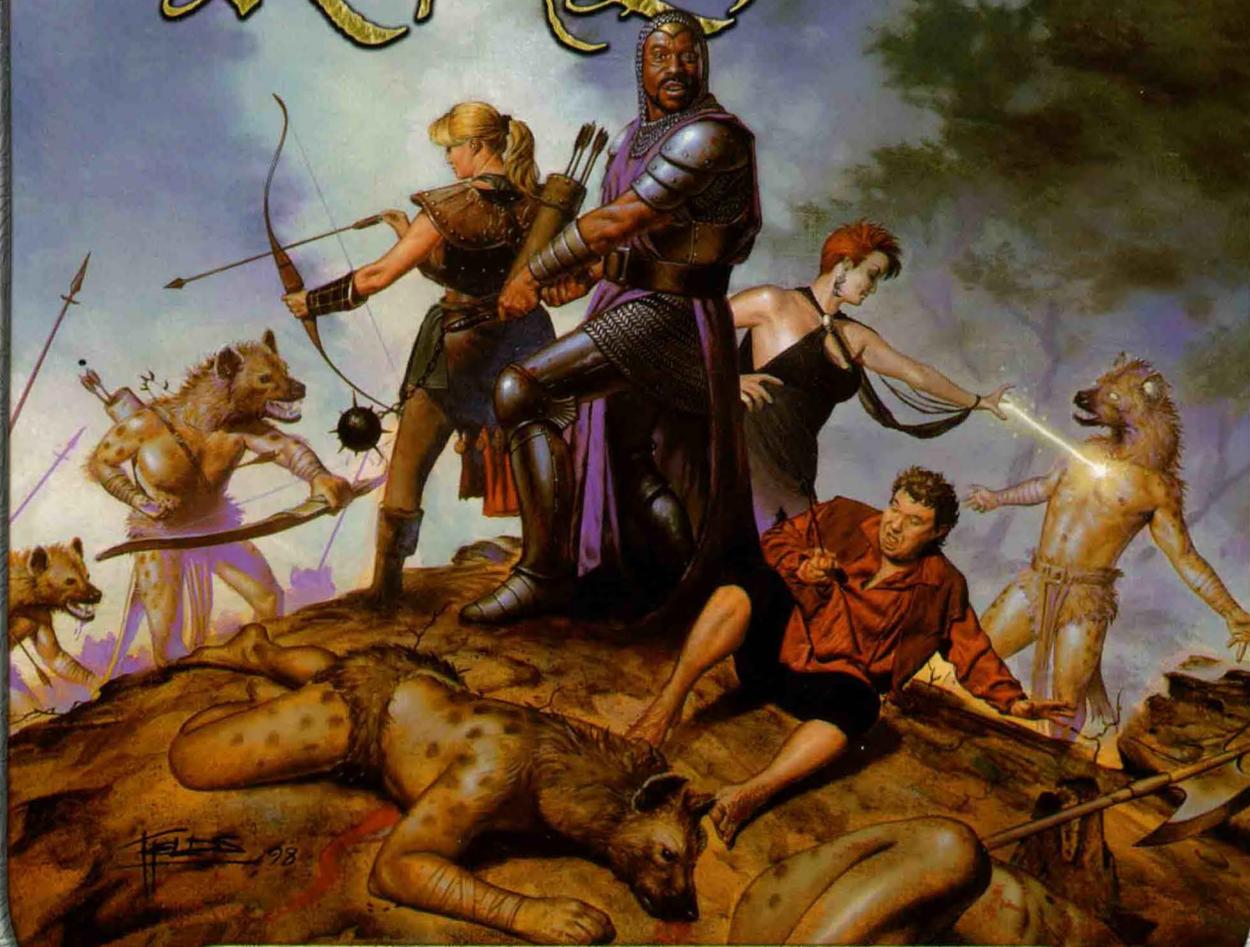


SILVER ANNIVERSARY



# Return to the Reep on the Borderlands



Advanced  
**Dungeons & Dragons**  
Adventure

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

## Return TO THE Keep on the Borderlands

by John D. Rateliff

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**Dedication:** to Dave Driscoll, John Mischo (Waterhead), and Matt Ostrande—comrades in arms.

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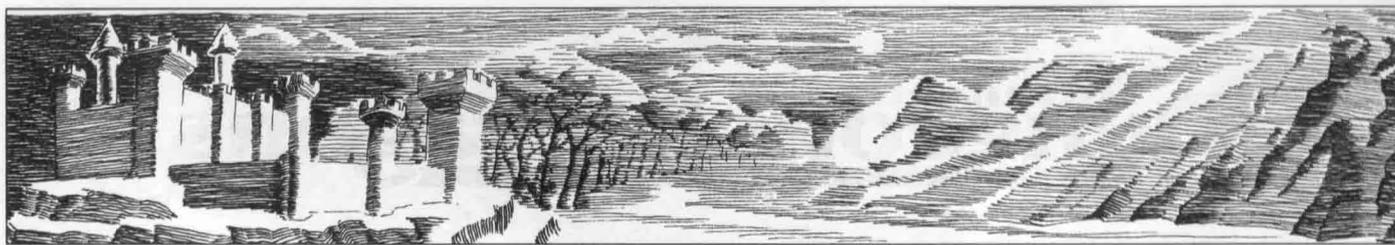
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## Return to the Keep

Of the hundreds of adventures published by TSR over the last twenty-five years, *B2, Keep on the Borderland* holds a special place in the hearts and memories of a whole generation of gamers. For many, it was the first adventure they ever played; literally hundreds of thousands of players and Dungeon Masters cut their teeth on "the Caves of Chaos" as their first dungeon delving. While we will never know the exact number, there's every reason to think that more people have played this adventure than any other in the history of roleplaying games.

*Return to the Keep* is an update of the classic adventure, detailing what has happened in the Caves of Chaos and the Keep itself in the two decades since brave adventurers cleaned out the monsters and departed for other challenges. The rules have been fully updated to Second Edition, encounters have been fleshed out, and the section of advice to inexperienced Dungeon Masters expanded and rewritten. In the main, however, *Keep on the Borderland* remains what it has always been: a series of short adventures, distinct enough that player characters (PCs) can catch their breath between each section, that smoothly segue together. Altogether, this adventure gives novice players and characters a chance to learn the ropes without getting in over their heads; characters who survive will have learned the basic tricks of their trade, just as players and Dungeon Masters will know the basics of good gaming.

## Advice for the Young at Heart

This section is intended primarily for Dungeon Masters new to their craft but may also prove useful for experienced Dungeon Masters with new players, reminding them of some of the basics of dungeon-delving that may not occur to first-timers. Remember that even if the players are old hands, their characters will not be; this module works best as the PCs' first experience "in the field." Feel free to depart from any of these suggestions when doing so improves your home campaign; one of the greatest strengths of AD&D is its endless adaptability—it's rare that a group doesn't come up with a few favorite "house rules" of its own. Don't be afraid to let the players reinvent the wheel; much of the fun of the game comes from seeing what creative solutions the players and their characters come up with when confronted by the challenges of the scenario.

## Boxed Text

Most of the area descriptions in the Caves of Chaos begin with boxed text. This represents what would be apparent to the PCs upon first entering that area; it does not include hidden features (like traps) nor monsters and items out of their immediate line of sight. Boxed text can either be read out loud by the Dungeon Master or simply paraphrased in his or her own words. Paraphrasing is often preferred by experienced Dungeon Masters, especially when the author's written and Dungeon Master's colloquial style greatly differ. Be careful when rephrasing, however, not to leave out vital details—boxed text often includes clues that alert players will pick up on. Nothing annoys players more than having their characters walk into some danger that the character would have seen, had the Dungeon Master deigned to mention it to the player.

Example:

**Dungeon Master:** You see a small cave with a door at the far end.

**Player:** My thief crosses the cave and listens at the door.

**Dungeon Master:** She only gets halfway across before she falls into the pit gaping in the floor. She falls thirty feet—less, if you count the spikes. Roll 3d6 for damage.

**Player:** Arrgh! Why didn't you tell me about the pit?

**Dungeon Master:** You didn't ask.

—Note, however, that the trap would have been perfectly fair had the pit been covered or disguised in some way or if the PC barged into the room before the Dungeon Master finished describing it.

A second common slip when describing rooms is to give away details that the PCs should not know: the identity or value of objects in the room, the presence of traps, or other concealed features.

Example:

**DM:** You enter a shrine of Orcus. The 5th-level evil cleric kneeling before the altar rises, draws his *mace* +2, and attacks.

—In fact, no one can tell a character's "level" simply by looking at him or her. Furthermore, no character will ever describe himself or herself in terms of level, as this is an external game mechanic, not a way that characters in the fantasy world of the game define themselves. The same is true of magic items (a paladin might refer to her "enchanted sword" but never to her "lucksword +2"). Likewise, alignment is rarely obvious. A character's class may be guessed from his or her gear, especially for experienced players, but let the players figure this out for themselves—don't describe a new acquaintance as "a thief" but as "a man in leather armor, carrying a short sword."

## Customizing this module to your campaign

When running a pregenerated adventure such as this one, remember to be flexible. Players have a habit of doing the unexpected; resist the temptation to force them to follow a particular track. If your characters get so involved in interacting with the personalities at the Keep that they never get to the Caves, so be it; improvise more encounters with the NPCs and save the Caves of Chaos for another group, another day. If, on the other hand, they leave town as soon as possible and head straight for the Caves, don't try to entangle them in events back at the Keep; let them dungeon-crawl or indulge in random wilderness encounters in the woods and swamp to their hearts' content.

One simple technique to increase both yours and your players' enjoyment in this adventure is to tie it to your ongoing campaign. This is easily done by inserting clues to the next adventure, substituting a character they've met before (friend or foe) for one of the NPCs in this adventure, starting an ongoing theme you mean to develop through the next several adventures (a conspiracy of humanoids, a union of evil deities, an organized theft of magic items), or the like. If this is your group's first adventure, keep an eye out for potential long-term allies and opponents who can reappear in subsequent adventures. Should the slaver-merchant, one of the Hidden Temple clerics, or the would-be Master Assassin at the Keep escape, he or she might well make

an ideal nemesis for the heroes; such a character's attempts to wreak revenge might well set in motion a whole new plot line. Similarly, various denizens of the Keep might become friends, lovers, or long-term allies of the characters who can be encountered again and again in future adventures.

## Darkness

Remember that most of the rooms in the Caves of Chaos have no light sources other than what the PCs bring with them. Torches have a radius of fifteen feet but only last for thirty minutes; they can be handy impromptu weapons against some creatures, but of course hitting a monster with a torch usually extinguishes the torch. Lanterns are better but more expensive: a hooded lantern costs 7 gp and casts light for a thirty-foot radius; a bullseye lantern costs 12 gp and has a diffuse sixty-foot beam. Both require an additional outlay for oil, but a flask that will keep it supplied for two hours of burning time costs only 7 cp. The Dungeon Master is welcome to work out air consumption ratios if he or she wishes, but in general it's assumed that such light sources do not use up undue amounts of available air unless the PCs hole up for long periods in an interior room in the cave complex. If so, the Dungeon Master is well within his or her rights to give them Intelligence checks to notice that the air is getting stuffy and encourage them to extinguish all lights to conserve their air supply. Alternatively, he or she can simply ignore the air problem and assume that the characters' light sources do not interfere with their air supply; this is much the simplest solution.

Should the characters find themselves completely without light at any point, the Dungeon Master should shift all descriptions to focus entirely on what they can hear and feel (see the chapter "Riddles in the Dark" in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* for a good example). A fight in the dark, or simply trying to find their way out, can be a memorable experience for all concerned—especially if the relative position of friends and foes becomes confused. Note that all attack rolls suffer a -4 penalty when the characters cannot see what they're targeting, and even that assumes they have a pretty good idea where the creature they're attacking is (from hearing it move, reacting to a blow it aimed at them, and the like). Characters with the blind-fighting proficiency reduce this penalty to -2. Given the limited range and relative fragility of artificial light sources, a wise party will have at least two lit at any one time, one near the front of the party and the other near the rear.

**Infravision:** Many monsters in the caves, as well as any PCs and NPCs who are elves, half-elves, dwarves, gnomes, or halflings with Stoutish ancestry, can see in the dark just as humans see in daylight; such creatures and characters are effectively blinded for several rounds by any light source. Thus, the party cannot douse a light, throw open a door, and expect characters with infravision to be able to see; even if they'd kept their eyes closed the light from the torches or lantern would dazzle them until they have time to adjust. Some Dungeon Masters prefer to use an optional variant of infravision wherein creatures and characters with infravision can only see heat-sources. Fine detail is impossible to make out, merely blobs of warm and cool: Undead such as skeletons and zombies are effectively invisible, since they radiate no body heat. You should choose which form of infravision would make for the more interesting play; just be sure that both PCs and their foes have the same advantages and hindrances.

## Death's Door

This adventure works best when all the PCs are new, 1st-level characters off on their first adventure. Low-level groups are very vulnerable to a few bad dice rolls, and a single encounter can spell doom for the whole party. Therefore, the Dungeon Master is strongly urged to use a modified form of the optional "death's door" rule. By this rule, characters are not slain

when they drop to zero hit points. Instead, a wounded character falls unconscious at zero hit points and thereafter loses a hit point a round until tended by an ally, whereupon he or she stabilizes. A character may go as low as -9 hp under this optional system; death occurs when he or she reaches -10. Healing spells may restore the character to consciousness and activity: Simply apply magical healing directly to the negative hit point total, with the character regaining consciousness as soon as he or she passes into the positives. Traditionally, a character revived from death's door is helpless for the following day as his or her system recovers from the shock; the Dungeon Master may wish to dispense with this restriction at his or her discretion.

Another optional rule the Dungeon Master may wish to employ is the "zero hit points" rule. If an attack reduces a character to exactly zero, allow his or her player to roll a Constitution check; success means that the wounded character barely holds on to consciousness. He or she is unable to fight or walk but can talk (crying out a surrender, mumbling a few words of advice to his or her companions, or simply moaning piteously), crawl, drink a potion, or the like. Do not allow players to abuse this rule if you employ it; it is primarily a way of permitting wounded characters a chance to take some small actions and to allow villains their final dying words.

## Dividing Treasure & Experience Points (XP)

The original D&D and 1st edition AD&D games gave experience points for treasure gained and monsters slain; 2nd edition AD&D shifts the emphasis to story awards and specifies that it's only necessary to defeat the foe, not necessarily kill them (sometimes it's better to take prisoners). For purposes of this adventure, the Dungeon Master is strongly urged to use the optional rule that grants experience for treasure (at the rate of 1 XP per 1 gp value); this sends the message to the players that there are a multitude of right approaches to take (combat, stealth, negotiation), not a single preferred method of play.

The Dungeon Master should tally up experience at the end of each playing session and hand out the awards at the beginning of the next session (any longer gap of time will make it difficult to remember who did what). Total all the experience from monsters slain or defeated, hostages rescued, and treasure recovered, add any appropriate story awards, then divide the total by the number of characters in the party. Each PC receives one full share, as does each ally; henchmen each receive a half-share. Thus, if a party consisting of three PCs and two henchmen has earned a total of 100 XP, each PC receives 25 XP and each henchman 13 XP (12.5, rounded up).

From time to time, an individual character will pull off an impressive feat on his or her own; in such cases, that character should receive the entire award for defeating that monster, retrieving that treasure, foiling that plot, or whatever. As a general rule, however, experience is shared among all characters involved in that expedition, even if a particular PC was knocked unconscious early on in the proceedings. Only if a character sat out a stage of the adventure (remained back in the Keep while the rest of the party explored another cave, etc.) or was deliberately unhelpful should he or she forgo a fair share of the experience.

Appropriate story awards are listed at various points in the text; generally speaking, rescuing hostages, defeating the plans of evil characters, and eliminating a threat to the Keep are all achievements worthy of experience point awards. For each cave in the Caves of Chaos that is completely cleaned out, give the group a story award. The lowest-tier caves (Caves A, B, C, D, and E) are each worth 100 XP. The second-tier caves (Caves F, G, H, and J) are each worth 200 XP. Those on the third tier, Caves I (the minotaur's labyrinth) and K (the Hidden Temple) are each worth 300 XP. *These story awards are in addition to any*

experience gained in actually exploring said cave. When the adventure deviates from the established script, extrapolate from the story awards listed in the text to come up with appropriate awards for your characters.

**Treasure:** Just as experience should be fairly and equally divided, so too should treasure. Allies should receive a full share and henchmen a percentage set when the character agrees to take service with the party (typically anywhere from 50% to 10% of a PC's share). Hirelings do not receive portions of the treasure, as their wages are set beforehand at the time of their hiring. A wise employer will buttress the loyalty of henchmen and hirelings with the occasional bonus.

Difficulties may arise in that some items cannot be divided (gems, magic items, and other unique treasures). Common sense will dictate the distribution of most such items—a wizard has little use for a magic sword or a fighter for a wand, for example. Alignment will decide some disputes, with Lawful characters insisting on setting down rules and sticking to them and Chaotic characters preferring random methods of assigning rewards. Ideally, a character who allows another to have a choice item one time should have first pick the next time so that magic weapons and the like are distributed as equally as possible throughout the party, thus increasing their chances of survival. Where the characters cannot come to an agreement, it's best to have each player with a character who could use the item roll a d20, with the character whose player rolls highest winning (the Dungeon Master should roll for NPC allies of the party). If there are multiple items to be distributed, have all the players roll, with the winner getting first choice, the runner-up second choice, and so on.

## The "Ecology" of the Dungeon

The Caves of Chaos are not a static environment. Only a score of years ago, eager adventurers explored virtually every chamber in the complex and put to the sword every "monster" they found. Nature, however, abhors a vacuum, and prime real estate has a way of attracting tenants. Once the adventurers had marched away, leaving the empty caves behind, they did not remain empty very long. Some of the humanoid tribes had members who escaped the holocaust, having been away on foraging expeditions at the time. Others, hearing that the caves were empty, flocked to the area and soon established new colonies. The various races of humanoids have established an equilibrium, but it is not a stable one. From time to time one tribe is eliminated or evicted by pressure from its neighbors (a fate that most recently befell the gnolls), their place either usurped by the victors or filled by new arrivals. At present the Hidden Temple is paramount, although the minotaurs are also very potent and the irrepressible kobolds come and go as they please. For purposes of running this module, it is enough for the Dungeon Master to be aware that news spreads quickly. Empty caves will not remain abandoned for more than a few weeks at most, and denizens of other caves will take precautions once they realize that the PCs are bent on cleaning out the entire complex (see individual cave descriptions for specifics).

## Exploring the Dungeon

The Caves of Chaos are deliberately designed so that the simpler dungeons are the most accessible, with the most dangerous being the hardest to reach. This helps prevent the PCs from getting in over their heads in the very first cave they enter. By the time they have finished clearing out the lowest tier of caves, they should have gained enough experience and practice to be able to face the more difficult challenge of the middle tier, tackling the most dangerous caves of all (Caves I and K) only after they have all advanced to 2nd level. Should the party decide to enter one of the truly dangerous caves right off the bat, remember that they always have the option to run away (see "Running Away" later in this chapter).

## Good for the Goose, Good for the Gander

The Dungeon Master should always remember that characters and monsters all have to play by the same rules. If he or she is going to allow the PCs the advantage of being able to run away without suffering a free attack (see "Running Away") or not dying until reduced to -10 hit points, then their enemies need to enjoy the same advantages. The same goes for any house rule (critical hits, fumbles, etc.) you decide to incorporate in your campaign: If the PCs can do it, so can the NPCs and the monsters. Extending the same benefits and penalties to all sides impartially makes the game more fair and hence more interesting.

## Hirelings, Henchmen, and Allies

Sometimes, PCs are well advised not to go it alone. If there are only two or three PCs, having an extra person or two along when they go into the dungeon might well mean the difference between success and failure, when failure may mean the deaths of all the PCs—either in one disastrous battle or on the altars of the evil priests of the Hidden Temple. *Hirelings* are simple employees of the PCs who are not willing to risk their lives for the PCs. A hireling may serve either an individual or the party as a whole. *Henchmen* are loyal followers who serve out of a sense of love, admiration, or duty. Henchmen will fight alongside their master or mistress at need but naturally will not take unreasonable risks, any more than would a PC. A henchman is always loyal to a specific character, not to the party as a whole. *Allies* are adventurers in their own right who have, for reasons of their own, decided to join forces with the PCs on a short-term basis—perhaps they owe the PCs a favor or share their goals. Allies are never subservient to the PCs but are equal partners in their joint enterprise. Players can decide the actions of their henchmen (within reason; the Dungeon Master should never be afraid to overturn a player decision to have a henchman do something that is obviously not in that character's best interest); allies are always run entirely by the Dungeon Master.

**Drawbacks:** Be warned that, while NPCs can be vital to the survival and success of a small party, too many henchmen and allies can slow down the game, especially for a new Dungeon Master. He or she is often busy enough keeping track of the dungeon layout, the monsters, and traps without taking time to constantly role play several characters as well. Also, novice players may be too inclined to rely on advice from NPCs played by the Dungeon Master. The first problem can be minimized if only one or two NPCs accompany the party at any one time, the second by having the character either give bad advice or be reluctant to offer any at all, being a follower rather than a leader. Most of the potential allies and henchmen described in the Keep section of this adventure have some personality flaw which should prevent them from dominating the party as well as making them relatively easy for the Dungeon Master to play.

**Alignments:** Simply because characters have different alignments does not mean they cannot get along. Alignment is only part of personality; even chaotic characters have standards, and even evil characters have feelings. It's quite possible for characters of widely differing alignments to form attachments or reach agreements—in fact, agreeing to disagree is a vital element in the success of any player-character party. That said, alignment does have an influence on behavior. Chaotic characters are less likely to follow orders and more likely to show initiative. Lawful characters are more predictable, more reliable, less innovative, and more likely to identify themselves as part of a group. Neutral characters tend to react to situations on a case-by-case basis and often take on the coloration of their surroundings, behaving in pseudo-lawful fashion when

surrounded by lawful characters and more randomly when in a group dominated by chaotics. A few reverse this by automatically allying themselves with a minority viewpoint in all cases in order to "maintain the balance." Good characters put saving lives and alleviating suffering above all other goals; evil characters either enjoy causing pain and suffering or, at the very least, consider that "the ends justify the means" and that any atrocity is permissible if it achieves a goal they consider desirable. Neutral characters abhor the atrocities of evil but fear the intolerance and conformity that minions of good might impose were evil eliminated; some neutrals (the so-called "true neutrals") view all other alignments as a precarious balance, with each element necessary to the whole.

## Interacting with NPCs

The Keep, Wilderness, and Caves of Chaos all offer plenty of chances for the PCs to interact with people they encounter. Encourage PCs to negotiate; sometimes a foe may surrender rather than fight to the death, and sometimes attackers may call for a parley and give the PCs a chance to ransom themselves rather than being wiped out. The most important rule of thumb for the Dungeon Master to remember is that all the characters in the game—human, demihuman, humanoid, and "monster"—are personalities. Each has goals of his or her own; do not allow their interests and the PCs' to automatically coincide, as this gives the players an unrealistic advantage. Some characters will be predisposed to be friendly towards the adventurers—for example, most of the folk at the Keep will be happy to hear that someone plans to battle the monsters of the Caves of Chaos. Others will be hostile—for example, almost all the inhabitants of said Caves. Others are neutral—for example, the Bee-Man (see Wilderness Encounters) has little interest in the characters. He won't harm them (unless they attack him or do something equally foolish) but neither will he join them; he has his own affairs to attend to. Clever PCs will look for ways to turn foes into friends; doltish ones will alienate potential friends and make neutrals downright hostile.

That established, it must be admitted that sometimes talking is not a good option—mindless monsters like the otyugh in Cave G and the stirges won't negotiate, nor will the xenophobic lizard men of the swamp, even if the PCs approach them in good faith. The evil clerics of the Hidden Temple and the slaver who works with them may profess themselves willing to parley but are not to be trusted. However, other unlikely alliances—with the displaced gnolls in the forest, for example, or the bandits—are certainly possible, so long as the PCs take precautions against treachery and demonstrate to the other side that an agreement is in their best interest. A prisoner who offers to buy his or her freedom with a piece of information poses an interesting moral dilemma for the PCs; such situations are thus to be encouraged. Encourage the PCs to talk to people, including foes; it encourages roleplaying and should increase everyone's enjoyment of the game.

## Keeping Watch

One simple trick for staying alive that might not occur to first-time players is having their characters set a watch when they bed down for the night. Even in the Keep this is prudent; in the Wild it is essential—otherwise anyone or anything can creep up on the PCs in their sleep and slay them before they're aware of what's happening. Three watches are sufficient for the average night, with each character taking a watch and sleeping the remaining two-thirds of the night. Characters who sleep through two watches can regain spells and hit points even if the watches are not consecutive; characters who do not sleep at least two watches regain neither. If the party has enough members, they might consider doubling up on watches (two lookouts are better than one, especially at night). Random

encounters that are quickly over (for example, an attack by stirges driven off within a few minutes) do not prevent the characters from going back to sleep and reaping the benefits of rest. Continual interruptions (for example, being attacked repeatedly by hit-and-run strikes from a band of kobolds) negate all benefits of sleep.

## Mapping & Marking a Trail

Characters entering a dungeon can soon get turned about if they don't make some kind of map to keep track of their progress. Ask for a volunteer to be the party's mapper; the player should listen carefully to the Dungeon Master's descriptions and record them in graphic form as carefully as he or she is able. A party's map can be as simple as stick-drawings or as detailed as graph paper and stepping off distances can make it. Creating detailed maps does slow down the adventure, but characters who don't bother with such details will miss many clues as to the locations of secret rooms. Chalk marks are a simple and often effective way for characters to mark their trail inside, but anyone coming across the marks thereafter will know some intruder has come that way. In the wild, characters without direction sense who fail to mark their trail in some way will quickly become lost in the woods. Even with blazings or chalk marks, however, characters are still vulnerable to having their marks destroyed or moved by others who pass that way after them.

## Marching Order

In order to avoid disputes when an encounter occurs, it's vital for the Dungeon Master to know where the characters are at all times. The easiest way to do this is to ask players to establish a "marching order" for their characters (including, of course, any NPC allies or henchmen with the party). The marching order lets everyone know who typically takes the lead, who comes next, who watches the rear, etc. Once everyone becomes familiar with the marching order, it's easy for characters to make substitutions to fit special circumstances ("Okay, now Kate's fighter is going to step to one side while Matt's thief moves up to check for traps"). It also makes it easier for the Dungeon Master to decide who's affected by a trap or ambush without alerting players to possible danger by asking who's in the lead (or the rear, or third in line, or whatever). Characters exploring caves and tunnels typically travel two-abreast where space allows, while the woods surrounding the Caves of Chaos are dense enough that characters passing through them must travel single-file. It's thus simpler to ask for two marching orders (double-file and single-file), jotting them down in pen and then making pencil substitutions when PCs vary their arrangement to meet a specific circumstance.

## Replacing Dead PCs

Sometimes, the worst happens. A PC took one risk too many, or valiantly sacrificed herself so that others could escape, or simply got unlucky. Give characters every fair break, but don't make heroic efforts to keep them alive: Adventuring is dangerous business, and occasionally one of the good guys is going to die. So long as the Dungeon Master doesn't play favorites and lets the dice fall where they may, players will accept the loss of a character. His fall should become part of the history of the ongoing campaign ("Man, you remember that fighter of mine who got gnawed to death by giant rats? He only had three hit points left and was just saying 'I've got a bad feeling about this' when suddenly—chomp! What a way to go!").

The loss of a character does not mean that the player is out of the game, however—far from it. He or she should begin to roll up a new character at once, who can join the group on their next return to the Keep. After all, the Keep is an outpost on the edge of settled lands, known as a spot where would-be

adventurers come to start their careers. It makes sense that from time to time new characters arrive, just as the PCs did at the beginning of the adventure (the eight NPCs described in "The Keep" are just such individuals). Alternatively, if an ally (one of the pregenerated NPCs) has joined the party and adventured with them long enough to win their trust, the Dungeon Master can simply hand that character over to the player who lost a character; that henchman or ally now becomes a full-fledged PC under the control of that player.

## Running Away

Remember when running this adventure that the PCs are all low-level. Sometimes they may stumble into the wrong cave entrance and find themselves in 'way over their heads. Let them know that it's all right to run away from a fight they can't win—"live to fight another day" is a time-proven strategy. The standard AD&D rule punishes characters who try to flee by allowing their foes a free attack; the Dungeon Master is strongly encouraged to suspend this rule in order to help keep low-level characters alive. Note that creatures may pursue a fleeing foe; typically they will break off only if the PCs leave the cave complex altogether. In the woods or swamp, opponents may pursue until they lose sight of their quarry or feel they're getting too far from their home territory. As always, the NPCs and monsters should be allowed to benefit from any rule used for the PCs, so remember that sometimes opponents of the PCs will turn tail and run, scattering if pursued. The kobolds and gnolls regularly use this tactic to lure pursuers into ambushes; most humanoids simply flee for their lives.

## Secret Doors

Players unfamiliar with the rules may not realize that their characters can check for secret doors and thus may never find some area of the caverns. The Dungeon Master should remind them of the option from time to time, but don't be blatant about it. For example, don't remind them of the rule every time they enter a room in which you, as Dungeon Master, know there's a secret door to be found; it won't take long for them to realize that they only need to check when the Dungeon Master tips them off. Instead, if they ask what their options are, include this in the list ("leave the way you came, continue down the corridor, check for secret passages, lie down and sleep for a while"). The mechanic for actually finding a secret door is to have the player roll a d6 (six-sided die): If the result is a "1," then his or her character finds any secret entrance that might be there. The player must state exactly where the character is checking (left wall, right wall, floor, roof, end of the passage, etc.); a single roll will usually suffice for one wall or surface of a room or for forty feet of corridor.



The exception to this are elf PCs: An elf can notice a secret door simply in passing (1-in-6 chance) and has a 2-in-6 chance (a roll of "1" or "2" on 1d6) of finding such a door when he or she is actively looking. Thief characters may choose instead to make "Find Traps" rolls.

Note that the "find secret door" mechanic can be extrapolated into a general rule for noticing out-of-the-way things (a trip wire, something left behind by the last person to pass that way, the slight creak of someone's shoe as she sneaks up to ambush you, etc.). Having the players roll a d6 from time to time, jotting down the results, and then ignoring them also helps disguise the genuine rolls—don't be afraid to keep the players guessing.

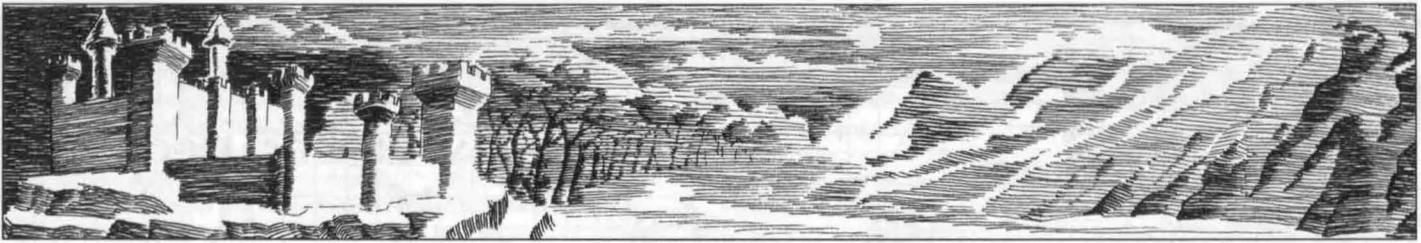
## Weather

Do not assume that the PCs will enjoy good weather every day and night they are in the area. Storms can play an important role in the adventure—rain can wash away traces of someone's passage or make it easier to track those who have stepped in fresh mud. A steady drizzle can make sleeping outside impossible, preventing the characters from resting and regaining spells and hit points; an overcast day can bring nocturnal creatures, such as most humanoids, out of their lairs hours before they would otherwise be active. Fog makes it easy to get lost, especially in swamp or forest terrain where every tree or hassock looks much the same. And of course only a fool would walk around in metal armor during a thunderstorm. In short, vary the weather so that when there's an occasional bright and sunny day both characters and players appreciate their good luck.

## A Final Note

When in doubt, keep it simple. If you're a first-time Dungeon Master, take your time and use the rules you're comfortable with, adding more complexity as you become familiar with the system. If you're an experienced Dungeon Master with beginning players, don't overwhelm them with too many options ("I want to attack—what do I do?" "You roll the twenty-sided die—that blue one there—and hope you roll high" is perfectly acceptable when starting out). Be ready to help if they ask for advice, and remind them when it's obvious that they've forgotten something basic (such as a cleric forgetting that he or she can attempt to turn undead). If you have experienced players with beginning characters, be sure to separate player knowledge from character knowledge. For example, the *players* may know that trolls have a special vulnerability to fire or that a character in leather armor is often a thief, but their *characters* should not—that information should be learned only through personal experience. Be firm and disavow all attempts to act on information the PCs would not actually have.

When in doubt, look it up. If you can't find the rule quickly, make a decision so that the game can go on (just like a major-league umpire). You can always make adjustments later on, after the play session, if you find out that you've made a mistake; be willing to admit when you've made a bad call but don't let your players bully you into letting them get away with murder. Don't incorporate a house rule without informing your players about it beforehand; they have a right to know what to expect. Above all, have fun—that, after all, is the whole point of the game.



# The Keep

The Keep and the surrounding swamp and forest actually occupy quite a small area of land, only a few miles across. As such, this adventure can easily be dropped into almost any fantasy campaign. If you're using the World of Greyhawk setting, the Keep should be located in the southwesternmost part of the Yeomanry, a lordless land of freehold farmers shielded by monster-haunted mountains from the great desert beyond.

The official name of the Keep is "Kendall Keep"; the lord who built it named the place after a deceased adventuring partner. However, residents and travelers alike universally know it merely as "The Keep."

## History of the Keep

The Keep was founded some thirty years ago by Macsen Wledig, a successful adventurer who, having reached the stage in his career when he had begun to attract followers, decided to retire and build his own stronghold with the proceeds of his exploits. He chose an area on the fringe of civilized lands where he could carve out his own little fief. Having chosen a readily defensible spot not claimed by any lord, he proceeded to build a stronghold atop a low flat hill, not too far from an important trade route. He planned to drive all the monsters from the land, save for a few which he intended to allow to skulk in odd corners, feeling that the occasional monster-hunt might prove good sport when he began to miss the old days of dungeon delving and deeds of valor. Then, peasants and freemen attracted by the protection of his fortress would settle nearby, and within a few years he would have his own village at the heart of a region of well-defended farms and fields, the beginnings of his own barony.

Such, at any rate, was his plan. In the event, Macsen found that retirement agreed with him. He devoted all his time to managing the affairs of his garrison and the Keep, leaving the region beyond untouched save for the occasional patrol, and even these grew less frequent as the years passed. It was left to others, themselves aspiring young adventurers even as the Lord of the Keep had once been, to clean out the humanoids of the nearby Caves of Chaos, raid the lizard men of the swamp, and eliminate those threats to his little settlement. Eventually the decimated lizard men became so few that they were shy and rarely met with, the emptied caves offered neither treasure nor glory to explorers, and would-be heroes out to make a name for themselves moved on to other regions.

Thus things remained for many years, until the disaster of war overtook the land. The Keep itself was unaffected, being far from the centers of civilization and the other prizes of war, but Macsen could not stand by and watch his homeland far to the north be destroyed, not while he was still hale enough to wield a blade. Gathering all his troops except for a few whom he left behind to man the Keep until he returned, he marched away and was never seen in the south again, falling in battle with all his men around him. When peace came at last, word of the disaster finally reached the Keep. The castellan long held out hope that the rumors were false, but at last had to admit that his master, and almost all his own comrades, were dead.

Fortunately, Macsen had chosen his castellan well. Devereau was a faithful henchman, an archer who only remained behind

because of a crippling wound received in an early adventure; had he been able to march alongside his lord he would have died with the rest. A more ambitious man might have declared himself the new Lord; a less deliberate one would have recruited new troops and thus brought in strangers, forever changing in character of the original settlement. Devereau did neither. After calling a meeting attended by every man, woman, and child in the Keep, he discussed their situation and put before them three options: to abandon the Keep and each return to his or her homeland, dividing the remaining treasury equally; to invite a new lord or lady to come and to obey his or her will as they had Macsen's; or to appoint a new leader from among their number. Following much debate, they chose the last of these, asking Macsen to continue as castellan and see them through the difficult times ahead, renewing his appointment at a town meeting at the end of each year.

