+1; hp 57; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+2 (*scimitar* +2), 1-6 (dagger); SA spell use (lvl 1-6), Wisdom drain; SD Nil; AL CE; THAC0 10.

The resulting battle is furious; the lamia nobles will not fall without trying to take the PCs with them! They attack in a one-two punch, the female using spells, the male attacking with his scimitar and dagger. (DM Note: If the battle is going poorly for the PCs, bring in the thri-kreen and wemics as reinforcements.) When the lamia nobles are defeated, one will beg for mercy, offering to tell the PCs their secrets in exchange for his life. If the PCs do this, read the following:

The Initiation of the Lamia

The procedure by which a human woman is transformed into a full lamia is long and perilous.

The Initiation begins when a lamia noble casts a polymorph spell on her, transforming her into the form of a lamia. Only 50% of the Initiates survive the transformation. The surviving neo-lamia have the physical abilities of a lamia but lack the magical powers. Each neo-lamia pairs with a lamia noble; for the next two weeks, they remain together as the lamia noble endows the neo-lamia with magical powers of her own. At the end of this period, the Initiate is proclaimed a full lamia.

One week before this adventure, the lamia nobles transformed four Initiates into neo-lamia. All four survived. One went with each of the two lamia nobles while the other two went with the normal lamia.

Lamia Treasure Room

This room contains the bulk of the lamia hoard. It contains both treasure and whatever otherwise unusable items the lamia took from their victims, such as saddles and armor. If the PCs search the piles of loot, they discover 8000 cp, 3000 gp, 500 pp, a *wand of polymorphing*, *figurines of wondrous power* (ivory goats), *eyes of petrification*, a *robe of the archmagi*, a *scarab vs. golems*, a *potion of heroism*, a *potion of flying*, a citrine worth 50 gp, a peridot (50 gp value), and a jacinth worth 5,200 gp.

Epilogue

Though the Initiates may appear to be calm and even anxious to return home, the mental conditioning they received at the hands of the lamia lingers. The thri-kreen Voice offers to reverse the conditioning using her mental abilities. If this is accepted, the process will take approximately two days to complete. The Dragonfighter pride thanks the PCs for the return of their child: this has earned them a place as members of the pride and of the wemic nation. The thri-kreen war party is faced with a problem: having served her purpose, the Voice must die. Inventive PCs may solve this problem with the *wand of polymorphing*. Using it to turn her into a human frees the thri-kreen from her influence and spares her life. She returns with the women to the town to live a normal life among them. Doing this also earns the undying respect of the party leader, who refers to the PCs as clutch mates of the thri-kreen.

If the lamia are all killed, the menace is ended. The thri-kreen and wemics will return home, secure in the knowledge that the desert is safe from the threat of the lamia.

Trolls and Centaurs

Terrain:	Mountains
Total Party Levels:	30 (Average 6th)
Total Magic X.P.:	1500
Total g.p. X.P.:	1500

This adventure is intended for player characters who use their brains as well as their weapons, and who already interact well with NPCs. It is especially suitable if a player would like his character to fall in love. The PC in question is presumed male, but the adventure can be shuffled about to provide a love interest for a female PC without much trouble.

Set-up

The party is traveling through the eastern foothills of a mountain range that runs north-south. While the land is generally good here, the past several months have been very dry, with prairie grasses turning brown and rivers dwindling to trickles. The druids promise rain within the next week, but for now, the PC's must provide their own water.

One morning, the party encounters horse-tracks in the dirt, leading towards the mountains, far from any paths. A character attempting to identify the tracks with a successful Tracking non-weapon proficiency check notices a peculiarity to the prints: there is an unusually heavy amount of weight on the front hooves. A druid recognizes them as centaur tracks, far beyond the forests to the southeast that delineate normal centaur territory.

Baran, a nine-year old in town, reports seeing "horse-people" out in the hills. He was playing in the dried-up river-bed when he saw about a half dozen of them, including children, in the hills just north of town. Baran would characterize their attitude as "sneaky, like they were afraid that somebody'd see them. The kids looked tired and kind of sad."

Wetherson is an elderly shopkeeper who has done members of the party favors in the past: he's accepted huge gems as payment for dry goods; he's allowed characters to run up short-term tabs; and he's been generally supportive of the adventurers, ready with a kind word and solid advice.

Recently, Wetherson's health has been failing. He's been having troubles walking, and his strength has all but disappeared. This is not merely old age; Wetherson seems to have suffered damage from a nerve infection. *Cure wounds* spells cannot aid him, since he is not wounded, and neither does his condition fall under the domains of *cure disease*, or even the ministrations of a *potion of healing*. Wetherson's sister, a priestess, has heard about a variation on a *potion of healing* that might repair the injuries Wetherson has suffered. Unfortunately, the potion lists troll blood as a major component, and trolls are rare in these parts. Fortunately, a raiding party of trolls has been spotted in the mountains a couple days west of town. If the party can get back within a few weeks with fresh troll blood, Wetherson's sister can prepare the potion and bring him back to health. For their part, she offers the PC's 1500 gold pieces to bring back five ounces of troll blood that has been unexposed to fire.

After two successful Tracking rolls in the correct area (reports can pin down troll activity to an area about two miles square), the PC's can spot troll tracks. The trolls (a character making his roll by over 25% can tell there are about a dozen of them) seem to be following earlier tracks, left by centaurs.

The Adventure

A month ago, a pack of trolls patrolling the forests to the south stumbled up on an enclave of centaurs. There were only eighteen trolls to nearly seventy centaurs, but the horse-people have little feel for fire, a troll's one weakness. The centaurs sent a scouting party to find Milleriel, a copper dragon who had promised friendship with the centaurs, but Milleriel never came, and the scouts were not seen again. And the trolls kept coming.