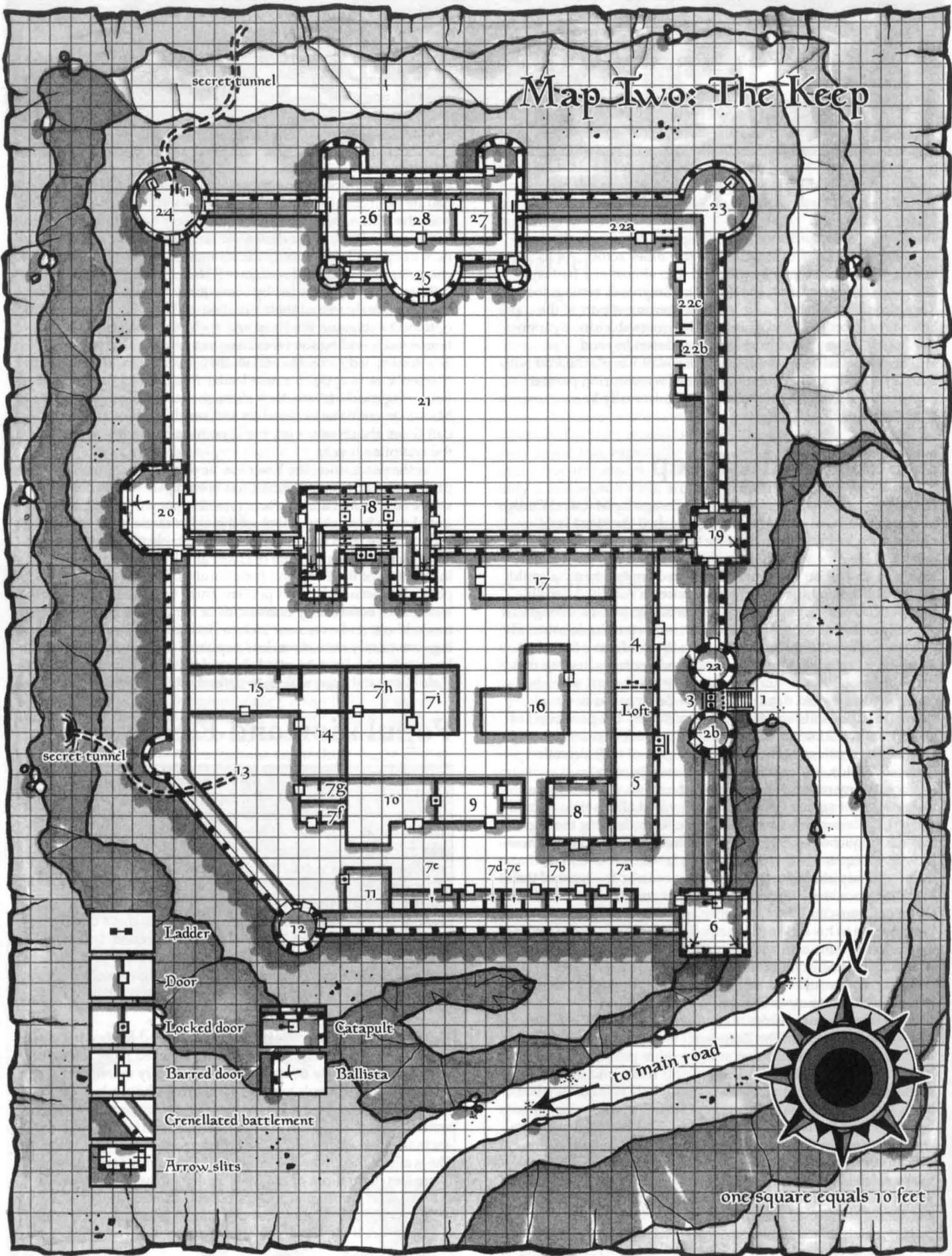
In the years since, the Keep has slowly rebuilt its strength. The profession garrison of the past has been replaced by a militia, with every farmer and craftsman (and -woman) serving a stint of guard duty in rotation. Much of the old barracks and parade ground have been transformed into vegetable plots (the better to feed the population in time of crisis) and living quarters for inhabitants of the Keep and their families. The wisdom of this policy has been tested and proven: Three times the Keep has been attacked or besieged by humanoids or bandits, and each time it has held out and overcome its foes. Today it is a small but thriving community once more, less populous than of old but warded by people who have invested years of hard work into making this their home and been willing to defend it to the bitter end.

## Population and Placement

Even from the road, the Keep is an impressive sight: a mighty castle perched on a flat-topped hill, with a path climbing steeply up beneath frowning guard towers until it reaches the main gate. Crenellated battlements line the walls, offering plenty of cover for archers to attack any foe coming up the exposed path. As you draw near, a clanging as of a great gong goes up from one of the towers that overlooks the path—clearly, your approach has been noticed. You continue on your way, your back itching as you try not to think about deadly arrows suddenly being launched in your direction. Following the curve of the path around to the side, you come to the great gate—a drawbridge flanked by thirty-foot-high watchtowers. As you approach, the guard on one of the towers hails you.

The Keep's excellent defensive position and foreboding exterior are the main reasons it has not been attacked more frequently (only thrice in nearly thirty years); were it fully manned, it would be very difficult to take by assault without a large force, heavy equipment, and a long siege. Do not suggest to newly arriving PCs that it is currently undermanned; let the adventurers make their own deductions based on what they see inside. The walls of the Outer Bailey (areas 1 through 17) are almost thirty feet high; those of the Inner Bailey (areas 18 through 27) average sixty feet high. The ground immediately outside the walls has been set with spikes and strewn with caltrops, making it very difficult for anyone to approach other than by the carefully watched path.

# Map Two: The Keep



-  Ladder
-  Door
-  Locked door
-  Barred door
-  Crenellated battlement
-  Arrow slits
-  Catapult
-  Ballista



one square equals 10 feet

### 1. Main Gate

Strangers approaching the Keep who reach the end of the path find a drawbridge blocking entry into the fortress. Two towers flank the gate; the drawbridge is controlled from the northernmost tower, the portcullis behind it from the southernmost tower. The fissure that serves as a moat is sixty feet deep; water fills the bottom ten feet, and a layer of flammable oil floats upon the water. In the face of a serious assault, the entire surface of the moat can be set alight, burning for about half an hour (note that a carelessly dropped torch produces the same effect). The drawbridge is very solidly built and well maintained, requiring 80 hit points worth of damage before it can be chopped through or smashed open. Naturally, anyone attempting such an unfriendly act would spout arrows like a porcupine and be doused in hot tar, boiling oil, and the like.

### 2a & 2b. Gatehouse Towers

These towers jut only a few feet above the curtain wall; a single guard keeps watch atop each at all times, day or night, rain or shine. As soon as anyone comes within forty feet of the gate, the lookout on the right-hand tower (Laurl) calls out: "Halt! Who goes there? Friend or foe?" Presumably the PCs will answer "friend"; thereafter the guard on the left-hand tower (Charl) will ask "What is your purpose?" (each PC must give an explanation for visiting the Keep—note that it need not be true but it must be at least plausible). Finally, the first guard will ask "Name?" Each PC must identify himself or herself before being granted entry (of course, nothing compels the character to give his or her true name). Assuming all goes well, then the second guard says "Right!" and descends out of sight into the left-hand tower. A moment later, the drawbridge slowly lowers with many a groan and clank of its great chains, revealing the portcullis beyond. Charl then reappears, huffing and puffing a bit, and keeps an eye on the party while Laurl descends into his tower and raises the portcullis.

**Laurl and Charl (Lookouts, 2nd-level Fighters):** AC 5 (chainmail) or 4 (chainmail and shield); MV 12; hp 18, 20; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (shortbow) or 1d6 (shortsword); SZ M (6', 5'); ML steady (12); Int average (10); AL LG, NG; XP 35 each.

### 3. Courtyard

The portcullis slowly rises, creaking, clearing the way for you to step off the drawbridge and between the towers. About ten feet ahead waits the final barrier barring your entry: a set of sturdy double doors made of thick wood reinforced with iron bands. The shutter at the back of a barred window in the right-hand door opens and a woman's face scrutinizing you with calm deliberation. "Welcome to Kendall Keep" she says.

She looks you up and down, her eyes resting thoughtfully on your exposed weaponry. "I'm Sabine, the Gatekeeper" she goes on. "This is a peaceable place. We don't like brawling in the streets, folks stabbed in the tavern, or anything like that. Keep your weapons sheathed within the walls and stay out of trouble, and you'll find the Keep a home away from home. Stir up trouble and you'll wish you'd never come here. I guarantee it."

Sabine will not admit the strangers until they have put away any unsheathed weapons (slipped a sword into its scabbard, unstrung a bow, and so forth). She suggests they show their good intentions by "peace-bonding" each weapon—that is, tying its hilt to the sheath or their belt—but does not insist. Naturally, such restrictions do not apply to a wizard's staff, but the character should be holding it loosely like a walking stick, not grasping it in both hands like a quarterstaff. Once she is satisfied that they understand the rules and pose no immediate threat, she disappears from the window; a minute later they hear the sound of a bolt being drawn back and a key being turned. Then the door swings open, permitting entry into the Keep itself.

Sabine is a fit, attractive woman in her thirties, a widow who has been the Keep's doorwarden for the past six years. She has

seen a lot of would-be heroes and is not easily impressed. She keeps a close eye on potential troublemakers but quickly warms to those willing to obey the Keep's rules regarding weapons inside the walls. As the Gatekeeper, she has the authority to turn away strangers she feels may pose a danger to the permanent residents; on occasion she has had the outer portcullis lowered, trapping unruly visitors between the gate-towers until Jadale's militia had arrived to take matters in hand. Normally, however, she helps newcomers find their bearings. Sabine keeps track of everyone who enters and leaves the Keep, and thus can be a valuable source of information to characters who befriend her. She directs visitors depending on their appearance. She points out the stables (area 4) to those who are mounted, the warehouse (area 5) to those accompanying a cartful of crates or barrels, the marketplace (area 13) to those bearing a basket of goods, the inn and tavern (areas 14–15) to those who have the look of thirsty travelers who might want a place to stay, and so forth.

**Sabine the Gatekeeper (3rd-level Fighter):** AC 3 (chainmail +1, shield); MV 12; hp 36; THAC0 18 (16 with *longsword* +1 and Str bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2 (*longsword* +1, Str bonus); SZ M (5'8"); ML champion (16); Str 17, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 12, Chr 12; AL LN; XP 120.

### 4. Stables

These common stables are available for the use of all visitors at the cost of 5 sp per horse per day; 1 gp gets the horse a rubdown and feedbag of oats rather than a share of the manger's hay. Saddles, harness, and other tackle can either be entrusted to the stablegirl, Tella, or stored in the warehouse next door. Tella is friendly and a font of information (gossip, really) about the comings and goings of everyone. Unfortunately, she will be just as free with information about the PCs to others who may come asking about them (in particular, agents of the Hidden Temple). Tella, a teenager of about 14, is Rafe the Smith's daughter. Insatiably curious, she is adept at eavesdropping and may poke through the PCs' belongings, given the chance; secrets they



would prefer to keep quiet may spread and reach unfriendly ears if they do not take precautions.

**Tella the stablegirl (1st-level Thief):** AC 8 (Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1 (dagger) or 2 (thrown dagger); Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills (see below); SZ M (4'8"); ML average (8); Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 8, Chr 14; AL CG; XP 15. Thief Skills: pick pockets (20%), open locks (15%), find & remove traps (5%), move silently (30%), hide in shadows (20%), detect noise (45%), climb walls (70%), read languages (10%).

Note that both the stables and adjoining warehouse are formed from a single long, low building separated only by an internal wooden wall. The outer walls are of stone, and the side of the roof facing the gate-towers has a battlement running its length—a second line of defense should the Gate be forced in an attack. The interior of the stables has stalls for twenty-two horses, as well as a hayloft at its southern end (Tella's favorite spot for overhearing interesting conversations).

## 5. Warehouse

This long building is available for the use of any visitor for storage at the rate of 1 sp per package (sack, saddlebag, barrel, crate, etc.). Merchants typically use it to safely stash their wares while at the Keep. The double doors are kept barred and locked; Sabine the Gatekeeper holds the key.

## 6. Gatekeeper's Tower

This square stone tower rises some fifty feet and has a crenellated battlement on top, complete with two ballistae (only one of which actually still works) and a venerable but still quite functional catapult. The tower has three levels connected by a stairway that winds up inside its outer wall. Sabine the gatekeeper lives on the ground floor with her two 4-year-old sons (Sabir and Tahir). Her quarters are simple but comfortable, divided between a large living area, her room, and the boys' room. A miniature of her late husband, an adventurer eaten by giant rats while exploring the supposedly abandoned caves to the northeast, hangs in a place of honor on one wall.

The second floor houses the guards who watch the gate; its four rooms are home to Lauri, Charl, Wort, and Joop. All are 2nd-level Fighters; Lauri and Charl are currently on the day watch and Wort and Joop on the night watch (they switch every month or so). Three of the four are skilled fletchers and the fourth, Joop, a competent bowyer; they spend much of their time on duty making arrows to replenish those used in hunting or defense, while Joop smooths and shapes wood for a new shortbow.

The third floor, only ten feet high but as wide as the ones below, is the Outer Bailey's armory: some twenty polearms (mostly pikes), thirty swords (mostly shortwords but also with some longwords and two broadswords), a dozen bows, a few maces, and 300 arrows tied in bundles. The door to the tower is usually left unlocked so that the folk of the Keep can get to the weapons housed upstairs quickly in case of an emergency; the inner door to Sabine's quarters is locked (again, Sabine carries the key; her brother-in-law the Smith carries a duplicate).

## 7. Family Homes

Each of these low wooden buildings is home to one of the local families. Most are plain but sturdy wooden buildings about 20' long by 10' wide and about 15' high, with a workroom in the front and a sleeping area in the back. In good weather, the doors stay open, allowing both a breeze and customers to come in; children run in and out in all weathers.

**7a. Home of ol' Tarlach the fisherman.** Tarlach is never here when the weather is good and often away even when it's raining or drizzling, fishing down in the Meander. He sells what he can't eat in the market, smoking or salting whatever's left at the end of the day. Once a much hen-pecked man, he is serenely enjoying his old age. His daughter, Miep, married one of the Lum brothers (see below), and he sometimes takes a small pack of the Lum children

with him for a day's fishing. He is followed by cats (an ever-changing population of the town's mousers) wherever he goes.

**7b. Home of Reece the cobbler.** A quiet man who keeps mostly to himself, Reece is a veteran of the northern wars who arrived here a few years ago, looking for a place to settle down and forget the horrors of the battlefield. He has since married a local woman (Asgrim, a young widow whose first husband marched off to the battlefield while they were still newlyweds, never to return). They have a three-year-old son, Decius, and a year-old daughter, Nadya. Reece is much respected by his neighbors as a steady, level-headed bloke who's good with a sword (as proven by his stints in the local militia) but never throws his weight around.

**7c. Home of Dubricus d'Ambreville.** Dubricus, a potential ally and adventuring companion of newly arrived PCs, came to the Keep several months ago seeking an adventuring party to join up with. He found no takers, primarily because he insisted any group he joined must take him as its leader (on the principle that the smartest person in the party should be the one to make the decisions). He has since reconsidered and decided that it's better to be subtle and let some charismatic fighter believe he or she is in charge. Dubricus comes from a wealthy noble family but did not bring much wealth with him, being determined to make a name for himself on his own merits. To supplement his cash supplies, he has been working as a scribe and scrivener, drawing up contracts between merchants and the like—moderately remunerative work (he charges 2 sp per page) but terribly boring to an active, quirky mind like his. Much more to his liking has been his informal school, open to any child who wants to learn how to read and write. His classes are very popular, especially his impromptu lectures on history (highly dramatized in the telling), with their invariable digressions in unpredictable directions. Dubricus is fully described in the "Potential Henchmen & Allies" section in Chapter Two.

**7d. Home of Quince Brakenbury the tailor.** Quince can make any kind of clothing to order, from a simple jerkin to elaborate vestments (for prices, see the lists in the Equipment chapter of the *Player's Handbook*). He buys cloth on a regular basis from passing merchants and just as regularly sells finished garments to others. A long-time resident, Quince originally lived in the slightly larger building next door (7e) but switched with Jocelyn the tanner in order to give her more room for the bulky hides that make up her stock-in-trade. He and Jocelyn are currently courting, and their neighbors expect a wedding before the year is over. Quince is a cheerful fellow, much smarter than he looks, and given to whistling tunes as he works.

**7e. Home of Jocelyn the tanner.** Jocelyn came to live at the Keep three years ago, abandoning her previous life as a hunter (when asked for a reason, she replies "I just got tired of sleeping under trees. In the rain. With bugs."). With some basic knowledge already of how to cure hides, she has since by trial and practice mastered the art of tanning and can produce anything from tough leathers suitable for creating leather armor (cuir-boille) to soft doeskin. She is experimenting with scraping down hides to create parchment but has not yet mastered the technique; consequently she sells the results at half-price (5 sp per scroll or sheet). Since one of the by-products of tanning is a frightful stench, she does not cure the hides in her house but in the abandoned dungeon beneath the Prison Tower (area 24). Those locked up overnight in one of these cells after some brawl or minor infraction agree that the smell was by far the worst part of their incarceration.

Jocelyn has become very friendly with Quince the tailor and expects to marry him within the next few months. Quince does not know that Jocelyn is actually a retired bandit, part of the same band currently living in Cave B in the Caves of Chaos. She left when the bandits decided to throw in their lot with the Hidden Temple and serve its evil priests. She is careful not to

recognize any of her former comrades when they come to town from time to time to buy supplies (aside from her sister, Neath, now one of the three bandit leaders, who occasionally stays with her), and they return the compliment. When the Hidden Temple eventually decides the time has come to move against the Keep, the bandits will seek to blackmail Jocelyn into helping them take over the settlement, not realizing that her loyalties, such as they are, now lie with her friends and neighbors at the Keep.

**7f. Home of Nearne, Opal, and Chandry.** This small house is home to two sisters, one of whom is a potential NPC henchman or ally, and the elder sister's daughter. The ladies run a dairy; as their house is too small to keep the animals in, the milk-cows are housed in the lower level of the Lookout Tower (area 12). After milking the cows each morning, they divide responsibilities: Chandry takes the fresh milk to those families and customers who have standing orders for it (the tavern, the baker, etc.) while Nearne and Opal divide the rest, churning some into butter and setting any remnant aside to curdle for cheesemaking. Meanwhile, Chandry takes the cows outside the Keep to graze at the bottom of the hill. On market days Nearne or Opal take the cows to pasture, letting Chandry man a stall to sell wheels of cheese as well as fresh milk and new-churned butter. Opal also has a religious vocation (she is a 1st-level Cleric) and holds biweekly nighttime services at the local chapel for residents she share her faith or simply those who prefer to avoid Abercrombie's fiery sermons. Opal is a potential NPC henchman or ally of the PCs; see below.

**7g. Home of Brother Martin the baker.** This bakery currently serves as the business and work place of Brother Martin, a wandering friar who for the past several months has been staying at the Keep to learn about local faiths and beliefs. When he learned that they were without a full-time baker (Calista, the Innkeeper's wife, did all the "public" cooking for the community in addition to keeping up the Inn), he decided to adopt that as his trade while he was in the area. In addition, he took in a local orphan, Jenn, whose father had died from the grippe the previous winter, to teach her a skill by which she could earn her living rather than relying on the charity of others. Martin is not a particularly good cook, but competent enough in the daily chores of baking bread for the community. Much of his time is spent baking waybread (essentially hardtack, a major component of "iron rations" along with dried meat and dried fruit) to sell to merchant caravans and adventurers. Being industrious, he has thus created a surplus of edible food that the castellan has stored in casks to provision the Keep in case of siege or other disaster (such as a bad harvest). Martin is well liked, being friendly, helpful, and non-judgmental. He is a potential NPC henchman/associate, as he's beginning to feel that it's time for him to move on again. He does not realize that young Jenn has a crush on him and will insist on accompanying him when he leaves, running away if prevented.

**7h. Home of Hobbin the carpenter.** Hobbin, along with his brother Asham, is one of the most successful craftsmen at the Keep. Their late father was a builder who aided in the original construction of the Keep; many of the wooden buildings are his work. Hobbin can do almost any kind of woodworking, from carving mantelpieces and turning candlesticks to carving cutlery (wooden forks and spoons) and smoothing a staff; he gladly takes orders from merchant and adventurer alike. A solemn man not much given to idle chat, he is respected by his neighbors as a hard-worker devoted to his family. He shares this house with his wife Alwyn and their five children: Valens, Arius, Quillan, Arven, and Lucin (Valens, the eldest, is twelve; Lucin is only five). Hobbin is a mainstay of the community and, while willingly serving his stints in the local militia, has no interest in leaving his home and family to risk life and limb in the wilderness.

**7i. Home of Asham the cooper.** If Hobbin is solemn, Asham is sometimes downright gloomy—a fact that puzzles his neighbors, who know him for an honest craftsman with a thriving business

and a loving family (a wife, Naramis, and seven children: Arpad, Anrod, Atli, Parwin, Durifern, Barthony, and Blasco). Asham is actually the older of the two brothers, and his occasional gloom is partly constitutional and partly the result of worry and a guilty conscience. Asham is a barrelmaker by trade, able to shape any kind or size of cask from a handmug to a huge "hogshead" barrel. Some time ago a customer offered him double the normal price if the cooper would put a secret compartment in a specially commissioned barrel for him and Asham agreed. The same customer (Mendel the trader) returned on his next trip through the area full of praise for his work and ordered several more of the same design. Only gradually did it occur to Asham that Mendel was a smuggler, and despite the generous remuneration he decided to have nothing more to do with his schemes. Mendel only smiled when Asham told him so on the merchant's next visit, but the following day Asham's eldest daughter had disappeared—an apparent runaway. Mendel paid the cooper a little visit the next day and, smiling, told him his daughter had been spirited away by the Hidden Temple and would remain safe and sound so long as the cooper cooperated by keeping quiet and continuing to supply the special barrels. Asham has no way of knowing whether Mendel was actually involved in Arpad's disappearance (he was) or whether she is even still alive (she is), but he dare not endanger her and so reluctantly continues building the barrels Mendel uses for his nefarious schemes.

### **8. The Smithy**

This stone building is thirty feet high, with a crenellated roof for defense; its sturdy double doors can be barred from inside at need. Rafe the Smith, a large man whose arms bulge with corded muscles, lives and works here, aided sometimes by his sons. His forge is on the ground level; blacksmith, widowed mother (Mother Smith), pregnant wife (Dara), and two sons (Jankin and Kemble) all live in the upper story. Rafe can make horseshoes, nails, and bits with ease, but weaponsmithing and armor-forging are beyond him; the best he can do is make arrowheads or mend a hole in a shield by welding or bolting a patch over it. The Keep once had a resident weaponsmith in Macsen's day who kept the garrison supplied, but nowadays folks rely on what's left in the old armory, supplemented by what the castellan can buy from passing traders. The blacksmith is willing to undertake special commissions, anything from forging a holy symbol to dipping a blade in melted silver, provided that the price is right and the task does not interfere with his normal business. Rafe is a stalwart in the local militia, and generally considered one of the community's leaders; his good opinion carries great weight here.

### **9. Quartermaster [Adventuring Supplies]**

This place would be called a general store in any other village; its name among the locals comes from the Keep's military origins. The locals rarely shop here, preferring to trade among themselves for most necessities. Instead, "Quartermaster" Moseley conducts the majority of his business with passing travelers. He specializes in adventurer's gear and thus carries most of the common items listed under "Miscellaneous Equipment" on Table 44: Equipment in Chapter Six of the *Player's Handbook*—backpacks, blankets, flint & steel, lanterns, scrollcases, hand mirrors, oil, rope, sacks, waterskins, etc. He does not carry specialty items such as thieves' picks or holy symbols, nor luxury items (jewelry, perfume), nor bulky items (chains, chests, tents). Moseley is scrupulously fair and charges the standard prices given in the *Player's Handbook*. He lives in a set of rooms in the back of the shop. A locked Dutch door (Moseley carries the key, naturally, and has another hanging on a nail just inside his living quarters) connects the store with the other half of the building; see area 10 for its contents. The door to the shop stands open during business hours but is locked at night and whenever the Quartermaster is away.

### **10. Quartermaster [Merchants' Goods]**

Some goods cannot be produced locally due to the lack of any craftsman skilled in that particular trade—for example, currently

## Rumors

- 1 The Hidden Temple, they call it. Some kind of haven for holy folk, where they shut themselves off from the world to pray and study holy books and what not. No, I don't know where it is—it's *hidden*, see, so they can have a bit of peace and quiet and not be pestered by goblins, bandits, adven . . . —er, bandits, and what-not, don't you know.
- 2 There's a spy somewhere in the Keep. Don't know who he is, or who he reports to, but I'll be jiggered if he means us any good.
- 3 A mad hermit lives off in the woods somewheres. Danged fool doesn't eat meat!
- 4 Used to be lots of lizard men in these parts. Terrible time we had with 'em. Lord Macsen, he offered a bounty—10 gp a head I think it was. Whack! Whack! You should have seen the pile those heads made. Ain't no lizard men left hereabouts these days.
- 5 Yeah, I seen it. We call it the shy tower 'cause sometimes it's there & sometimes it ain't. Way up on a hill overlooking the road, it is. No, I never climbed up to take a close look. Mate of mine did, & he never climbed back down again. A good place to stay away from.
- 6 Treasure? There's no treasure left in these parts, 'less the pawnbroker has it.
- 7 There are spiders in the Spiderwood! Great nasty big 'uns, with teeth!
- 8 Treasure? 'Course there's treasure hereabouts. Y' just have to know where to look for it. I'd try those caves up the road if I was you. The folks what went through there years ago 're bound to have missed something. Stands to reason. I'd go myself, if it weren't for the wife & kids.
- 9 A cleric? Abercrombie's the official chaplain, but the castellan won't let him hare off adventuring, more's the pity. You might want to check over at the bakery or the dairy; Opal and Martin both have the Vocation, and they're a sight easier to deal with than Ol' Brimstone.
- 10 A thief? Ha! Who needs a thief when you've got a pawnbroker, a loanshark, and a locksmith all rolled up into one? 'Course he's a thief! He's a halfling, ain't he?
- 11 The caves? No, I can't think of anyone still living in town who's been up that way. A good place to stay away from, unless you're an adventurer or just plain looking for trouble.
- 12 I listened to many an adventurers' tale in my day. And from everything I hear, the lower caves, the ones down nearest the stream—the Goblinswater, we call it—are the easy ones. The higher up they are, the tougher. Take my advice and stay out of the higher caves till you've gotten a few successes under your belt.
- 13 If you're going out into the wild or even just down the road a spell, look out for bandits! They're terrible in these parts. Most folks say they just rob ya and let you go, but I've noticed every once in a while somebody just disappears . . . The goblins got 'em, most folks say, but I ain't so sure. Watch yourselves out there, and come back safe.
- 14 I tell you, it was horrible. Some kind of great big mosquito-bat, as big as a tomcat, with big, horrible, insect eyes and a long sharp beak. It chased me for miles, till I finally lost it by diving in the river. Br.
- 15 If you're hard up, or in trouble, Mendel the merchant is a good fellow—he might loan you enough to get by.
- 16 A wizard? You should talk to the schoolmaster; he can read and write and everything.
- 17 "Bree-yark." It means "I come in peace" in the goblin tongue. My Uncle Henslow said so. And he was an Adventurer, so he should know.
- 18 A terrible battle it was. And not a man-jack of them ever came home again. There was many a widow and orphan made in this town that day, I can tell you.
- 19 The castellan's a fair man, but mark my words: in a few more years, it'll be young Jadale that'll be running this place. There's some say her dad was ol' Macsen himself, but I don't pay them no nevermind. You know how folks talk.
- 20 There's *something* going on up there in those old caves, whatever most folks around here think! Cob the woodsman said he's seen gnolls in the woods three times in the last month, and twice the Goblinswater ran red with blood. He found some strangers kilt on the road, kilt dead they was! Looked like they'd been hacked on with axes, Cob said. And the one what looked to be their leader, she was stuck to a tree with a spear rammed right through her. Ugh! Gives me the fantods, it does, just thinking about it!

the Keep has no resident potter, weaver, glassblower, or basket-maker and so its residents are dependent upon passing merchants for cloth, plates, and crockery. Moseley stocks up on such items, buying them out of the Keep's treasury and then selling them at cost to the residents. This half of the Quartermaster's store is devoted to such bulk goods. It also serves as a long-term warehouse for merchants, some of whom travel up from the south as far as the Keep where they deposit goods to be collected by a later caravan traveling down from the north. The Quartermaster keeps such goods carefully locked away until the rightful owners claim them; this middleman warehousing has added a good deal to the Keep's coffers over the last few years.

### 11. Locksmith

This sturdy stone building was formerly a loan bank whose previous owner, the miser Hubertus, was murdered during a robbery (the murderer was never caught, nor the stolen goods ever recovered). It's now the locksmith's shop, home to the halfling "Mouse" (no one at the Keep knows or cares that this is only his nickname, not his real name). Mouse maintains all the locks throughout the Keep as well as the gate and portcullis mechanisms; he also oils the ballistae and catapults. His specialty is to open locked boxes, coffers, and the like brought to him by adventurers (inaccessible loot recovered from various sources). He generally charges 10 gp to 25 gp for this service but is some-

times willing to do it "on spec" for a percentage of whatever's inside (usually 10%). He strongly suspects some of his customers are bandits but doesn't care, so long as they pay promptly and in full for his services. Mouse can also install new locks, provide lockpicks and skeleton keys for the right price (double the listed rate, or 50 gp in all), or even make new keys to fit locks in items recovered from the dungeons.

Far more profitable than his expertise with locks, however, is Mouse's second trade: pawnbroker. He inherited this side of the business from the late unlamented Hubertus, who made it a practice to insist upon taking valuables as collateral for all loans he made, reselling them as soon he could find a likely buyer. Mouse is considerably more up-front about it: The amount he is willing to loan a client is directly proportional to the value of the pawn. He typically loans the full amount of the item's total value in ready cash, charging a 20% interest, payable each month on the anniversary of the loan. Should the debtor be unable to repay the original loan with interest, the pawned item put up as collateral becomes Mouse's property. The debtor can choose to extend the loan by simply paying the monthly interest rather than the full amount necessary to redeem the pawn. The actual items Mouse has for sale change with every caravan that passes through, but he often has odds and ends of useful adventuring gear and odd bits of treasure about. Currently his stock includes a rather battered but functional suit of platemail (a steal at only

500 gp), a rusty suit of chainmail (available for 70 gp, though he will originally ask for 100), a signet ring set with an ankh (asking price: 20 gp; Mouse is unaware that this ring is magical—it is actually a *ring of animal friendship*), and a silver dagger in a matching jeweled scabbard (600 gp). He protects his house, his life, and his treasures by triple-locking the door and setting numerous traps that would cause much grief for any unwary intruder. If threatened, he hides in the secret cellar, where he has hidden away his wealth in various ingenious ways.

Despite his moderately shady occupation, Mouse is regarded with amused tolerance by most of the people of the Keep, as his usurious loans are made almost entirely to outsiders passing through. He's known to be a skilled retired adventurer, so PCs looking to hire a rogue to accompany them will be pointed his way; see the "Potential Henchmen & Allies" section at the end of this chapter for his statistics and description.

### 12. Lookout Tower

The lower level of this forty-five-foot tower, a tall stone chamber some thirty feet high, serves as nighttime or bad-weather stabling for Neanne's cows (see area 7f above). Milking pails hang from pegs on the walls and a bin nearby stores manure until it can be carried to the commons (see area 21) for use as fertilizer. Above this straw-filled level, redolent with warm smells of milk, hay, and manure, is a watch-post (fifteen feet high, with a ladder leading up to a trapdoor in the crenellated roof) where one of the local children is posted as look-out to spot all approaches along the road. The lookout changes daily on a rotating schedule, but all are alert and quick to ring the great gong that hangs here at the first sight of strangers. A series of single strokes marks the approach of outsiders, warning the gatekeeper and guards at the gatetowers to be on the alert. Double strokes signal danger, bringing every able-bodied man and woman to battle-readiness and mustering the militia. On the day the PCs first arrive, one of the many Lum children (see area 18), sharp-eyed eight-year-old Tarquin Lum, is on watch. This duty is a

popular one among the children, as it means a day's exemption from normal chores. The castellan uses children for this task partly because they can best be spared (it would be folly to waste a trained craftsman on mere guard duty) but also to help train the children in their responsibility to the community and eventual participation in the militia.

### 13. Market Square

This farmer's market and trade fair is held in an open area in front of the Inn every seven days (every three days during harvest season), as well as whenever a caravan arrives in town. Sometimes when the inn is full (that is, when several caravans arrive at the same time or overlap), drovers are allowed to park their wagons here and caravan guards to camp in this open area in small tents. A few permanent booths here are kept up against the west wall of the Keep when not in use. The centerpiece of the square is a large fountain, its water splashing from a marble statue carved in the shape of a nymph. This fountain hides a secret escape tunnel from the Keep which is effectively invisible while the fountain's basin is filled with water. Turning off the source (artfully hidden on the back of the nymph's neck) allows characters a normal chance to find and open the escape tunnel, which leads down a slippery chute to a point half-way up the western cliff-face of the hill, where nets catch anyone coming down the chute. The exit point is protected from discovery below by a jutting ledge; coiled rope ladders placed here under hollowed-out fake boulders permit safe descent to the plain below.

The exit tunnel's existence is a secret supposedly known only to the castellan (Devereau), the militia lieutenant (Jadale), the gatekeeper (Sabine), the chaplain (Abercrombie), the tax-collector (Master Nashe), and the innkeeper (Wilf). Actually, a seventh person is aware of it: the locksmith Mouse (who discovered a complete blueprint of the Keep hidden among Hubertus's effects but has wisely kept this information to himself). Mouse does not know if Hubertus sold the knowledge to any outsider, but guesses that the late miser hoarded information just as he hoarded gold.



#### 14. Inn: The Green Man

This two-story building (with a stone lower story, half-timbered upper story, and mossy thatched roof) has been a popular spot for merchants and travelers to stay in since the Keep was first constructed. Remodeled several times, it has always been run by the same family; the current hostler is Wilf, son-in-law of the original Innkeeper (the late Beasley). Beasley's daughter, Calista, divides chores and responsibilities with her husband. Calista devotes herself to keeping the Inn clean and welcoming guests who wish to rent a room, while Wilf runs the bar and tavern. Calista does most of the cooking, and Wilf most of the bartending; Jess the serving girl (and freelance thief) waits on customers and generally helps out about the place, doing whatever chore is necessary to keep things running. Most folks only stay here a few days while their caravan makes a short layover to sell some goods and reprovision, but some stay for extended periods. Room and board is 1 gp per day, but a weekly rate of only 6 gp (half for meals, half for the room itself) is available for those with no immediate plans to move along. Wilf and Calista have many ties to the community, being lifelong residents. Their daughter Ebb married one of the Lum brothers (Jolan), and Calista's sister Dara is married to Rafe the Smith. In addition, they know virtually every traveler who passes through the area on a regular basis, and being good hosts they do their best to make newcomers and strangers feel at ease.

Currently several NPCs are staying here, some of whom will be willing, even eager, to join the PCs as adventuring companions, and PCs might well meet such folk either at the tavern or in the halls on the way to their respective rooms. There are a total of ten private rooms in all, but most can accommodate several guests if PCs want to share quarters. Jess lives in the smallest of the guestrooms, just at the top of the stairs; a trapdoor over her bed allows access to the crawlspace above where extra blankets are stored. Half the ground floor is taken up by a common sleeping room where up to a dozen people can bed down. Such a sleeping place costs only a single silver piece; for double that Calista provides a warm blanket as well as a dry place to sleep. Meals can be purchased separately. Cob, an itinerant huntsman who might be recommended to the PCs as a guide and be willing to join them as a henchman, stays in the common room during his visits to the Keep (one of which will coincide with their arrival). "Third," the Warrior Maid of Maruda, has been staying in the private room at the end of the hall but moves to share Jess's quarters when a crowd of guests arrives (this has occurred twice so far in the past month). Finally, Aseneth the wizard has been staying in one of the nicer rooms since her arrival at the Keep a few days ago. Jess, Cob, Third, and Aseneth are all detailed in the "Potential Henchmen & Allies" section (see Chapter Two).

#### 15. Tavern: The One-Eyed Cat

This friendly spot offers food & drink for residents and travelers alike. Wilf the hostler greets guests and takes orders, while Calista presides over the kitchen; Jess delivers meals and generally helps out wherever needed (see the previous entry for more on Wilf, Jess, and Calista). The masked warrior-woman Third hovers silently whenever potentially unruly customers are present, moving decisively to stop troublemakers should the need arise. Like the adjacent inn, it is a tall building, but in this case there is no second floor: inside is simply one long high room with a beam roof. The lower wall is stone, giving way to wood about eight feet up. Windows in the upper area can be opened (by pole) to let in fresh air or closed to keep in warmth on chilly nights.

Along with the marketplace and chapel, this is one of the best places to meet people in the Keep; strangers and residents alike enjoy socializing here, and outsiders staying at the adjacent inn usually take their meals here. In short, in the grand tradition of D&D taverns, this is probably the best place for the PCs to make contacts should they wish to link up with potential henchmen and NPC allies.

#### 16. The Guild House

This handsome two-story stone building holds several sumptuous apartments available as free lodging for masters of large caravans, making the Keep a popular stop for merchants all up and down the North Road (the funds come through taxes levied on those selfsame merchants). Greeves and Peta, two aged domestic servants, see after the building and its guests. Greeves the butler and Peta the housekeeper took care of the late Lord Macsen since the latter's childhood; the only reason they did not accompany him on his last campaign was their advancing age. Player characters can rent a room here if they wish to avoid the Inn for some reason; the cost is 5 gp per person per day (meals are not included and must be purchased for an additional 5 gp). No more than two rooms (of the Guild House's five) will be made available, as Greeves and Peta wish to keep enough rooms available for the Guild House to serve its primary function should unexpected guests arrive. Immaculate servants, Greeves and Peta are aloof perfectionists, always polite and always detached. Their son and his wife became adventurers and were lost in the Caves of Chaos during the early days of the Keep; their granddaughter Jess works at the One-Eyed Cat. Tomas and Holga will choose this as their base when they arrive at the Keep, several weeks after the PCs' first venture into the wilderness; see "Adventures in Town."

#### 17. Chapel

The spiritual center of the Keep, from the outside the chapel looks like a simple stone shell sixty feet long with a peaked slate roof soaring sixty feet above the ground. Inside things are quite different: Lancet windows in the south wall let in light but all attention is drawn by a stained glass window in the upper east wall. A sunburst design dominates this twenty-foot-tall eight-foot-wide window. Beneath it is a simple altar; this, several bare pews, and a poor box by the door complete the furnishing of the nave. Stairs just inside the sturdy double doors (which can be bolted from inside in times of emergency) lead down to a small cellar where the chaplain lives; there is also a small guest room where he can put up visiting clerics and a vestry for storing church property (vestments, etc.). Abercrombie the chaplain (he dislikes the title "curate" and succeeded in discouraging its use) puts little stock in ceremony; he is a man of action who feels good words should be followed by good deeds and distrusts inactive piety. He never tires of admonishing his flock in weekly morning services that are well attended by virtually everyone in the Keep and is famous for his brimstone sermons. Opal leads quiet evening services twice a week; these are not as well attended as Abercrombie's weekly meetings but he still finds it irksome that some should choose a quieter path to devotion than his own. He is deeply suspicious of Brother Martin since in all their theological discussions he has been unable to get Martin to lose his temper even once. Of all the people in the Keep, Abercrombie would be the quickest to believe PCs who come to him with wild stories of hidden temples full of evil clerics right on the Keep's doorstep.

**Abercrombie (3rd-level Cleric of St. Cuthbert):** AC 3 (chain-mail & shield +1); MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 20 (19 with mace +1); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (mace +1); SD spells, turning undead, +2 bonus to saving throws against mind-affecting magic due to high Wisdom; SZ M (6'); ML champion (16); Str 15, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 16, Chr 14; AL LG; XP 120. Spells (4/3): 1st—*bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds* [TS]2; 2nd—*hold person*, *know alignment*, *spiritual hammer*. Skills: healing (14), local history (14), reading/writing (13), reading lips (10), religion (16).

#### 18. Inner Gatehouse

A vital part of the Keep's defenses, this solid stone building separates the Outer Bailey from the Inner Bailey; even if the lower portion of the Keep (areas 1–17) were overrun a determined defense here could preserve the rest of the fortress. The double doors open inward and can be bolted from within in times of emergency; these days, they usually stand open so folks can pass through freely. The Inner Gatehouse is only one floor tall (twenty feet) to the south but two stories (forty feet) to the north,

allowing those atop the higher section to shoot down into the courtyard before the doors. Arrow slits line the lower walls (and the hallway between the front and rear doors) and two ballistae rest atop the upper story's battlements, making any assault on the Inner Gatehouse costly indeed.

In the old days, this was an armory and barracks. Now it is home to the Lums, an extended family of farmers (five brothers and one sister plus their spouses and numerous progeny) who provide most of the fresh food for the entire Keep. The eldest brother, Jud, and his indomitable wife Tarpeia are the undisputed heads of the clan; they have six children. The only sister, Kither, married Wilton (son of Beasley, the old Innkeeper; his sister and her husband now run the Inn and Tavern); they have ten children (all but two of them daughters; the eldest and youngest are boys). Wilton works part-time as the Keep's miller (see the description of area 20) but much prefers farming with his in-laws, his wife's family. The second brother, Jerick, sometimes acts as the local butcher when one is needed; he and his wife Durga have eight sons. The third brother, Jolan, married Ebb (Calista the Innkeeper's daughter and Wilton's niece); they have seven children. The fourth brother, Kabel, married Miep, daughter of old Tarlach the fisherman; they have four children so far, with another on the way. The fifth brother, Kimber, is the youngest of the clan and the only bachelor; he sometimes flirts with attractive strangers down at the tavern after a hard day's work.

The Lum family, the largest in the Keep, forms the backbone of the local militia (at least one of them is serving in it at any given time). In addition to the garden in the Keep's Common (area 21), they tend several fields in the lowlands surrounding the base of the Keep.

#### 19. Water Tower (Cistern)

This small tower now serves as a reservoir; rainwater is collected on the roof and funneled down into a large cistern that completely fills the forty-foot-high square stone structure; the old doorway on the ground level has been bricked up and waterproofed. A ladder now leads up from the courtyard to the crenellated roof, where a ballista waits that can fire down against anyone standing outside the main gate (area 1); it is in the best shape of all the Keep's remaining ballistae and will always be manned in case of an attack.

#### 20. The Granary

This fifty-foot-high tower, once another guardtower, is now a granary. The Keep lacks a mill or miller, so they have installed a great horizontal grindstone powered by a patient donkey that walks round and round it in a circle. Wilton, brother-in-law to the five Lum brothers and husband to the only Lum sister (see entry for area 18), spends a half-day every other day turning wheat into flour. The ground meal is then stored in barrels, some of which is put away in case of siege or famine and the rest distributed among the Keep's families. The parapet on top of the tower once had a catapult and two ballistae, but the catapult has since been moved to the parapet (area 23) and only one ballista remains now due to wear and tear over the years.

#### 21. The Common

Formerly a parade ground where soldiers marched and Macsen practiced tilts with his squire, this large field has now been converted into a vast vegetable garden tilled by the Lums. Potatoes, corn, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, beans, peas, cabbages, and onions stand in orderly, well-hoed rows. Fertilizer from the dairy, water from the cistern (when needed), and loving care from the Lums produce a wealth of food in due season. Several more fields surround the Keep at the base of the hill, but this one is the Lums' pride and joy and an important element in the Keep's survival in case of siege. Woe unto the PC who carelessly treads on a tender young plant!

#### 22. Old Stables

Once home to over thirty warhorses and swift messenger mounts who served the Keep's garrison in Macsen's day, these stables

have now been split up. The northern wing (22a) is still used for livestock, providing stabling for the half-dozen horses that remain: two light warhorses (belonging to Devereau and Jadale) and four riding horses (used as needed by the militia). The millstone donkey (see area 20) has a stall here as well, and valuable or spirited horses belonging to visitors are sometimes quartered here instead of in the main stable by the gatehouse. All these horses are tended by Jess the stablegirl.

The eastern wing of the old stables (22b) contains a chicken hoop at its southern end. The rest (22c) is used for tool storage (hoes, shovels, rakes, clippers), garden supplies (bean-poles, string, netting, and the like), and food storage (bins for potatoes, hooks for hanging onions, racks for drying corn, etc.). With so much food about, there would normally be danger of pilfering and spoilage by rodents, but several cats haunt the place night and day, dividing their time between the stables (mice and rats) and the garden outside (birds).

#### 23. Parapet

No tower anchors the north-east corner of the Keep, but here the curtain wall bends outward in a wide loop, and the parapet has been extended into a circular platform to fill the space. A catapult here defends the Keep against assault from this direction; the catapult currently placed here is a replacement for the original, which was burned in an unexplained accident (Jadale suspects sabotage). The platform can be accessed either from the walkway that lines all the outer walls of the Keep (a sturdy wooden structure that runs five feet below the level of the walls, offering a place for defenders to stand) or by two ladders, one of which leads from the Common (area 21) to the roof of the stables (area 22a) and the second from hence to the parapet. This corner is the weakest spot in the Keep's defenses (Macsen always intended to build another tower here but ran out of money during the original construction) and, as such, will be fully manned in case of attack and carefully watched by the Keep defense commanders.

#### 24. Prison Tower

This great circular tower rises sixty feet high, with walls over two solid feet thick. The crenellated roof holds a catapult intended to defend the Keep against assault from the northwest. Unfortunately, the catapult has suffered from weather and age and now has a 15% chance (non-cumulative) of breaking per use. The upper level of the tower immediately below the roof is the Keep's jail: a circle of ten stout cells shaped like blunted wedges, each sharing a wall of bars with its neighbor of either side and having a well-locked door facing inward toward the stairwell. A small barred window in the curved stone wall at the back of each cell lets in light. The cells are sturdy enough to restrain the most dangerous of normal prisoners; manacles, chains, muzzles, and other restraints are available if needed against spellcasters and the like but are never used except as a last resort. The Keep has neither constable nor jailer; Jadale the militia lieutenant polices the Inner Bailey (areas 18–27) as needed and Sabine the Gatekeeper is responsible for quelling disturbances in the Outer Bailey (areas 1–17). In practice, the two women work well together, with Sabine concentrating on preventing trouble and Jadale on dealing with it once it arises; Devereau the Castellan has authority over both.

Prisoners do not, as a rule, remain here very long; the local justice favors restitution, community service, fines, or banishment over long periods of enforced idleness. In truth, the Keep simply does not have the resources to feed and care for folks who do not contribute to their own support and the castellan refuses to institute prison slave labor. However, it is quite common for troublemakers to be locked up for a day or two to calm down or sober up. Player characters arrested and brought here will usually be released the next day if someone vouches for them. This could be a means for the Dungeon Master to arrange for them to meet Brother Martin, Dubricus, Opal, or Aseneth (although the latter, being a newcomer, would probably have to pay a bail to secure their release). Alternatively, Mendel the slaver could arrange for a

lone PC's freedom in order to accrue a debt that could later be exploited, initially presenting his deed as purely motivated by beneficent good will for the poor unfortunate PC.

The lower level of the tower, connected to the jail and roof by a small circular stone staircase in the center of the tower, holds Jocelyn the tanner's workshop (see area 7e). Characters who look through here see what at first looks like a torture chamber with "racks" (frames for stretching hides), "torture implements" (sharp knives of all sizes, plus razors and scrapers, all for shaping and cleaning hides), and a faint smell of rotting meat (tanning is an unpleasant business; the unavoidable stench is the reason Jocelyn does here tanning here and not in her home). Various buckets, rags, and the like complete the scene.

The door at ground level is usually left open (the better to air out the tannery) but can be bolted and locked if necessary. The tower is otherwise accessible only from the roof or via doors to the parapet connecting it to the Granary and the Fortress. The base of the central stairs actually conceals a secret escape tunnel that leads to spot at the bottom of the hill some distance to the north of the Keep. This was built during the Keep's original construction and is now known only to the castellan, the militia lieutenant, and the chaplain.

### 25. Fortress

The final line of defense in case of attack, this building alone could hold out for days against a determined assault. The front facade holds two archers' galleries, each fifteen feet high, accessible only from the flanking sixty-foot-high guard towers—themselves liberally besprinkled with arrow slits that allow defenders a 360° field of vision. Multiple archers can stand on the narrow stair that comprises each tower's interior, so that several can shoot in the same direction at the same time from various levels. The main building is thirty feet high and very solidly built, with a massive iron door protected by its own portcullis (a set, one designed to drop just outside the door and another just behind it); the door can be locked, barred, and wedged as necessary. Two forty-foot-high semicircular towers project from the back of the fortress, protecting the north end of the stronghold from encirclement. The entire roof is lined with battlements that offer defenders shelter from attackers on the ground; parapets connect the Fortress to the Prison Tower to the west and the catapult parapet to the east.

Inside, the lower floor is mainly devoted to a great hall where all the Keep's residents gather for special occasions (feasts, festivals, and celebrations of thanksgiving). A solemn feast is held here once a year commemorating the day Macsen rode away with so many of their friends, relatives, and colleagues. Smaller rooms line the side of the building; these are mainly storerooms, although the first room on the right has been converted into an office. Here Master Nashe, the Keep's treasurer, tax collector, and clerk, maintains his hall of records. Nashe is responsible for collecting all tolls, seeing that money for necessary expenditures doesn't get wasted and generally overseeing the financial side of the community as a whole. He is also in charge of market stall allotment, grain distribution, and the like and has a reputation of being scrupulously fair. Nashe is one of the few remaining "fossils," as they like to call themselves (Greeves and Peta—see area 16—are others): one of Macsen original retainers, having been hired when the Keep was first built and serving faithfully ever since. As a safety precaution, his office holds no treasure; he keeps track of every silver, copper, and gold piece via a system of wooden chits that look rather like dominos while the actual money is safely stashed in the Fortress's hidden basement. Those who search his office may find a false trap door beneath his desk: this is a trap, and opening it fills the room with sleeping gas (save vs. breath weapon or fall asleep for 1d8 hours).

The Fortress does not actually have a "basement" level, but the two northernmost towers each have a secret trapdoor in the floor at ground level. The one in the northeast corner leads via a narrow steep stair down to the treasury: a small room (about twenty feet by twenty feet) which holds the Keep's modest

public treasury: 1,246 gp, 806 ep, 2,418 sp, and 471 cp, plus a single gold bar worth 200 gp. All except the bar are secured in four neat chests (Nashe holds the keys). This room is officially "secret," but many folk at the Keep know it exists; most believe it lies directly beneath Master Nashe's office (hence the fake trap door already described). The secret door in the floor of the northwest tower opens onto a shaft with a ladder bolted to one side; sixty feet down the shaft opens out into a small room carved from the surrounding rock. Macsen intended to have a third secret escape tunnel dug from this point but ran out of money; now it serves as a final bolt-hole in which a few inhabitants of the Keep might hide in case of disaster, hoping to creep out and escape after things had died down. Only Devereau, Jadale, and Greeves know of this room's existence, and none is likely to reveal that knowledge except in dire emergencies.

### 26. Jadale's Quarters

Jadale—the young, active daughter of Macsen's squire (Lady Arla)—was too young to ride off to battle when Macsen died, much to her regret. Now grown to a teen (17), she wants to restore the former glory of the Keep and is often at odds with Devereau over his cautious, patient approach. She feels that a bolder, more active stance would attract like-minded adventurers and pioneers, enabling them to fulfill Lord Macsen's original vision of a bustling walled town surrounded by prosperous farmlands. She is in charge of the local militia: every able-bodied adult (that is, everyone fourteen or older) serves a term every third month. Militia duties are usually light; its main purpose is to train the Keep's population for defense and keep them in battle-readiness in case of emergencies. Their competence has been proven by the fact that the Keep has survived all three attacks by humanoids since Macsen's death, with minimal loss of life on the part of the defenders. From time to time the militia ventures beyond the walls, either to repel small bands of raiders despoiling the farmlands at the base of the hill or to help escort caravans carrying important shipments of goods. Jadale herself, a born adventurer, has taken two leaves of absence from her duties in order to venture further afield and gain valuable experience. She is thinking of making a third excursion sometime in the next few months and might join the PCs in the final stages of the campaign if they present clear and compelling evidence of the danger posed to the Keep and its people by the Hidden Temple (say, a rescued captive). In short, she is a bad enemy and a valuable ally, someone who will probably not make much impression on first-time visitors (who will see only a competent, confident young fighter) but may become important later in the adventure. Harming her will bring down the wrath of the entire population upon the offender's head.

Note that despite their personality clash Devereau and Jadale work well together; each trusts the other completely. A widespread rumor among the Keep's inhabitants makes Jadale out to be Macsen's daughter—while not everyone believes this, she is not just respected but loved and will very probably replace Devereau as castellan within the next few years.

**Jadale, militia lieutenant (3rd-level Fighter):** AC 2 (*chainmail* +2, shield); MV 12; hp 29; THAC0 18 (17 with *longsword* +1); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8+1 (*longsword* +1) or 1d6/1d6 (*shortbow*); SZ M (5'5"); ML champion (16); Str 15, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Chr 16; AL NG; XP 120. Skills: endurance (16), etiquette (16), heraldry (13), local history (16), riding—land based (16).

### 27. Devereau's Quarters

Lord Macsen's sole surviving henchman, Devereau fought bravely beside the old fighter's side for years until he was permanently crippled in a battle with a troll; only a *heal* spell or the equivalent (that is, some equally potent magic) could mend his withered leg. Still, he retained his skill with the bow and became a superb sniper. When Macsen decided to build his own stronghold; Devereau's lack of mobility made him an ideal choice to guard the builders. The same combination of talent and handicap caused Macsen to entrust the Keep to him when the old Lord

gathered all the rest of his henchmen and troops and rode away to his death. He was kept the depopulated, undermanned Keep secure ever since. Today morale is high and the population is slowly rebuilding, but Devereau knows better than anyone does how thin a thread their security hangs by. The Keep has survived unsophisticated attacks by humanoids and brigands, but it no longer has the resources to stave off a determined assault by experienced troops with proper equipment and capable officers. They have survived because no one wants the stronghold bad enough to take it, but as the recovery continues that could change. For now, all he can do is muster what strength he can and make the most of what resources are available.

Devereau's injury has taught him how to rely upon others to do what he cannot and he is always alert to guiding others' motivations to achieve his ends. A few would-be adventurers wandering into town will not attract his attention, but a band of characters who survive one, two, or even three forays against the Caves of Chaos will. How he reacts depends on the situation; he might be willing to lend the PCs support (free healing from Abercrombie the chaplain, better equipment from the Keep's armory, perhaps even their own quarters—probably a suite in the Guild House). He will be reluctant to give permission for his chief aides, Jadale and Abercrombie, to accompany them but might agree to let one or both go in a final strike against the Hidden Temple, especially if the PCs have uncovered Mendel the slaver's connection with the evil priests. The Dungeon Master should decide for himself or herself how much the castellan gets involved with the PCs; if they use the Keep as a mere stopping place between forays, he could remain a remote figure they never even meet. If they actively roleplay and become involved with the people here, they could win his good will and assistance.

**Devereau the Castellan (5th-level Fighter):** AC 5 (*leather armor* +3, Dex bonus and lameness cancel each other out); MV 3 (crippled leg); hp 35; THAC0 16 (13 with *longbow* +1 and Dex bonus); #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d8+2/1d8+2 (*longbow* +1, sheaf arrows, Str bonus) or 1d8+1 (*longsword*); SA bow specialization (+2 bonus to attack rolls against targets within 30 feet); SW crippled (cannot walk without crutch); SZ M (5'9"); ML champion (16); Str 16, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Chr 11; AL CG; XP 270.

## 28. Macsen's Quarters, now Hall of Justice

This large room, lavishly furnished, was once the private quarters of Macsen Wledig, the lord who built the Keep. Most of the more ostentatious luxuries were quietly sold off years ago, but a splendid silver mirror worth 300 gp still adorns one wall. Arras flank the large desk placed near the back wall, and a fine carpet covers the floor. This chamber now serves as the Keep's Hall of Justice, where Devereau hears disputes, tries cases, and hands down judgments. Most of his time is devoted to hearing both sides of an argument between neighbors or settling a merchants' quarrel over the terms of a contract. In the case of a theft or assault (rare, but not unheard of), anyone who witnessed the crime is asked to step forward and volunteer testimony. The word of Keep residents tends to be given more weight than that of strangers in such cases, but Devereau is a reasonable man and will allow the accused to have his or her say. Simple brawls do not come before the court; such offenders are either told to sleep it off or locked in the pokey overnight (see area 24) until they cool down. A deliberate attack that caused death or a serious injury is another matter. The penalties range from payment of a fine (often by confiscation of the offender's possessions) to banishment (it may seriously inconvenience a PC to not be allowed back in the Keep along with his or her comrades after a foray into the wilderness) to hanging (reserved only for cases of deliberate unprovoked murder). Thefts are handled by restoring the stolen property to its rightful owner, along with an equal amount forfeited by the thief. A thief who cannot pay the restitution can offer his or her services to work off the debt; if the victim refuses, the thief has the choice between banishment or being locked in the stocks in the market square for one day per gold piece value of the item(s) stolen. Food and drink are not provided to a

character so pinioned, so he or she is dependent upon the mercy of bypassers; fortunately the townsfolk are good-hearted on the whole and see to it that no miscreant starves or suffers unduly. No one has ever been forced to stand in the stocks for more than two days, although the townsfolk do not tell strangers this. Early in the third day Abercrombie the chaplain arrives to ransom the unfortunate character, having arranged some method whereby he or she can pay off the debt (typically by joining a caravan as a guard, with strict warning to behave himself). Mendel has also been known to ransom such folk if they were still in the stocks when he came to town on one of his irregular visits, taking them with him and promising to set them on a new path in life. Actually, he recruits the truly vicious for the bandits that lair in the Caves of Chaos, turning the rest over to the Hidden Temple for sacrifice.

## Potential Henchmen & Allies

The following eight nonplayer characters are provided to help round out player character parties who might need an extra fighter or someone with a special skill (healing, lock picking, spellcasting) to have a decent chance of success. There are two fighters, two clerics, two wizards, and two thieves; within each character class, one is male and one female. A few of these will actively seek to join an adventuring group; others must be sought out and invited. Naturally, not all eight need join the adventurers; the Dungeon Master should give the PCs a chance to meet each of them during their first visit to the Keep and leave it up to the players whether or not they team up with them and, if so, which one(s). Should they decide not to ally with a particular NPC during their first meeting, it should still be possible for them to recruit that character on a second or subsequent visit. The Dungeon Master can even offer these eight characters to the players as possible PCs at the start of the adventure, or as a pool for replacement PCs, should a PC perish during the adventure. They can even be used as a rival party of adventurers that forms due to the catalyst of the PC's arrival.

When playing these characters as NPCs, the Dungeon Master should be careful not to dominate the party. Be sure to separate Dungeon Master knowledge from character knowledge; otherwise the players will soon take to following the NPC's lead ("Did you notice how Dubricus never seems to fall into a trap? I'm going to take my cues from him from now on."). Each of the eight characters detailed here has some character flaw which makes him or her a poor choice to lead the party; it should not take long for players to realize this and henceforth discount his or her advice accordingly.

In short, have fun—playing NPCs in the party is one of the joys of Dungeon Mastering—but don't try to play both sides of the game at once.

**Cob (1st-level Fighter):** AC 6 (studded leather & shield); MV 12; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 (longsword) or 1d6/1d6 (shortbow); SZ M (6'2"); ML elite (14); AL NG; XP 35. Str 14, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Chr 9.

Skills: hunting (9), survival—woodlands and swamps (8), weather sense (9).

Appearance: Lean, tanned, weather-beaten, disheveled.

Quote: "Oh, I don't know. Whatever."

A huntsman not quite sharp enough to be a ranger, Cob is good-natured and easy-going, a skilled woodsman who spends most of his time out of doors. He has lived in the area for years and is quite familiar with the nearby woodlands. When at the Keep he first goes to the tanner to sell whatever hides he has acquired since his last visit, then heads straight to the tavern, where he promptly drinks away the proceeds. When all his money is gone, he sobers up and disappears back into the woods for another week or month. Cob is utterly trustworthy but guileless, always believing the best of people. His wilderness skill could prove important in the wild, although he will not think to offer suggestions unless asked. Cob would make an ideal

henchman to an adventurer willing to overlook his shortcomings, but woe to the party that tries to put him in a position of authority.

**Third, Warrior Maid of Maruda (2nd-level Fighter):** AC 3 (bronze chainmail, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 14; THAC0 19 (18 with Str bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (greatspear, Str bonus); SA can use spear as melee weapon or throw it as missile weapon (carries a total of three); SD parry, infravision; SW -1 attack penalty in bright sunlight, does not speak Common; SZ M (5'10"); ML fanatic (17); Str 17, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Chr 17; AL LN; XP 65.

Skills: agriculture (10), blind-fighting, endurance (12)

Appearance: Very pale skin, green tunic and cloak, wears bronze mask at all times.

Quote: "Maruda!"

"Third" hails from the distant underground city of Cynidicea, where she belongs to an order of warrior-nuns who have been charged with exploring the surface world their people abandoned long ago. She only arrived at the Keep a few weeks ago, having crossed the desert to the south beyond the mountains. She does not speak common and does not care to teach Cynidicean to outsiders, so most assume she is mute if not a little simple-minded. If approached with respect, she might be convinced to change her mind about learning to speak in common or teach another Cynidicean, but so far, this has not happened. The inn has provided her with room and board since she broke up a fight in the tavern on the night of her arrival; she has been acting as an unofficial bouncer ever since, preventing caravan guards or belligerent drunks from harassing either the locals or outsiders who can't defend themselves. "Third" is the name she has been dubbed by the folks here since trying, via sign language, to convey her rank in the Order: neither Maruda's Champion (the matriarch) nor Hallowed Mask (the chosen few) but Warrior Maid (the third rank in the hierarchy). Her true name she keeps hidden, like all those sworn to Maruda's service. Should Third join a group, she proves brave and capable, knowing when to withdraw from a losing situation but staunchly standing by her allies in a fight. In battle, she yells her battle cry ("Maruda!").

**Brother Martin (1st-level Cleric of St. Erkenwald):** AC 5 (chainmail); MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (quarter-staff); SD spells, turn undead; SZ M (5'7"); ML elite (13); AL LG; XP 35. Str 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Chr 15. Spells (3): *bless*, *cure light wounds* (×2).

Skills: cooking (10), local history (15), modern language—dwarf (10); modern language—elf (10); modern language—halfling (10); religion (16)

Appearance: Nondescript; tonsure, simple brown robes, measured voice.

Quote: "Let's see what everyone thinks before making a decision."

A reasonable man in an unreasonable world, Brother Martin is unusually tolerant for a cleric; he believes that the many gods are all worthy of worship, although not necessarily of encouragement. Thus he respects evil deities but would actively oppose wrongdoing by their minions. He questions all he meets about their beliefs, seeking to add to his store of knowledge and understanding. He arrived at the Keep several months ago and, finding the local chaplain inclined to be intolerant, looked about for some useful work to do during his stay. He settled on being the baker, the local baker having recently died. While he's not exceptionally skilled, he can provide adequately for local needs; much of his time is spent baking trailbread (a type of hardtack) for the use of travelers, adventurers, and caravans. Recently he has begun to feel restless and is thinking about moving on; thus he has been training a teenaged orphan in the baking trade. She has already mastered the rudiments of the craft and seems likely to surpass his skills once her apprenticeship is over. If Martin joins the group, he will insist that every character have a chance to speak up when the party is debating important decisions (the Dungeon Master should use this to make sure shy players get a chance to

contribute) and favor frequent returns to the Keep between forays to the caves and wood in order to check up on his apprentice.

**Opal (1st-level Cleric):** AC 6 (ringmail & shield); MV 12; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (morning star); SD spells, turn undead; SW alignment shift; SZ M (5'5"); ML steady (12); AL N\* (see below); XP 35. Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 15, Chr 12. Spells (2): *cure light wounds*, *sanctuary*.

[\*alignment changes to match phases of the moon]

Skills: astrology (13), dancing (12), healing (13), herbalism (11).

Appearance: Quiet and calm, verging to giggly and giddy near full moon.

Quote: "Where does it hurt?"

Opal worships a moon-god; her usual alignment is Neutral, but this varies according to the phase of the moon (a 28-day cycle, unless the major satellite in your campaign has a different cycle). When the PCs first meet her, which should be just after the New Moon, her alignment will be predominantly Neutral Good. By the time of the First Quarter a week or so later, her alignment will have shifted to Chaotic Good. Under the Full Moon a week after that, she becomes rather giddy, a bit giggly, and thoroughly unpredictable (a card-carrying Chaotic Neutral). She becomes more sober as the moon wanes, reaching Neutral under the Last Quarter and reverting to Neutral Good again for the next New Moon. Most of the time, though, Opal is a valuable addition to any adventuring party: a calm bedrock, capable in combat and skilled in healing, who might restrain impulsive characters from disaster—which should make her later recklessness all the more surprising to them. Opal has lived at the Keep all her life, having been born here; she works as a cheesemaker, turning perishable milk into large cheeses that can be stored for long periods. Her "moon-cheeses" are pale, with a slight greenish tinge; most are sold to caravans but the tavern also keeps a good supply in stock.

**Dubicrus d'Ambreville (1st-level Mage):** AC 10; MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells; SD spells; SW impulsive; SZ M (6'); ML champion (15); AL CG; XP 35. Str 15, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 6, Chr 14. Spells (1): *magic missile*. Spellbook: *burning hands*, *color spray*, *comprehend languages*, *identify*, *light*, *magic missile*, *read magic*.

Skills: ancient history (16), ancient language (17), blind-fighting, direction sense (7), etiquette (14), reading/writing (18), spellcraft (15), \*thaumaturgy (15).

\*proficiency from *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic*.

Appearance: Tall and thin, with a mop of unruly hair and look of wide-eyed wonder

Quote: "I've got an idea!"

A scion of a famous family of wizards, Dubricus is extremely clever but also, regrettably, a loon. That is, he often comes up with brilliant but impractical ideas. Put another way, he has plenty of brains but no sense. Characters who adopt his schemes without question are courting disaster (allow them a few uncomfortably close scrapes until they get the message); those who treat his brainstorming with skepticism may think of ways to get around their shortcomings and profit by his genius. Dubricus plans to become a great wizard and is always getting ideas for new spells that he intends to research. He's fairly strong for a mage (wizards being traditionally puny) and not afraid to lay about with his staff in melee if the party is hard-pressed.

**Aseneth (2nd-level Necromancer):** AC 9 (*ring of protection* +1); MV 12; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells; SW cannot cast Illusions or Enchantments; SZ M (5'2"); ML unsteady (7); AL NE; XP 65. Str 8, Dex 11, Con 5, Int 15, Wis 16, Chr 17. Spells (3): *chill touch*, *sleep*, *unseen servant*. Spellbook: *chill touch*, *detect magic*, *hold portal*, *identify*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, *sleep*, *unseen servant*. Scroll: *spectral hand* (×2). Note that as a Specialist Wizard, Aseneth can cast an extra **Necromancy** spell per level per day.

Skills: \*anatomy (15), ancient language (15), healing (14), herbalism (13), reading/writing (16).

\*proficiency from *The Complete Book of Necromancers*.

Appearance: Dark haired, pale, dresses entirely in black.

Quote: "What's the fuss? It's just some dead bodies."

Aseneth only arrived at the Keep within the last few days, having recently completed her apprenticeship under the tutelage of a master necromancer. She is aware of the presence of the Hidden Temple and would like to ally herself with them to continue her research into all things necromantic. Unfortunately, she does not know its exact location or how to make contact with its clergy. Wary of revealing her interest to the locals, given the general prejudice against evil magics, she is looking for a party of adventurers to join in exploring the area, intending to part company with them once they have achieved her goal. Aseneth prefers manipulating people over crass displays of power. She is clever enough, and persuasive enough, to be able to talk others into taking most of the risks and doing her dirty work (citing her lack of armor or combat skills as a good reason to stay well back from melees). While evil, she is no fool and will not attack fellow adventurers for no good reason (thus endangering her own precious skin), although she might take subtle revenge on a character who harasses her with open suspicions (note that her herbalism skill enables her to brew mild poisons that could make a character who drank it miserable for days). Her skills and spells make her a valuable addition to almost any group (especially one low-level enough to lack the *know alignment* spell) but she is neither sentimental nor squeamish, and occasional flashes of callousness may shock her fellow adventurers.

**Mouse (2nd-level halfling thief):** AC 6 (no armor, Dex bonus); MV 6; hp 8; THAC0 20 (18 with *dagger +2*, *longtooth* or with thrown dagger and Dex bonus); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d6+2 (*dagger +2*, *longtooth*) or 1d4/1d4 (thrown daggers); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills (see below), 30' infravision; SW coward; SZ S (2'3/2"); ML unreliable (3); AL CN; XP 65. Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Chr 9. Thief Skills: pick pockets (35%), open locks (60%), find & remove traps (45%), move silently (55%), hide in shadows (50%), detect noise (20%), climb walls (55%).

Skills: appraising (14), fishing (9), rope use (18) set snares (17), tightrope walking (18), tumbling (18), ventriloquism (12).

Appearance: Furtive, nervous; small even for a halfling.

Quote: "Are you crazy? I'm not going in there."

Small even for a halfling, "Mouse" (his real name is Dudley Talbot, but no one at the Keep knows him by anything other than his nickname) is exceptionally skilled but an absolute coward. He settled at the Keep several years ago and set up shop as a locksmith, but the bulk of his business is done as a pawnbroker, offering down-on-their-luck adventurers and merchants money in exchange for valuable items as collateral. He then sells the collateral if the loan is not repaid within a set period (typically 30 days). Mouse can easily be tempted to join the PCs in their exploration of the Caves of Chaos by the promise of treasure: His innate caution is overcome only by his avarice. While with the party he can be extremely useful so far as opening locks and detecting traps goes, they will have to offer him strong incentives to get him to scout ahead or run any unusual risk. Mouse will not steal from fellow adventurers ("honor among thieves"), though he might pocket some usual find if he comes across it with no one else to see.

**Jess (1st-level Thief):** AC 6 (leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 12; 4 hp; THAC0 20 (19 with shortbow & Dex bonus); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d6 (shortsword) or 1d6/1d6 (arrows); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills (see below); SZ M (5'4"); ML steady (11); AL CG; XP 35. Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Chr 12. Thief Skills: pick pockets (45%), open locks (25%); find & remove traps (05%), move silently (30%), hide in shadows (05%), detect noise (15%), climb walls (60%).

Skills: appraising (14), disguise (11), fire-building (9), jumping (13), local history (12), reading lips (12).

Appearance: Slim, pretty, competent, quick.

Quote: "Feets, don't fail me now"

Jess was born at the Keep and has lived here all her life. Her thief skills are self-taught and grew out of her growing dismay at seeing travelers pass through: Some lived in wealth while others scraped by in dire poverty. She has taken it upon herself to

redress the imbalance and spread the wealth around. She does not consider herself a thief but a "distributist," as she only takes from those who have too much (in her view) and passes it along to those who lack their fair share. She works in the tavern as barmaid/serving girl ("I'm *not* a wench."), plying her true trade via surreptitious pickpocketing of boastful or overly endowed merchants and adventurers. She's smart and careful and so far has not been caught—except by Mouse, who promptly gave her a few pointers. Her combat skills come from time spent in the local militia. Jess is a good resource for meeting other potential NPC allies; as a lifelong resident of the Keep, she knows all the other characters detailed in this section with the exception of Aseneth (a recent arrival whom she only knows by sight). Since she actually works in the same building with Third, she might ease that character's otherwise tricky insertion into the party.

## Adventures in Town

The Keep is not a static setting that remains unaltered each time the PCs return. Instead, life goes on in their absence—caravans come and go, occasional visitors pass through, and NPCs with agendas of their own make their arrivals. Three of these are detailed below; the Dungeon Master should feel free to substitute or add to this number, especially to strengthen ties to a past or future adventure. In addition, the PCs themselves may start adventures through their interaction with the various townspeople. The Dungeon Master should encourage them to make contacts and be open to following up on relationships initiated by the PCs. Remember also that simply removing an NPC from the town (by having him or her join the PC party) changes the Keep by that character's absence.

### Mendel the Slaver

Upon their first return to the Keep after a foray into the wilderness or to the Caves, the party finds the merchant Mendel ensconced in the largest room of The Green Man (the one at the intersection of the two upstairs halls) with the latest in his series of ever-changing traveling companions, Chantel and Sascia, having arrived earlier that day from the south. Mendel greets them volubly and does everything he can to befriend them, having found a pleasant exterior the best cover for his foul deeds. The residents of the Keep have no suspicion of Mendel's slaving activities, nor of his connection to the Hidden Temple; Aseneth knows that some go-between serves as contact between the Hidden Temple and the Keep but does not know his (or her) identity. Mendel sometimes hires stray guards whose caravans have left without them, later delivering them over to the evil priests for sacrifice. His attractive female companions also occasionally meet this fate when he tires of them; when next they encounter him, the PCs will note Chantel's absence and may later find her or her remains in Cave J of the Caves of Chaos. Both ladies are *charmed* to protect him and will throw themselves on anyone who threatens him, clawing and biting, but for more effective protection Mendel relies on two guards named Devdas and Ohtar—dour, silent types who do not hesitate to kidnap or slay on his command. Mendel is careful to hide his connections with the evil priests and also conceals his own abilities; no one at the Keep knows that he is actually a fairly accomplished mage.

**Mendel the Slaver (4th-level Mage):** AC 10; MV 6 (obese); hp 14; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells; SZ L (6' but obese); ML average (10); Str 5, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 18, Wis 13, Chr 16; AL NE; XP 175. Spells (3/2): 1st—*charm person*, *phantasmal force*, *sleep*; 2nd—*ESP*, *web*. Special Equipment: scroll (*feign death*, *wraithform*, *magic missile*, *invisibility*), *amulet of controlling undead* (as 5th-level cleric), ring enchanted with *conceal alignment* (causes all *know alignment* spells cast upon Mendel to give the false reading of NG), sign of Ereshkigal (enables him to command the zombies and skeletons guarding the secret back entrance to the Hidden Temple).

Mendel poses as a merchant who ships goods in small quantities—only a few barrels at a time—throughout the area; his route causes his cart to visit the Keep on a regular basis (sometimes as often as every week but usually about once every two to three weeks). A grossly fat but genial man who makes a point of befriending strangers and helping out those in trouble, for years now he has kidnapped isolated folk and delivered them to the Hidden Temple's sacrificial altars. He generally has his trusty bodyguards shanghai a suitable target, carefully choosing a time and place where there will be no inconvenient witnesses. He reserves the occasional victim for his own use (Chantel and Sascia are the latest of these), forcing all others to drink from a special potion provided him by the temple that mimics the effects of a *feign death* spell for a period of three days. The limp figure is then stuffed into a barrel and covered with a false lid. Anyone opening the barrel sees only some innocuous produce (pickles, apples, grain, ground meal, etc.); it requires closer examination and actual poking around inside to find the false lid a foot beneath this cover. Mendel is very good at misdirection and has evaded detection or even suspicion for over four years now.

**Devdas and Ohtar (2nd-level Fighters):** AC 4 (chainmail & shield); MV 12; hp 18, 22; THAC0 19 (Devdas) or 18 (Ohtar); #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+1 (broadsword, Str bonus); SZ M (5'8", 5'10"); ML fanatic (17); Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Chr 11 (Devdas) or Str 17, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 10, Chr 8 (Ohtar); AL LE; XP 65 each.

Husband and wife, Devdas and Ohtar are devotees of the Hidden Temple sworn to Mendel's service. Between them they have kidnapped or murdered more than a hundred people. They are ruthless and efficient, carrying out Mendel's instructions without question. Player characters will probably ignore them as "the hired help," anonymous bodyguards who remain always in the background; should they later come to blows, PCs who underestimate them may well live to regret it.

**Chantel and Sascia (zero-level):** AC 8 (Chantel) or 9 (Sascia); MV 12; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (kick, bite, fist) or 1d4 (dagger); SZ M (5'6", 5'4"); ML fearless (20); Str 10, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 8, Chr 17 (Chantel) or Str 9, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 6, Chr 18 (Sascia); AL N (effectively NE while under Mendel's control); XP 7 each.

These two nubile ladies are completely under Mendel the merchant's control, having been repeatedly *charmed* until they have very little willpower left. Mendel may order them to befriend impressionable characters, the better to put the PCs off guard and win their trust. Neither will betray her master, whatever the inducement.

## The Assassin's Challenge

Sometime between the character's second and third visit to the Keep, a couple of strangers arrive and take a room at the Guild House. The man, Tomas, is slim and wiry, wearing leather



armor beneath stylish clothes: dark-haired, with a pencil-thin moustache and neat pointed beard, he looks like a professional fencer. The woman, Holga, is blue-eyed and blonde—cool, calculating, and unshakingly calm. Together they make an attractive couple and neither is unwilling to indulge in a little flirtation on the side. Tomas explains to any that ask that he is waiting for "a shipment of goods" which he is to take charge of and deliver to its rightful owner; he politely refuses to give any more details. His lovely companion Holga will help him evaluate the goods and make sure that it is indeed the very item he has been sent to recover. Both are friendly but remain distant, deftly evading questions about themselves and turning the conversation to the characters and their deeds instead. They are clearly experienced adventurers but will refuse any offer to join the PCs' party, begging a prior commitment for the present.