Now, months later, the centaur tribe has reached its final days. All the warriors have been killed; all that remain are the young, the aged, and widows with no feel for combat. Even if the attacks were to cease, the tribe would die out. And still the trolls attack.

But Ianeireus, the centaurs' wisest sage, remembers a legend. The stories talk of a safe haven, a Land of Peace and Contentment, just on the other side of the mountain range to the northwest. And so, with trolls in pursuit, the centaurs have left their home.

It should not be difficult for the party to locate the centaurs. The encounter will probably happen after a day or two of tracking and searching, and will occur a day into the mountains. If the centaurs are startled (that is, if the party *surprises* the centaurs and is not immediately friendly), their first action will be to bolt at a movement rate of 8, the speed of Ianeireus, the slowest of the tribe. If the centaurs surprise the party, they will attempt to flee. If neither side is surprised, the centaurs will hold their ground and wait for the party to make the first move.

Centaurs (7): AC 5; MV 18; HD 1-3; hp vary; #AT 2(3); Dmg 1-6/1-6/Possible weapon; AL NG; THAC0 19 (17 if 3 HD).

Ianeireus is the revered patriarch of the tribe. He is respected not for his years but rather for his wisdom. He is, however, near death; he has only 2 Hit Dice remaining, and a vicious wound in his left haunch. He currently moves at 8, and is down to 3 hit points. Were he healed, he would move at 12 and have his full complement of 7 hit points. He reminds his people about the urgency of their quest, and provides stern encouragement to the dispirited.

Amphinome is Ianeireus' second wife. She has 2 Hit Dice and 7 hit points. Their two sons and three daughters were killed by the trolls. Amphinome is tired, and looks older than her 65 years. (Centaurs typically live to see their 80th birthday.) She is looking forward to the Lands at the end of their quest.

Antenor withdrew from being an active protector of the tribe only a few years ago. He has 3 Hit Dice and 10 hit points. He still carries a composite longbow and a supply of sheaf and flight arrows, including three *flight arrows* +2. Antenor realizes the necessity of flight from the trolls, but he doesn't like it. Bitter with hindsight, he's certain that the tribe could have beaten the two-legged vermin, if only the tribal leaders hadn't made so many mistakes.

Trolls and Centaurs

Marpesse is a widow of the tribe. She has 2 Hit Dice and 7 hit points. She keeps to herself, but she is very much afraid of the trolls. She has not slept well since her husband died, but finds some comfort in the children that have survived this far. Marpesse loves children, and could not bear to see another one killed by the trolls.

Clarisse has 3 Hit Dice and 10 hit points. She is in her early twenties, and she is beautiful. She was betrothed to Gereus, a brute and a drunkard, but he was killed some months back. Clarisse never thought much of Gereus in the first place, taking him for a coward and a lout, but she is now classed as a widow, and is free to marry who she chooses. She is wise in the ways of nature, kindly, and gracious.

Eurybates is just barely 16 years old, and considers himself to be the leader of the tribe. He has 3 Hit Dice and 16 hit points. He fights with a morning-star as well as with his front hooves, and he has incapacitated a couple of trolls in single combat. Eurybates is not rash, nor is he pushy, but he does take his responsibilities very seriously. He appreciates *Ianeireus'* years of experience and often seeks advice from *Clarisse*, but he reserves the right to make the final decision. He lacks in experience, but he compensates by erring in the side of safety. Eurybates is not all that bad a guy; he's likable enough, as long as outsiders don't try to take his authority away from him.

Laodike is 9 years old. She has 1 Hit Die and 6 hit points. She does not understand exactly what a troll is, but she knows that they killed her parents and all her friends, just for fun, and that only fire and dragons can kill them. She trusts Eurybates and *Clarisse* is her best friend. *Laodike* some times falls asleep in *Marpesse's* arms.

Dexamene is 3 years old, *Laodike's* younger sister. She has 2 hit points. Her movement rate is only 9, as she has yet to learn to gallop. She misses her mom, but *Marpesse* is a nice lady.

The centaurs speak the language of elves, but not common. The reaction of the centaurs will depend upon the attitude of the party, but Eurybates is more than willing to accept the aid of the PC's as guards against the trolls, as long as they are willing to follow his instructions and abide by a common sense code of behavior. To a centaur, humans and dwarves are shunned because such races do not understand how to live in harmony with nature; Eurybates wants to make sure that the party behaves itself when escorting the centaurs. If the party insists on payment, Antenor is willing to surrender his *flight arrows* +2, requiring from the player characters in return a vow to give their best effort to safeguard the centaurs until they reach the end of their quest.

First Combat

Without magical assistance, the trip to the top of the mountains would take three hard days of climbing for the party. But such terrain is difficult for centaurs (particularly for the children) and will take five days at a forced march (only eight hours of rest a day), or seven at a more leisurely pace. Marching is considered mildly strenuous. The DM should impose the rules in the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, page 88, with the provision that the fatigue checks come every hour; the time between successful Constitution checks is not reduced. All centaurs, including *Ianeireus*, are considered to have 18 Constitution for purposes of this check. There are magical means of cutting down travel time over the mountains (*rainbow* spells, *potions of flying*, and so on), but the centaurs will be reluctant to experiment with such matters. Amphinome in particular is skittish about magical transportation.

During the first night, two hours before sunrise, the encampment will be attacked by trolls.

Trolls (9): AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 25, 33, 29, 34, 38, 30, 28, 30, 27; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/5-12; SD: Regeneration; AL CE; THAC0 15.