In fact, Tomas and Holga are extremely dangerous. Tomas is a skilled assassin and Holga a talented mage of no small water. They hail from the distant Lendore Isles, where the assassin's guild Tomas was apprenticed to was suppressed and its members exterminated except for Tomas and one wily elder; Holga was apprenticed to a sorceress allied with the guild who died on the executioner's chopping block. The two of them, only teenagers at the time, escaped and pooled their talents, just as had their mentors. It has proved to be a highly successful partnership; few of their carefully selected targets have survived the lethal combination of his stealth and her magic. They are here now because Tomas hopes to realize his ambition to found his own Assassin's Guild in distant Cathos City. To overcome his rival among the loosely affiliated assassins that have gathered in that town, he needs to pull off some notable coup that will cement his reputation. Since both strongly believe that it's important not to kill in your own backyard, they have traveled to this distant spot to pull off something sure to impress even the most jaded assassin: They plan to assassinate the entire town.

Tomas does not expect this to be easy, nor to catch every last inhabitant—it's enough for him if he disrupts the place so much that folks flee, leaving the Keep abandoned. Since he is undertaking such a difficult challenge, he and Holga spend several days casing the place before the actual killings begin—mapping out the buildings, getting to know the population, observing the defenses and guard schedules. In fact, he will engineer some fake alarm (a fire in the stable, perhaps) just to see how quickly they respond to the unexpected. Those whom he believes key to maintaining the social structure will be his first targets (Devereau, Jadale, Abercrombie, Master Nashe, and Sabine). Craftsmen whose talents cannot be replaced come next (the smith, the cooper, the locksmith), as their deaths will destabilize the community. And of course anyone who responds to the crisis with courage and resourcefulness (including, hopefully, the PCs) will be targeted, the better to demoralize the survivors and paralyze their efforts to stop him. Tomas will himself pretend to be an early victim (courtesy of Holga's *feign death* spell), giving him more freedom to move around and carry out his crimes. Identifying him as the perpetrator of the murders should be difficult, and stopping him even more so. The PCs must come up with a careful plan that not even the most resourceful of assassins could avoid; Tomas has not survived so many years of back-stabbing without being wary of being lured into a trap.

Note: If the Dungeon Master intends for the Keep and its inhabitants to become a long-term part of his or her campaign, the character's home base to which they return between adventures to distant dungeons, then this plot thread should not be used or, at the very least, deferred until much later in the campaign.

**Thomas (7th-level Thief [Assassin]):** AC 6 (*leather armor +1*, Dex bonus); MV 12; 22 hp; THAC0 17 (16 with *rapier +1*); #AT 1 (*rapier*, light crossbow, dagger) or 2 (thrown dagger); Dmg 1d6+1 (*rapier +1*) or 1d4 (thrown dagger) or 1d4+1+poison (*dagger of*

venom, 4 doses) or 1d4+1 (crossbow bolt); SA poison (type C, causes 25 points of damage on failed save vs. poison or 2d4 points on successful save, twelve doses), backstab (+4 attack bonus and quadruple damage on all surprise attacks); SD thief skills, *cloak of elvenkind* (90% undetectable, 50% in good light); SZ M (5'10"); ML elite (13); Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Chr 16; AL LE; XP 1,400. Thief Skills: pick pockets (15%), open locks (50%), find & remove traps (50%), move silently (55%), hide in shadows (55%), detect noise (20%), climb walls (90%), read languages (25%).

Skills: blind-fighting, direction sense (13), disguise (15), etiquette (16), rope use (15), swimming (13), tightrope walking (15), tumbling (15).

Special Equipment: light crossbow with 20 quarrels (all smeared with type C poison), garrote, seven throwing daggers, three vials of poison (four doses per vial), silk rope, grapple, pitons and mallet (head wrapped in cloth), thieves' tools (glass cutter, suction cups, lockpicks), four vials of oil (Greek fire), two vials of lamp oil (slippery), flint & steel, firepot, 75 pp, 150 gp, gem (black opal, value 1,000 gp).

While brave, Tomas will retreat at once from any fight that turns against him, often laying an ambush for too-bold pursuers. He will never engage in a toe-to-toe fight against a stronger opponent if he can possibly help it; his strengths are in striking by surprise from hiding. Between his thief skills and his magical equipment, he can usually manipulate circumstances to bring about such opportunities. Tomas is patient and very difficult to lure into a trap, preferring to let a target escape when he is in doubt. Before going out on a night's stalk, he carefully dabs poison on all his weapons (rapier, daggers, and crossbow bolts), removing any traces the next morning (thus he will gladly offer up his weapons for inspection). The only person he would risk himself for is Holga, even to the extent of surrendering if she is threatened with death (planning to use his rope use and lock-picking to win their freedom at some later date). Tomas is very lawful, so it is possible to strike a deal with him, but he places no value at all on human life (aside from his own and Holga's) so any such deal should not attempt to appeal to his "better nature"—he hasn't got one.

**Holga (6th-level Wizard):** AC 7 (*cloak of protection* +2, *ring of protection* +1); MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 19 (17 with *dagger* +2); #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d4+2 (*dagger* +2) or 1d3/1d3/1d3 (poisoned darts); SA spells, poison (25 extra points of damage on failed save vs. poison, 2d4 additional points even on successful save); SD spells; SZ M (5'2"); ML steady (12); Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Chr 17; AL NE; XP 975. Spellbook (4/2/2): 1st—*burning hands*, *charm person*, *friends*, *identify*, *magic missile*, *mount*, *Nystul's magical aura*, *read magic*, *shield*, *sleep*; 2nd—*ESP*, *improved phantasmal force*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *levitate*, *strength*, *web*, *wizard lock*; 3rd—*feign death*, *fireball*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *sepia snake sigil*, *wraithform*.

\*indicates favored spell for memorization

Skills: dancing (13), etiquette (17), herbalism (14), reading/writing (17), reading lips (14), spellcraft (14), tumbling (13).

Special Equipment: 12 darts, *ring of fire resistance*, *boots of elvenkind*, *dust of disappearance* (three doses), *amulet of proof against detection and location*, scroll: *improved phantasmal force*, *invisibility* (×2), *web* (×2); *feign death*, *wraithform*.

Holga has been Tomas's partner for almost ten years and greatly enjoys her role of establishing his cover, distracting attention from his doings, and occasionally joining in for the kill. She greatly fears a fate such as befell her mentor (a public beheading) and will plead for mercy if exposed and captured, planning to escape at some later date. If she and Tomas are confronted or trapped, she uses her spells and magic items to either destroy their opponents or make good her escape (via *wraithform*, her *dust of disappearance*, or any of a number of other means). She will never risk Tomas's life, whatever the circumstances. Holga receives less attention from the assassins in Tomas's would-be guild, which shows that they do not appreciate that she is just as dangerous as he is. She considers his current plan a little quixotic but intends to help him achieve his goal by whatever means

possible; the lives of every man, woman, and child at the Keep mean little to her when set aside Tomas's ambition.

## Sir Robin

This wandering bard will have arrived at the Keep shortly before the party's second return; attracted by their tales of their own exploits, he offers to accompany them on next foray. He refuses to fight (except in self-defense), preferring to strum his instrument and sing instead (claiming "you'll fight better if I sing during melee") as well as offer advice ("I wouldn't let him hit with that sword if I were you. Ooh, too late. Have it your own way then, but don't say I didn't warn you . . ."). He refuses to stop chattering or strumming, even in the most inappropriate circumstances (while they're trying to sneak up a corridor, for instance). They will probably be glad to be rid of him, but once safely back at the Keep he entertains the locals with a ballad he composes ridiculing the PCs' exploits. This ballad is very catchy and very scurrilous, mercilessly exposing each PC's foibles to public view. Characters who shrug Sir Robin's insults off will find the fuss soon blows over once the bard joins up with a passing caravan and departs; those who attack him may find themselves in serious trouble. If the Dungeon Master wants to use the "assassin's challenge" subplot described above, he or she could arrange for the bard to be Tomas's first victim, causing suspicion to fall upon the PCs and distracting the Keep's officials from their true peril. Otherwise, it's best to treat this episode as a spot of comic relief, especially if the Dungeon Master roleplays "Sir Robin" with massive, unshakable self-conceit (Henry Kuttner's short story "The Proud Robot" might offer a good example, as would Douglas Adams' Zaphod Beetlebrox).

**Sir Robin, conceited bard (3rd-level Bard):** AC 10 (AC 6 with Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 9; THAC0 19 (17 with darts and Dex bonus); #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d3 (darts); SD rogue skills, bard skills; SW self-conceit; SZ M (5'11"); ML unsteady (5); Str 10, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 12, Chr 16; AL CN; XP 65. Rogue Skills: Climb (60%), detect noise (20%), pick pockets (45%), read languages (5%). Bard Skills: alter mood (save vs. paralyzation to resist), inspire allies (+1 bonus to attack and saving throws, +2 to morale), negate vocal charms and attacks, identify magical items (15%). Spells (2): *unseen servant* (×2).

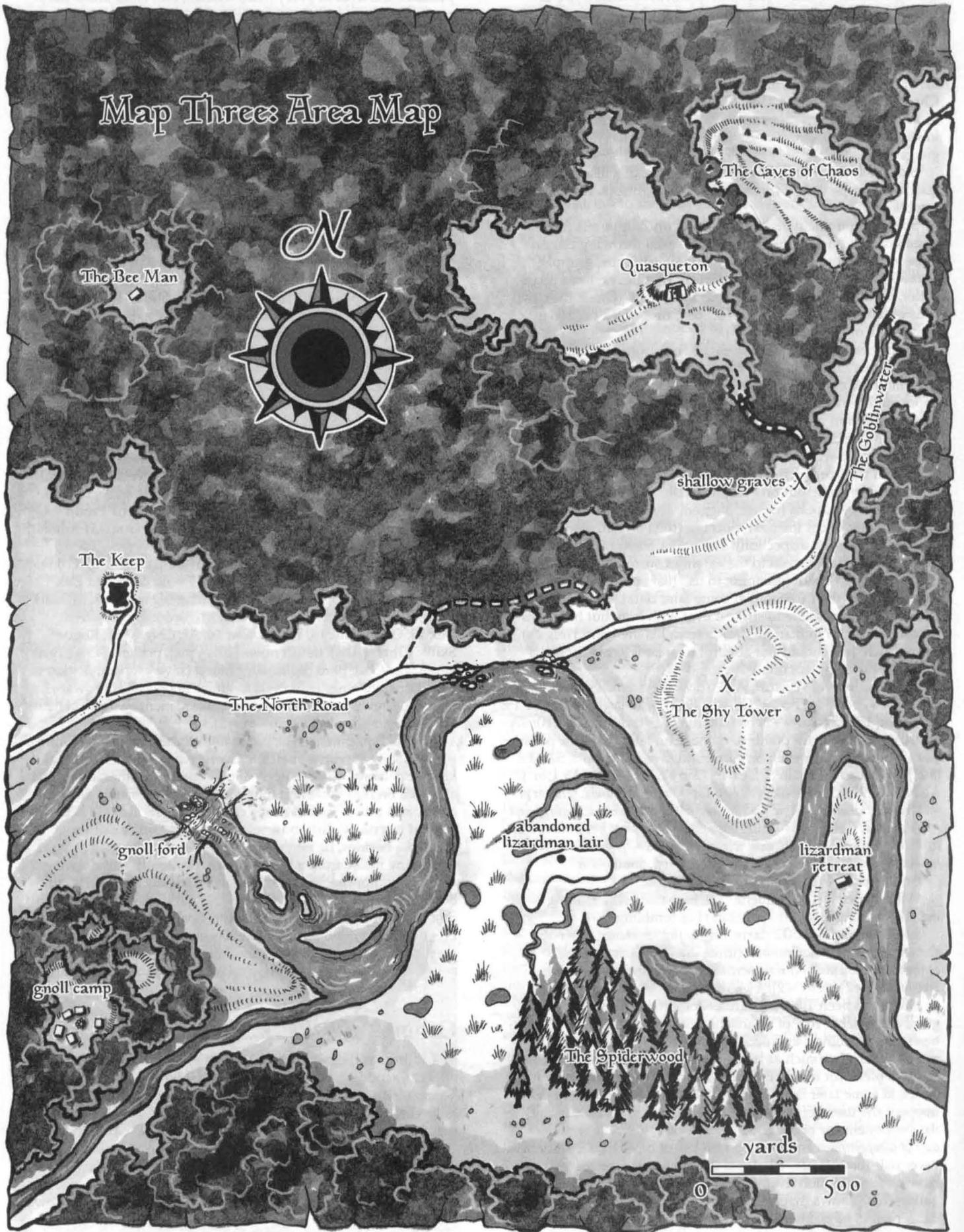
Special Equipment: lute, picks, fine clothes, small silver mirror.

Sir Robin's favorite spell is *unseen servant*, which he uses as a kind of personal valet to open doors, dust his clothes, and generally wait on him hand and foot. He also knows *mount*, *ventriloquism*, and *wall of fog* but rarely casts them. His attitude is that combat is a nasty, dirty business liable to get one's clothes mussed—besides, he might get hurt. Therefore he prefers to watch any melee from a safe distance, prudently withdrawing if any danger approaches him. He carries a spare lute and a number of replacement strings. Should this get smashed, he resorts first to small silver whistle-pipes and finally to a kazoo. If the PCs destroy every instrument he has on him, he improvises with percussion. Despite his character flaws, however, he would never betray the party or deliberately cause them harm; he's simply too self-absorbed to be reliable.

## Others

In addition to the permanent residents, a number of local hunters, woodsmen, and trappers consider the Keep their home, visiting it on an irregular basis. Some relatives of the folk who live here may have become caravan guards; others may have run away to become bandits (see Cave B in the "Caves of Chaos" chapter) or adventurers in distant lands. The Dungeon Master should feel free to arrange for new arrivals to drop by for a short stay from time to time. This is also a good device for bringing new PCs into the campaign, should a new player wish to join in or should an original PC have met with an untimely fate.

# Map Three: Area Map





## The Wilderness

The wilderness surrounding the Keep can be divided into several regions: the road, the swamp, and the wood. Each poses its own dangers and its own opportunities. When the characters are outside the Keep, there is a 1-in-6 chance every other hour of a random encounter (the Dungeon Master can ignore this roll if the party is banged up from a recent melee). When there is an encounter, roll again on whichever of the following tables is appropriate. "Road" encounters apply in the cleared land and plains between the river and the woods. "Wood" encounters apply whenever the PCs venture into the forested area to the north. "Swamp" encounters apply everywhere south of the river as well as in the marshy area along the river southeast of the Keep. Some encounters can occur repeatedly, others only once; see the entries below for details. If a non-repeatable encounter has already occurred, the Dungeon Master can either substitute another encounter from the list or treat the result as "no encounter." Note that a few of these entries (for example, the zombies) can occur only in specific locations within a given terrain. Should this result occur on a random encounter roll when the characters are elsewhere, the Dungeon Master should make a note that the encounter automatically occurs when the PCs reach that area and treat it as "no encounter" for the present.

### 1d10 Road Encounters

1	leucrotta
2	caravan
3-4	bandits
5	bulette
6	The Bee Man
7	stirges
8	pilgrims
9	zombies
10	The Shy Tower

### 1d10 Wood Encounters

1	leucrotta
2-3	gnolls
4-5	bandits
6	harpy
7-8	wolf spiders
9-10	stirges

### 1d10 Swamp Encounters

1	stirges
2-3	gnolls
4-5	lizard men
6	spiders
7-8	giant frogs
9	leeches
10	shambling mound [daytime]/will o'wisp [nighttime]

## Bandits

These bandits belong to a band that originally had a camp south of the river. Some time ago they allied themselves with the Hidden Temple and recently moved into Cave C, having exter-

minated the orcs who once lived there. They scour the area in small bands of five or so, lying in wait for unwary travelers to rob. For the most part they are content with highway robbery—picking a lonely spot on the road and having one of their number (often a woman, to put travelers off-guard) hail bypassers while the others lurk in the underbrush, springing up when their targets halt, arrows notched and ready to fire. The bandit who first hailed the travelers then calls for them to hand over their goods "quiet-like," searches them if he or she (usually she) thinks she can get away with it, collects any obvious booty, and departs. Characters who do not kick up a fuss are usually not harmed and are usually left with weapons and armor (although the bandits might remove bowstrings as a precaution against reprisals, leaving them a safe distance away). Those who fight to defend their possessions find the bandits willing to use deadly force if necessary to escape. Most of the bandits are Neutral—townsfolk who prefer thieving to work or caravan guards discharged for dishonesty—and more interested in loot than slaughter (after all, a dead mark can't be robbed again, while sheep shorn today grow more wool tomorrow). A few, however, are evil and enjoy inflicting pain (brigands rather than true bandits). This proportion will slowly grow greater over time as the Hidden Temple solidifies its hold over these untrustworthy allies and promotes the more vicious among them to positions of authority, eliminating those who hesitate to follow their orders without question. The Hidden Temple recently recruited a small band of eight evil halfling bandits, and these are extremely dangerous to any non-halflings they encounter.

**Bandits (four 1st-level Thieves):** AC 6 (leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 5 each (average); THAC0 20 (19 with shortbow and Dex bonus); #AT 2 (bow) or 1 (shortsword); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (arrows) or 1d6 (shortsword); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills (hide in shadows 35%, move silently 40%); SZ M; ML average (8); Dex 16, Int average (8-10); AL N, CN; XP 35 each.

**Highwayman (Bandit leader, 2nd-level Thief):** AC 4 (studded leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 10; THAC0 20 (18 with shortbow and Dex bonus); #AT 2 (bow) or 1 (shortsword); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (arrows) or 1d6 (shortsword); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills (pick pockets 50%, hide in shadows 40%, move silently 45%); SZ M (5'1"); ML steady (11); Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Chr 14; AL N; XP 65.

**Halfling Brigands (eight 2nd-level Thieves):** AC 4 (leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 6; hp 8 each (average); THAC0 20 (17 with shortbow, Dex bonus, and racial bonus); #AT 2 (bow) or 1 (shortsword); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (arrows) or 1d6 (shortsword); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage), stealth (-4 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls); SD thief skills (pick pockets 50%, move silently 70%, hide in shadows 60%), 30' infravision; SZ S (3' average); ML elite (14); Int average to very (8-12), Dex 18; AL CE; XP 65 each.

Since there are several dozen bandits in all, it is not only possible to meet the same group more than once (assuming those bandits survive a given encounter) but to meet other groups even if an earlier band has been captured or eliminated. It will increase the fun if you can encourage a sense of camaraderie between the PCs and the bandits—difficult, but well worth it if you succeed. It should be possible for PCs to buy their passage relatively unmo- lested, especially if they look capable of putting up a good fight. They may even be able to strike up an alliance with the bandits (assuming the party has a flexible morality and lacks any paladin

types) or persuade one or two of the highwaymen (and -women) to throw in their lot with them. The Dungeon Master can use this as an option if the PC party is poorly equipped with thieves.

Given the current war between the Hidden Temple and the gnolls (see the entry for gnolls, below), 10% of all "Bandit" encounters should be with the PCs stumbling across the butchered remains of a bandit group that ran afoul of a gnoll patrol. The gnolls will have carried away any fallen comrades but sharp-eyed characters might spot some clues as to the identity of the bandits' killers (a thatch of bloody fur, unusual tracks near the human bodies, etc.). The average bandit carries 1d6 sp and 1d4 gp; each highwayman carries 2d6 sp and 1d8 gp and wears some small piece of jewelry (a ring, earring, bracelet, or the like) worth 10–20 gp. Halfling brigands each carry 3d6 gp.

## The Bee Man

The strangest, but least dangerous, of all the random encounters PCs may have once they wander away from the Keep is to encounter this "mad hermit." The Bee Man (he answers to no other name) lives in the woods directly north of the Keep, about two-thirds of a mile away from the settlement in a bee-loud glade. Characters within half a mile of this place begin to encounter bees coming and going—a few at first, then in great number. The bees ignore the characters unless attacked. Curious strangers following the bees soon spy a glade some 100 feet across, the ground thick with clover and wildflowers of every description. A small stream flows through the tree-lined clearing and beside it is a dilapidated cottage made of daub and wattle (dried mud and sticks) and a row of well-maintained beehives. A stooped figure moves back and forth tending the hives.

Should they hail him, he politely stops what he's doing and waits for them to approach. He never initiates a conversation but replies politely in a soft voice to direct questions—however, he is easily distracted and often turns the talk to a topic much on his mind: bees. He knows far more about bees than anyone should and hums happily to himself much of the time. He usually invites visitors inside for a meal of honeycomb in a wooden bowl and a drink of water in a wooden mug. The only furnishings, aside from a stack of wooden bowls and wooden mugs on a shelf, are a low wooden table with a single rickety chair and a pile of straw (probably once a sleeping pallet). Several cupboards built into the wall have been colonized by the bees and are now filled with hives. The low door stands open, as does the single window (the shutters having fallen to pieces).

It is also possible for characters to meet the Bee Man without ever coming here, as he roams far and wide in the woods and meadows searching for new flowering plants to bring back to his glade, as well as meeting many interesting bumblebees. He also occasionally comes to the Keep on market day to trade a little honey for various items—some string, a new brown robe once a year, pots to keep honey in, and the like. Wherever he goes, he ties a beehive on his back, sometimes "seeding" a colony in a likely spot but more often just for the company. The Bee Man never harms anybody, but he is not defenseless: Anyone harassing him is immediately attacked by swarm after swarm of bees, taking 1d4 points of damage per round from hundreds of stings (save vs. poison or go into shock). Anyone driven off by his bees will not be able to find his glade thereafter, as he will use *hallucinatory forest*, *entangle*, and other spells to ward his home from their presence. The Bee Man has no treasure, other than his honeycombs.

**The Bee Man (7th-level druid):** AC 10; MV 12; hp 43; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell; SA spells, bees; SD spells, +2 bonus on saves vs. fire or electricity; SZ M (5'); ML steady (12); Str 9, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Chr 15; AL N; XP 0. Special Abilities: identify plants, animal, and pure water; pass through undergrowth without trace; immune to woodland charms; shapechange thrice per day. Spells(3/3/2/1): 1st—*animal friendship*, *entangle*, *locate animals or plants*; 2nd—*goodberry*, *messenger*, *speak with animals*; 3rd—*plant growth*, *summon insects*; 4th—*hallucinatory forest*.

## Bulette

This "land-shark" ceaselessly patrols the meadows around the Keep. Blinded by an uncooperative would-be meal long ago, it hunts by feeling the vibration of creatures that pass overhead, living largely off deer from the forest. While a terrifying foe, those who hold perfectly still and make no noise whatsoever can avoid it. Characters who panic upon seeing its fin plow through the ground towards them and flee find that it is faster than the average human as well as a tireless pursuer. It can knock down trees but will not follow prey into boggy or rocky terrain, so characters who encounter it near the river or one of the hills may be able to escape it by flight, but it should be a near thing. Standing and fighting is a very bad option, as any NPC from the area can tell the PCs; no low-level group can hope to defeat it in melee.

**Bulette:** AC -2; MV 14 (burrow 3, jump 8); HD 9; hp 54; THAC0 11 (15 due to blindness); #AT 3; Dmg 4d12/3d6/3d6 (bite/claw/claw); SA can leap into the air like a fish breaking water, striking with all four claws in passing; SW blind from old injury, area on back behind fin is only AC 6; SZ L (12' long, 9 1/2' tall); ML steady (11); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 4,000.

Note that bulettes detest the taste of elves, so if it chases one down it will pause, sniff disgustedly, and depart. There is only one bulette in the area, so if it is slain treat subsequent roll with this result as "no encounter." The bulette has no treasure.

## Caravan

Every few days a small caravan passes along the road, typically stopping overnight at the Keep. There is thus a chance that characters traveling on or near the road may run into such a group outside of the Keep. A typical caravan consists of one to three merchants, each with a cart or wagon full of trade goods. The merchant either rides on the cart (often driving it herself) or is mounted (usually on a donkey or riding horse). Two to four guards accompany each wagon: These are generally zero-level "men at arms" (THAC0 20, hp 1d8+1, AC 10 to AC 4 depending on equipment, damage by weapon) but will sometimes be 1st- or even 2nd-level Fighters down on their luck. Merchants will typically refuse to break open their trade goods in the wilderness (lingering on the road invites bandits) and often respond coolly to offers from adventurers to travel together (this being a favorite bandit ploy and therefore something the prudent merchant is anxious to avoid). Of course PCs who come upon a caravan under attack by bandits, gnolls, harpies, or whatever and then come to its aid will of course meet with a warmer reception from the grateful merchant and guards (and possibly even a small reward—say 10 gp). A typical guard carries 1d10 sp; a typical merchant 1d10 sp, 1d10 gp, and 1d4 pp—the merchant will also have up to 100 gp hidden somewhere in the wagon (any larger transactions are conducted via letters of credit).

This encounter can occur more than once, but only after an interval of three to four days, and a second roll will probably indicate a different caravan. If the PCs have not yet encountered him, the Dungeon Master can choose to make one of these encounters be with Mendel the merchant, who proves unusually friendly and willingly shares the road with the adventurers. This is so he can size up this new element in the area for his next report to his masters at the Hidden Temple.

## Giant Frogs

A low muddy mound rising a few feet above the surrounding swamp water marks the former site of the lizard man community. The lizard men themselves have fled deeper into the swamp as a result of harassment by adventurers and forces from the Keep, and the abandoned tunnels and lairs are now home to a number of giant frogs that have taken over the dens for their burrows. These human-sized amphibians are always hungry, attempting to eat anything that they encounter. Characters poking around the river or the edges of the swamp will encounter a

solitary wandering frog; those who venture deeper into the swamp blunder into packs of 2–6. A total of some thirty giant frogs inhabit the mound. If the PCs somehow manage to slay that many then they encounter no others. It will take several weeks for the tadpoles scattered throughout the swamp to grow into 1-HD frogs roughly two feet in length and weighing roughly 50 lbs; these small frogs can jump 180 feet, have THAC0s of 19 (15 on tongue attacks), do 1d3 points of damage per bite, and have tongues only six feet long. Giant frogs are very dangerous to low-level parties, who might not realize the danger these voracious creatures pose until too late. The frogs have no treasure.

**Giant Frogs (1 or 2d3):** AC 7; MV 3, swim 9, jump 100' (30' straight up); HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 16 (12 with tongue); #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA tongue (18' long, adhesive, reels any victim weighing less than 250 lbs. into frog's mouth), swallow whole (on roll of a natural 20 on any target less than 3' tall or long, victim dies within three rounds); SD camouflage (-3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls); SZ M (6' long); ML average (8); Int non (0); AL N; XP 270 each.

## Gnolls

Displaced from their ancestral cave (Cave J) in the Caves of Chaos, this band of gnolls is now camping south of the river, at a site once notorious as a bandit-stronghold. The gnolls witnessed the extermination of the orcs and the scattering of the hobgoblins and realized they were next on the Hidden Temple's list.

Therefore when the first attacks began on their lair they evacuated the entire complex, broke through the attackers' lines (mainly composed of undead orcs, hobgoblins, and humans), and withdrew to the far side of the river. Here they have licked their wounds and planned their revenge. While their numbers were depleted in the fighting retreat, they have recruited warriors from allied clans to the south and west. No less than three flinds (one female and two males) are currently present, each a young adult out to establish himself or herself as the chosen leader of the revitalized gnoll community. In the meantime, they rule jointly as a troika. In addition to the thirty warriors, fifteen female gnolls survive and have taken upon themselves responsibility for guarding the above-ground colony, aided by a half-dozen hyenas; a score of youngsters ranging from near-adults to infants round out the exile community.

The three flinds are inexperienced but wily, and each has a plan for re-establishing the colony. Ashur, the largest male, favors a straightforward glorious attack on the Hidden Temple; he feels that if the gnolls were to give battle at the time and place of their choosing, then they cannot fail. While this may seem unduly rash, he has his reasons, having noticed that the Temple is solidifying their hold on the Caves of Chaos and growing stronger all the time; hence delay can only play into the hands of their enemies and make the inevitable battle all the more bitter. Ninurta, the sole female, wants to eliminate the Temple's minions piecemeal, one bandit group at a time, so that when the final battle comes, most of their foes' resources will have been whittled away. Deeply concerned about the growing strength of the Temple, she feels the gnolls must tilt the balance before attacking in force; otherwise they will lose gnoll lives to no avail against the undead-creating evil priests. The smaller male, Tammuz, is the wiliest of the three. He wants to manipulate the humans of the Keep (and the PC adventurers, once they arrive on the scene) into conflict with the priests; once the adventurers have weakened the Hidden Temple, the gnolls can move in and destroy their foes. He would even be willing to ally with the PCs in planning a joint strike. On the other hand, if the PCs prove capable of cleaning out the entire Caves complex by themselves, then Tammuz will simply wait until they are done before moving the gnoll tribe into the newly vacant caves, where they would keep a low profile for a time until the strangers had moved on.

Since the gnolls feel very exposed living on the surface, they keep a sharp watch. Their camp is surrounded by outlying guard-

posts, each with five gnolls and a hyena. Characters who stumble across one of these guardposts would be wise to withdraw, as the gnolls are fierce and give no quarter, posing a considerable challenge to any low-level party. Furthermore, any sound of combat at one of these spots brings a double-strength gnoll patrol to investigate, arriving ten rounds later. This patrol is followed by another (led by one of the flinds) ten rounds after that. Should both patrols fail to return, the females and children decamp through a carefully planned escape route that leads through the swamp past the giant frogs, through the spiderwood, and across the river off the map to the east. Their retreat is covered by the remaining gnoll warriors not currently out on patrols or scouting expeditions, who engage the attackers as necessary to allow the noncombatants time to get safely away. Should the adventurers massacre a large portion of the gnoll warriors, the surviving gnolls assume that the PCs are in cahoots with their foes.

Henceforth the PCs will be subject to ambushes and attacks by the vengeful gnolls for as long as they remain in the area, with these ceasing only when no flinds or adult male gnolls remain.

Player characters who avoid the gnoll lair or never explore south of the river may still encounter gnoll patrols, especially in the woods, as the humanoids are scouting out the area between the Keep and the Caves of Chaos in order to keep an eye on their enemies' movements and to harass them as much as possible. Patrols tend to avoid humans and demihumans, unless they mistake the PCs for bandits, in which case they will attack at once. Occasionally a single gnoll scout may be encountered, but a typical gnoll encounter will be with a patrol consisting of five gnolls. When the gnolls mount an attack or ambush against the bandits or other Hidden Temple minions, they send out a double-strength patrol (ten gnolls) led by one of the flinds.

Gnoll encounters may be repeated so long as the tribe's losses do not exceed the total number of gnolls present. Recruitment from other tribes continues, so an additional 1d2 gnolls arrive each week. Should all three flinds be killed, the tribe breaks up; thereafter, marauding bands of gnolls wander the forests, killing everything they encounter. In this case, recruitment ceases at once, and the attacks end only when the last gnoll has been slain.

**Gnoll warriors (30 male gnolls):** AC 5 (chainmail); MV 9; HD 2; hp 12 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg halberd (1d10) or battleaxe (1d8) or two-handed sword (1d10); SZ L (7½' tall); ML elite (14); Int low (7); AL CE; XP 35 each.

**Gnoll guards (15 female gnolls):** AC 7 (ringmail); MV 9; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (greatspear) or 1d10 (halberd); SZ L (7½' tall); ML steady (12); Int low (7); AL CE; XP 35 each.

**Ashur, Ninurta, Tammuz (flinds):** AC 5 (chainmail); MV 12; HD 2+3; hp 21, 18, 16; THAC0 17 (16 with Str bonus); #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (flindbar); 1d8/1d8 (longbow with sheaf arrows); SA flindbar (on successful attack, the chains entangle target's weapon and tear it from his or her grasp on a failed save vs. rod/staff/wand); SZ M (6½' tall); ML champion (15); Int average (10); AL LE; XP 120 each.

**Hyena (6):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 15 each (average); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SZ L (6' long, 4' high); ML average (10); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 65 each.

The Dungeon Master is warned that a gnoll patrol will probably prove too much for a party comprised entirely of first-level characters to handle. Rather than wipe out all the PCs in one unequal struggle, remember that the gnolls may choose to merely stare threateningly at the PCs before withdrawing, or they may negotiate rather than attack. If a fight does break out and the PCs are worsted, the gnolls may take them captive, both to pump them for information regarding the Hidden Temple (this may be the first the characters have heard of it) and to enslave them. Gnolls are lazy and like to have slaves around to do all the unpleasant hard work; these lost all their slaves during the ouster from their old lair and would be very pleased to have docile minions about to dig, fetch, and carry. The Dungeon Master might introduce a bandit, a solitary kobold, or one of the NPC allies as a fellow captive (Cob would be a good choice). If

using this subplot, allow the PCs a fair chance to escape if they can come up with a good plan (possibly leading to an exciting chase with the unarmed characters fleeing at top speed through the swamp, the baying of gnolls and hyenas following them in hot pursuit). Otherwise, they will have to negotiate their way out by striking up some kind of deal with one of the three flinds.

**Treasure:** The gnolls lost most of their possessions when forced to abandon their old lair, but each of the guards and warriors carries 2d6 ep and 2d4 gp. The flinds each carry 3d10 gp and wear jewelry worth 100 to 300 gp (necklace, earrings, rings, pendant, etc.). The tribe as a whole has a cache of 500 gp, which they have buried under the firepit in their camp.

## Harpy

When this encounter is rolled, ask the characters to each roll a d6: Those who get a "1" (1–2 for elves; bards and thieves may opt to make detect noise rolls instead) are first to notice a faint lilting melody carried by the wind. Those who turn and flee avoid this encounter; those who investigate out of curiosity or simply remain where they are find the song getting clearer: a woman's voice singing a lovely plaintive tune. Any human or demihuman hearing the song must now save vs. spell or become *charmed* (elves get to roll their resistance first). Those who fail run at top speed through the woods until they reach the great oak tree from which the sound originates, where they are attacked by the singer: a harpy. All those who failed their saving throws stand passively while she tears into their flesh. Naturally, characters who resisted her song may attempt to save their comrades, but unfortunately her talons also charm any they touch (save vs. spell or stand mesmerized for 20+1d10 hours). A harpy will eat one character per day, so if all the PCs succumb to her *charm* there is still a chance each subsequent day that they may shake off the enchantment and flee before mealtime arrives.

**Harpy (1 to 3):** AC 7; MV 6, fly 15 (C); HD 3; hp 15, 22, 18; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6 (claw/claw/bone club); SA song, touch (see above); SD song; SZ M (6'); ML elite (13); Int low (5–7); AL CE; XP 975 each.

A single harpy is probably challenge enough for a party of first-level characters; groups with 2nd or even 3rd-level PCs should be able to handle flocks of two or three. The harpies have no treasure, although the area around their nest is littered with bones and debris from past victims. Those who search carefully find the following among the mess: 120 gp, 14 pp, a *potion of healing* in an old leather bottle, an amber necklace worth 100 gp, and five smooth pieces of jade in a rotted pouch (worth 100 gp each).

There are only three adult harpies in the entire wood, so if that many are slain then no more encounters occur. However, one of them has laid an egg in a nest hidden eighty feet up the tree; unless this is found and dealt with, it hatches out within four weeks. The baby harpy will pose no danger at first (except to birds and small forest animals), but within a year or so it will grow to be a threat unless somehow captured and tamed (if the PCs fail to do so, assume the priests of the Hidden Temple do, unless these are completely obliterated in the course of the adventure).

## Leeches

The waters of the swamp are unhealthy to those not native to such an environment—such as the PCs. A leech encounter will not be apparent at first. Such a die roll on the random Swamp Encounters chart means that 10 to 20 leeches have quietly attached themselves to a random character, draining enough blood to cause the loss of 1 hp (do not inform the players of this; simply pick the character with the least protection—typically an unarmored thief or mage—and make a note recording the damage). More and more leeches arrive over time, with hungry ones replacing those who suck their fill and drop off. Thus, in the course of the second hour, each character whose base Armor Class is less than AC 4 (Dexterity adjustments and magical

bonuses do not apply) will be afflicted, losing 2 hp. By the end of the third hour, every character who lacks immunity to leeches (which are annelid worms, not insects, by the way) will have a score or more of the creatures busily sucking away for 2 hp per hour thereafter. Leech bites are painless, so characters will only notice the infestation if they periodically stop and check submerged limbs, checking inside boots, under clothes, and the like. It is quite likely that the first the PCs learn of the leeches is when the character with the fewest hit points suddenly feels woozy and pitches over, drained unconscious by the relentless attack.

Once discovered, the leeches are relatively easy to detach (fire or salt causes them to let go) but difficult to escape from. By now the characters are probably deep in the swamp, several hours' walk away from dry land and safety. For every leech they remove, another eagerly takes its place as soon as the character takes another step. Only *levitation*, climbing a tree (if they are near the Spiderwood), or being physically held above the level of the water and carried (by some stalwart warrior, most likely) will do. Dying by leeches is an ignominious end for would-be heroes, so encourage players to think of ways to escape the leeches' mindless but unending pursuit; this is a good example of a case where problem-solving rather than combat is required to escape a dilemma. The number of leeches is not infinite, but it is very great (in the thousands), so simply trying to kill them all is not an option. This encounter can reoccur whenever the conditions are right (that is, whenever the characters enter the swamp).

## Leucrotta

At some point, either when the PCs are walking along the road or when they are somewhere along the edges of the woods, they will no doubt be startled to hear a blood-curdling scream. It sounds like a woman screaming in terror and calling for help, with other noises that suggest some fierce beast attacking in fury (or, if the Dungeon Master prefers, bandit or gnomish attackers). Should the PCs not investigate at once (most red-blooded heroes will charge right in), the screams and growls (or shouts) continue for a minute or two, then end in a single strangled cry. Those who still hold off hear only silence for a time, followed by a low moaning. Characters who immediately head in the opposite direction avoid this encounter but will be marked by the leucrotta for future attention (the Dungeon Master should probably arrange for such cautious characters to also overhear a genuine attack on some poor hapless soul—perhaps a solitary traveler—later on). Characters who rush to the rescue soon find the scene of the apparent attack: a small forest clearing where the ground is torn up as if some great struggle had taken place here. There is no sign of attacker(s) or victim, but several scraps of cloth cling to the trees on the far side, apparently indicating the direction they went.