The pack of trolls pursuing the centaurs has split into two groups. One half dogs the party's trail, while the other attempts to move ahead of the herd and ambush them. This is an attack of the first group, and has come up from the grasslands below. They will, with typical trollish tactics, scream some gibberish in trollspeak and rush the encampment. They will try to kill anything that moves, giving preference to the dangerous PC's, but more than happy to take a swipe at one of the centaurs. Although any centaur may be fair game for the trolls, the DM might consider that the death of *Clarisse* or *Eurybates* at this time would harm the story. The DM might also let the players know about the experience point bonus for keeping the centaurs alive.

If more than one troll is incapacitated, or the party inflicts significant damage on the trolls with fire or acid, or if the party has inflicted about twice as much damage on the trolls as they have received, the trolls will flee into the night. Their infravision, combined with an ability to climb even sheer cliff faces 80% of the time, and a willingness to throw themselves off 50' cliffs to avoid capture (why not?) should hinder pursuit.

For their part, Eurybates and Antenor will join the PCs in combat unless one of the Player Characters insists that they stay out of the fight. The two centaurs team up on one of the trolls, inflicting serious damage.

The code of the centaurs limits the party's ability to use fire. The lands around are very dry, and the use of burning oil projectiles, *fireball* spells, and the like, is irresponsible. Remember, "kill the trolls first, then set them on fire." The centaurs will immediately extinguish any brush fires so that they do not set the entire mountainside kindling. If a fighting troll is set aflame, it will flee into the night, possibly starting a grass fire. The centaurs will be able to contain the damage tonight, but afterwards, such an indiscretion has a 10% chance of starting a major fire. For details, see pages 66 to 68 in the *Wilderness Survival Guide*.

Once the battle is over and the centaurs' feelings about fire are understood, the party can rest for the night. However, for the rest of the night, and at intervals through the nights to come, the trolls will hide in the terrain surrounding the encampment and laugh. These trolls will attack at night, 75% likely to do so after midnight, on a roll of 1-2 on a d6, checked each night.

Ambush

The other set of trolls hasn't had as much luck. Their clever ambushes have gone unused, since the centaurs have taken different paths than those the trolls were expecting. In the mountains, however, the centaurs have limited options. Now, the ambushes become a real danger.

Trolls (8): AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 30, 38, 39, 34, 37, 41, 43, 40; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/5-12; SD regeneration; AL CE; THAC0 15.

The ambush takes place three hours after noon; check to see if any of the PCs are fatigued, as above. Unless the trolls are surprised, they will begin combat while they are 30 yards above the party and 55 yards distant, throwing 15 pound boulders for 1-8 points of damage. Naturally, these trolls do not have any signs of fire damage that the party might have inflicted on the group the night before. They are particularly trying to hit centaurs, and each troll comes ready with three boulders. After the boulders are thrown, the trolls will sweep down (taking 4 rounds) and attack the party until they break morale or the party withdraws. The terrain is considered to be precarious, but with a -2 bonus to the Dexterity checks (see *Wilderness Survival Guide*, page 84). Characters failing the check are thrown 10-60 feet away, and suffer damage as if they had fallen half that distance. Because of their exceptional agility, trolls fail their checks only on a result of 20, and need only make one check per round, even if they miss their target more than once.

Trolls and Centaurs

The centaurs will attempt to find cover. They will find 50% concealment in 1-2 rounds, and 50% cover an additional 1-4 rounds later. In any melee with these trolls, the centaurs will retreat and let the PC escorts deal with the threat.

The trolls can be surprised, but only if the party is moving at a forced march. In this case, the party still receives a -2 penalty to surprise the trolls (this is an ambush, after all) but is sufficiently ahead of schedule to have a chance at taking them unaware. This situation is startling the trolls: a -2 penalty is assessed to their morale during the combat. On the other hand, trolls do not suffer a morale penalty for being reduced in hit points unless the damage is caused by fire or acid, in which case the penalty is doubled.

While they live, these trolls will continue to harass the party with such ambushes during the day. If an ambush does not kill all the centaurs, the trolls will regroup and set up another attack 1-3 days later. With advanced warning (*invisible* point guards, eagle-eyed sentries on wing above), the party ought to be able to defuse many of these situations.

It is also in the days that follow that Clarisse will confess to a PC (preferably a male character who's been looking for a love interest) that she has fallen for him. She has admired those virtues he has exhibited in combat. She isn't sure she'd want to enter the Land of Peace and Contentment if it meant losing the PC. Ideally, the player character ought to return Clarisse's attraction. If not, the storyline will still run its course, but Clarisse's love will be unreturned, and the story may lose some of its poignancy.

The PCs Strike Back

On the last day of the trek up the mountains, the "day trolls" will certainly attack, but this time, the party has an advantage. The characters are now above the timber line, and the rocks and lichen are unlikely to catch fire from any attacks the party might throw at the trolls. Mitigating this advantage, however, is the treacherous nature of the terrain at the peak; the area is still considered precarious, but the -2 bonus to Dexterity checks is not applied. And any fall will take the character 10-100 feet away from the fight, with the character taking damage as if he had fallen one half that distance. Any trolls that flee this encounter will join with the "night trolls."

That night, there will be no troll attacks. About midnight, clouds will roll in, intermittently obscuring the moonlight. All of the centaurs sleep very soundly. Nothing short of physical injury will awaken any of them, as they dream of Skerit, "the Forester," a Power which guards the centaur race. These dreams bring comfort to Eurybates and his people. They waken the next morning at the first touch of sunlight through the clouds, refreshed and renewed for the trip down the mountain.

The Way Down

Skerit has granted these mountains the power to act as a portal for those centaurs seeking shelter and sanctuary, a portal to the Beastlands, that Outer Plane known to humans as the Happy Hunting Grounds (see *Manual of the Planes*, page 91.) The farther the centaurs descend the western face of the mountains (it's a three-day trip down), the more they belong to the Beastlands, and the less claim the Prime Material Plane has on them:

After a half-day's journey, they can smell the Beastlands, and can hear the roar of great cats in the distance. They also receive 10% Magic Resistance, as they are not entirely connected to the Prime Material any longer.

After one day, they *pass without trace*. At this point, Clarisse realizes what is happening, and that the process is removing her forever from her beloved.

The second day, rain begins to fall, but the centaurs are untouched by it, still standing in the sunlight of Krigala, the first

layer of the Beastlands. As the party progresses down the mountainside, the rain begins to pass through the centaurs, who are now AC 1 and possessed of 50% Magic Resistance. Clarisse refuses to go any further, fearing that every step she takes down the hill is a step forever away from her love.

Ianeireus (or some other centaur, if Ianeireus is dead) reminds her that the journey is one-way. Once begun, it can never be recanted. She is now trapped between worlds. She can either enter the Beastlands with the rest of the centaurs, or she can remain as she is, a spirit without substance, haunting, never having, her heart's desire.

Even so, Clarisse declares, she would turn away from the Beastlands, for without her love, they could never be the Lands of Peace and Contentment for her.

Ianeireus accepts this, but offers that there is a third choice, if Clarisse and the Player Character truly love one another. The portal was never intended to keep a centaur and his or her beloved apart. If the PC is willing, he can join the centaurs on their journey. Ianeireus warns the PC, however: if his love for Clarisse is not true, he'll spend a long time regretting his decision.

If the PC is willing to cross over with Clarisse, the other centaurs will accept that decision. He will feel the sun on his face and hear the sounds of the forest around him. He too has an AC bonus of +4 and 50% Magic Resistance, but creatures of the Prime Material have the Armor Class bonus and 50% MR against the magic of the PC as well. As the party continues to descend the mountainside, that Player Character will come more and more into the Beastlands, there to spend his life with his beloved. It is suggested that the player retire that character and begin the next adventure with a new PC.

It may be that the PC is not, in fact, in love with Clarisse, or feels other obligations that force him to decline her invitation. If so, she will plead once more to him, and then, if he still refuses, she will charge down the mountainside in tears, never to be seen again.

In any case, the rain will continue as a drizzle into the night. The centaurs (and the PC accompanying them into the Beastlands) are still sunlit through the night. And the final troll attack (all those remaining from both the "night" and "day" troll forces) comes at midnight. The trolls realize that something is happening to the centaurs, and they don't like it at all. They attack with a Morale bonus of +2, determined to wipe out the centaurs. By this time, the centaurs (and Clarisse's love) give and receive only half damage in battle with the trolls, and enjoy AC -1.

The next day, around two hours before noon, the centaurs begin a slow fade from view. Their voices sound far away. By noon, they are gone, safe at last.

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Terrain:

Total Party Levels: 60 (Average 7th)

Total Magic X.P.: 14,150

Total g.p. X.P.: 15,590

This adventure requires the player characters to think on their feet in situations not necessarily of the party's choosing.

Set-up

The town of Avendell is situated a half-day's walk from Lake Reymashe, a very large freshwater lake. Avendell is in fact on the edge of the valley that was molded over the millennia by the lake's flooding and receding. Overlooking Avendell, and shading it in the afternoon sun, is a 700' high cliff, sheer after the first 50 feet. These rocks, named the Wailing Cliffs after the sepulchral sound of the wind along their face, support the hill-top residence of a storm giant named Trinas. Trinas exacts tribute (one magic item of exceptional beauty each year) from Avendell, and offers his protection to the city's population in return.

The party is resting in Avendell between adventures, perhaps planning to investigate the caves in the Wailing Cliff. They receive a summons from Wheisseir and Griffia, the husband and wife who govern the town. There seems to be a problem.

"This town is guarded against the dangers in the valley by Trinas, a giant who dwells atop the cliffs. Each year, he asks us for one item of both magic and beauty, to show our appreciation of his guardianship. This year, we meant to present him with the *urn of the greenlands*. The urn is a rare find, the handiwork of a race of elves that settled in the valley some thousand years ago. It is fragile for a magical item, made of thick, green-stained glass and covered with intricate cameos of pastoral scenes. The urn stands four foot high, and weighs a little over fifty pounds."

If asked, Griffia will explain the urn's powers. Animals which drink water from the urn are healed of disease and relieved of fatigue. Such animals do not tire for a full day. Also, the urn will, once each day, *purify* any grains placed therein immediately after harvesting. Small loaves of bread made of such grains (4d6 + 12 such loaves can be baked from one urnful) cure 1-3 points of damage. The second power requires a brief ceremony in which a priest casts both *bless* and *purify food and drink* over the crops.

"Avendell had intended to present the urn to Trinas this past week, but it was stolen from us just outside of town by a band of dark bandits, living twenty miles up along the river that feeds into the lake. If the urn is not presented to Trinas by dawn tomorrow, the anniversary of our pact, the giant will withdraw his support of Avendell, and those selfsame bandits will descend upon us."

"The town was able to scrape together 10,000 gold pieces, to hire the Lions of Reshallah, a mercenary company with a reputation for getting the job done. But the Lions have not yet arrived, and it does not seem that they are likely to do so. The gold is yours, if you arrive back here with the urn before sunrise."

Fighters in the party may have heard of the Lions of Reshallah. They are led by a human named Francos (Reshallah having retired some years back), who has a reputation for surprising, bold tactics in unusual circumstances. The Lions will examine any fighting situation without charge; if they show up late and the town cancels their services, the Lions will ask only for the expenses incurred in the traveling. If they actually enter combat, however, they demand their full price. The Lions have been known to raze patrons who were reluctant to pay. If the Lions did defeat the bandits, and Avendell could not pay them, the mercenaries would likely level half the town. Or, at least that's their reputation.