All of this is the set-up for a trap, the jaws of which now snap shut. While the PCs examine the scene and peer in the direction the unseen participants seem to have taken, the leucrotta sneaks up on them from behind, silently approaching from the same direction they originally took. Unless someone has specifically stated that his or her character is keeping a sharp lookout behind them, the first they know of the leucrotta's approach is when it suddenly lunges into the clearing and attacks the rear-most character with its devastating bite. The creature relies on surprise and ferocity but it is very sly. Should it be getting the worst of the fight it retreats, dodging in and out among the trees to make missile fire more difficult (–4 penalty the first round, –7 the round after that, and –10 the third round before it vanishes from sight among the dark trunks). Those who follow too closely are kicked by its rear hooves (see below). On the other hand, characters who are outclassed or decide to flee soon find to their dismay that the leucrotta is very swift (50% greater than that of the average human, triple that of a dwarf or halfling); it tirelessly pursues any prey in sight. Prudent characters who climb trees find that while the creature cannot climb, it is fully capable of biting through the trunks with its awesome jaws, bringing their

perch crashing down. Should the characters pepper it with missile weapons and spells, the sly beast slips away and bides its time. If badly injured, it keeps its distance; otherwise it lurks out of sight and waits for them to be off-guard—perhaps creeping up on an injured character if he or she is left alone for any length of time (such as outside the Caves of Chaos). There is only one leucrotta in the region, but it can be encountered a number of times until defeated; once it has become interested in the challenge posed by the characters they are safe from it only within the walls of the Keep.

**Leucrotta:** AC 4; MV 18; HD 6+1; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6 (bite); SA can bite through metal (on a successful attack, armor or shield must make item saving throws vs. crushing blow or be punctured), can kick with both rear hoofs for 1d6/1d6 when retreating; SZ L (9' long, 7' high at shoulder); ML elite (14); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 975. Special Ability: leucrotta can imitate almost any sound a normal person or animal could make, the better to lure unwary prey.

## Lizard Men

When Lord Macsen first built the Keep, the greatest threat to its survival was the lizard man colony in the nearby swamp, whose lair was only about a mile and a half from his new-founded settlement. The lizard men vigorously defended their prior claim to the area, waylaying any humans and demihumans they found near the river and carrying them off to slowly drown. Macsen led several expeditions against them and encouraged adventurers to do the same, until the scaly folk's numbers had been drastically reduced and the attacks on his people ceased. The last expedition reported that the lizard man lair had been abandoned, its residents apparently either scattered or dead. Nowadays, any resident of the Keep will tell inquisitive visitors, the remaining lizard man have become fugitive and shy, no longer to be feared. Some believe they have died out altogether, dismissing the occasional disappearance of those who went poking into the swamp as pure bad luck (the general assumption is they sank into a bog or were devoured by frogs and spiders).

The truth is far otherwise: The lizard men's numbers may have fallen but those who remain are filled with malice from years of persecution. They have fallen back to an island in the river further away from the Keep, abandoning their old burrows and tunnels (these are now home to a giant frog colony). Their war against the humans has become an obsession, but they are very cautious as the result of too many defeats over the years, only attacking when they are sure of victory. The result of this for PCs is that a lizard-man encounter usually consists of their being spotted by a lone lizard-man scout, who stealthily trails them from that point onward for as long as they remain within the swamp, mostly keeping underwater. The PCs will get a strange sense that they are being watched but should see no more than an occasional ripple as if something just submerged beneath the muddy water. The lizard man's scaly hide makes it immune to leeches, and years of living in the swamps has taught them how to avoid the giant frogs and other hazards.

The lizard men only attack in one of two circumstances. The first is if they can catch one or two characters alone in the swamp; even then, they will observe the intruder(s) carefully for several hours to make sure it is not a trap. Thus, during the course of the PCs' stay at the Keep, ol' Tarlach the fisherman might fail to come home one night. If a child or two accompanied him that day, then the PCs might be asked to join the search party (by Tarlach's daughter Miep, or the distraught parents of the missing child, or by Jadale the militia lieutenant). The second case is when intruders come too close to their hidden lair. All entrances to this place are underwater, so characters may actually explore the surface of the little island without finding anything more than a few lizard-like footprints and fish bones. Those who linger too long, however, are attacked by 2d4 lizard men, who rise silently out of the water on all sides. The PCs should be able to defeat them, but following them back into their

lair is a bad idea: the tunnels are entirely flooded, so characters have an excellent chance of drowning (at 1st to 3rd level, they should lack the ability to breath underwater). To make matters worse, visibility is terrible in the muddy water, imposing a -4 penalty on all attacks to any character without blind-fighting. Movement is difficult, meaning that the lizard men automatically win initiative each round. Missile weapons are effectively useless, and melee weapons that need to be swung (clubs, maces, swords) suffer an additional -4 penalty; only stabbing weapons are exempt. The lizard men dart in and out, striking and then vanishing, making it difficult to know where to aim a blow. Wise characters will withdraw once they realize just how badly the deck is stacked against them.

There are a total of only ten surviving adult lizard men, so deduct any slain as scouts or on the island's surface from the number available to defend the lair. There are a dozen young in the lair (hatched from a clutch a few years ago). The adults will fight to the death if intruders invade the lair, giving the young lizard-folk time to escape through any of the dozen or so underwater outlets. There is no treasure within the lair, as they lost all of it to adventurers before abandoning their former den; this tribe has regressed to the point where they no longer collect treasure from victims or even make or use weapons, relying entirely on teeth and claw. The lizard men have ignored the gnoll's intrusion to the edges of their territory since both groups share a common foe (humans); this may change if the gnolls ally with PCs for a joint attack on the Hidden Temple.

**Lizard Men (1 or 10):** AC 5; MV 6, swim 12; HD 2+1; hp 13 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1d6 (claw/claw/bite); SZ M (7' tall plus 3'tail); ML unsteady (5) for scout, fanatic (18) for defenders of lair; Int low (6); AL CE; XP 65 each.

**Juvenile lizard men (12):** AC 5; MV 12, swim 12; HD 1; 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1d3 (claw/claw/bite); SZ M (4'tall plus 2' tail); ML average (8); Int low (7); AL CE; XP 15 each.

## Pilgrims

This encounter occurs only once, and only when the PCs are within sight of the road. They come across a band of pilgrims who are traveling up from the south (if it is night, they glimpse the pilgrims' campfire where they stopped for the evening). These followers of a minor sect (The Second Coming of the Great Prophet Quonzar) are on their way to a holy shrine in the north, escorting a heretic who claims to have had a vision from Quonzar. The "heretic" will recount his story to the elders of the church, who will either incorporate it into their holy book or have him stoned. The pilgrims are so filled with religious enthusiasm (regularly chanting things like "Holy Quonzar's singing fish!" and "We're going to see Quonzar!" or just "Hallelujah!" over and over) that they are only mildly disturbed by the fact that another one of them disappears every few days. When they started out there were a score of them; when the PCs meet them, they are down to a dozen, one of whom (Sister Betik) disappears that very night. The pilgrims assume their missing fellows have been "taken by Quonzar"; skeptical PCs who investigate find a neat pile of well-picked bones hidden under fallen leaves about a hundred feet off. Even if confronted with this evidence, the pilgrims remain undisturbed, merely observing "Quonzar moves in mysterious ways."

The predator that has attached itself to this hapless band is a bhut, an extremely rare creature with the ability to change its shape to appear human during the daytime (the better to blend in with its unwary prey). It stays unobtrusively in the crowd, not drawing undue attention to itself, and keeps its features hooded at night. Player characters can identify the culprit by setting a trap for it in hopes of catching it in the act ("My, what big teeth you have, Brother Mathias."). The bhut is a very dangerous foe but has a strong sense of self-preservation, so it will flee unless it feels certain it can prevail. If it makes good its escape, it leaves the area altogether and assumes a new identity somewhere far away.

This encounter occurs only once, as the pilgrims are only passing through the area. They have no treasure, being holy mendicants (the bhut, however, has a bracelet worth 100 gp hidden beneath its robes). The names of the surviving pilgrims are Sister Betik (the next victim), Brother Arvind, Sister Shahira, Brother Mathias (the bhut), Brother Taghrid (the heretic), Brother Prasad, Sister Naresh, Sister Mirvat, Brother Talal, Brother Tariq, Sister Vyalia, and Brother Tuladin.

**Bhut ("Brother Mathias"):** AC 4; MV 12; HD 7+2; 42 hp; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6 (claw/claw/bite); SA bite causes numbness (save vs. paralysis or suffer -2 penalty to all attack rolls for 1d4 rounds); SD assume human form in daylight, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, hold, poison, and gas, immune to non-magical weapons, *know alignment* gives false result (LG rather than LE); SW slain by any successful attack from a *blessed* weapon; SZ M (6'; ML unsteady (7); Int very (12); AL LE; XP 1,400.

## Shambling Mound

This encounter only takes place within 100 yards of water and only in daylight. The shambling mound is very territorial, showing itself to intruders to give them a chance to withdraw. To onlookers, it appears as if an eight-foot-high pile of rotting vegetation suddenly pushes its way up from beneath the fetid water, swaying silently. If the characters do not leave in short order, it begins to slide toward them, two slimy appendages extended like huge clumsy arms. Note that with its movement rate characters should have a decent chance to outrun it. Should they choose to close with it or stand and await its coming, it wraps itself around a victim (enfolding the target in its arms while the bulk of the loose body falls on him). If both arms strike the same target, he is entangled in the rotting muck that makes up the shambler's body and suffocates in 2d4 rounds—the shambler is very strong, so a successful bend bars/lift gates roll on the victim's part is required for him to break free. The shambler pursues trespassers until they leave the swamp entirely, whereupon it forgets about them. It has no treasure, allowing the bodies of victims to fall into the mud where they are lost forever in the trackless swamp.

**Shambling Mound:** AC 0; MV 6; HD 8; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8 (appendages); SA entangle (enfolds victim in its mass—see above); SD camouflage and stealth (difficult to see or hear until moves, -3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls), immune to blunt weapons, half-damage from piercing and slashing weapons, immune to fire, resistant to cold (half-damage on failed save, none on successful save), unaffected by decapitation or dismemberment (other than hp loss), electric attacks cause it to grow 1' per HD of the *lightning bolt*, if not killed altogether regenerates all damage in 12 hours; SZ L (8' high); ML fanatic (18); Int low (5); AL N; XP 6,000.

## Spiders

The Spiderwood on the southern edge of the swamp is notorious as a haunt of giant spiders who have filled this stand of cypresses with their webs; anyone who lets it be known in the Keep that they intend to go that way will be warned to beware the spiders. For once, the rumors are absolutely true: The woods are filled with webs spun haphazardly from tree to tree, and no less than a dozen spiders lurk in the area (a typical encounter will be with no more than 1d3 at a time, however). Because of mist and fog from the nearby swamp, the webs do not burn as readily as do most spiderwebs. Torches applied directly to the webbing cause them to smolder and burn, but the flames do not spread readily (thus it is impossible to burn down the entire forest by this means). The spiders do not hoard treasure but have nevertheless accumulated some over the years; PCs who search thoroughly will find a desiccated body roughly every 100 feet. Each time they do, roll 1d10. If the result is 1-4, they find 1d6 sp; on 5-7, 1d8 gp; on 8, a pouch with 30 gp; on 9, a long-dead warrior in

rusty but still usable gear (chainmail, shield, longsword, scabbard); on 10, a withered wizard wearing a ring with a blue stone worth 100 gp and carrying a scroll in a still weatherproof scrollcase (the scroll has the spells *identify*, *magic missile*, *sleep*, and *unseen servant*). These last three discoveries occur only once; thereafter treat a result of 8-10 as no treasure.

**Giant Spiders (12):** AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1 hp+poison (bite); SA poison (type A: save vs. poison or suffer 15 additional points of damage within the next 15 minutes); SD webs; SZ S (2' diameter bodies); ML unsteady (7); Int non (0); AL N; XP 175 each.

This encounter can be repeated whenever the PCs venture into the spiders' territory, so long as any of the dozen spiders in the colony remain. The spiders will not pursue prey outside the woods.

## Stirges

These pests attack PCs anytime they are wandering in the woods or along the roads at night with torches, lanterns, or other bright lights; they are also attracted to campfires. They swoop down out of the darkness with little or no warning (roll for surprise), fasten themselves to the characters or their mounts, and attempt to suck their blood. Each stirge can drain enough blood to cause 12 points of damage, after which the sated creature detaches itself and flies sluggishly away. Their legs end in pincers that grip a target so tightly that only killing the stirge will remove it before it has drunk/drained its fill. Attacks against an attached stirge are a calculated risk: If the attack misses the stirge, the attacking character must roll again—if the result of this second roll is high enough to hit the stirge's victim, then he or she suffers the full force of the attack. Targets pierced by a stirge's beak and being drained of their very life's blood generally writhe in agony, so attackers trying to bash the attached stirge gain no bonuses to hit (the target, although frozen in place, is hardly "stationary," due to the victim's movement).

**Stirges (2d4):** AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1+1; hp 5 each (average); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (proboscis); SA drain blood (1d4 points per round, starting round after attaches self to victim, detaching when sated—see above); SD keen senses (200' infravision, acute sense of smell), attacks against an attached stirge that miss may hit its victim instead (see above); SW proboscis cannot pierce hides of creatures with natural AC 3 or better (this does not apply to humans wearing platemail, as the stirge will attack through the slits and joints in the armor); SZ S (1' long body, 2' wingspan); ML average (8); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 175 each.

Stirges are minor pests to experienced adventurers, but they can pose a nasty threat to first-level characters; therefore the Dungeon Master is advised to make the first stirge encounter be with only one or two of the creatures. Once the PCs have some idea how to fight them, subsequent encounters can be with larger flocks. Since the area is infested with the creatures, stirge encounters can occur repeatedly and in any terrain. Fortunately, stirges are nocturnal, so any daytime encounters merely mean that the PCs pass near a nest of the creatures hanging upside down asleep—unless they are underground, in which case the stirges can be active anytime in the endless night below the hills.

## The Shy Tower

This particular encounter is fixed in location and can only take place if the PCs climb the hill east of the Keep (south of the road, half-surrounded by a bend of the river). A roll indicating this encounter from any other location merely indicates that they have caught a glimpse, perhaps through the trees, of a far-off ruined tower standing on a steep hill beside the road. Curiously enough, the tower cannot always be seen; on some days folk gazing that direction can spot no sign of it from vantage points where it is usually visible—hence the name. It has a slightly sinister reputation at the Keep and among caravans that frequent the road, as a number of people who have climbed up for a clos-

er look have not returned. Of those who did, some claimed they found only an abandoned ruin with no treasure or any other feature of interest. Others claimed to have found only an empty hilltop with no sign of what they declared must have been a mirage. It is well known that the bandits who lurk along the road avoid this particular hill like the plague, and rumor has it that humanoids similarly shun the place.

Player characters who are intrigued by the rumors or who simply spot the tower for themselves and decide to investigate find a simple stone structure, a circular tower with a single entrance that lacks even a door to close. Two small narrow windows, barely more than arrow slits, can be seen up near the top of the tower, but nothing can be glimpsed through them from without. Characters who climb up the rough stone sides to the jagged remnants of the rooftop battlements (a feat requiring a normal climb walls roll) find no trace of a trapdoor or any access to the interior of the tower from above. Those peering through the arrow slits some fifty feet off the ground find them blocked within by something that prevents anyone on the outside catching a glimpse of whatever lies within. Characters who prod the openings to try to dislodge the unseen barrier (some long slender tool like a stiletto will be required) find the tower suddenly tremble under them in a sudden spasm like a very localized earthquake, shaking off anyone clinging to the wall (normal falling damage—1d6 hp per 10 feet—applies).

The hilltop around it is scattered with old bones of humans and animal strewn about. Inside there is a 25% chance of finding a reasonably fresh corpse (three to four days old) of some chance traveler who took shelter here for the night; he or she seems to have been killed by a heavy blow from some blunt object. The body has not been robbed and can have whatever normal (nonmagical) equipment and provisions the Dungeon Master pleases. If there is a body, then there are also the remains of a small campfire on the stone pavement; otherwise the chamber is bare. The only feature of the circular room, which fills the entire tower level, is a stone staircase winding up around the inside of the wall. Characters who climb up to the second level find another circular chamber like the first, with another stair leading up to a locked door blocking what is apparently the third and final level.

Characters who come here are safe so long as they do not wake the tower, which is actually a gigantic specimen of a creature known as a "house hunter," a huge relative of the common mimic. But whereas mimics can shape themselves to imitate a box or chest, house hunters can take the forms of whole buildings. This particular specimen is very old and very strong. It spends much of its time sleeping and will luckily be in this state when the PCs first arrive (the body is the remains of its last victim—the tower prefers meat that has ripened for a few days). Simply walking around inside the tower or scaling its sides will not awaken it, nor will any amount of noise. Inflicting any kind of harm on it, however, is another matter—say, building a fire or breaking down a door. If PCs build a fire, nothing happens for a few minutes, then the floor begins to ripple as if the fire were a pebble thrown into still water; characters on the ground level must make saving throws vs. petrification to keep their footing. As for characters who try to open the door to the topmost level, the apparent lock cannot be picked; in fact, closer examination reveals that the knob and lock mechanism are all one solid piece with no moving parts. Breaking down the door requires a successful bend bars/lift gates roll. Up to two characters can attempt this at a time, with double the normal chance of success if they get a running start. Otherwise, it can be chopped through with an axe (AC 0, 10 hp) but begins to bleed from the first stroke, the entire tower giving a shudder at the same second the axe hits. The room beyond is the same shape as the two below, but here the ceiling, walls, and floor are all made of red flesh dripping with saliva. This saliva is mildly acidic (1d4 hp per round of contact; human skin begins to smoke immediately as the outer layers of epidermis begin to dissolve) and is the means whereby the tower consumes its meals.

Once the tower is awake and angry, it attacks by having sections of the walls or ceiling suddenly slam into the intruders at the end of huge pseudopods. Fortunately it can only make 1 attack on each level in a round, giving the no doubt startled characters time to flee. Unfortunately, the stairs will writhe wildly, making it impossible for anyone to retain his or her footing without falling. Those who slide down the steps take only 1d4 points from the buffering, but a large mouth with great stone teeth forms at the bottom of each staircase, gaping open to receive them. If anyone falls into a mouth, then the tower bites on that round rather than strike with a pseudopod (4d6 damage for either). Meanwhile, on the ground level the doorway to the tower begins to chomp up and down like a great mouth. There is no other exit (what seemed to be "arrow slits" from outside are in fact the creature's eyes), so unless they can kill the creature (not impossible but definitely unlikely) they must somehow get through these great stony jaws. The door can snap shut once per round, and there is room for but a single character to try to dash through each round. If the tower's attack misses, this means the jaws close too slowly and that character is now safely outside. If the attack hits, then that character suffers full damage from the blow and falls in the doorway, where the tower can automatically attack that target again next round unless comrades pull her to safety. Characters who mindlessly dash for safety are likely to suffer major losses here; those who come up with some plan should gain the benefit of their cleverness. The Dungeon Master should judge the likelihood of any particular plan working. On the whole, schemes which hinge on tricking the door into closing at the wrong time will fare better than those which attempt to wedge the jaws open (as stated before, the tower is *very* strong, snapping staffs and halberds like so many rotten toothpicks).

Once all the surviving PCs are safely outside, they may try to stand around and shoot the thing full of arrows. This will probably do it little harm, as the weather is hardly suitable for archery (give them all at least -4 penalties for trying to shoot in the rain) and they are likely to run out of arrows before killing or seriously injuring the creature. Give them a final scare by having the tower give a lunge and begin to move in their direction, spouting pseudopodia as it comes. This should send them scampering pell-mell for safety; it does not pursue them down the hill. This encounter occurs only once—that is, PCs can glimpse the tower any number of times, but once they have climbed the hill and actually encountered it, whether they inadvertently awaken it or not, they will not be able to revisit it. They may glimpse it again from a distance, but a second climb up the hill reveals only bleak bare stony ground (littered with the fresh bones of any companions who died inside the tower). The wary and long-lived being has decided to lay low for a year or so, after which it will resume its depredations. Should they manage to slay the thing, it collapses into a huge shapeless mass of protoplasm; give them your hearty congratulations for a job well-done.

**The Shy Tower (house-hunter):** AC 0 (stony exterior) or 6 (untransformed surfaces); MV 1; HD 30; hp 200; THAC0 1; #AT 3



(1 per floor); Dmg 4d6 (pseudopod or mouth); SA acidic saliva (contact with untransformed surfaces causes 1d4 points of damage per round); SW relatively immobile; SZ G (60' high, 30' diameter); ML steady (12); Str 24, Int very (12); AL N; XP 20,000. As a final note, this encounter works best in foul weather; the Dungeon Master should arrange for it to be a gray overcast day when the characters climb the hill, turning to rain as they reach the top. The poor visibility not only makes it easier for the tower to maintain its disguise but also encourages PCs to venture inside. Give the characters lots of scares with this one, but avoid slaughtering the lot of them—the idea is to hit them with something totally unexpected to scare the willies out of them.

## Will o'Wisp

This encounter only takes place at night, and only if the PCs are foolish enough to try camping in or passing through the swamp in the hours of darkness. At first it seems no more than a faint glow off in the distance that flickers and slowly fades from view. Then a similar glow, but of a different color, appears in a different direction, burning for a while then going out in a sudden flash. Finally a third glow appears directly ahead of the party, shimmering like distant candlelight. It slowly approaches at a walking pace, revealing itself at length to be a flickering light like that from an invisible lantern, bobbing towards them as if carried by an invisible wanderer. It stops some distance off and begins to move about as if its unseen bearer were trying to signal the characters. Characters who step up to the spot where it hovers stumble into a bog and begin sinking at the rate of 1 foot per round, whereupon the light suddenly surges forward and attacks.

This is a very dangerous encounter, as the will o'wisp takes great pains to lure the PCs into a position where they must divide their attention between trying to rescue characters sinking in the mire and fighting off their attacker. However, the heroes do have one thing in their favor: The will o'wisp can be kept at bay by *protection from evil* (this is one of the times it really pays to have a paladin in the party). If the characters lack sufficient firepower (in the form of *magic missiles*) or any priest with access to *protection from evil*, the Dungeon Master is advised to describe the will o'wisp's approach in terms so unmistakably sinister that any sensible party would flee for all they're worth. In addition, any cleric in the party will automatically find that his or her deity has provided the character with *protection from evil* in place of one of the spells he or she requested.

The will o'wisp has amassed an enviable treasure, but it will be very difficult for the PCs to find it; if the will o'wisp is seriously injured and in danger of being destroyed, it douses its light and flees, surrendering if it cannot. Speaking in an eerie hollow voice, it offers its treasure as ransom for its continued existence. The treasure is hidden at the bottom of an eight-foot-deep bog and consists of the following: 312 cp, 140 sp, 389 ep, 603 gp, 51 pp, and seven pieces of jewelry (a ring, a necklace, a pair of bracelets, a tiara, a jeweled belt, and a small stone idol) worth 200 gp, 30 gp, 150 gp (×2), 2,000 gp, 400 gp, and 3,600 gp, respectively. The jade idol is very old and much worn, seeming to represent a seated human or humanoid figure. It radiates faint magic if this is checked for and has the same properties as a *luckstone* (grants its owner a +1 or +5% bonus to all saving throws and checks). Naturally, recovery of all this treasure will be a difficult and lengthy procedure.

The will o'wisp can be encountered repeatedly, but it changes its tactics each time it encounters the group, making it difficult to recognize and avoid until it is too late. Note that it can change the color of its light at will or even blank it out entirely for 2d4 rounds, enabling it to dart about and attack from an new direction. Normal weapons do full damage to the will o'wisp, assuming they can hit it (it is extremely agile and maneuverable, able to change course in a second; hence its exceptional Armor Class).

**Will o'wisp:** AC -8; MV fly 18 (A); HD 9; hp 42; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8 (static electricity); SD immune to all magic

except *protection from evil*, *magic missiles*, and *maze*; SW kept at bay by *protection from evil*; SZ S (2' wide); ML fanatic (17); Int exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 3,000.

## Wolf Spiders

Unlike the web-spinners of the Spiderwood, these hairy hunting spiders roam about the forest north of the road, singly or in packs. They hunt largely by scent, following the trail of likely prey for long distances, then chasing it down with a short burst of speed when they come into sight. Always hungry, wolf spiders attack anything their own size or smaller. They are not particularly vicious, and quick-thinking characters can avoid combat by throwing them food (basically any meat, the fresher the better). In such cases, the spiders will fall upon the bribe and happily devour it, ignoring the characters. The spiders are just smart enough to come to associate the characters with an easy meal thereafter, following them around and insisting on further treats. It is even possible to tame them, although this is unlikely to occur to most PCs. If threatened or attacked, the spiders respond aggressively, and they always chase anything that flees (flight activates their predator/prey instincts). The Dungeon Master should basically treat these spiders as behaving more like bears or wolves than the average arachnid; PCs able to communicate with them (via *speak with animal*) or the like find they have simple, direct minds and all the instincts of a large, confident predator.

**Wolf Spider (1 or 1d4):** AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bite); SZ M (6'); ML champion (15); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 35 each.

The Briarwood is full of these creatures, so this encounter can occur over and over. However, the spiders are diurnal, so they will only be active in the daytime, settling into shallow natural depressions or half-burrows at night.

## Zombies

This encounter only takes place at the point indicated on the area map (Map Three). Here the forest comes near the road, just as the latter bends north to pass near the Caves of Chaos. To the west of the road are a number of shallow graves; these require detect secret door rolls to discover. In each of a dozen graves rests a zombie—some dressed like caravan guards, others like farmers or townspeople, a few in soiled and rotting adventuring gear. These zombies ignore travelers who pass by on the road but attack anyone who disturbs their rest. PCs who discover the graves and dig their way down to its inhabitant find it comes to life as soon as the body is touched, with the others beginning to dig their way up at the same moment (reaching the surface on the third round following). Zombies who are turned either sink back into their graves or wheel and stagger back into the trees.

Once the zombies have been dealt with, the sharp-eyed may spot a faint trail leading from the roadside graves back through the trees. Following this path requires three successful tracking rolls to keep from getting lost in the woods. The lucky or persistent find the trail eventually brings the characters out into a large field where only brambles grow out of the rocky soil, with a plain path winding a way toward what looks like a barrow or possibly just a low cliff face some three hundred yards away. Movement through the thorny undergrowth is impossible for any non-Druid, and even characters on the path must move at half their normal rate to avoid the briars that line either side. Numerous bits of zombie flesh and torn scraps of their clothing can be seen caught on these thorns, indicating that the undead do not slow down or take any precautions when going this way.

The path ends in a small patch clear of thorns (about thirty feet wide) before a stone door in a stone lintel set in the side of a low rise—either a natural cliff-face or the exposed mouth of an ancient burial mound. Characters who are trailing zombies can, on a successful tracking roll, tell that their quarry passed through the now-closed portal. The door is difficult to open from the outside (successful bend bars/lift gates roll required), but characters

who make a lot of noise trying or simply knock see the door slowly swing open. Inside is revealed an antechamber some twenty feet wide and thirty feet deep, with tunnels in both the far left and far right corners running off into the darkness. In the antechamber, blocking entry, stand two dozen skeletons, who wait patiently for the characters to show them the proper token (a holy symbol from the Hidden Temple, such as Mendel the trader carries). They will obey the commands of anyone displaying such a token. These skeletons are here to guard this secret back entrance to the Hidden Temple and also to collect sacrifices turned over by Mendel and carried up the hill by the zombies. If the PCs do not possess the proper icon, the skeletons close the door once more. Trespassers without the icon who attempt to enter are attacked, with any skeletons that are turned retreating down the passageway to the right a hundred yards or so before turning and blocking the passageway once more.

Aside from several barrels (empty, with false lids about 1' down) stacked to one side, the antechamber holds nothing of interest. Both exits from this room lead to tunnels (ten feet tall, eight feet wide) cut through the rock; dwarves checking the stonework will be very impressed with the skill of the excavators. The left-hand passage has an arrow and the word "QUASQUETON" engraved at eye level only a few feet in; this way once led to the secret fortress of Quasqueton, but the tunnel has completely collapsed; characters can only go this way thirty feet or so before having to turn back. In just that space, however, they discover unmistakable signs that the patient undead are working to clear the passage—a task that will probably take them several years to complete.

The opposite tunnel, to the east, leads all the way to the Hidden Temple in the Caves of Chaos and forms a secret back door whereby its evil priests can come and go or get supplies without the other denizens of the Caves being any the wiser. Party members who explore this passage to its end travel some seven hundred yards, eventually coming out in room 1 of Cavern K.

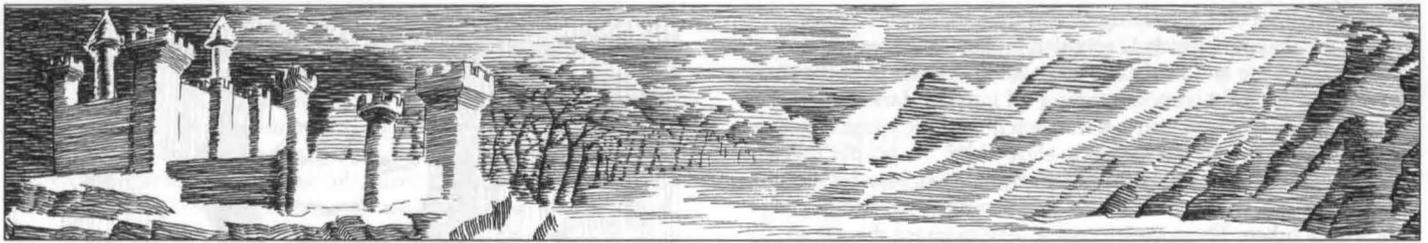
**Zombies (12):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 8 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (fist); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, death magics (already dead), poison, and cold-based spells; SW always lose initiative, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

**Skeletons (24):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (rusty shortsword); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear*, poison, death magic, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons; SW blunt weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

If the Dungeon Master wishes to tip Mendel's hand, the PCs could witness the following scene as they emerge from the woods or come around a corner in the road, warning them that all is not right with the merchant.

Off in the distance, you see a cart laden with barrels drawn up beside the road. While two women stand petting the draft donkeys and two guards wait patiently, leaning on the cart, a huge man in robes walks about thirty feet off the road, where he stops and fumbles in his robes for a moment before pulling out some kind of medallion. It's too far away to make out the details, but he holds the thing aloft and seems to be chanting. The next minute, you can see grayish hands clawing their way up out of the earth. Soon a dozen or so rotting human corpses stand swaying on their feet beside him. Still holding up the medallion, he gestures toward the wagon and the things shamble over to it and begin unloading the three or four barrels he indicated. They hoist these on their shoulders and disappear into the woods carrying them. The guards come over to the spot where the creatures were buried and busy themselves, apparently covering all traces of the disturbed earth, while the ladies help the large man climb back into the cart. The ladies join him and he gets the donkeys in motion, the guards walking on either side as the little group resumes its journey.





# The Caves of Chaos

Following a winding path through the dark forest that presses close on either side brings you at last through the thick belt of trees and to the entrance of what's either a large ravine or a small canyon, depending on your point of view. You'd estimate it's well over four hundred feet long and over a hundred feet wide. The narrow stream that paralleled the path trickles down the center of the ravine, forming great muddy puddles in several places, its source hidden in the trees that cluster at the far end of the ravine. Several other clumps of trees could hide almost anything up to and possibly including a giant. The walls of the ravine slope up steeply on either side—you have no doubt you can climb them, but you'd need both hands. Several cave mouths are visible on the slopes, crude paths leading up to them; more may be hidden by the trees. As a chill wind blows into your face, you feel sure that you have in fact found the famous Caves of Chaos, where many an adventurer has sought fame and left only his or her bones behind.

There are in fact twelve separate cave openings, not all of which are visible from the floor of the canyon. The lower-level caves are the least dangerous and the ones higher up the most perilous; should first-level PCs take it into their heads to work from the top down, let them get mauled in the very first encounter in the upper caves and then have a chance to retreat. This should send the message that they should reserve those caves for later, when they have gained more experience, concentrating on more modest challenges for the present. In addition, the Dungeon Master might gently prod them by mentioning the obvious tracks leading up from the stream into Caves B and D (shoeprints of bandits and naked feet of goblins, respectively). The sharpest-eyed among them should have a chance to spot the kobold sentry lurking in the small bush beside Cave A as he darts into the entrance to report the presence of intruders. Finally, bold adventurers might be attracted by the features that surround some of the cave mouths—heads in niches (Cave B), piles of bones (Cave E) and the like.

## Cave A: Kobolds

All areas inside this cave complex are unlit. Kobolds can see in the dark; PCs will either need infravision or must ignite a light source if they wish to avoid stumbling around in the dark. Kobolds are small and weak, unable to best humans in fair combat. Therefore they never play fair, relying instead on traps to injure or kill their foes. When forced into combat, the kobolds run away unless they have an overwhelming numerical superiority (at least three-to-one). This lair is filled with traps of all sorts, some lethal and others designed to discourage intruders and make them give up in disgrace and go away, leaving the kobolds in peace. In case of truly persistent intruders, the kobolds have a number of bolt-holes to duck into, too small for any character larger than a halfling or gnome to crawl through.

Once the PCs have made a foray into the kobold lair and departed, the kobolds begin to trail them. These humanoid creatures have learned through long experience that where adventurers go, mayhem is sure to follow. Therefore they shadow the characters, picking up stray bits of loot (look! copper pieces!) and food

(yum! fresh goblin!) in their wake. The kobolds may even sneak up on sleeping characters and attempt to make off with some particularly tempting bit of treasure. These lurkers avoid contact with the adventurers, running away if discovered and then circling back to pick up the trail again later. In short, they are pests—dangerous when tangled with on ground of their own choosing and merely annoying elsewhere.

### A1. Entrance

This cave mouth is five and a half feet high and three feet wide—room for just one person at a time to pass (tall characters will need to duck!). Inside you see only darkness. However, the passage quickly doubles in height and breadth, allowing you to stand up and march two abreast if you want. Only some twenty feet from the entrance, the passage comes to a "T." The way ahead is blocked, but new passages head off to the right and left. Diagonally to your right you can see what looks like a small alcove that seems to serve as a guard station. A small humanoid creature with scaly skin and a pronounced muzzle is seated there in a crude chair, a spear gripped tightly in one hand, staring balefully in your direction.

This kobold guard is actually nothing more than a corpse carefully lacquered to prevent decay. Any blow causes it to pitch forward and lie still. Touching the body is a bad idea, though, as it is infested with rot grubs that leaps out and burrow into the exposed flesh of anyone searching the body. The rot grubs remain quiescent unless the body is poked or prodded by someone standing within a few feet of it. The preserved corpse has been placed here to lure invaders into stepping onto the pit trap at the intersection of the three corridors. The kobolds are light enough to step on the trap's thin lid (papier-mâché on a wicker framework, painted on the top to look like stone) without falling through; thus tracking rolls will reveal muddy footprints leading in and out of the area without giving away the trap. Anyone weighing 100 pounds or more (or two lighter characters whose total is 100 pounds or more) who steps on the 10' x 10' square area of the intersection falls out of view, taking 1d6 points of damage. The pit is ten feet deep, meaning that anyone without the climb wall skill will need help or be unable to get out. A number of dry well-picked bones crunch underfoot, as the kobolds dump their refuse in this pit. The bones—a mixture of animal, human, and humanoid—are useless as weapons, having been split open for marrow and now being very brittle; the loud crunching noise they make alert the kobolds in room A3 that they have uninvited guests.

**Rot Grubs (2d8+4):** AC 9; MV 1, leap 3, burrow 9; hp 1 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA burrow to heart in 1d3 turns, killing host; SW fire (immediate application of a torch to infested skin kills 2d10 rot grubs but inflicts 1d6 points of damage to the host), *cure disease* (instantly slays all rot grubs in host); SZ T (average 1" long); ML unsteady (5); Int non (0); AL N; XP 15 each.

### A2. Spiderweb Trap

It's difficult to tell how large this room might be, as it's covered from wall to wall and floor to ceiling with spider webs. Some of the great dark strands are as big around as your arm. The webbing is so thick that you can't see anything that might be lurking in the area.

This is another trap; there is no danger here other than whatever rash intruders bring upon themselves. The kobolds placed these webs here, then soaked them in oil so that anyone setting them alight would fill the tunnel with thick black smoke. The smoke makes the air difficult to breathe: Choking characters who fail saving throws vs. breath weapons pass out in 1 to 5 rounds (1 round per 3.5 points of Constitution). PCs who make their saves can drag stricken comrades to the entrance, provided they can keep their sense of direction. Characters belonging to underground races (dwarves, halflings, gnomes) or those with direction sense or blind-fighting can automatically find their way back to the exit; all others must attempt Wisdom checks to keep from getting turned around (and possibly stumbling into the smoldering webs, the pit trap, or the rot-grub riddled corpse).

There is no treasure nor any monsters in this chamber.

### A3. Kobold Common

The kobolds spend most of their time here—eating, sleeping, quarreling, gambling, chewing sticks to make more papier-mâché, and planning new traps. The passageway to this room from the entrance contains a “secret door” that is simply papier-mâché pasted over the side-tunnel. The covering is the same gray as the rock walls but very thin, and anyone touching the wall at that point can immediately tell that this ten-foot section is not stone; anyone leaning on it falls right through. The passage beyond leads deeper into the kobold lair (to rooms A4–A6). The main passageway from room A1 to A3 slopes up at a noticeable grade, beginning at the curve just past the sentry alcove.

With typical malice, the kobolds have prepared a suitable reception for intruders. As soon as they hear anyone approaching room A3, they give the huge papier-mâché boulder just inside the entrance to the chamber a great shove and send it rolling down the corridor toward the entrance. The lightweight

boulder starts with a Movement Rate identical to that of the kobolds (MV 6) but picks up speed as it goes. After ten feet it travels at MV 7, after twenty feet at MV 8, and so forth, reaching its maximum speed (MV 18) just before it reaches the pit. Characters who run back down the hall at top speed can escape, but they have no time to hesitate or stop along the way. Likewise, characters who jump through the side-passage are missed by the boulder but are likely to run afoul of the wire stretched across the corridor a few inches off the ground. Those who simply stumble into the wire at a walking pace suffer a single point of damage. Any who hit it while running take 1d4 damage and must make a successful saving throw vs. petrification/polymorph or be lamed (movement rate cut in half) until he or she receives some form of magical healing (for example, *cure light wounds*; the healing proficiency cannot negate this crippling). Characters struck by the boulder will be knocked down but unharmed: it simply rolls right over them, unless it fails an item saving throw vs. crushing blow at a +4 bonus. If the item fails its save or rolls all the way into the pit (perhaps landing on some hapless PC still trapped down there), it breaks open and a swarm of angry hornets spill out. The hornets attack anyone within sight for a single point of damage per round until dispersed by smoke or until a character so afflicted has immersed himself or herself in the stream outside (even characters in full plate armor are vulnerable to these stings, as the hornets will fly in holes in the visor).

Inside room A3 itself, further traps await. Roughly half of the forty or so kobolds who make up this community will be in this chamber when the heroes first arrive (the rest are either in rooms A5 and A6 or skulking about elsewhere in the complex). Most of those present scurry through the bolt-holes leading to room A5 or outside to the thicket of trees as soon as they hear intruders return after the boulder has been dealt with. Read the following description aloud to the players of characters who peer into the room:



This chamber seems to serve as a combined living and sleeping area for the creatures who live here. You see a number of mangy pelts that apparently serve as sleeping pallets. Scattered bones litter the floor, and in one corner are a pile of chewed sticks and what looks like a heap of grayish wood pulp. Your attention is drawn, however, by the half-dozen or so figures that cringe against the back wall, sucking their thumbs and shielding their eyes from the glare of your torchlight, whining piteously all the while. They look just like the creature you found in the chair near the entrance, except that these are obviously alive and apparently very frightened.

By now, it should come as no surprise that yet another trap awaits adventurers who venture into this room. The kobolds who are pretending to be infants are decoys whose role is to prevent the characters from looking up. Just over the entrance, hidden from view to anyone still in the tunnel, is an overhanging ledge cut back into the west wall. Three more kobolds lurk up here, ready to dump vats of sticky syrup on anyone who passes below. When one of the kobold decoys gives the signal (a "cry of fright"), they tilt the vats on the unfortunates below. The kobolds have a THAC0 of 20, but unless the characters are actively looking up for signs of danger the kobolds gain a +4 bonus for attacking with surprise. Furthermore, the attack treats all targets as if they were AC 10; only Dexterity bonuses apply, and only if the character becomes aware of the attack and can attempt to dodge before it is too late. The thick golden syrup is harmless, but it is extremely sticky, making it impossible for spellcasters to manipulate components (they just get stuck to the mage's hands), for fighters to draw weapons (they get stuck in the scabbards) or fire a bow (the arrow gets stuck to the string), etc. Furthermore, all characters drenched by the kobolds have their movement reduced by half (their shoes stick to the floor a bit with each step). The syrup can be washed off, but this requires a lot of water (the equivalent of ten waterskins' worth, or a few rounds' submersion in the little stream).

Fortunately, the kobolds can only affect characters standing immediately beneath them, so no more than two or three characters are likely to be afflicted. As soon as the trap has been sprung, the kobolds at the rear of the cave snatch up the spears they have hidden on the floor behind them and throw them at any characters in sight who were not drenched by the syrup. The next round they appear to charge, throwing a second volley of javelins as they come, but swerve and dart toward one of the two culvert-like escape tunnels (whichever is nearest to the kobolds and furthest from the angry PCs). These are covered by thin sheets of paper pasted in place that look exactly like the surrounding wall: To the astonished PCs it will look at first as if the kobolds burst right through the stone. Each tunnel is less than a foot in diameter, making these passages too small for anyone larger than a kobold or halfling to squeeze through. The one on the right is level with the floor; that in the left wall about a foot



or so off the floor. Unless prevented, the kobolds make good their escape the following round, snickering nastily as they scamper out of sight.

Characters who climb up to the ledge find the escape route used by the kobold bombardiers: a narrow chimney over a shallow stone firepit. Several baskets beside the firepit hold fine sand, powdered dyes, and the like. Several hollow reeds are propped against the back wall, and a few bits of melted glass of various colors can be found in the firepit. This is where the kobolds make their fake gems (see room A4), some of which they have traded to the unsuspecting goblins in Cave D. There is no treasure in the room, although if characters slay any of the kobolds and search the bodies they find 3d8 cp per kobold.

**Kobolds (20):** AC 7; MV 6; HD 1/2; hp 1d4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (shortsword, javelin, spear), 1d4+1 (spiked wooden club) or 1d4 (dagger); SA traps; SD cowards, cunning; SW -1 attack penalty in bright light; SZ S (average 3' tall); ML average (8); Int average (10); AL LE; XP 15 each.

#### A4. Priceless Hoard?

The door opens to reveal that the room beyond is filled with treasure! An enormous pile of what must be thousands and thousands of coins lies heaped in the center of the room. Gemstones, some of them as big as a walnut, lay scattered on the floor like marbles. In the midst of all this wealth, a large egg rests in a hollow scooped out of the coins like a giant nest. There is no sign of any movement in the room.

Unlike all the other rooms in the kobold caves, there is no trap here. Closer examination reveals that the egg is about a foot long, with a tough leathery shell that is warm to the touch. A successful appraising roll reveals that the gems are simply colored glass, pretty but worthless, while the same roll allows the character to estimate the number of coins (about 6,000 gp). Allow any character who made a successful appraising check an Intelligence check: success on this second roll means that he or she realizes that the "gold coins" are suspiciously light. They are, in fact, copper pieces which have been painted gold by the devious kobolds, partly as barter or ransom goods (should such be needed), partly to provide a ready-made "hoard" for the hatchling.

The egg is another matter: This is extremely valuable, and could be a useful bargaining tool. It is the egg of a copper dragon that the kobolds recently found in one of the chambers of the Hidden Temple and made off with. The evil priests had intended to use it as the featured sacrifice in an evil ritual on an upcoming major religious holiday of their dark faith that will fall about three weeks from the time the PCs first enter the Caves of Chaos. They are frantically searching for it but as yet have no clue that the kobolds are the culprits, believing instead that their enemies the gnolls or bugbears must be responsible. To make matters more interesting, the baby dragon's parents (both young adults) arrive about the time of the planned sacrifice, having finally traced their missing egg to this general area. They will go to any lengths to recover their unborn child, including threatening the Keep with destruction unless the egg is returned, safe and sound. Should this happen, characters who destroyed the egg or parboiled it over a slow fire might well want to relocate to another region.

On the other hand, characters who have heard of the vast amount that mages and others are sometimes willing to pay for a dragon's egg may take pains to keep the egg intact. The egg hatches in three weeks' time, and the infant copper dragon then imprints upon whichever character takes care of it. Note that copper dragons can eat almost anything, including rocks and poisonous creatures such as scorpions. The infant will be mischievous and willful, and with its innate *spider climbing* ability it may prove quite a handful. However, it will also be devoted to its "parent," following him or her everywhere and wailing miserably if separated even for a moment.

Should the characters simply leave the egg undisturbed where it is, the hatchling bonds with the kobolds, whose

teachings and sneaky ways greatly exaggerate its sense of mischief. It's quite possible in this sequence of events that in years to come the kobolds and their dragon-child ally may come to dominate the entire Caves of Chaos complex—a daunting thought.

#### A5. Court of the Kobold King

You see that this room forms a vivid contrast to the bare stone walls you have seen so far in this cave. From floor to ceiling, the walls have been covered with cave paintings in vivid colors, mainly reds, oranges, and blacks. The drawings depict a number of small creatures clearly meant to represent the little monsters you've already encountered. They seem to be bowing and paying homage to a creature that looks just like them but is ten times their height. The large creature's name, KURTULMAK, is chiseled beneath his picture in crude runes. The drawing shows him seated on a great throne, holding a tiny figure clearly meant to be a human aloft in one great paw preparing to swallow the unfortunate in one single bite while trampling another beneath his great feet. As near as you can make out from the arrows and diagrams, the drawings indicate that this room is a kind of antechamber to the room where the large creature lives. A short corridor at the back of the room leads to a stone lintel holding huge double doors that fill the entire space between floor and ceiling, ten feet high and just as wide.

This room is another example of kobold humor. This particular kobold community has no king, having lost theirs in the incursions by adventurers twenty years ago. They found, though, that they could get along quite easily without one. Both males and females (most mammals find it impossible to distinguish between the two kobold genders) work, together or apart, toward common goals: food, shelter, loot, and tormenting any non-kobolds they can find. One kobold hit upon the idea of trying to frighten away adventurers who had made it this far past all the traps by making them think the Great Kobold God waits in the next room. In fact, Kurtulmak admires cleverness put to vicious use and has a 1% chance of coming to the aid of his followers should the adventurers enter room A6. Should he appear, all the PCs who see him must save vs. spell or be filled with holy terror, fleeing at top speed for 1d3 turns. Furthermore, any time a character who failed this save encounters a kobold in the future, he or she must save vs. spell or this terror reoccurs. Characters unaffected by the holy terror hear the huge figure chuckle before it fades from view.

There is no treasure in this room. Some collectors might pay handsomely for such vivid examples of kobold folk-art but the pictures cannot be removed from the walls without destroying them. The secret tunnel to room A3 is disguised by a papier-mâché cover and may be found by a normal detect secret doors roll (or by pure blind luck, as it feels different from the surrounding wall).

#### A6. Kobold Lair

All the kobolds who escaped the adventurers in room A3 via the bolt-hole to the left are now in this room, together with another 1d10 kobolds who had been busily preparing more gold paint from ground-up minerals. They listen carefully for any sounds from the next room. If they hear the PCs retreating, they give a great yell and set out in hot pursuit, waving spiked clubs and throwing spears as they come. If they hear the characters approach the door, read the following boxed text:

The double doors swing open easily. Behind is a room that seems full of the little creatures—dozens at least!—standing shoulder to shoulder in neat ranks. The light glints off their beady little eyes. Suddenly they give a great bloodcurdling yell and raise their spears and javelins in unison, getting ready to throw the deadly missiles at you!

The smart thing to do, of course, is to slam shut the door, putting it between the adventurers and all those soon-to-be-flying

spears and javelins about to turn the characters into so many pincushions. If the characters do so, a dead silence falls. When they open the door again, the room beyond is empty—not a single kobold to be seen. A careful search turns up only the mortar and pestles filled with fine goldish grains, a small pile of various glittering small rocks (worthless minerals used by the kobolds to create their "gold paint"), and a thin rope about sixty feet long tied with knots every five feet. If killed or captured, each kobold carries 3d8 copper pieces; 30 more copper pieces are soaking in a stone bowl filled with the gold paint. A successful roll for detecting secret doors locates the well-made stone door in the left wall that leads to the labyrinth but not the secret of how to open it (the kobolds have wedged it from the other side): only a *knock* spell can force it open. See Cave I for more information.

### Cave B: Bandit Lair

This complex once housed one of the two orc tribes to live in the canyon. Recently the priests of the Hidden Temple, in their quest to bring the entire valley under their control, attacked with their undead minions. The defeated orcs retreated to Cave C, where they joined forces with the other tribe, but to no avail; in the next attack, the evil clerics, bandits, and undead worked in unison, slaughtering the orcs to the last infant. The dead orcs now lay piled where they fell in the chambers of Cave C (see below), where they are "ripening" for later animation as undead skeletons. Meanwhile, the abandoned complex of Cave B has been turned over to the bandits as their new hideout, from which they launch raids on travelers throughout the surrounding countryside, turning any prisoners over to the priests for interrogation and sacrifice.

#### B1. Entrance

The cave opening here is surrounded by niches cut into the rock, each of which holds a severed head. Some are human, some dwarf, some elf, and some humanoid. Of the humanoid heads, one is a small scaly creature with small horns and a pronounced muzzle, while two others with low brows and thick black hair clearly belong to a different race and could almost be mistaken for extremely ugly humans were it not for the dirty gray color of the skin. Only one of the niches, just to the right of the door, is empty. Someone has scrawled some writing over it in rain-washed chalk. There is no sight or sound of life from within.

The niches contain grisly trophies set there by the now-departed orcs; the bandits find it a useful deterrent to keep out the merely curious. One of the humanoid heads is that of a kobold, the other two are goblin. The writing over the empty niche can be read on any successful reading/writing proficiency roll or with a thief or bard's read languages skill. The one-word message is in Common, and reads simply "Reserved" (if no literate character succeeds on the role, assume the chalk is too blurred for the letters to be made out).

This niche is supposed to be filled by the head of one of the lookouts in room B2, disguised as just another trophy—a hole has been cut in the back through which someone standing in the guardpost beside the entrance can see strangers approaching and raise the alarm. A flap of heavy gray cloth hanging at the back of the niche prevents any light from escaping from the room beyond and hides the rest of the lookout's body, making his or her head look as if it had been cut off at the neck. Fortunately for the PCs, the three bandits currently on guard when they first approach this cave are too lazy & slack to keep a proper watch, especially in bad weather (after all, if they were responsible and dependable they wouldn't be highwaymen). Player characters who discover the flap and gently move it aside will catch a glimpse of the three men playing cards by candlelight in the room beyond. The bandit facing the niche has a 15% chance of noticing the movement and raising the alarm; characters who

make a great deal of noise or flail around with a sword through the opening automatically alert the lookouts. Otherwise, cautious characters will get the drop on these inattentive lookouts.

Should the PCs explore this cave once and return later on a second visit, they find a red-haired woman's head occupying this niche, her face blankly staring and her mouth open in the rain. The Dungeon Master can either have this be the detached head of someone carried off by the bandits (in which case if prodded it rolls out and lands at the PCs' feet) or the living head of one of the more reliable surviving bandits, placed on watch in case the adventurers returned. In the latter case, the lookout alerts her companions at once with hand signals and they move into ambush positions beside the entrances to the cave and room B2; as soon as the PCs enter the cave she withdraws her head and joins them.

### B2. Guard Post

This small, bare room contains little beyond a wooden table, three chairs, and three bandits. The bandits are not allowed to drink on duty, making this an unpopular assignment generally given to those who have made mistakes on the last ambush or otherwise displeased the bandit chiefs. At present all three bandits are ignoring the entrance, engrossed instead in a card game. They recently stole these cards from a passing merchant and are arguing bitterly about the rules. As soon as anyone enters the room, however, they abandon their argument and their game, draw their short swords, and attack. So long as the fight does not cause excessive noise, the bandits elsewhere in these caves ignore the ruckus, but if it lasts more than five rounds, then a bandit arrives on the sixth round to tell them to shut up. If she sees a combat, the newcomer bolts back the way she came and tries to raise a general alarm. If the PCs have invaded this complex before within the last three days, then a half-dozen bandits take up positions in the entrance to room B4 and fire shortbows down the corridor to try to hold off any attackers.

Assuming the three inattentive guards are dealt with quickly and quietly, characters may explore the guardroom. There is nothing of interest here other than the cards the bandits are playing with: These are sorted into three decks of roughly fifty cards each. No two cards are alike, and all are illustrated with vivid hand-painted pictures of various people, creatures, and scenes. The cards are worth up to 500 gp to the right collector, so long as the characters keep them from getting crumpled or damp. They have no special powers at all, although they do radiate magic if this is checked for (the small wooden storage case currently serving as a base for the candle is enchanted to cast *Nystul's magical aura* on the cards once per day if they are stored in it for twelve uninterrupted hours). The bandits each carry 1d8 sp and 1d6 gp.

**Bandits (three 1st-level Thieves):** AC 6 (leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 5, 7, 6; THAC0 20 (19 with thrown dagger and Dex bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (shortsword) or 1d4 (dagger); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills (hide in shadows 35%, move silently 40%, detect noise 15%); SZ M; ML average (10); Dex 16, Int average (8, 10, 9); AL N, CN; XP 35 each.



Unknown to the bandits, there is a secret trap door in the floor of this room leading down into the labyrinth. The secret door is difficult to discover because of the mud and debris and impossible to open from above without a *knock* spell as there is neither pull-ring nor room to insert a knife blade and get leverage. It can, however, easily be opened from below by any character tall enough (7' or more) and strong enough (minimum Str score of 17). It also opens on its own if characters lay a labys (two-headed axe) on its stone surface.

### B3. Storage Room

The corridor seems to end in a small, crowded room full of crates, boxes, and barrels. Bolts of cloth are piled up in one corner, and a great deal of merchants' goods seem to have been just dumped wherever was handy. Two or three beautiful rugs, now sadly stained with mud or wine and burned in a few spots by overturned candles, have been dragged onto the floor and spread out to form a haphazard carpeting to the chamber. Aside from yourselves, the room seems empty of any living inhabitants.

This storage room is used for whatever goods the bandits decide to carry off from merchants they rob who lacked enough cash to be worth their while. Some they use themselves or pass along to the priests of the Hidden Temple, some they resell through Mendel the Slaver. The room is also used for off-duty socialization, being a popular spot for trysting bandits desiring a bit of privacy. There is a 20% chance that a couple is here when the PCs first enter the complex; if so, the two bandits hide if they hear footsteps approaching. They remain absolutely still behind the barrels and boxes (85% chance of remaining undetected) so long as PCs are in the room, then slip out and follow them after they leave. Alternatively, if a grand melee breaks out between intruders at B1 and the main group of bandits at B4, then these two try to backstab any PCs who attempt to slip around the archers and enter B4 via the northeast passage. They have the same stats as the lookouts in B2, except that each is currently armed only with a dagger.

Most of the goods in this room are not particularly valuable (the amorous bandits each carry 1d8 sp and 1d6 gp), but the three rugs, if properly cleaned and repaired, are worth 200 gp each. Unfortunately, they are bulky and cannot be folded; instead, they must be rolled up. The rolled rugs are twenty feet long and fairly awkward, requiring two carriers (one at each end) of at least average strength (Str score 11 or above). Even in their current condition, somewhat worse for wear, they would fetch 100 gp each from a traveling merchant with an eye for a bargain.

### B4. Feasting Area

This large (thirty-foot by fifty-foot) room is where the bandits pass most of their time when not out on raids or sleeping off a night's debauchery. It is also where they divvy up their loot. Characters entering who have managed to avoid raising the alarm see a half-dozen men and women (four men, two women) eating, drinking, arm-wrestling, sharpening weapons, and simply chatting as they sit scattered among the room's three large tables. When they see the strangers, the bandits hail them and wave them toward the tap-keg against the north wall with several wooden mugs hanging on pegs over it, inviting them to "join us in a friendly ale." They do everything they can to put the strangers at their ease and off their guard, seeking with deliberate casualness to find out who the characters are and what they're doing here, possibly trading some more-or-less truthful but generally useless information (perhaps identifying which are the kobold, orc, and hobgoblin caves, for example) in return. When they judge the time is right, all six leap up and try to get the drop on the PCs, shouting out to wake the sleepers in the next room as they do so. Roll for surprise if the PCs are relaxed and unwary; otherwise roll for initiative normally. Rather than

shoot or stab, the thieves hold knives at the throat of any character they caught off-guard or have their target in sight of a point-blank bowshot. Five of these bandits have the same stats as those in room B2 except that they are armed with shortbows in addition to shortswords and throwing daggers; the sixth is a 2nd-level leader.

**Bandits (five 1st-level Thieves):** AC 6 (leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 5 each (average); THAC0 20 (19 with shortbow or thrown dagger and Dex bonus); #AT 1 (shortsword, dagger) or 2 (shortbow, thrown daggers); Dmg 1d6 (shortsword) or 1d6/1d6 (arrows) or 1d4 (dagger); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills (hide in shadows 35%, move silently 40%, detect noise 15%); SZ M; ML average (10); Dex 16, Int average (8–10); AL N, CN; XP 35 each.

**Bandit leader (2nd-level Thief):** AC 4 (studded leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 10; THAC0 20 (18 with shortbow and Dex bonus); #AT 2 (bow) or 1 (shortsword); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (arrows) or 1d6 (shortsword); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills (pick pockets 50%, hide in shadows 40%, move silently 45%); SZ M (5'8"); ML steady (11); Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Chr 13; AL N; XP 65.

Resolve the combat normally, remembering that unless magical *silence* is cast on the room that bandits in room B5 will hear the ruckus and come running, arriving in two rounds and joining the combat the round after that. On the other hand, should the adventurers manage to disable all six bandits in a single round (say by a timely *sleep* spell) then the sleeping bandits in the next room do not wake up. If the fight goes against them (say half or more of the bandits in this room are down), then one of them bolts up the north passage to attempt to warn their leaders and the rest back up and throw up their hands in surrender. Captured bandits plead eloquently for mercy, promising to "clear out" and never return if given "a second chance." Each carries 1d6 sp and 1d8 gp.

### B5. Sleeping Area

This place is clearly a crude dormitory, with over twenty pallets made up of rough blankets thrown over a pile of straw bedding.

This room typically has ten to twelve bandits sleeping in it. Each bandit owns little more than clothes, personal weapons, and a few coins from his or her share of the loot (most of which gets spent on periodic debauches whenever they get to go into town, either at the Keep or on more distant provisioning runs). Since they distrust one another—and rightly so—each carries his or her small stash at all times (a pouch of 1d6 sp and 1d8 gp).

If the PCs have penetrated this far into the bandit lair without raising the alarm, any bandits sleeping here are effectively at their mercy. The Dungeon Master may need to remind Lawful Good characters that murdering people in their sleep, even outlaws, is hardly recommended procedure and may bring divine censure. Ten of these bandits are 1st-level, with any extra being 2nd-level patrol leaders (use stats for previous entry).

### B6. Halfling Highwaymen

The door to this room is locked and trapped with a poison needle. Anyone handling the knob is pricked and must succeed at a saving throw vs. poison or suffer 10 points of damage (2 points per round for a total of five rounds, beginning on the round after the poison is injected). The trap can be detected and disarmed on a successful find & remove traps roll. The lock can be picked normally. Should open locks attempts fail, the door is a sturdy one and requires a successful bend bars/lift gates roll to bash in. It can be chopped through with a hatchet or axe (AC 8), taking twenty points of damage before it splinters and allows entry.

For a minute you blink, unable to believe your eyes. This cozy chamber stands in sharp contrast to all the bare, smoky rooms you've encountered so far in this cave complex. The floor is covered by an attractive carpet of bright, cheerful

colors, primarily yellows and greens. Comfortable furniture, all of it apparently sized for children, fills the place. A banked fire smolders in the tiled fireplace and a rack of fine pipes rests on the low mantelpiece next to a pipeweed box. A nearby bookcase holds several small volumes. Several small beds line the rear of the chamber in neat rows—eight in all.

The evil halfling brigands who live here have redesigned this room to resemble a halfling-hole. The fire is to take off the chill that lingers throughout these caves. The pattern on the carpet hides the caltrops the halflings strew about the place whenever they're absent; when the halflings are here, the caltrops are neatly stored in a box beside the entrance. There are eight pipes, hand-carved from briar, that would fetch up to 20 gp each to the right buyer (typically a merchant at Kendall Keep's market, although the castellan himself would buy one or two). The pipeweed is mildly toxic (the halflings have all built up immunity); anyone smoking any of it must make a saving throw vs. poison or collapse in a choking fit the next round after inhaling any of the stuff. The fit passes after 1d6 rounds, but he or she remains weak from nausea for 1d3 turns, suffering a -2 penalty to all rolls. The books are a mix of folk tales concerning the exploits of famous heroes (the pages dealing with legendary thieves are particularly well thumbed), cookbooks (nearly falling apart from heavy use, with many annotations in the margins), and investment guides.

The halflings are highly successful brigands. They treat each other well, extending the same courtesy to any other halfling they happen to meet, but are completely ruthless toward any of the "big folk" (i.e., everybody else). The rest of the bandits are rather afraid of them, and with good reason: The halflings have slit the throat of more than one human who offended them, waiting until he or she was off-guard and drunk or asleep. Since the halflings trust each other they have pooled their wealth: Hidden under a loose stone in the back of the fireplace is a stone box (again, locked and trapped with a poison needle identical to the one on the door). Inside is their combined hoard: 42 ep, 197 gp, 34 pp, and 3 gems (amber, worth 100 gp each). In addition, each halfling carries 3d6 gp and a single gem (a small smooth piece of jade worth 5 gp) "for luck."

**Hesselwhite & Co, halfling brigands (eight 2nd-level Thieves):** AC 4 (leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 6; hp 8 each (average); THAC0 20 (17 with shortbow, Dex bonus, and racial bonus); #AT 2 (bow) or 1 (shortsword); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (arrows) or 1d6 (shortsword); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage), stealth (-4 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls); SD thief skills (pick pockets 50%, move silently 70%, hide in shadows 60%), 30' infravision; SZ S (3' average); ML elite (14); Int average to very (8–12), Dex 18; AL CE; XP 65 each.

These halflings will be absent when the PCs first explore Cave B, but they will be here should the PCs ever re-enter the bandit lair. Note that the brigands can also be met with in the wilderness as a random encounter; if slain there, they obviously will not appear here and vice versa.

### B7. Catbird, Nore, and Orm the Worm

The three bandit chiefs share this chamber (informally known among the bandits as "the catbird seat") in a kind of casual arrangement. Seldom are all three here at any one time; usually only one or two are present, the other(s) out leading a raid on a passing caravan or reporting to their masters at the Hidden Temple. If the Catbird or Orm the Worm is present, he hides behind the tapestries that line the walls and tries to backstab an unwary intruder. If Nore is present, she hides in the alcove opposite the door, locks herself into the shackles there (easy enough given her lockpicking skills) and pretends to be a prisoner, begging anyone who discovers her to rescue her and take her away from this horrible place. The Catbird, who fancies himself a kind of bandit hero, will fight valiantly but ask for quarter against overwhelming odds, striking the best bargain that he can. By contrast, the

Worm will throw down his weapons, fall prone, and weep upon their feet begging and pleading for mercy. Characters should beware turning their backs on him, however, as Orm is as treacherous as he is cowardly and will draw a hidden dagger and backstab his captors if given a chance. All three are dressed more like nobles than bandits in their stolen finery; the Catbird looks like a dashing court dandy, Nore like a rather daring noble lady in distress, and the Worm like an overdressed toad. All three are aware of the secret door to room C5 and will use it to escape if things go badly for them (for example, if the PCs' refuse the Catbird's proffered surrender, suspect Nore's bonafides, or seek to repay Orm's treachery).

This room has clearly been furnished by someone with a taste for luxury. The walls are lined with tapestries showing scenes of a sunlight-dappled forest. An enormous four-poster bed dominates the center of the room, covered with silks and other expensive fabrics. A freestanding mirror stands next to an armoire in the northwest corner, the door hanging open to reveal a variety of rich clothing in many different sizes and styles. A night table beside the bed holds a variety of combs, perfume bottles, and cosmetics. An elegant silver candelabra with a dozen candles burning in it hangs from ceiling.

The door to this room is kept locked (all three bandits leaders have a key) and a small bell tied to the inside knob in such a way that it rings softly on any attempt to open the door, giving the bandits within time to hide and prepare an ambush. The Dungeon Master should choose which of the three bandits leaders is present, based on the one(s) he or she thinks would produce the most interesting interaction with the group. If it is Nore, then a careful search of the room reveals a jeweled earring on the floor with a spot of blood on it. Nore stays quiet unless it seems the intruders will discover her, upon which she moans and pretends to be have passed out. Paraphrase the following when characters look behind the western tapestry:

As you step toward the tapestry, you hear a low moan that seems to come from somewhere behind it. Cautiously lifting the wall hanging and peering behind it, you can see some sort of opening in the stone wall directly behind the armoire. Going closer and stealing a glance inside, you can see that it's a shallow alcove that apparently serves as a temporary prison. A woman in a blue silk gown is hanging in shackles, a trickle of blood slowly dripping down the side of her face. Two more sets of manacles hang from the ceiling, currently empty. Her eyes open and she stares blankly in your direction for a few seconds before whispering, "Help me."

Naturally, if Nore is not present, the alcove is either empty or contains some hapless prisoner. The bandits are supposed to turn any captives over to the priests of the Hidden Temple for questioning (torture) and eventual sacrifice, but sometimes an attractive merchant, guard, or passenger catches one of the bandits' eyes and is held back for a time as a "potential recruit" until he or she tires of the prisoner. They also sometimes hold a prosperous-looking captive for ransom, promising to free him or her once the money arrives. Alas, generally by that time the priests have discovered the captive's existence and demanded him for their altars—a request the bandits dare not refuse.

If the adventurers fall for Nore's deception, she thanks them for their timely aid and introduces herself as the Lady Lenore ("call me 'Nore'"). She claims to be a noblewoman whose retinue was beset by "bandits, monsters, and other riffraff" and promises them "a suitable reward" if they can get her safely back to civilization. If asked about her injured ear, she says one of the ruffians tore her earring out (in fact, she did it herself for better verisimilitude). Nore is a good actress but somewhat hampered by the fact that she has only vague ideas about how ladies should behave. Anyone with the etiquette or heraldry skills should be able to notice her occasional gaffes on a successful skill check (for example, her lack of elegant table manners at their



next meal). If called on these discrepancies, she sighs and wonders aloud at how long it took them to find her out. She then "comes clean" and confesses to being merely a would-be adventurer who got unlucky and was playing for time, hoping that the adventurers—like the bandits before them—would keep her alive while they checked out her story, giving her time to befriend them and show her usefulness. Nore thereupon tries to join the party, offering them her skills, expertise, and knowledge of the caves. For

example, she doesn't know the lay-outs of the other major cave complexes (other than some of the rooms of Cave F and room K5 in the Hidden Temple) but she does know roughly what kind of creatures inhabit each (kobolds in Cave A, goblins in Cave D, etc.). The only cave she will not speak about is the Hidden Temple (Cave K). She denies all knowledge about this and tries to steer them away from it by any means possible, rightly fearing what the priests of Ereshkigal will do to her if they suspect she has switched sides. If they determine to explore that topmost cave and she cannot dissuade them, she will slip away and either warn the priests (in which case the PCs may encounter her animated corpse there) or make her way to the Keep, asking her sister, Jocelyn the tanner (a former member of this bandit gang), to hide her until she can make good her escape to distant parts. It's up to the Dungeon Master whether Nore ultimately throws in her lot with the PCs or not, largely depending on how badly they need a thief and how they treat her.

**The Catbird (bandit leader, 4th-level Thief):** AC 3 (*studded leather armor* +1, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 21; THAC0 19 (18 with *rapier* +1); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (*rapier* +1, Str bonus); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills; SW misplaced sense of chivalry; SZ M (6'); ML champion (15); Str 16, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 5, Chr 15; AL LN; XP 175. Thief Skills: pick pockets (5%), open locks (15%), find & remove traps (25%), move silently (45%), hide in shadows (45%), detect noise (25%), climb walls (30%), read languages (5%). Treasure: 1d10 sp, 1d12 gp, a silver necklace set with garnets (worth 400 gp).

**Nore (bandit leader, 3rd-level Thief):** AC 10 (no armor, AC 7 with Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 13; THAC0 19 (17 with shortbow and Dex bonus); #AT 2 (bow) or 1 (shortsword); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (arrows) or 1d6 (shortsword); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills; SZ M (5'6"); ML steady (11); Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Chr 15; AL N; XP 120. Thief Skills: pick pockets (55%), open locks (20%), find & remove traps (35%), move silently (40%), hide in shadows (45%), detect noise (30%), climb walls (70%). Treasure: A silver earring set with a tiny blue sapphire (worth 300 gp). The gown Nore is currently wearing is itself worth 80 gp.

**Orm the Worm (bandit leader, 3rd-level Thief):** AC 4 (leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 19 (17 with missile weapon & Dex bonus); #AT 1 (shortsword or dagger), 2 (shortbow), or 3 (throwing darts); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (shortbow) or 1d6 (shortsword) or 1d4 (dagger) or 1d3/1d3/1d3 (darts); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief skills; SW treacherous coward; SZ M (5'1"); ML unreliable (4); Str 14, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 14, Chr 4; AL CN; XP 120. Thief Skills: pick pockets (60%), open locks (25%), find & remove traps (25%), move silently (35%), hide in shadows (30%), detect noise (35%), climb walls (80%). Treasure: 2d10 sp, 3d10 gp, a golden ring with a flawed topaz (worth 200 gp), a platinum medallion on a thin silver chain (worth 100 gp, worn under his jerkin), and tarnished bracelet set with a dull green stone (silver and peridot, worth 500 gp).

Other than personal items, the only valuables in the room are the furnishings and accouterments. There are a dozen complete changes of clothing in the armoire, two-thirds of which is male attire and the rest female; these are worth 10 to 20 gp each. The silk sheets on the bed are worth another 100 gp, while the cosmetics might bring 50 more (although PCs would need to take care with the fragile perfume bottles). The mirror is both fragile and bulky but would bring 30 gp should a determined PC somehow get it to market. The chandelier is worth 120 gp (but only one-tenth that if broken up or melted down for the silver). Finally, the four "tapestries" are each worth 30 gp (they are actually only painted canvas—pretty but relatively inexpensive). Naturally, all these items were looted from passing caravans and PCs attempting to resell them at the Keep run the risk of their being recognized by the original owner (10% chance, non-cumulative, per item). Most of the merchants who ply this trade route and hence are the bandits' favorite targets are regulars who have been stopping at the Keep for years. They will certainly claim their lost property, and the local authorities will back them up on this, at most negotiating a 10% finder's fee for the PCs.

The PCs can visit this location up to three times and encounter a different bandit leader each time. If they slay or permanently remove all three leaders, the surviving bandits fall under the domination of the halfling brigands; thereafter the bandits become much more ruthless and cruel out of fear of their halfling masters.

## Cave C: Former Orc Lair

This complex was once home to one of the two orc tribes that lived in valley, since exterminated by the bandits working in coordination with the priests and undead of the Hidden Temple. The dead orcs remain for the most part where they fell, their flesh slowly being eaten away by rats and maggots. When the decay is sufficiently far advanced, the evil clerics will animate them as undead skeletons. In the meantime, the abundant carrion has attracted a number of rats and other vermin, some of which may prove troublesome to exploring adventurers.

### C1. The Stench of Death

A horrible odor of foul rotteness flows out of this place, the smell of dead animals left unburied for too long. Within all is still; no movement can be glimpsed as you peer into the darkness.

Thief or bard characters attempting a detect noise roll may, on a success, make out a faint rustling that sounds like dried leaves in the wind. These are small scavengers (mainly normal rats) feeding off the bodies within. There is no danger here, although some characters may prefer to hold cloths over their mouth and nose before entering because of the stench.

Inside, the characters find signs of the fierce battle that took place here. At the intersection just inside the entrance, the hacked remains of a heavy net (now chopped into little pieces and quite useless) lie mixed with shattered bones and several large dried bloodstains. Here the orcs set off a trap, dropping an overhanging net onto the first wave of the invaders (primarily skeletons). Any character who examines the scene closely can find the small dark hooks screwed into the ceiling that once held the net overhead and the broken strings at ankle-level that served to set off the trap. The blood is orcsish, although that is difficult for the average adventurer to determine (it's slightly darker than human blood); the bones are human, and on close examination prove to be old and dry. The tunnel to the north is partially blocked with cobwebs; these are from perfectly normal spiders attracted by the flies that were in turn attracted by the corpses in these caves.

### C2. The Last Stand

The corridor leading to this room seems to have been the scene of a fighting retreat, and here you can see where the defenders were brought to bay. This 30' × 30' room was the site of a desperate struggle. The green-skinned humanoids whose bodies litter the place seem to have lost, slashed and clawed to death by their undead foes. Several human skeletons, their dry bones broken or smashed, are here as well, collapsed into untidy heaps. In a few cases, it seems as if the desperate humanoids had been reduced to biting at their foes, trying to break their bones with the huge teeth in the jutting lower jaw. The human remains seem much older than the humanoid bodies, which while far-gone cannot have been dead more than a few weeks. Rats scurry for cover as you approach but stop a safe distance off, ready to return to their interrupted meal.

A total of ten male orcs lie dead here. The bodies have been very professionally stripped of any usable gear by the bandits; no armor, weapons, or coins remain. However, the bandits missed one item: One of the orc warriors was using a longsword with a silver handle set with jewels. The sword, looted from a long-ago orc raid, was supposed to be used only for ceremonial purposes but the orc didn't know that. The sword broke in the final battle and its hilt (worth 120 gp) is lying under the fallen orc's body. The rats do not attack unless backed into a corner and threatened, in which case they swarm over the nearest tormentor, attacking as a 4-HD monster (THAC0 20) and inflicting 4 points of damage per round for 1d3 rounds or until panicked by fire, whereupon they flee up the corridor. Anyone bitten by a rat has a 5% chance of contracting a serious disease (save vs. poison to resist infection). For more about the disease, see the description in room C4.

### C3. Carnage

The corridor to this room is stained with streaks of dark dried blood, as if dead or dying folk had been dragged down it. After about twenty feet it takes a jog and opens out into a good-sized room. A horrible sight meets your eyes as you look over the smashed remains of a crude barricade into what was apparently once a common area for the humanoids. Flies buzz as they crawl over the corpses of the women and children of the tribe, apparently massacred here with no way to escape. In addition to at least twenty adults and a dozen children who seem to lie where they fell, another twenty or so bodies, all male, are stacked to the side of the entrance—apparently slain elsewhere and then placed here by the victors. The ceiling of the room seems to be a dark mass that ripples as you watch it.

After the attackers broke through the orc defenses at the entrance, these noncombatants had no way to escape from the undead seeking to kill them. After a desperate struggle, the barricade gave away and the slaughter began. The evil priests ordered the bodies left here to decay for later animation as skeletons, forcing the bandits to place here as well the dead orcs from Cave B and those who fell fighting in the corridor.