The Adventure

The bandits are a tatterdemalion of forces under the leadership of Khordoc Bushybrow, a powerful bard from lands to the north. He has united factions from two thieves' guilds under Lambert, a half-elven thief, and combined them with the Hand of Torrace, the pirates who used to raid along the lake, and a band of disgruntled mercenaries.

Khordoc Bushybrow, 10th level Human Bard: AC 4; MV 12; hp 31; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6 + 2; SA spells, thief abilities, inspiration; AL CN; THAC0 14. S 12, D 14, C 13, I 16, W 9, Ch 17; Proficiencies: light crossbow, short sword, vaulge, sling; dancing, disguise, etiquette, heraldry, swimming. Equipment: *bracers of defense AC 5*, *ring of protection +1*, *short sword of speed +2* (already figured into the THAC0 and damage listed above), *potions of extra-healing* and *delusion* (believed to be a potion of invisibility).

Thief abilities: PP 90, DN 26, CW 83, RL 21. Spells in spell book: *alarm*, *cantrip*, *charm person*, *read magic*; *spectral hand*; *clairvoyance*, *hold animal*, *infravision*; *firetrap*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *phantasmal killer*, *wizard eye*.

Khordoc is allowed to have memorized three first level spells, three second level (*spectral hand* three times), two third level, and one fourth level spell.

Khordoc is an easy talker and a good leader, even if his goals are criminal. He has taken a collection of disparate bands of wanderers, and is well on his way of cementing them together as a bandit force to be reckoned with, one that uses stealth as well as steel. Khordoc is fair, if capricious at times, and he genuinely likes his lieutenants.

Lambert, 7th/8th level Half-elf Fighter/Thief: AC 4; MV 12; hp 44; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6 + 4; SA thief abilities; SD *invulnerable*, 30% resistant against *sleep* or *charm*; AL LE; THAC0 10. S 17, D 19, C 11, I 16, W 11, Ch 14. Proficiencies: staff, staff-sling, dagger, bastard sword, blindfighting, jumping, tightrope, tumbling. Equipment: *staff +3*, *+6 against undead*, *ring of warmth*.

Thief abilities: PP 58, OL 86, F/RT 45, MS 62, HS 50, DN 41, CW 95, RL 69.

Lambert was the recipient of an improperly made *potion of invulnerability*. The effects of the potion were permanent, as noted above, but Lambert is no longer able to drink alcohol. Should he do so, he will lose his powers of *invulnerability* and

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in addition be at -3 on all statistics for the duration of the intoxication. As Lambert was a hard-drinking elf before his alteration, he curses his new state more often than praising it. Nonetheless, he has found his thieving skills improved as he has abandoned his armor, and now goes around wearing little more than a tunic and loincloth, even on the coldest days. This has only served to increase his reputation as a free-spirited swashbuckler.

Lambert is the lieutenant in charge of the thieves in the gang. Rather than take his meals and sleep with the other commanders of the band, Lambert stays by his thieves. This has earned him a certain degree of loyalty, so he does not let on that he does so out of suspicion. There are members of two former thieves' guilds under him. From a band of Chaotic Neutral elven thieves, Lambert commands four second-level thieves (one of whom is a 2nd/2nd level wizard/thief whose spell book contains *detect undead*, *friends*, *grease*, *Nystul's magic aura*, and *read magic*) with 7 hit points apiece, and six first-level thieves (5 hp). From a Neutral Evil guild out of a coastal city to the north, Lambert has gathered two third level thieves (one of whom is a dwarf with a Find and Remove Trap skill of 82% and magical tools that increase her Open Locks and Find and Remove Traps scores by 10%) with 14 hp apiece, two second level thieves (7 hp), and three first-levels (3 hp). Except for the dwarf, all these thieves are human. The elves have concentrated on learning how to move silently and hide in shadows. The humans have concentrated on locks, traps, and climbing.

Torrace, 8th level Stout Halfling Fighter: AC 3; MV 9; hp 66; #AT 2; Dmg 5-6; SD: +3 save against wands, staves, rods, spells, and poison; AL CN; THAC0 12. Proficiencies: whip, whip (spec.), single weapon style (see "Complete Fighter," page 62), single weapon style (spec.), dagger, sling, navigation, rope use, seamanship, swimming. Equipment: *leather armor +3*, *whip +2*, *rope of entanglement*, two doses of *potion of speed*, dagger, sling. Torrace has trained sufficiently in the use of the whip that he can use it to knock weapons from his opponents' hands at ranges from 10 to 30 feet, by succeeding in a "to hit" roll against AC 3, and can pull an opponent to the ground with any successful hit followed by a Strength check, but the halfling must then spend the rest of the round untangling the whip.

Torrace has proven himself time and again as a capable leader and a wise pirate. One of his better moves was to join with Khordoc. He brings with him 20 pirates, half of them female, each wearing ring mail (AC 6) and carrying broad swords and longbows. Five of them are 4th level (34 hp), ten are 3rd level (11 hp), and five are 2nd level (10 hp). They act as the strong arm of the bandit gang, often times entering a combat by swinging down upon an opponent from ropes in the trees.

Fam, 5th Level Human Fighter: AC 4; MV 12; hp 36; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+1; AL N(E); THAC0 15. S 17, D 13, C 16, I 12, W 17, Ch 14. Equipment: Splint mail, bastard sword.

Fam leads the mercenaries of the company, 40 2nd-level men in splint mail with long swords and shields (AC 3, 1-8 points of damage, 12 hp apiece). These men are roughnecks, ill-behaved and loutish. But they do enjoy a good fight. Their armor, made of alternating bands of brass and tarnished steel, have earned them the nickname "Pinstripers." They usually attack anyone who calls them this to their faces, however.