There is no treasure here, the area having been thoroughly looted by the bandits under the watchful eyes of the priests. However, there is danger. Several of the smaller orc skeletons have been completely stripped by the rats and insects, and the Hidden Temple's Necromancer has animated them as an experiment to see how well humanoid skeletons would serve their purposes. There are four of these undead creatures, which rise four rounds after this chamber is entered and attack anyone not bearing a holy symbol of Ereshkigal or Nergal. The combat might be made more difficult by the characters' being distracted; the large number of flies have attracted a colony of bats, who now roost overhead. The bats sleep in the daytime but will be disturbed by any loud noise or the presence of light in this room (even a single torch). If roused, the bats swirl around in a panic, effectively blinding the characters for 1d3 rounds, after which the flying mammals make

their escape down the corridor (unless a character is standing in the corridor with a light source, in which case the panic-stricken bats flee back into room C3 and continue to fly about in a dark cloud until the light is doused). The bats are essentially harmless, but they may prevent characters from noticing the orc children rising up to attack until the latter begin to sink their teeth and bony fingers into the intruders. Note that, being undead, the orc children are invisible to heat-sensing infravision.

**Skeletal orc children (4):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 1/2; hp 3, 3, 4, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite or throttle); SD half-damage from piercing and slashing weapons, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *cold*, *fear*, and *poison*; SW full damage from blunt weapons, may be turned, destroyed by holy water; SZ S (2'); ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 15 each.

The orc children do not pose any real threat to the party, but this encounter with low-level undead should help teach them things they will need to know before tackling the caves filled with undead (Caves F, J, and K). In particular, they will learn that swords, arrows, daggers, and the like are not particularly effective against skeletons, whereas maces, clubs, and staffs are. They should also learn that their spells may not be reliable against such creatures. Finally, the encounter could give any cleric in the group a chance to shine, as any "turned" undead lay back down quietly.

#### C4. Rats & More Rats

The orc chief, an orog fully six and a half feet tall, once lived here with his modest harem, one of whom was a half-orc. All four are now dead, slain by the bandits who crept in through the secret door from rooms B7 via C5 and backstabbed them as they fought off the undead invaders advancing from C1. The bodies were dragged back into the bedroom (C4), stripped of valuables, and left to the rats; adventurers coming down the corridor can hardly miss the dark pools of blood and drag marks.

The door to the room is ajar; inside, three giant rats have made a nest out of the formerly grand bed (now ruined beyond repair). The room is otherwise empty except for the well-gnawed bodies, the bandits having made off with everything that could be carried. The giant rats are aggressive and attack anyone intruding into their territory.

**Giant Rats (3):** AC 7; MV 12, swim 6; HD 1/2; hp 4, 3, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA bite may inflict disease (see below); SW fear of fire (avoid opponents carrying candles or torches, attacking their companions instead); SZ S (2' long); ML unsteady (7); Int semi (4); AL NE; XP 15 each.

Anyone bitten by a giant rat has a 5% chance of contracting a serious disease ("ratbite fever") unless he or she makes a saving throw vs. poison. The disease's onset time is 24 hours, during which the character suffers a loss of half his or her total hit points. Thereafter the character is racked by fever, chills, and delirium. He or she is essentially helpless and unable to adventure for 1d2 weeks. A *cure disease* spell can negate all these effects but is unlikely to be available. The Dungeon Master is encourage to use this spell of enforced inaction as a way for the invalid PC to interact with the NPCs of the Keep, perhaps gaining some valuable information in the process.

#### C5. Secret Room

The secret door opens to reveal a hidden room, dark and still. A small wooden table with two chairs sits in the middle, and a large wooden chest, its lid closed, rest against the north wall. You can see another door at the opposite end, made of stone like the one you just opened. A map has been chalked on the south wall, with many annotations scribbled on it in some strange runes. Other than that, the room seems to be empty.

The secret doors connecting this room to Caves B & C are obvious from this side but require normal rolls to find from the outside, as they lie flush with the surrounding stone walls and only swing inward when the correct keystone is touched. Note that characters who do not bring a light source into the room do not discover the bandits' map. The map shows the surrounding

countryside, with labels in Thieves Cant. Any thief in the party can automatically read the markings, although they might be reluctant to admit it (for example, Mouse might identify it as "an obscure dialect of Halfling"). The labels read "C" (Caves of Chaos), "K" (Keep), "G?" (gnolls), "B" (Bee-man), "graves" (Mendel's zombies), "Q" (hidden entrance to Quasqueton/Hidden Temple), "L" (former location of lizard-man lair), "S" (the Spiderwood), and "T?" (the Shy Tower). Note that the map is drawn directly on the stone and so cannot be removed, although characters with ink pen and paper can easily make a copy.

The chest is likely to attract treasure-minded PCs' attention. The bandits leaders stash their loot here: 204 cp, 397 sp, and 414 gp. The chest is locked (Nore, Orm, and The Catbird all know that the key is hidden underneath the chest itself) and trapped. Failure to detect and disarm the trap (by pressing a false knot on the chest's side) causes anyone standing within five feet of the chest to be sprayed with bright blue dye when it is opened. The dye is harmless but cannot be washed off (it wears off of skin in 3-4 days), making it easy for the bandit leaders to identify and punish anyone trying to dip into their treasury on the sly.

This room was once used by the orc leaders of the two tribes for secret meetings; the bandits discovered it when the orc chief of Cave B fled into it after they defeated his bodyguards. They pursued and killed him before he could escape into Cave C, then shortly afterwards used their newfound knowledge to destroy the orcs of Cave C in turn. Other than the chest and the map, the only other feature of interest here is a third secret door, very well hidden, in the northwest corner. This secret door is similar to the one in room A6 and like it leads to the Labyrinth. The bandits are not aware that this secret door is here, nor were the orcs before them, although the kobolds in Cave A have found it—there is a 20% chance that any given gp in the chest is a kobold counterfeit (see Cave A for details). Characters on this side of the secret door can open it either by casting a *knock* spell or by presenting a labys (a double-bladed axe), either of which causes it to silently swing open. See the description of the Labyrinth (Cave I) if they manage to both detect and open it.

## Cave D: Goblin Lair

The goblins that live here were almost wiped out by adventurers twenty years ago but had fully recovered when the priests of the Hidden Temple began their assault on the humanoids of this valley. Since the evil clerics consider them a minor threat they have not yet been attacked, but they know it is only a matter of time. Therefore the goblins will be alert and difficult to surprise. Recently they have been joined by the remnant of the hobgoblin population that formerly lived in Cave F.

#### D1. Entrance

The rough cave soon gives way to worked stone tunnels. Only a few steps in, the passage divides in three. One continues straight ahead and ends in a door after some thirty feet. One angles off to the left, forking again at the edge of your vision. One goes twenty feet or so to the right and then ends in a t-intersection with two new corridors leading off to north and south. The muddy floor shows signs of coming and going in all directions, mostly from bare human-like feet.

The rough cave soon gives way to worked stone tunnels. Only a few steps in, the passage divides in three. One continues straight ahead and ends in a door after some thirty feet. One angles off to the left, forking again at the edge of your vision. One goes twenty feet or so to the right and then ends in a t-intersection with two new corridors leading off to north and south. The muddy floor shows signs of coming and going in all directions, mostly from bare human-like feet.

Goblin guards wait down both the left and right passages and will be alerted by any loud noises (shouting and the like).

However, the goblins are rather cowardly and must make morale checks before advancing to defend their lair; failure indicates that they nervously hold their positions and hope the intruders go the other way.

### D2. Trap!

Each of the three short corridors labeled "D2" is a trap. In each case, triggering the trap causes a rusty iron portcullis to come crashing down, preventing the escape of anyone caught in the dead-end corridor. A successful bend bars/lift gates roll is required to escape. Up to two characters may attempt to combine their rolls at a time—for example, if a character with Str 15 (7% chance) and one with Str 12 (4% chance) were to combine their efforts, they would have an 11% chance of raising the gate.

The first corridor, D2a, ends in an unlocked door; any attempt to open the door sets off the trap. There is nothing but stone behind the false door. The second corridor, D2b, has a wooden chest at the east end; lifting the lid of the chest sets off the trap. The chest is empty, aside from a note in the bottom with the words "Bree-yark!" printed on them in large, poorly made letters (a goblin insult that translates roughly into "GOTCHA, STUPID!"). The third corridor, D2c, holds a closed coffin at the extreme east end. Raising the lid reveals what to first sight appears to be a sleeping vampire. In fact, it is merely a realistic wax figure resembling a classic nosferatu (a bald man with dead-white skin dressed in formal clothes, arms crossed over his chest, his elongated fingers ending in claws). The wax figure is quite harmless, but the trap is set off when anybody weighing at least 100 pounds steps on the pressure plate that makes up the final ten feet of the corridor. However, unknown to the goblins, a very well made secret door to the Labyrinth is located at the extreme end of the corridor on the right. Like those that may have been previously encountered, the door has no handle or catch on the outside and can only be opened from outside by means of a *knock* spell or presentation of a labys (two-bladed axe).

In each case, a successful find & remove traps check enables a lucky thief to identify the trap and disarm it. These portcullises are meant to trap intruders in dead-ends without cover where the goblins can easily kill them with their spears from a safe distance.

### D3. Eastern Guard Post

The tunnel opens out into a twenty-foot by thirty-foot room with a set of stairs going up. A chalk line has been drawn down the middle of the room. Against the near wall on your right is an open-topped barrel with several crude wooded mugs on a small table nearby. Another barrel against the far left wall has a bunch of what look like broom handles sticking up out of it. You see six small gray-skinned humanoids wearing dirty leather armor. Five of them are engaged in a game of tug-of-war with a knotted cloth rope, while the sixth lean negligently back against the wall and takes a drink from its mug. When it sees you it chokes, drops its mug in a spray of liquid, and snatches up its spear, shouting "Bree-Yark!"

Any character who speaks goblin knows that "Bree-Yark" is a general term of abuse that can mean anything from "Hey, Stupid" to "Gotcha!" or "What a Maroon." It is a favorite expression of this particular tribe, who use it in so many applications that they have become known as the Bree-Yarks by their kin, a label they have defiantly adopted.

These goblin guards often while away the time playing simple games such as tug-of-war, steal-the-bacon, and the like—rough-house sports that keep them active and do not distract them from keeping an eye on both entrances. Each carries a spear stuck through his belt and usually has several more ready to hand, with more in the barrel (a total of sixty—the "broom handles" are really spear-shafts). The goblins fight bravely against intruders, but if half their number fall in melee the survivors will bolt up the stairs, hollering "help!" "intruders!" and the like (in goblin, of course). If they make it up to the door to

room D4 they pound on it and shout to alert the hobgoblins within, begging to be let in all the while.

The barrel is two-thirds full of small beer. The goblins carry 1d4 cp each but their main treasure is sunk at the bottom of the barrel: a "pretty rock" that belongs to whichever goblin emerges victorious from each day's games. Possession changes hands often, and by mutual agreement it remains submerged until that day's owner is declared the winner. Besides, the goblins believe it improves the flavor of the brew. The "pretty rock" is actually a lump of unpolished onyx that, properly polished, is worth 50 gp.

Naturally, if the PCs first enter this room via the back entrance (that is, by descending the stairs from D4), then the Dungeon Master should adjust the boxed text above accordingly.

**Goblin Guards (6):** AC 6 (leather armor, shield, Dex bonus); MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear); SD infravision (60'); SW hate bright light (-1 attack penalties in sunlight or *continual light*); SZ S (4'); ML average (8); Dex 15, Int low (7); AL LE; XP 15 each.

### D4. Hobgoblins in Wait

The stairs at the back of the guard chamber lead up to a landing, then take a sharp turn to the right before leveling out in a short corridor that ends in a door.

The lower course of the stairs is trapped with a trip wire at the top. This does no damage to characters going up besides causing anyone running up the stairs to fall flat (the goblins know where all the trip wire is and use this knowledge to out-distance pursuers). Coming down, however, anyone who does not detect the trap will trip and fall. If the character was merely walking, he or she simply falls down and must save vs. petrification/polymorph or be stunned for 1d3 rounds. Someone running full-tilt down the stairs, however, goes head over heels crashing and bumping all the way to the bottom, taking 2d6 points of damage along the way (save for half). The upper (east-west) section of the stairs is untrapped. The door at the top of the stairs is locked—not with a key-lock but with a latch on the opposite side. Thus it can be locked from the inside but not from without, a successful open locks roll indicating that the thief has succeeded in slipping a knife or stiff wire through the space between the door and frame and lifting the latch.

This sizable chamber is largely bare, as all the furnishing seems to have been piled against the far wall. You can just make out the top of a closed door in the far right corner, almost hidden behind the clutter of boxes, barrels, smashed furniture, and loose debris stacked in front of it. A few heaps of cloth and furs in the middle of the room seem to serve as nests or beds for the large humanoids who were waiting for you, weapons at the ready. They attack!

These humanoids look different from any the characters should have encountered so far: They are much larger than the kobolds or goblins—almost as large as gnolls—with hairy reddish brown hides, bloodshot yellow eyes, and strong yellow teeth. As soon as the door opens, the two archers who have taken up positions at the far end of the room let loose a volley of arrows. Then the two with bardiches (essentially huge long-handled axes) flanking the entrance swing from a safe distance against any character who has entered the room or remained standing in the doorway. The archers are aware of the danger of shooting into melee and try to avoid shooting adventurers who are in hand-to-hand combat with the two hobgoblins with bardiches, preferring to target characters who are charging across the room or else those still in the corridor. If the characters all gang up on the two hobgoblins near the entrance, the archers target those on the fringes of the melee, firing at whoever is furthest

from their comrades. If engaged in melee by charging characters, they drop the bows and draw their close-quarters weapons (a broadsword and a morning star, respectively). Any goblins who escaped from the guardroom below (room D3) join in the melee as well. The hobgoblins fight to the death, but if the battle goes against them the goblins run to the back of the room and scramble frantically among the stuff piled there, trying to unblock the door and escape down the tunnel, trusting to luck to make it past the undead who haunt the former hobgoblin lair and escape out the entrance at area F1. These hobgoblins each carry 3d10 gp (all they could save from their plundered hoard). Note that unlike kobolds, orcs, and goblins, hobgoblins are not inconvenienced by sunlight and fight just as well in bright light as in darkness.

**Hobgoblins (4):** AC 5 (scalemail, shield); MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 7, 8, 6, 7; THAC0 19; #AT 2 (longbow) or 1 (melee weapon); Dmg 1d8/1d8 (sheaf arrows) or 2d4 (bardiche, morning star, broadsword); SD infravision (60'); SZ M (6½'); ML champion (15); Int average (8); AL LE; XP 35 each.

#### D5. Western Guard Post

This room is very similar to room D3, except here the guards will be engaged in a game of "steal the bacon" when the characters enter (the "bacon" being a pouch filled with 1d10 coppers and a gold tooth)—unless, of course, the characters have caused enough noise to alert them beforehand. They jump to the attack when they see the intruders. These goblins have only a single spear apiece which they throw if possible before closing for melee with their morning stars. If more than half of their number fall, the survivors yell and scatter, with at least one going to the secret door to Cave E and throwing it open. The sluggish troll, awakened from its slumber, arrives through the door two rounds later unless the adventurers slam it shut in that time. See the description of room E2. Dealing with the troll should keep the adventurers busy while the goblins get away (perhaps even purloining the pouch if this seems possible)—at least, that is the goblins' hope. Each goblin carries 1d4 cp, which he will gladly offer in ransom if captured. If questioned, the goblins do all they can to send the adventurers to Cave F, describing the "vast, unclaimed, unguarded wealth" that waits there. "And no undead at all," pipes in one. "None," echo the others.

**Goblin Guards (8):** AC 6 (leather armor, shield, Dex bonus); MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear) or 2d4 (morning star); SD infravision (60'); SW hate bright light (-1 attack penalties in sunlight or *continual light*); SZ S (4'); ML average (10); Dex 15, Int low (7); AL LE; XP 15 each.

#### D6. Goblin Commons

Read the following text aloud only if the characters somehow make it this deep into the goblin lair without raising the alarm.

This area, with at least three entrances and exits that you can see, seems to be home to this tribe of gray-skinned humanoids. At least a dozen females patiently work on various domestic tasks—pulling what look like grass seeds from a pile of cut stalks, grinding the coarse grains on a stone slab with a smooth stone, cooking up some kind of gruel or porridge from the resulting seed-meal, cracking nuts, peeling roots, and the like. Three more tend the ten or so children of the tribe, who range from babes in arms to youngsters half an adult's height (that is, about two feet). The last two are each working with a hand loom, weaving a rough cloth out of some sort of strands—fur? hair? plant fiber? The women seem to range in age from wrinkled toothless ancients to young adults—the equivalent of human teenagers. At least three are obviously pregnant, even to your untrained eye. They all chatter incessantly while they work in some strange language that sounds like "gobble-gobble-gobble" to your ears.

There are a total of seventeen female goblins here and ten goblinimps, all noncombatants who will flee at the first sight of strangers. They abandon whatever they are doing (food preparation, mostly),

snatch up the children, and run in the opposite direction than that by which the PCs entered. Female goblins are a downtrodden lot, and if captured they submit to whatever the PCs order (so far as they can understand them; none of these goblins speak anything but their native language, the goblin tongue). The female goblins have AC 10 and an average of 3 hp each; the youngsters range from 2 hp for the older children to 1 hp for the babes and toddlers. None of the females or children have any treasure.

If any goblin from the west guard room (D5) escaped and made his way here, then the narrow opening to this room is blocked by a lowered portcullis similar to those that make up the traps at areas D2a, D2b, and D2c. In that case, the surviving goblin guards let loose a volley of spears anytime anyone shows himself or herself through the opening, taunting the strangers as cowards all the while ("BREE-Yark") and inviting them to become pincushions (they replenish these spears from a barrel of forty located in the tiny alcove in the southern wall). The alerted goblins send for their leader from room D7 and also their hobgoblin allies in D8, who arrive in three rounds. A hush falls when the goblin king and his retinue arrive, and—taking care to keep out of their line of sight—he will attempt to engage the intruders in conversation while the hobgoblins sneak around the side passage outside room D7 and gather behind the one-way secret door. The king shouts out in broken Common "Who go there? Be off? No want today. No elves, no elves." Unless they can somehow engage his interest within two rounds (difficult, unless they reply in goblin with something like "We're here to kill all the evil priests in the Hidden Temple"), he signals to the hobgoblins and the next round they throw open the secret door and attack, loosing a volley of spears as they come. These hobgoblins each carry only one spear, so as they close to melee they draw morning stars, broadswords, or bardiches. The goblins crowd up to the portcullis and poke anyone who comes too close, but they do not raise the portcullis unless half or more of the adventurers are incapacitated. If the hobgoblins are routed or the PCs try to get through the secret door, the goblins slam it shut, chortling "Yark-yark-yark-yark"). The goblins retreat back toward room D8 if either of the entrances is breached. Stats for the goblin guards, the hobgoblins, the goblin king, and his retinue may be found in the descriptions for room D5, D8, and D7, respectively.

#### D7. The Goblin King

Of the whole tribe, only the leader (the self-styled "goblin king") has his own room, complete with door. However, since he shares it with his bodyguards (three larger than usual male goblins) and a pet worg it's hardly "private" as most humans use the term.

This smallish room (twenty feet wide, thirty feet long) is surprisingly snug. A small rather nicely carved wooden bed at the far end is piled high with furs in place of a mattress, topped with a magnificent wolfskin. Beside it is a padded bench with worn plush velvet and mahogany paneled sides. What really catches your eye, though, is the faded tapestry hung behind the bed. Depicting an armor-clad warrior battling three large furry humanoids, it sparkles as the rays of your torch [or equivalent light source] reflect off her battleaxe and breastplate. Three sleeping pallets on the floor between the bed and entrance where you are standing complete the scene.

Characters approaching from rooms D5 and D6 may already have encountered the goblin king; otherwise, he is here, sitting on the bed and gazing up at the tapestry. His three bodyguards will be here as well, each armed with three spears for throwing and a morning star for close-quarters. The "wolfskin" mentioned in the description above is actually his pet worg, which automatically winds any intruder even if invisible, letting out a growl and rising to attack. The worg is intelligent and can actually speak a few words of goblin in addition to its own language.

**Hurkul the Goblin king:** AC 4 (*ringmail*+1, shield, Dex bonus); MV 6; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear) or 2d4 (morning star); SD infravision (60'); SW hate bright light

(-1 attack penalty in sunlight or *continual light*); SZ S (4'2"); ML elite (13); Str 11, Dex 15, Con 16, Int average (10), Wis 11, Chr 8 (16 to goblins); AL LE; XP 35.

**Goblin Bodyguards (3):** AC 5 (studded leather armor, shield, Dex bonus); MV 6; HD 1; hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear) or 2d4 (morning star); SD infravision (60'); SW hate bright light (-1 attack penalties in sunlight or *continual light*); SZ S (4'); ML steady (12); Dex 15, Int average (8); AL LE; XP 15 each.

**Worg:** AC 6 (thick pelt); MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SW fears fire; SZ M (7' long); ML steady (11); Int low (7); AL NE; XP 120.

The goblin tribe's treasure is stashed in a pot (actually a large bronze chamber pot) inside a secret compartment of the padded bench (either find & remove traps or locate secret door rolls can detect this secret compartment). The pot holds 480 cp, 23 sp, and a dozen large gems (red, green, and blue-white). These appear to be rubies, emeralds, and diamonds but are actually glass, "tributes" extorted from the wily kobolds. In addition, each guard carries 2d4 cp and the king himself 3d4 cp, 1d4 sp, and a single gold piece (worn almost smooth). The pelts are also potential treasure; while the ones on the bottom are too old and soiled to be of any value, the topmost four are retrievable. Jocelyn the tanner back at the Keep would pay 12 gp apiece from her savings for these pelts or could use them to create custom-made suits of leather armor for the characters (charging 3 gp each since the PCs provided their own raw materials).

The greatest treasure in the room is the tapestry, which depicts a scene from the career of Lady Durnsay ("Lady Durnsay and the Bugbears"), a famous adventurer of four hundred years ago. While old and worn, the tapestry is a true work of art, part of a series by a master craftsman who actually wove gold and silver threads into the weave. The tapestry is worth as much as 900 gp if the characters manage to take it down and carry it out without further damage, but removing this "good luck charm" wins them the undying enmity of the goblin tribe and all their many far-scattered relations.

#### D8. Hobgoblin Refuge

This thirty-foot by fifty-foot room contains the now-familiar heaps of cloth and skins serving as beds as well as a number of barrels and crates that seem to fill double duty both as storage and as tables, benches, and the like for the humanoids that fill the place. Several boxes have been pushed together in the center of the room to form a crude table, atop which is—of all things—a sandbox. You have a confused impression of hairy, reddish-brown hides, bloodshot yellow eyes, and strong yellow teeth snarling at you as they rush to attack.

Formerly the hobgoblin tribe that lived in Cave F were bitter rivals of the goblins, who resented the raids and bullying from their larger cousins. With the current crisis, however, they have buried the hatchet and the surviving hobgoblins have moved in with the goblins after being driven from their own lair by undead in the service of the Hidden Temple. Thus the goblins strengthen their defenses and the hobgoblins gain a refuge from which to harass the hated undead who expelled them from their ancestral home. The bulk of the hobgoblins—six adult males, eight adult females, and two striplings—live in this room; the four other adult males keep watch in room D4, the only room they have retained control over of their former home. In a sandbox on a table in the middle of the room they have scratched a rough map of the layout of Cave F which may provide PCs who find and correctly interpret it with valuable information. Unfortunately, each round that a combat lasts in this room has a cumulative 10% chance of ruining the map.

Naturally, the hobgoblins keep careful watch on the secret door connecting Cave D to Cave F; as far as they know, the undead have not yet discovered the secret doors that link areas F4 and F6, but they know this could happen without warning. They have salvaged what they could from their old lair and from

time to time send a spy to find out what the skeltar and zombie, the undead leaders, are up to; as often as not, these spies fail to return. Therefore they will flee through the secret door only *in extremis*—for example, if they are clearly losing a battle against an implacable foe. If at all possible they will try to lose pursuers in the maze of room and double back the way they came rather than dare the undead lair.

The hobgoblins are aggressive and alert. The females fight as well as the males, although because they lack armor they will hold back from hand-to-hand combat and throw spears instead. The two striplings (one male, one female) also keep their distance and use slings, reverting to daggers if forced into melee. The hobgoblins have relatively little treasure: the males carry 1d4 gp each, the females 2d6 sp, and the youngsters 3d4 cp. Naturally, if the male hobgoblins were slain in a grand melee in room D6 then only the females and striplings will be encountered here.

**Male Hobgoblins (6):** AC 5 (scalemail, shield); MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 5, 7, 9, 6, 7, 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear) or 2d4 (bardiche, morning star, broadsword); SD infravision (60'); SZ M (6½'); ML steady (12); Int average (8); AL LE; XP 35 each.

**Female Hobgoblins (8):** AC 10; MV 9; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear); SD infravision (60'); SZ M (6'); ML average (10); Int low (7); AL LE; XP 15 each.

**Hobgoblin Striplings (2):** AC 8 (Dex bonus); MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 2, 3; THAC0 20 (19 with sling due to Dex bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (sling stone); SD infravision (60'); SZ M (5'); ML elite (13); Int average (9); AL LE; XP 15 each.

## Cave E: Troll Cave

The entrance to this cave is noticeably larger than that of the one only eighty feet further to the east (that is, Cave D). A strong, sour odor can be smelled as far as sixty feet away. Bones lay carelessly scattered on the ground around the cave-mouth.

#### E1. Mud Pit

This room is littered with bones of all kinds—human, humanoid, and animal—as well as bits and pieces of fur, discarded claws, antlers, and the like. The center has been scooped out to form an enormous puddle some fifteen feet wide; you have no idea how deep the muddy water may be. It looks possible to walk around the edges by keeping near the walls, but the clay floor looks wet and no doubt slippery. Bizarre ornamentation has been stuck up here and there around the wall: a halberd, a crumpled and scorched suit of armor, a withered head with an openmouthed astonished expression that looks large enough to have belonged to a giant, a set of antlers, and a bear's paw. An opening to the left leads off into darkness.

The troll who lives here is extremely lazy but slightly more cunning than most of its kind. Having discovered by accident the convenience of having a source of fire-extinguishing water ready at hand, it learned from the experience and now dabs itself with wet clay whenever preparing to exit from its lair. The resulting pit also makes a handy place to hide its treasure, most of which rests at the bottom of the hole. The "puddle" is eight feet deep, so it is quite possible for a character falling in to drown unless rescued by friends who manage to keep their footing. Anyone trying to reach the items displayed on the walls (trophies of well-fought meals) must make a successful climb walls roll or slip and slide into the water hole. The "giant's head" actually belonged to an ogre, a kinsman of the ogre who once lived here and was slain by adventurers long ago; he sought to reclaim the cave but fell before the troll's relentless attacks.

The troll is generally well disposed toward the neighboring goblins, as they sometimes throw it bribes. While a terrifying opponent when fully roused, the troll more often than not ignores

intruders who promptly withdraw. Anyone who injures it, messes with its trophies, or tries to steal its food, however, must face its wrath. The troll's treasure is hidden at the bottom of the muddy pool: 3,244 gp and six gems: a piece of turquoise (10 gp), a pair of bloodstones (50 gp each), a single gray pearl (100 gp), and a perfectly matched pair of topaz (500 gp each). Recovering this treasure should be difficult, as the coins and gems are scattered loose among the mud under eight feet of murky water. In addition, too much noise always has the chance of waking the troll in the next room—something wise characters will no doubt wish to avoid.

## E2. Sleeping Troll

The sound of stentorian snoring comes from this slightly drier but still muddy place. A foul nest of sticks, furs, rags, and mosses holds a large creature whose warty green skin is smeared with clay. As you watch the loud snores cease as it uncurls itself, stretches, and yawns, revealing a fang-filled mouth. It blinks sleepily then curls back up again, hiding its head in its arms so that only the long pointy nose sticks out. The area around the creature is littered with hundreds of bones, no doubt the remains of past meals.

If prodded, shot, stabbed, thumped, or splashed the troll is roused to fury. It tends to pursue a single foe until he or she is dead, whereupon it devours the fallen prey, ignoring any other characters unless they interfere in its hard-earned meal. Likewise, any attempt to search the room causes it to raise its head and stare balefully at the intruders who interrupted its nap. It slowly rises, revealing its full nine-foot-height for the first time, scratches itself with its wicked claws, and strides confidently up to the nearest foe. Characters who flee at once may escape, especially if they drop some significant treasure ("play-pretty!") or meal to distract the troll. Otherwise they must battle the creature.

**Important Note:** Remember that the PCs in this adventure are supposed to be novice adventurers with little experience in identifying various monsters and their strengths and weaknesses. If the characters immediately break out flaming oil at the sight of their first troll, the Dungeon Master should firmly disallow such player knowledge dictating the characters' actions. If you have players who are new to the game, all the better; savor the surprise that comes from each player's first experience with a regenerating creature as a monster they thought they'd killed rises to its feet again and returns to the attack.

Remember also that this troll is smarter than most and has no interest in dying. Therefore if reduced to zero hit points or below it does not attack immediately upon regaining consciousness. Instead, it plays possum for a few rounds so as to give its natural healing longer to repair its injuries. Similarly, if badly injured it fights its way to room E1 and plunges into the muddy pool. Trolls have Constitution scores that are off the human scale, and the creature can easily crouch underwater for a half-hour or so without drowning (beyond that, long noses can be useful). It also submerges itself if attacked with fire or acid, protecting itself from the terrible burning with all that lovely moisture. Finally, remember that the troll is nine feet tall and the water-filled pit only eight feet deep; hence it can attack anyone in room E1 without leaving the pit but just by standing up.

**Troll:** AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; 33 hp; THAC0 13; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d4+4/1d4+4/1d8+4 (claw/claw/bite) or 1d8 (thrown stone, range 60 feet); SA severed limbs or head continue to attack (limb may be severed on a "natural 20" attack with an edged weapon); SD regeneration (3 hp per round); SW damage from fire and acid does not regenerate; SZ L (9'); ML elite (13); Int average (8); AL CE; XP 1,400.

At first sight there seems to be nothing of interest in the troll's nest other than a half-gnawed human arm—sole remnant of a zombie the troll captured on a recent foraging expedition. The troll has made considerable inroads into the Hidden Temple's zombie supply over the past few weeks and the evil priests are considering various options to remove this troublesome thorn in

their side (another reason the goblins wish to remain on good terms with the creature). However, close examination one of the thicker branches woven into the nest turns out to be a sturdy quarterstaff. This is actually a *quarterstaff* +1, once owned by a minor cleric of the Hidden Temple who lead an early attempt to expel the troll and provided it with a meal and some bedding instead.

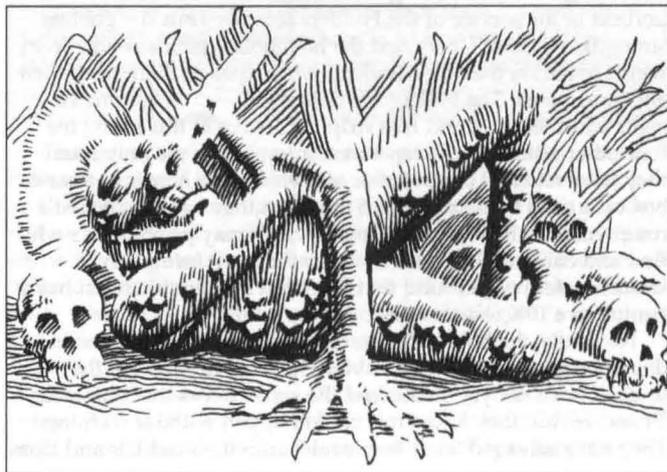
## Cave F: Former Hobgoblin Lair

The hobgoblins that have lived here for decades were recently evicted from all but one room (D4) of their ancestral home by a host of skeletons and zombies sent from the Hidden Temple. These undead were led by two special minions of Ereshkigal, in life evil wizards in her service who spontaneously animated after death as unique low-level undead. The "skeltar" and "zombire" resemble an ordinary skeleton and zombie, respectively, but they have retained their intelligence, free will, and spellcasting abilities beyond the grave. Now that the hobgoblins have been expelled, the skeltar and zombire have taken up residence and filled these caves with undead as they plan the destruction of the goblins in Cave D and ultimately the troll in Cave E as well.

## F1. Talking Skulls

To your surprise, this cave entrance has an actual door blocking the passage. The door is set a few feet within the cave mouth, and the walls leading to it are lined with skulls—mostly human, but also humanoid and demihuman. Several are nailed to the door itself, and as you approach they begin to chatter. A dry, hollow voice intones "Come in—so glad you've decided to join us." The skulls seem to laugh, then relapse in motionless silence.

The skulls were placed here long ago by the hobgoblins to discourage trespassers, but the current undead residents decided to add a few sinister touches of their own, animating the skulls and placing a *magic mouth* on the centermost one. There are five skulls in all, harmless unless disturbed. However, the evil priests of the Hidden Temple have cast a *glyph of warding* on each skull, and touching a skull (even with a sword or staff) sets off the *glyph*. From left to right, the first skull's *glyph* causes fire damage (5d4, save for half). The second skull's *glyph* causes blindness (save vs. spell to negate). The central skull's *glyph* causes 5d4 points of cold damage ("suddenly the icy finger of death seems to chill you to the very marrow of your bones"), save for half-damage. The fourth skull's *glyph* causes paralysis (save vs. spell to negate). The fifth and final skull's *glyph* causes electricity to arc out and shock the character (5d4 damage, save for half).



Any physical damage destroys a skull but sets off its glyph unless delivered from a distance. Once its *glyph* has discharged that particular skull is harmless.

The door is bolted from within; a successful open locks roll indicates that the lucky thief has inserted a dagger or stiff wire through the narrow gap of the doorframe and raised the bolt. The door can be forced open with a bend bars/lift gates roll or chopped open with an axe (AC 5, 30 hp), but either of these approaches activates all the skulls and alerts the undead within.

Inside the door, the tunnel divides in three directions, running east, northwest, and south. The east tunnel brings adventures to a fork, one branch of which ends at the door leading to room D4; since this is blocked from the far side, it can only be opened from this end by a bend bars/lift gates roll. The other branch of this tunnel leads to room F2; anyone proceeding down this short winding corridor is attacked before they reach the room by six brown-boned hobgoblin skeletons posted in F2. The south tunnel soon turns into a steep, narrow staircase that characters can only climb single-file. At the top of the stairs it opens out into an east-west corridor leading to rooms F3 and F4 (the skeltar's lab and zombie's lair, respectively). The third and final tunnel leads northwest, passing room F5 and ending in the door to room F6. Anyone who passes by the archway to room F5 activates the undead defenders of the complex stationed here, who silently emerge and attack; they also attack any who enter the room.

**Hobgoblin Skeletons (6):** AC 5 (toughened bones); MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bony fist); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear, poison, death magic, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons*; SW blunt weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

## F2. Bone Vats

This is clearly an unwholesome place. Manacles hang from the walls, several of which hold the bodies of large humanoids. It's hard to tell exactly what race they belonged to, since they have been stripped of their skin and flesh, exposing the bone beneath. You can see that broken bones have been carefully splinted and other structural damage repaired as much as possible. The whole has then been daubed with some brownish coating, no doubt from the bubbling vat in the near corner. A noxious organic smell rises from the thick boiling liquid.

This former torture room has been converted into a research area by the skeltar, which is concerned in discovering ways to repair damaged undead (a subject obviously of great personal concern to herself). The bubbling goo is a protective substance of her own devising somewhat like varnish; it soaks into the porous bone and toughens it. She has not yet treated her own bones with this organic substance, as she wants to study its long-term effects first (to make sure the treated bones do not become more brittle over time, to determine their rate of deterioration, etc.). None of the five skeletons chained to the walls has been animated, but sharp-eyed characters will note that one set of manacles hangs empty. Its former occupant is now crouched in a fetal position inside the vat, part of another experiment to determine whether immersion improves the absorption rate of the bone-varnish. It ignores intruders unless they come within five feet of the vat, whereupon it lunges to its feet (roll for surprise!), attempting to seize the nearest character and drag him or her into the vat with it. On a successful attack roll, it succeeds (characters subject to this attack are considered AC 10; armor type does not count but any Dexterity bonuses do apply). A character submerged in the thick, viscous, boiling liquid suffers 2d3 points of damage per round; the skeleton does not release its grip until it has been destroyed.

**Hobgoblin Skeleton (1):** AC 5 (toughened bones); MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bony fist); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear, poison, death magic, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons*; SW blunt

weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65.

There is no treasure in this grim place.

## F3. Skeltar's Lair

This place looks like you imagine a wizard's workshop would look, but only if it were not a particularly nice wizard. Mortars and pestles, flasks filled with strange liquids, alembics and retorts for distillation, and a plethora of strange devices the purpose of which you cannot even begin to guess at share space on the tables with scalpels, bone saws, and other tools of dissection. A partially disassembled skeleton lies on one table, its pieces neatly laid out like the parts of some intricate puzzle. Clearly the place is in use, as a spirit lamp burns under one of the retorts and a candle flickers from a small side table scattered with sheets of paper. A skeleton stands, silent and motionless, in a niche on either side of the door.

The two skeletons are "lab assistants" who obey any orders given to them. They do not fight, even in self-defense, even if ordered to do so, but they could be used to interpose themselves between their current master and some threat. Player characters who discover this may take them along, finding them a useful tool for opening doors, carrying loot, and the like. Naturally, any rangers, paladins, and Good clerics in the group will no doubt strenuously object, and anyone arriving at the Keep with undead servitors in tow will be denied entry and find themselves denounced as "godless practitioners of the Dark Arts."

The skeltar is temporarily absent when the PCs first enter this room, having gone to consult with her partner in room F4. The papers are covered with small, cramped writing and many detailed drawings. If examined in detail (a process that takes some time), these turn out to be a careful study of human anatomy, particularly the skeleton, with notes on various procedures for strengthening bone. Any necromancer, anatomist, or professional healer would find this material of great interest and might pay up to 400 gp for it. Naturally, the undead wizards here and the priests and priestesses of Erishkigal will want their property back, sending a patrol out after the thieves and alerting the bandits of Cave B to be on the lookout for them. Other than the papers there is no treasure here; the lab equipment is valuable but fragile and difficult to transport without proper crates, padding, and cartage—assuming, that is, that the PCs refrain from smashing everything within sight. If you use material components for spellcasters in your campaign, allow PC wizards to find a number of useful components here.

**Skeleton Servitors (2):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 N/A; #AT none; Dmg N/A; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear, poison, death magic, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons*; SW will not defend selves from attack, blunt weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP none.