Also with the bandit forces are 20 non-combatants. These include a team of cooks, grooms for the 40 draft horses that pull the bandits' belongings, a cooper, a weaponsmith, and an assortment of less reputable hangers-on who get pressed into service for odd jobs.

Khordoc and his band have raided around the river and lake valley for several months now, and the bard heard stories of Avendell's agreement with the giant. He sent the Hand of Torrace to ambush the small diplomatic mission that was delivering

the *urn of the greenlands*, with instructions to steal the urn but to leave as few corpses as possible. In this way, Khordoc thought to keep on Trinas' good side. He figured that the bandits did not need a storm giant any angrier at them than was necessary.

But the urn was surpassing in beauty. And so did greed begin to gnaw at Khordoc. Lambert argued that the bandits should raid the giant, since the people of Avendell had paid him a treasure on the same level as the urn every year for a generation, and who knows what might be next to those in the giant's treasure vault?

Khordoc might still have declined the temptation (Torrace was dead-set against an assault against a known threat for an unknown reward) when Vengar, the dwarven thief, said that she was exploring the Wailing Cliffs and came across a shaft of cave that looked as if it went all the way up to the giant's castle. Upon further examination, it was in fact a secret passage into Trinas' lair. This was too much of a temptation, and so the bandits, led by Lambert's thieves, made a raid against the giant.

They came away with fantastic booty: Khordoc especially fell in love with the *harp of transformation* which, when properly played, casts a *spectral force* with a radius of effect of 50 feet. (He's still getting the hang of it.) And the *rope of entangling* was just perfect for Torrace. Other items, which Khordoc hadn't heard about, would most likely be fenced in the cities to the south. And the 6000 gold pieces minted in archaic coinage weren't a bad haul, either.

But Trinas has today realized that some of his most precious treasures have been stolen, and he has prayed for guidance, and he has sent his griffons out to search for the thieves, and he has planned to war with them at sunset.

Trinas plans to assault the bandits by first hitting them with destructive weather and then advancing into battle personally. He has called upon his friend Esali, a 350 year old silver dragon, to aid in this raid. The dragon, having no love for bandits and some fear of his own horde being raided, agreed, but first sought out Avendell.

Two hours after the player characters left Avendell, Esali flew into town, as king to speak to the elders of the community. He explained that there would be horrible weather that night, as Trinas warred with the bandits, and so the townsfolk ought to keep under cover.

"But we've just sent a band of warriors out to retrieve our stolen treasure," Wheisseir protests. "They'll be caught out with the bandits!"

The silver dragon immediately flies off. Trinas would not be stopped by this news, and Esali is committed to helping with the fight. But perhaps his grand-daughter Dulsinar would assist.

The Encampment

The bandits have not tried to hide their encampment. Indeed, as the most powerful military force in the valley, they have grown overconfident, unaware that the Lions of Reshallah are only hours away, and unwilling to admit that a small party of adventurers can cause them grief. They have camped by the Reymashe River, in nine semi-permanent tents, with the kitchen tent and the stables just on the riverbank, the other tents thirty feet further from the water. The encampment can be moved, but only with effort. Khordoc's forces have put down a settlement intended to last for weeks.

Next to the river are three large ovens, necessary to feed such troops. There's usually a half-dozen salted carcasses hanging in the kitchen tent, as well as other quantities of foodstuffs. The three cooks will not react to the PC's unless the characters bother to point out that they are strangers here. Between the pirates, the thieves, and the mercenaries, the cooks haven't bothered to learn any faces, and will assume that the party is just a part of Khordoc's forces. Next to the kitchens are the stables, where the

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draft horses and Khordoc's light warhorse Lightning (a chestnut brown quarterhorse with a white blaze) are quartered. The four grooms will react with much the same indifference as the cooks.

The two large tents in the encampment, and the two loudest, quarter the mercenaries. These are rough, ill-smelling places, with a couple of dirty lanterns casting dim light on games of chance (many of them rigged), the beginnings of the evening's drinking—although none of the mercenaries are drunk yet, most of them are working diligently towards that state—bawdy songs in one corner, and other rowdy entertainments. If the PCs enter here without having alerted the camp (see below), the DM should roll for the mercenaries' reaction. The mercenaries will ignore the PC's until provoked in some way 35% of the time; 30% of the time, they will loudly demand that the characters leave, figuring the party to be from the pirates or the thieves; 20% of the time, the mercenaries will recognize that the PC's are strangers, shout an alarm, and attack; and 15% of the time, they will invite the adventurers to join them in their celebration. Once the alarm has been sounded, the men here will be strapping on armor and preparing for a fight.

The elvish thieves camp together. Lambert sleeps with them half the time, joining them in their depreciation of the human thieves, with their love of mechanical things and their ignorance of the finer points of roguery. PC's, even elves, will be unwelcome here, and the alarm will be sounded if the elves suspect intrusions into the compound.

Lambert spends the rest of his nights with the humans, sympathizing with them as to how the elves could steal anything, all right, as long as they didn't have to open any doors or climb through any windows to get to it. The mood here is usually ugly. Herein dwell the only truly evil characters in the compound, and the discussions of technique would curdle most listeners' souls. If the PC's pop in here before sounding any alarms, the thieves' reactions will vary. If the party might pass itself off as, say, some of the pirates (who are all human), then the thieves would invite them in, to maybe tease them and have some fun at their expense. If the party cannot pass as anything but intruders, the thieves will still invite them in, the better to backstab them while calling the alarms.

The pirates dwell by themselves. They are more mellow than the mercenaries and not as savage as the thieves. They spend a great deal of time discussing tactics and strategy in theoretical sea battles over tankards of what the cook claims is ale. They may react well to the PCs (figuring them to be still more new recruits into the gang), asking them to join in the discussions and introducing themselves. Or they may not appreciate the disturbance and curtly ask the party to leave. Or they may figure that the PC's are an invasion and defend themselves.

A small tent off to one side is where the leaders dwell. Here can be found the quarters of Khordoc, Torrace, and Fam, and occasionally others as well. Lambert, for example, spends a few days here when he's feeling paranoid about Khordoc. All the magical items in the bandit's haul are placed away somewhere within Khordoc's chests. These chests, marked "spare blankets," are locked with very complex (-50% to a thief's Open Locks roll) padlocks, and are too heavy to carry away (weighing at least 300 lbs a chest). Each chest is trapped with 2-4 subtle (-15% to find and remove skills) traps, most of which involve poisons. And each is *fire-trapped* at 10th level. In one of these chests rests the *urn of the greenlands*. Should the party confront Khordoc here without raising any alarms, the bard will angrily demand to know the reason for this intrusion. He will try to bully his way outside, where he will rouse the camp and attack the party. This tent will probably be empty once the alarm is sounded.

Off to one side is a small black tent. No one goes near it. This is the tent wherein is kept all the gold and silver that the bandits



have accumulated. The tent itself is *fire-trapped*, and there are *glyphs of warding* which drain a life-level (save versus death magic to avoid the effects) when any of the three chests inside are opened. Distributed among the chests are silver, some gold, and some pouches of rubies and sapphires, as well as an ornate ceremonial breastplate, sized for dwarves, made in silver and platinum. The booty comes to 11,590 gp, including the 6000 gold pieces the thieves took from Trinas.

When the party approaches the camp, it will most likely be an hour after sunset, with fading light still in the western skies, painting purple streaks across the dark storm clouds gathering. The party can smell the pork dinner cooking on the cool evening winds.

There are always five guards on duty, usually one of the pirates and four mercenaries, in full armor. If they see the party approaching, they will move to intercept them 100 yards from the camp. The guards may try to intimidate the adventurers away, telling them to "get lost, stay lost, and forget that you ever saw this place." If they are attacked, the guards will fight back. This is 60% likely to make enough noise to alert the camp. If the guards are outnumbered, or if the party demonstrates just how powerful they are, the guards will immediately retreat and sound the general alarm.

The party may approach the bandits looking to parley, to negotiate for the return of the urn. Unfortunately, Khordoc and his men are too arrogant to enter into such discussions seriously. They will invite the party to the leaders' tent, where they will be asked to remove all weapons in a sign of good faith. Khordoc, Torrace, and Lambert, presenting themselves as the leaders of the bandits, will do likewise. Then, the full force of the pirates will enter the tent, fully armed and armored, and subdue the party, moving the fight outdoors if possible. Khordoc will then intercede and begin his interrogation of the party.

This assumes that the party enters the bandit camp as soon as they can. In truth, the adventurers have a few hours lee-way to rest or plan, and still get back to Avendel in time. If they choose to bide their time, perhaps entering after the bandits have gone to bed, they will be outside when the rain begins. It is a solid rain, the first stage in Trinas' assault against the bandits, and the camp quickly closes down for the night.

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Timetable of Destruction

And so begins the assault of the storm giant.

Trinas, Storm Giant: AC 0 or -6; MV 15; HD 19+7; hp 98; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 3-18/3-18 (with bow) or 3d8+15 (with maul); SA spells; SD immune to electricity; AL CG; THAC0 3.

Trinas is a 7th level priest, and is capable of casting the following spells: *cure light wounds*, *detect evil* (x3), *faerie fire*; *hold person*, *obscurement* (x2), *slow poison* (x2); *hold animal*, *prayer*, *starshine*; *cure serious wounds*, *plant door*. This is in addition to his natural powers of *call lightning*, *control weather*, *control winds*, *levitate ten tons*, *lightning bolt*, *predict weather*, and *weather summoning*.

Trinas appears as an elderly, balding giant, with a wild flowing beard and his long hair in back tied in a ponytail. He wears red and black, loose-fitting clothes, and carries a great black two-handed (even for him!) maul.

An hour after dark, Trinas' *weather summoning* begins to take effect, sending torrential rains down upon the entire north shoreline of the lake. An hour later, the hail begins. Hailstones of up to an inch in diameter (considered medium-sized) pummel the encampment (see *Wilderness Survival Guide*, page 33). The hail will rip through tents in 5 minutes, exposing the bandits to the damage of the hailstorm. The natural defense against hail is, of course, to wear heavy armor. However, it is at this time that Trinas will *call lightning* down upon the encampment. Again, consult the *Wilderness Survival Guide* for the effects of lightning, particularly those involving heavily-armored characters. Needless to say, exposing the urn to the hailstorm is a Bad Idea.

An hour later, the hailstones are reduced to small size. Three hours after that, the hailstorm is spent, and the rain returns. At this time, the giant puts on his great armor and carries his weapons into battle against the bandits. He will accept neither surrender nor the simple return of his treasure; he wants to see these people disbanded, broken, or dead.

Twenty minutes into the hailstorm, Esali the Silver Dragon will attack as well, designing his assault to best cause disarray and panic among the bandits. He is also keeping an eye out for the PC's. If he should spot them, he will attempt to snatch them, two at a time, and deposit them some distance to the north, out of danger. If the party insists on staying, either to fight the bandits, or to find the urn, Esali will accept their wishes but will not go out of his way to rescue them should they find themselves in peril because they chose to stay. Once the hail is gone, Esali flies off, his job over.

Esali, Mature Adult Silver Dragon: AC -6; MV 9 Fl 30; HD 18; hp 90; #AT 3+Special; Dmg 1d8+7/1d8+7/5d6+7; SA: breathe three times for 14d10+7 cold or *paralyzation* cloud, and others; MR 35%; AL LG. Powers: *polymorph self*, cloud walk, feather fall, wall of fog, control winds, control weather.

Dulsinar is Esali's grand-daughter, only twenty years old. She has *polymorphed* herself into the form of a handsome elf warrior woman in brilliant gold plate mail, and is helping her grandfather by searching the encampment for the PC's. Once she finds them, she will explain the situation and *polymorph* into a golden pegasus, to take the party to safety.

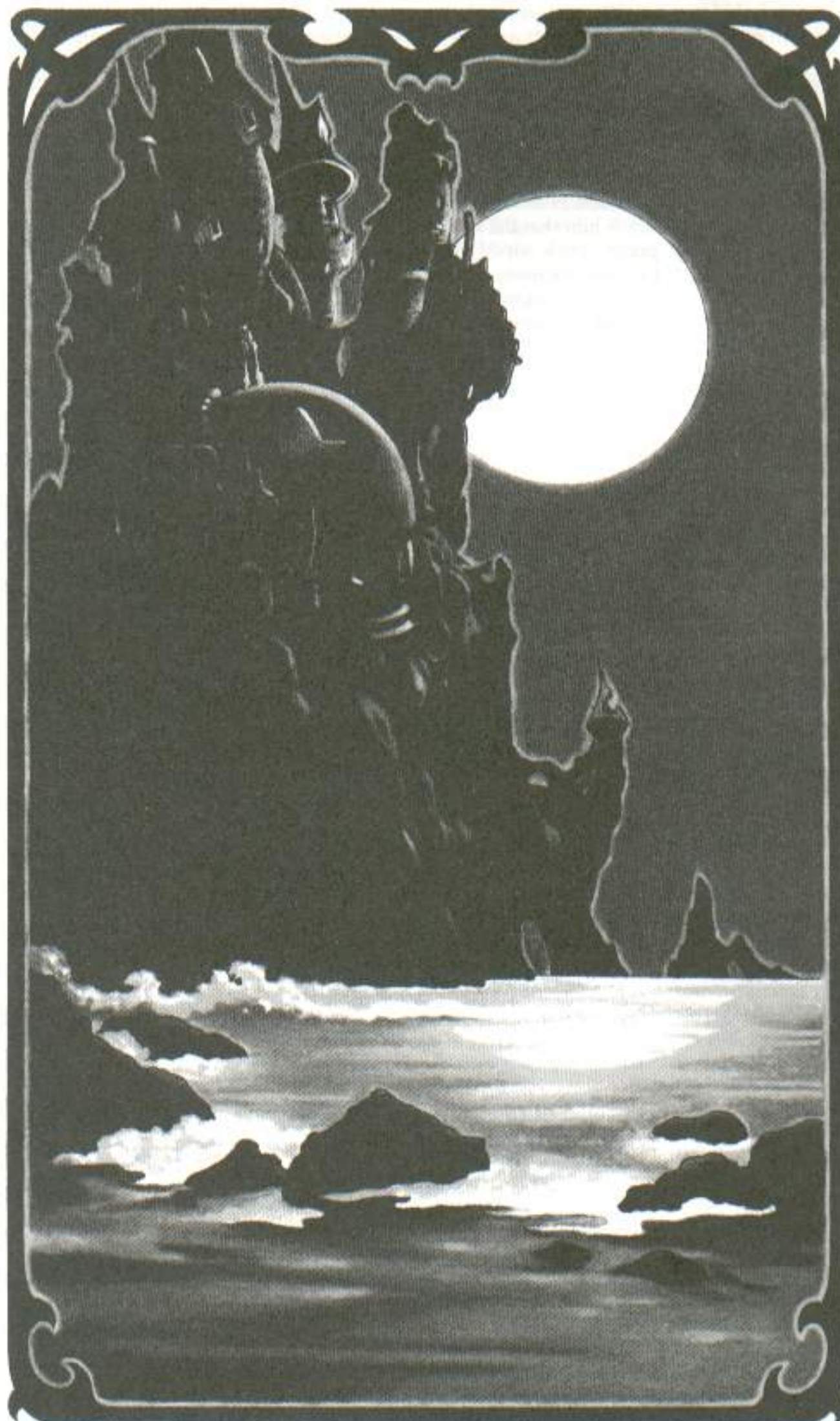
Dulsinar, Young Silver Dragon: AC -2; MV 9 Fl 30; HD 13; hp 58; #AT 3+Special; Dmg 1d8+3/1d8+3/5d6+3; SA: breathe for 6d10+3 cold or *paralysis*; AL LG; THAC0 7.

Shortly after the rain returns, but three turns before the giant makes his appearance, the Lions of Rashallah appear. If there are any bandits left, the Lions charge them. There are 100 mercenaries in the company, whose official language is, oddly enough, lizard man. All battlefield commands are barked out in the tongue, and all ceremonial announcements are proclaimed in it. There are three leaders, each with a Command Radius (for the benefit of the BATTLESYSTEM™ rules) of 10". There are

30 infantrymen of 3rd level, wearing chain and shield and fighting with long swords; 50 cavalry in leather armor on medium horses, wielding lances and horseman's flails, all 2nd level; and there are 20 archers (shortbow) in leather armor, also 2nd level. The infantry and archers are mounted on riding horses for greater mobility in combat, but they dismount to fight or shoot.

If the Lions begin fighting, the party is in trouble. To avoid being ransacked, the town council of Avendell would have to pay them their wages. But that would require the town to renege on its payment to the party. The adventurers might be able to persuade Francos to call off the fight, or they might later persuade him that the Lions jumped the gun, since the bandits were pretty much wiped out by the giant. If the party recovers the urn and the town presents it to Trinas, the Lions may decide to accept this argument, rather than fight a town under the protection of a storm giant.

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