## F4. Zombie's Chamber

A strange mixture of living area and the tomb meets your eyes as you enter. The front part of this large chamber is furnished with table, comfortable chairs, and bed; the back section holds mortuary slabs and coffins—some of them obviously occupied. The room is lit by candlelight from candleabra set in all four walls and a single tall candle on the table. Two skeletons dressed like maids and two corpses dressed like footmen stand on either side, their backs against the wall. A skeleton dressed in a slinky black gown with elbow-length gloves and a corpse in a rich red-velvet dressing gown are toasting each other with empty goblets when you enter. They turn their dead faces and stare at you. Then they turn to face each other again, lowering the goblets. "Guests?" says the

skeleton in very feminine voice. "So it would appear," replies the other in a deep, rich voice.

The skeltar and zombire, evil wizards who spontaneously animated after their deaths due to their devotion to the service of Erishkigal, are torn between the habits of a lifetime and their current undead status. Neither needs to eat or sleep, yet each occasionally feels compelled to do so. Therefore they can sometimes be found in the bed and sometimes in the tomb (she in her coffin and he on his slab). They envy the living but are clever and will not initiate combat if at all possible until the odds are in their favor. As soon as the adventurers enter, they send a silent summons to the undead skeletons and zombies in room F5, who set out at once to come to their masters' aid. However, it takes 18 rounds for the first skeletons to arrive, and in the meantime the dead wizards play for time. If attacked, they order the two skeletons and two zombies to defend them and retreat to the tomb section of the chamber, where six more zombies rise to attack. The undead wizards take refuge behind the slabs if necessary, using their spells and magic items intelligently, trying to hold out until reinforcements arrive. Of course, if the adventurers have already destroyed the undead in room F5, then no help is coming, but the skeltar and zombire will not know that. Accordingly, they play for time, offering to exchange information for their continued existence. The Dungeon Master should decide how much they tell the PCs, and how much of it is true, but this will probably be the first time the adventurers hear the name *Erishkigal, mistress of the underworld, goddess of death* and learn of the existence of "The Hidden Temple."

Note that all lesser undead in the presence of the skeltar and zombire cannot be "turned" unless their respective master or mistress is turned: The skeltar controls all the skeletons in the complex and the zombire all the zombies. If turned themselves, the undead wizards let out a dismal groan and break off their attacks. The zombire stretches out full length on its slab and the skeltar lays down in her coffin. Each is essentially helpless, unable to defend himself or herself until attacked, making this an ideal time to question them as described above. If spared, the undead wizards flee the area and re-establish themselves elsewhere to continue their work, possibly reappearing at some future point in your campaign.

**Skeltar:** AC 6 (AC 4 with *lapis ring*); MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (fist/blow); SA spells; SD spells, immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear, poison*, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged or piercing weapons; SW may be turned (as wight), full damage from blunt weapons; SZ M (5'5"); ML steady (12); Int genius (17); AL NE; XP 420. Spells (as 2nd-level specialist wizard): *chill touch, magic missile, sleep*. Special Ability: create undead (once per week may animate a skeleton which thereafter obeys all her commands without question). Special Equipment: *lapis ring* (see below), *necklace of missiles* (1 × 5HD, 1 × 4HD, 2 × 3HD).

**Zombire:** AC 5; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (fist, blow); SA spells; SD spells, immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear, poison*, and cold-based spells; SW may be turned (as wraith); SZ M (6'2"); ML elite (13); Int exceptional (15); AL LE; XP 650. Spells (as 3rd-level specialist wizard): 1st—*chill touch, color spray, magic missile*; 2nd—*spectral hand, web*. Scroll: *protection from normal missiles*. Special Ability: create undead (once per week may animate a zombie which thereafter obeys all his commands without question).

**Skeleton Maids (2):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (candlesticks); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear, poison, death magic*, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons; SW blunt weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

**Zombies (6) and Zombie Footmen (2):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (fist, kick, head-bash); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death magic* (already dead), *poison*,

and cold-based spells; SW always lose initiative, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

**Treasure:** The undead wizards have accumulated a considerable stash in the course of their misspent lives, to which they have added the plundered wealth of the hobgoblins. Under her gloves the skeltar wears a stone ring made of smooth polished lapis lazuli. Worth 50 gp, the ring is also enchanted and serves as a *ring of protection* that offers a +2 bonus to Armor Class and also grants a +4 bonus to all saving throws vs. charms, illusions, and enchantments. She also wears a bracelet (over the gloves) made out of polished flat oval stones of a milky green, linked with gold. These stones may be mistaken for marble or jade but in fact are a rare magical stone known as a shenstone. The bracelet is worth 800 gp to someone who correctly identifies the stones. She wears a gold choker from which several black stones dangle as pendants; this is a *necklace of missiles* with four missiles remaining (from which must be subtracted any she uses against the PCs). One missile cause a 5-HD fireball, one a 4-HD burst, and the remaining two 3-HD each. Finally, she wears a long thin silver chain (worth 20 gp) from which hangs a stone medallion (lapis, worth 30 gp) about two inches across bearing the image of a skull before a sevenfold gate on one side and a beautiful woman on a stone throne on the other: This is the sign of Erishkigal.

The zombire's robe is actually a *robe of useful items* with roughly half its patches remaining. In one pocket rests a crumpled up piece of paper—actually a *sheet of smallness*—inside which is a *manual of the golem* (flesh golem). In the other pocket is a cursed scarab that acts like a *helm of opposite alignment*; when carried for any length of time (an hour or more) it reverses the alignment of its possessor. Thus a LG character would become CE, a CG one would become LE, etc., with a Neutral character adopting one of the four extremes (LG, CG, LE, or CE; equal chance of each). The scarab functions once per month and cannot work twice on the same character. Finally, attached to the zombire's velvet belt is a *pouch of accessibility*. The remainder of their treasure is hidden in two of the room's coffins. One holds the skeltar's wardrobe (five more dresses of varying colors similar to the one she is currently wearing; all six are worth 50 gp each in good condition). The other holds 3,000 gp in thirty neat bags of exactly 100 each plus a pouch with fifteen gems: 4 tiger eyes (worth 10 gp each), 2 white chalcedony (50 gp each), 4 amethyst (100 gp each), 3 black pearls (500 gp each), a star sapphire (1,000 gp value), and a yellow diamond (worth 5,000 gp but requiring two successful appraising rolls to correctly identify). A single successful roll misidentifies it as a topaz worth only 500 gp).

In addition, some of the room's furnishings are of value: there are six goblets in all, each worth 35 gp, and four candelabra, worth 20 gp each.

There is a secret door in the west wall on this chamber that leads to the Labyrinth (see Cave I). The undead are aware of the door and have *wizard locked* it as a precaution against entry by the minotaurs (and kobolds). The door can only be opened by means of a *knock* spell or by presenting a labys (two-headed axe).



#### F5. Cold Storage

Characters who glance into this room see row after row of skeletons and zombies standing in neat ranks. These undead are stationed here to defend the skeltar and zombire and generally discourage hobgoblins, adventurers, and other riff-raff from entering

## Cave G: Fungus Cave

This cave-opening gapes like a wide mouth with an idiot grin, a trickle of water dribbling out to form the little stream that flows down through the valley. From within comes no sound except the occasional *plop!* of dripping water.

The Goblinwater originates in this cave, eventually making its way down to join the river some two miles away. There are virtually no intelligent lifeforms here, merely an assortment of various lowlives—some of them very dangerous, so explorers enter at their own risk.

### G1. Stirges' Roost

Immediately inside the mouth, the cave becomes a tunnel leading to the right and left. Looking right, you see it bend around a corner out of sight; the trickling stream comes from that direction. To the left, several dark openings await. A high-pitched squeaking comes from directly over your head(s).

The tunnel is home to a colony of stirges, who roost on the passage roof. Anyone entering who carries any kind of light source disturbs the stirges, who attack. However, at nighttime there is a 30% chance that the stirges are elsewhere, prowling about for prey, in which case characters may enter freely and without fear.

**Stirges (12):** AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1+1; hp 5 each (average); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (proboscis); SA drain blood (1d4 points per round, starting round after attaches self to victim, detaching when sated); SD keen senses (200' infravision, acute sense of smell), attacks against an attached stirge that miss may hit its victim instead (see above); SW proboscis cannot pierce hides of creatures with natural AC 3 or better (this does not apply to humans wearing platemail, as the stirge will attack through the slits and joints in the armor); SZ S (1' long body, 2' wingspan); ML average (8); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 175 each.

### G2. Source of the Goblinwater (Otyugh Pool)

The passageway gets wetter as you advance, until you are sloshing through several inches of water by the time you turn the corner. Ahead you see a pool of gray water, completely opaque with dissolved mud and sludge, that seems to bubble slightly as if a hidden spring were welling up from below. Lichens cling to the walls and the roof is thick with hanging mosses; from time to time a drop of condensation falls in the pool with an audible *plop!* that sounds unusually loud in the silence. A narrow ledge encircles the pool, but it is submerged under an inch or two of the murky water. The room is slightly warmer than the passage, and a foul brimstone smell is in the air.

Here at the source of the Goblinwater, fed by warm springs from below, lives an otyugh, nourished by the decaying mosses that fall into the water and the lichens that flake off from the walls. This pool serves as a dumping ground for wastes from the ravine's more fastidious residents (the bandits of Cave B, the Necromancer in Cave I, and the evil priests from The Hidden Temple). Fed by this rich diet (supplemented by the occasional bandit or acolyte when it felt the need for variety), the otyugh has grown to great size. From time to time it forages in the other rooms of the cave complex, bringing back fungus to add to the noisome mix. When the PCs originally enter, it ignores them, but there is a cumulative 10% chance per round they spend here that it becomes curious and decides to see what they taste like. The otyugh can attack anyone in the room or within ten feet of its entrance without leaving its nice warm pool (something it is loath to do). Roll for surprise when its tentacles come exploding out of the gray sludge. Initially it merely seeks to drag an intruder down

or exploring Cave F. Either of the undead wizards can summon them by silent mental command from anywhere in the complex, and the servitors obey those commands at once without question. The undead stationed in this room defend themselves if attacked. If anyone enters the room, the undead stand motionless for three rounds, then begin to stir in the fourth. On the fifth round, they attack anyone who has not fled the room. If the characters merely pass the entrance but do not enter (on their way to or from room F6), then the undead animate and pursue them, attacking them if they are still in the corridor. The undead do not leave Cave F, unless ordered to do so by the skeltar or zombire.

**Zombies (8):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 8 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (fist); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, death magic (already dead), poison, and cold-based spells; SW always lose initiative, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

**Skeletons (12):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (rusty shortsword); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear*, poison, death magic, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons; SW blunt weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

There is no treasure in this room.

### F6. Smoke Room

The door to this room is closed but not locked. Inside, the air is filled with aromatic smoke. Ten hobgoblins hang on wicked-looking metal hooks driven by main force into the stone wall.

The smoke comes from a covered smokepot in one corner; the zombire is experimenting with methods to better preserve the flesh and appearance of corpses for animation. As a result, these bodies look to be in much better shape than the other zombies encountered in these caves, and they all smell of cured meat. Only one obvious door leads into and out of this room, but a secret door in the opposite [west] wall leads to a short (twenty-foot) corridor only five feet wide and six feet tall. The secret doors at either end of the corridor are obvious from the inside. This short passage connects the Smoke Room to the rest of the former hobgoblin lair.

Six of these ten hobgoblins have been animated by the zombire, but they cannot detach themselves from the hooks without aid. Therefore characters who come into the room are safe from these zombies unless they take them down from the wall for some reason. There is no treasure in this room.

**Hobgoblin Zombies (6):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (fist); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, death magic (already dead), poison, and cold-based spells; SW always lose initiative, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

### F7 through F10. Abandoned Rooms

This section of the hobgoblin lair had largely fallen out of use after the lair was abandoned following attacks by adventurers twenty years ago. The new hobgoblin tribe that recolonized the complex was somewhat smaller and used these chambers mainly for storage. Most of the hobgoblins who survived the undead attack did so by fleeing through these secret rooms to the goblin cave (Cave D), using the same passage they had employed for years to sneak in and purloin the best bits of loot garnered by the goblins. They have now been taken in as refugees and sworn allegiance to the highly gratified goblins (pleased at being able to lord it over their overbearing larger cousins for a change). The hobgoblins have since made a few careful excursions into these rooms, stripping them of all valuables; there is no treasure here unless the Dungeon Master wishes to place some (probably trading goods looted from unfortunate merchants).

under the surface to drown for it to feast upon later at its leisure. Characters grappled by one of its ridged tentacles suffer 2d2 points of damage per round, plus drowning damage if applicable. However, if its intended meal puts up a fight and succeeds in wounding the creature, it begins hooting and smashing anyone held in a tentacle against the rock walls for 1d8 points per smash. Any character dragged under the surface is bitten (+2 bonus to the bite attack against any grappled opponent) for 1d4+1 points and has a 90% chance of contracting a fell disease. The otyugh does not pursue potential meals that leave the room.

**Otyugh:** AC 3; MV 6; HD 8; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d4+1 + disease (tentacle smash/tentacle smash/bite); SA constriction (2d2 points damage per round), +2 bonus to attack roll to bite grappled opponents, bite causes disease (90% chance; roll again to determine severity—80% debilitating, 20% fatal); SD never surprised, infravision (90'), limited telepathy (range 40'); SZ L (7' diameter blob); ML elite (14); Int low (5); AL N; XP 1,400. The otyugh has no treasure.

### G3. Fun with Fungus

This cave seems filled with a riot of fungus—mushrooms, toadstools, mosses, lichen, and whatnot sprout all around you. The back part of the room is shielded from your view by a rough projection in the wall, forming a kind of alcove. You move till you have a straight line of sight, only to have a strange sight meet your eyes. In the center of the alcove a perfectly spherical creature floats in mid-air like an evil moon. A great toothy maw fills the lower half of the floating head. Above this is a single eye fully a foot across staring fixedly at you. Ten short tentacles, each ending in an eye, move aimlessly atop the creature's body as it begins to drift toward you.

Despite appearances, this is not a beholder but a gas spore. It is attracted by body heat. If struck for even a single point of damage, it explodes, inflicting 6d6 points of damage on everyone within 20 feet (save vs. wand for half-damage). If the spore touches exposed flesh it shoots tiny rhizomes (root-like filaments) into the person and promptly collapses like an emptied balloon. The person it touched is now infected with spores and grows progressively sicker over the next 24 hours, dying at the end of that time unless he or she receives a *cure disease* spell. Upon death, he or she sprouts 2d4 more gas spores.

**Gas Spore:** AC 9; MV fly 3; hp 1; THAC0 N/A; SD see above; SZ L (5' diameter); Int non (0); AL N; XP 120.

The rest of the fungus here is benign. Characters who search carefully may find the remains of the poor unfortunate who "birthed" this gas spore. Beneath the fungus is the skeleton of a man in *chainmail* +1. He dropped his magical sword in his delirium before he wandered into this place and died (it was found by the bugbears in Cave H) but inside his decaying left boot where his big toe would normally be is a rotted silk pouch holding three gems cut into geometric shapes. One is pale green, apparently jade, and shaped like a tiny prism. Both of the others are shaped like tiny rods; one is clear, apparently quartz, and the other iridescent. All three are actually *ioun stones* this deceased warrior stole from an adventuring companion he killed, hiding them away to keep his other colleagues from suspecting that he was the culprit. When placed in orbit around a character's head the prism allows him or her to function as if one level higher, temporarily boosting hp, spells, THAC0, and the like. The clear spindle allows its user to go without food and water for as long as the stone remains in orbit (thereafter he or she must eat or drink immediately to make up arrears). The iridescent stone enables the character to stop breathing without any adverse effects.

### G4. Green Slime

Unlike the other chambers in this cave, this room seems clear of fungus. Only bare walls meet your gaze as you look to right and left.

There are two dangers here: green slime on the ceiling overhead and a gelatinous cube in the northernmost part of the room. From time to time creatures enter and fall prey to the slime, but the cube devours any patches that start up anywhere other than on the roof above its reach. Roll a d6 each time a character enters the room; on a result of "1" a patch of green slime falls on his or her head. The cube also begins to move slowly in that direction, arriving six rounds later. Note that the transparent cube is silent and essentially invisible in poor lighting (such as a torchlit cave); give characters who are alert the same chance to detect its approach as they would have to find a secret door, but those distracted by the green slime ("aaah! get it off me get it off me aaaah!") should be more or less blindsided when it blunders into the rearmost among them. The cube has no intelligence and attacks by simply bumping into things and enveloping them in its soft substance. There is no treasure in this room, making it a good place to stay away from.

**Gelatinous Cube:** AC 8; MV 6; HD 4; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 + paralyzation (digestive acids); SA touch paralyzes target for 5d4 rounds (save vs. paralyzation to resist), surprise (-3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls); SD immune to *sleep*, electricity, *fear*, *hold person/animal/monster*, paralyzation, and polymorphs; SW *slowed* by cold-based magic (MV 3, acid damage reduced to 1d4 per round), fire and weapons do normal damage; SZ L (10' cube); ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 650.

**Green Slime:** AC 9; MV 0\*; HD 2; 10 hp; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA covers target and turns any organic being into green slime in 1d4 rounds, eats through metal in 3 rounds and wood in 1 hour; SD immune to all weapons and most spells; SW *cure disease* (kills the slime), sunlight (renders it inactive), can be scraped off, frozen, or burned; SZ S (4' patch); ML N/A; Int non (0); AL N; XP 65.

\*The slime can creep very slowly back up the wall, but this takes hours and any patch that falls is always eaten by the gelatinous cube first. A new patch then grows on the ceiling from spores left by the original one.

### G5. More Fungus (I Scream, You Scream)

This place looks like a veritable garden of fungus, with mushrooms and toadstools higher than a halfling rising from the mossy floor. There seems to be a path through the mushrooms leading to a low dark passage on the right near the back of the room.

As soon as any character steps into the room, the shriekers begin to wail. Characters who move to silence the shriekers bring themselves into range of the violet fungi, one of which is alongside each shrieker (with the fourth at the beginning of the path, where it can strike at anyone who passes). The fungi must be within a foot or so of a target in order for their filaments to reach it. The sound of the shriekers bring giant rats and the wererat from area G6 in 1d3 rounds. Lookouts keeping a sharp eye on the "low dark passage" mentioned in the boxed text (the tunnel to area G6) can see several small dark figure race out of the opening and vanish beneath the fungus. All other character can see (if not distracted by the shriekers and violet fungi) is some kind of movement as if the toadstool stalks were being jostling from beneath from time to time. Note that the rats can move under the mushroom canopy and can recognize the violet fungi by sight, thus avoiding their attacks. Halflings, gnomes, and any character who decides to crawl on his or her knees can also make their way through the forest of stalks, but being on all fours may prove unfortunate when the ravenous rats attack.

**Shriekers (3):** AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 12, 15, 17; THAC0 17; #AT none; Dmg none; SD shriek when disturbed by light within 30' or movement within 10'; SZ S (3'); ML N/A; Int non (0); AL N; XP 120 each.

**Violet Fungi (4):** AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 11, 18, 16, 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg special (extrusion); SA anyone touched by

extrusion must save vs. poison or die, his or her flesh rotting away in a single round); SZ S (3'); ML N/A; Int non (0); AL N; XP 175 each.

**Giant Rats (12):** AC 7; MV 12, swim 6; HD 1/2; hp 3 or 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA bite may inflict disease; SD can move freely under the fungus cover; SW fear of fire; SZ S (2' long); ML champion (15) while under control of the wererat, unsteady (5) thereafter; Int semi (4); AL NE; XP 15 each.

**Lykos the Wererat:** AC 6; MV 12, swim 6; HD 3+3; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA bite may inflict disease or transmit the curse of lycanthrope to victim, backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD immune to normal weapons, reversion to human form heals 10% to 60% of any damage suffered, thief skills (hide in shadows 55%, move silently 60%); SW silver and magical weapons do normal damage; SZ S (2' long); ML steady (12); Int average (8); AL LE; XP 270.

The wererat is feral, attacking in rat form rather than with weapons, indistinguishable from any other of the giant rats. However, characters will no doubt be alarmed to discover that most of their attacks have no effect on it. In addition, there is always the chance that PCs may blunder into one of the violet fungi in the course of the battle (the characters will probably not be aware that the fungi can move, albeit very slowly). And of course the shriekers' siren makes it difficult to coordinate attacks or defense; the Dungeon Master may even want to impose a penalty to spellcasting since wizards and priests cannot hear themselves enunciate as they chant the vocal components of their spells. The wererat continues to attack viciously, darting in and out of cover, unless seriously injured (reduced to 7 hp or less), whereupon it and its minions withdraw. If Lykos receives enough damage to kill him, the Dungeon Master may decide that he has received a mortal wound and withdraws to die in his own lair.

There is no treasure in this room, as the wererat who lairs in the chamber beyond searches the remains of any victims of the violet fungi and removes their valuables. However, anyone examining the ground carefully finds a number of skeletons scattered about, mostly clustered about the shriekers (the shriekers and violet fungi live in a symbiotic relationship to acquire the decaying organic material they need to flourish). Most of the skeletons are human or humanoid (goblin and orc, primarily), but four dwarf skeletons can be found in one heap—relics of a demihuman expedition that came to grief in this chamber.

## G6. Rats!

The low tunnel leading to this chamber from area G5 is right down next to the floor and only two-and-a-half feet in diameter, forcing anyone who wants to transverse it to crawl on their hands and knees. If they have already dealt with the rats who dwell here, killing them in battle in the fungal forest, then all is well and they can enter room G6 without problem. However, if the wererat or any of his followers escaped, then they attack one-on-one against the lead character while he or she is still in the tunnel, biting at his or her face—literally fighting like cornered rats. Due to the constricted space, the character cannot use any weapon larger than a dagger and gains no Armor Class benefits from shield or Dexterity. Last of all, after all his minions have been slain, Lykos himself attacks and fights until mortally wounded. Once the tunnel has been cleared (potentially a long, grueling, bloody process) proceed to the room description below.

This curving chamber stinks to high heaven with the smells of damp fur, offal, and rotting meat. The tunnel leading off to your right is almost entirely choked with sticks, bones, dried grass, scraps of fur, and bits of metal. The stack rises to a height of almost six feet and seems to serve as a giant nest for these unsavory rodents. A well-chewed body lies on the floor—probably humanoid, although it's too far-gone to be certain.

If the characters mortally wounded the wererat (either in area G5 or in forcing the passage to this room), a trail of blood leads

from the entrance to the nest, where Lykos's body lies motionless, now reverted to human form (a short, scrawny man with a thin unpleasant face) in death. The dead humanoid on the floor was an orc (last survivor of his tribe, who fled Cave C before the final assault and attempted to take refuge in these caves). Formerly one of the bandit leaders (see Cave B), Lykos fled after becoming infected with lycanthropy lest his comrades discover his affliction and put him down like a mad dog. The transition to werebeast unhinged his mind, leaving him feral and dangerous to anything that went on two legs.

No obvious treasure meets the eyes of PCs, but anyone investigating the nest (which is rather like a big sloppy haystack crammed into a stone passage) can see the glint of shiny metal within. The wererat's hoard can be found by taking the nest apart, layer by layer. Scattered among the mess is a suit of dwarven platemail, another of dwarf-sized *chainmail* +1, the ruined remnants of dwarven leather armor, a *warhammer* +1 engraved with Moradin's symbol (a hammer and anvil), a double-headed handaxe that would serve as a *labys* to open the doors to the labyrinth, and a *crossbow* +1. Some 220 gp and a magnificent choker of silver chased with gold and set with tiny emeralds (worth 2,100 gp) have worked their way down through the stuff of the nest but can be recovered by persistent treasure-seekers. The hammer and choker are heirlooms of the dwarven clans to which the unfortunate band belonged and they will seek to reclaim these if they learn of their recovery, offering whatever the Dungeon Master deems appropriate as a finder's fee (a special suit of dwarf-forged armor for one of the characters would be about right).

At the very back of the passage, buried behind the nest, is a secret door to the Labyrinth. If detected (that is, if at least the upper half of the nest is removed), then it can be opened either by a *knock* spell or by presenting the dwarven handaxe. The Dungeon Master may either have the passage beyond be filled with 1d6 very surprised kobolds, each of whom holds a sixty-foot-length of knotted cord, or rule that a minotaur senses the door opening and investigates within four rounds. The kobolds flee at once, scattering in alarm; they are essentially untraceable once they get out of sight. The minotaur, on the other hand, rolls a single gold piece down the corridor toward the PCs in order to lure them into the labyrinth; wise characters will resist such obvious bait, especially if they are banged up from encounters with rats, the wererat, and the fungus.

## Cave H: Beleaguered Bugbears

### H1. A Call to Arms

Just outside the cave mouth here is a weather-bleached wooden sign with a message in large crude letters. Written in the goblinish common tongue, it reads "*Comrades! Join the cause! Repel the loathsome invaders who profane our ancestral caves with their sacrificial altars! All humanoids welcome!*"

Just inside the entrance, the bugbear shaman has placed a *wyvern watch*. Characters have only a 30% chance of detecting it in the semi-darkness, although thieves' find & remove traps attempts and the clerical *find traps* spell both work normally. If the *wyvern watch* goes off, it automatically alerts the guards in rooms H2 and H6.

### H2. Guard Room

This room has a brazier filled with coals, around which several large humanoids sit on three-legged stools, smoking meat on skewers. A huge gong hangs beside them within easy reach. The humanoids are hairy, their yellowish skin largely covered by yellow-brown fur. Their teeth are those of a carnivore, great fangs and incisors that the thick lips cannot wholly cover. Their eyes are an unsettling greenish-white, with red pupils. Great

wedge-shaped ears stand out on either side of their heads, rotating independently as they catch a noise. Apparently they heard you approach, because as you enter one of them is carefully putting down his skewer. Making no sudden moves, he slowly rises, standing a full seven feet high. Holding both hands out to you, empty and with the palms facing you, he steps forward carefully saying "Kakkatok? Kakkatok?" in an inquiring tone of voice.

Anyone who speaks the goblin tongue, or is under the effects of a *comprehend languages* spell will recognize this word as meaning "talk/discuss/bargain/negotiate." Anyone who speaks orc, hobgoblin, bugbear, or kobold has a percentage chance equal to his or her Intelligence  $\times 5$  (60% with Int 12, 40% with Int 8, 90% with Int 18, etc.) to understand. This is clearly a call for a parley; whether or not the PCs realize, or honor, this is of course entirely up to the players. They will not be able to take the bugbears by surprise, as the guards are alert (they expect an attack from the Hidden Temple's minions to come any day now); only a scout who is *silenced* and *invisible* could evade their notice. If the PCs have cleared out several other caves in the valley before entering this one, the bugbears will have heard of them, hence their attempt to negotiate an alliance. Since none of the bugbears speaks common or any of the demihuman languages (elvish, dwarvish, halfling, gnomish), this may prove difficult.

Assuming the characters do not attack and wait to see what happens, the bugbear stops about halfway across the room, kneels down, and draws something in the dust—a crude skull. He then rises, shouts "Dur!" ("death!/attack!/destroy!") and stomps on the image. Then he looks at the adventurers. If they hesitate, he points first to them and then to the skull, asking "Dur?" Unless the characters somehow signal their opposition to the death-priests of the Hidden Temple within three rounds, the bugbear begins to shout in his own tongue so rapidly that they cannot understand the words, although the angry tone is evident. He draws a dagger from his belt and throws it at the gong (consider it AC 10 for purposes of this "attack," with the bugbear gaining a +4 attack bonus against this stationary target) while his comrades charge to the attack with their longsword skewers. Unless the gong is somehow prevented from sounding (a clerical *silence* spell or PC throwing himself or herself between the gong and the dagger would do it), every bugbear in the complex hears the alarm and moves toward this spot as quickly as possible.

**Bugbear Guards (3):** AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 21, 18, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (skewer); SA stealth (can move absolutely quietly, surprising opponents 50% of the time); SD infravision (60'), exceptional sight, hearing, and sense of smell (cannot be surprised); SZ L (7'); ML elite (13); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 120 each.

Each bugbear carries 5d10 gp and 3d10 sp. In addition, the "skewers," if closely examined, turn out to be longswords of very fine make. Although blackened with soot and grease, if cleaned these are quite valuable. Two of them are worth 50 gp each due to the craftsmanship, while the third is actually a silver sword worth 200 gp. The silver sword is a delicate weapon, however, apt to get notched if used in combat against other metal weapons (iron, bronze, etc.). In such circumstances it has a 5% chance (non-cumulative) of breaking. If the blade does snap, have the player roll percentage dice to see how much of the blade remains attached to the hilt (80%, 24%, etc.—a high roll is obviously desirable in this case).

### H3. Bugbear Common

This room is obviously the living area for a large group of humanoids, with at least a dozen of the now-familiar piles of old garments to serve as bedding. The fine smell of roasting meat fills the air, the smoke escaping up a small pipe in the ceiling.

Unless alerted by the gong, this area is simply stiff with bugbears: 7 males, 10 females, and 12 youngsters. They are engaged in eating one of the two deer a hunting party recently brought back,

sitting cross-legged on the floor and each happily gnawing at a haunch or similar sizable hunk of meat off an iron platter. Characters who have entered into an alliance with the bugbears are brought here after meeting with the old shaman in room H4 and given a generous piece of venison of their own (bugbears are strict carnivores) along with a bottle of good-vintage wine. Afterwards the bugbears celebrate by taking catnip like snuff, a disgusting habit that makes them light-headed, relaxed, and sleepy. Many actually purr (hearing a bugbear purr should be a rather disconcerting event for the average PC). Should the alarm have been sounded, this room is empty, the food-platters abandoned and the meat on the spit burning. Characters who silently dealt with the guards in room H2 will be noticed (by their scent) when they are within thirty feet of the door to this chamber, with all the bugbears drawing weapons and silently taking up defensive positions.

**Male Bugbears (7):** AC 5 (studded leather, Dex bonus); MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 15 each (average); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (spiked club); SA stealth (can move absolutely quietly, surprising opponents 50% of the time); SD infravision (60'), exceptional sight, hearing, and sense of smell (cannot be surprised); SZ L (7'); ML elite (13); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 120 each.

**Female Bugbears (10):** AC 7 (hide, Dex bonus); MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 8 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace); SA stealth; SD infravision, exceptional senses (cannot be surprised); SZ L (7'); ML steady (11); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 65 each.

**Young Bugbears (12):** AC 7 (hide, Dex bonus); MV 6; HD 1/2; hp 4 each (average); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); SA stealth; SD infravision, exceptional senses (cannot be surprised); SZ S (3 to 4'); ML average (9); Int average (8); AL CE; XP 35 each.

There is no treasure here other than personal wealth carried by each individual bugbear: 5d10 gp and 3d10 sp for each male, 5d6 gp and 3d8 sp for each female, and 3d6 sp for each juvenile. The bugbears are aware of the secret door to the labyrinth, having only recently captured a group of kobolds who slipped through it for a bit of thieving. The bugbears grabbed five of the unlucky intruders, but the rest slammed the door and escaped, and the bugbears have been unable to open it. They are currently torturing the kobolds to extract the secret from them. As with the other doors to the labyrinth, this door can be opened from the outside only via a *knock* spell (which the bugbears do not have access to) or by presentation of a labys (a double-headed axe).

### H4. Bugbear Shaman

The door to this room is trapped with a special *glyph of warding* known as *Hruggek's noose*: Anyone triggering the glyph takes 5d4 points of damage (save for half-damage) directly to his or her neck, as if throttled by an invisible wire. The glyph leaves a thin red scar encircling the neck of any target that took damage from it unless all that damage is magically healed; anyone killed by the glyph is decapitated.

Your first thought upon entering is that this room is uncommonly warm—almost sultry, after the ever-present chill of most of these caves. An ancient humanoid, its yellow skin creased in wrinkles and its furlike hair gray with age, sits huddled in a blanket in a stout chair, accepting a steaming drink from a female humanoid. Both have shaved the hair in a strip encircling their necks, leaving a band of pale yellow skin that has the odd effect of making their heads seem almost detached from the body. In addition, the old male has an ugly scar on his left temple, as if a blow from an axe or swordblade struck him and made an actual dent in the skull beneath. The ancient creature takes a restoring sip from the wooden mug and then gestures for you to approach and seat yourselves.

This ancient shaman is the leader of the tribe, being the only adult male to survive the depredations of adventurers who almost wiped out his people twenty years ago. Although badly injured and left for dead, he recovered from his wound and began to have visions (or hallucinations) which he took to be sendings from

Hruggek, the bugbear god. Accordingly he convinced the few surviving females of the tribe that it was Hruggek's will that they remain there and reestablish the tribe. Once an ordinary warrior, he became a shaman and has remained their leader ever since, although now a great age (seventy-five, a lifespan almost unheard of among his people). The plan to unify all the goblinkin of the Caves of Chaos came to him in one of his visions; it is just as well for the folk at the Keep that he has had little success in implementing it. Although he does not speak Common nor any demihuman language, he welcomes the adventurers (assuming they do not burst in on him, swords swinging) and attempts to enlist them as allies, giving them whatever information he can about the Hidden Temple. Unfortunately, this is precious little other than the location of its entrance, the presence there of evil priests who worship a goddess of death and command a great army of undead, and their plan to control first this valley and then the entire region, including the Keep. To aid adventurers willing to assault the Hidden Temple he sends three of his best warriors (use stats from area H2), led by his acolyte. She, like all the younger adults of the tribe, is his child—his daughter, whom he is training to take his place. Assuming she survives the events of this module, it will not be long before she presides over her venerable parent's grave-feast (bugbears eat their dead, with great ceremony) and attempts to seize control of the valley, setting off a series of feuds among the remaining humanoids that will keep them busy (and away from the Keep) for years to come.

**Haggadah the Old (5th-level Bugbear Shaman):** AC 10; MV 6; HD 4+1; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells, infravision (30' range due to cataracts); SW age-eneffebled; SZ L (7'); ML steady (12); Int very (12); AL NE; XP 175. Spells (3/3/1): 1st—*bless, darkness, sanctuary*; 2nd—*augury, silence* 15[FM] *radius, wyvern watch* (already cast); 3rd—*curse*.

**Nabadiah the Acolyte (2nd-level Bugbear Shaman):** AC 5 (studded leather, Dex bonus); MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (morning star); SA stealth; SD spells, infravision, exceptional senses; SZ L (7'); ML elite (13); Int very (11); AL CE; XP 175. Spells: *bless, darkness*.

There is no treasure here, as the shaman has renounced worldly wealth and his acolyte must perforce do the same—during his lifetime, at least.

#### H5. Storage

This locked room is used to store goods belonging to the tribe—that is, stolen either from unfortunate travelers or, more often, from lesser humanoids. The bugbears' decades-long practice of extorting food and other loot from the kobolds, goblins, orcs, and occasionally hobgoblins contributed significantly to the reluctance of those races to join together and submit themselves to bugbear leadership when a common threat appeared in the guise of the priests of the Hidden Temple. Most of what is stored here is food, but there is also fuel (coal), bedding (cloth), beverage (wine and ale), and recreation (catnip!). The last of these must be kept strictly under lock and key in order to maintain discipline, but if the PCs enter into an alliance with the bugbears to sack the Hidden Temple, then the shaman breaks out the catnip as part of the resultant celebrations.

#### H6. Jailers

Four female bugbears stand on guard here to prevent any of the prisoners in rooms H7 or H8 from escaping, and to discourage rescue attempts from outside (primarily by inhabitants of the other caves). They hide on either side of the entrance and around the various corners, then leap out and attempt to ambush the intruders (roll for surprise). A key ring with the two large (4") keys that open the doors to H7 and H8 hangs in a niche high up on the west wall. The jailers each carry 5d6 gp and 3d8 sp. One of them has a double-headed throwing axe dangling from her belt (taken from the kobolds); this will open any of the doors leading to the labyrinth.

**Female Bugbears (4):** AC 7 (hide, Dex bonus); MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 8 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (spiked mace) or 1d6 (throwing axe); SA stealth; SD infravision, exceptional senses (cannot be surprised); SZ L (7'); ML steady (11); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 65 each.

#### H7. Slaves

The door to this room is barred from without, and the area within is covered by *continual darkness*. Hence, characters who open the door can see nothing, not even with infravision. They hear only the sad clink of chains; if they call out, there is a moment of silence followed by several high-pitched voices babbling beseechingly (in kobold).

Characters who dispel the darkness or explore the room by touch find four live kobolds, chained against the wall by a continuous link across their chests that has them a good two feet off the floor. They also find one dead kobold, dangling with a knotted cord around his neck. The bugbears recently captured this band of kobold explorers but have not been able to wrest from them the secret of the labyrinth; thus they have decided to kill them slowly one by one until the survivors decide to talk. Since kobolds are utterly selfish, each is grateful not to have been chosen and the bugbear plan will only work when a single kobold remains.

If freed, the kobolds express their undying gratitude (groveling on their faces, kissing the characters' feet, etc.). They remain completely loyal until the first time they are faced with a battle, whereupon they run away at top speed. They refuse to explain the method of opening the door to the labyrinth, fearing to be left behind once the secret is revealed, but gladly demonstrate it given the chance. Therefore they will want to bring along the knotted cord used to strangle their late comrade and also claim the throwing axe from the body of their jailer if at all possible. The Dungeon Master should feel free to use the kobolds as comic relief, the adventure having been grim on the whole up to this point.

**Kobolds (4):** AC 7; MV 6; HD 1/2; hp 2, 3, 4, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or 1d2 (bite); SW -1 attack penalty in bright light; SZ S (average 3'); ML unreliable (2); Int average (10); AL LE; XP none.

#### H8. Slaves

The door to this room is barred from without. Inside are several human slaves and prisoners who were unlucky enough to be captured by the bugbears. If the PCs have not yet encountered Cob the woodsman (see "Potential Henchman & Allies" in Chapter Two), then he is here. Several 1st-level bandits are here as well, captured while returning from an unsuccessful highwayman job (use stats from the Wilderness random encounters section in Chapter Three). Cob will swear service to anyone who rescues him, faithfully aiding the character who freed him until he has repaid his great debt. The bandits will also be grateful and will help their rescuers as much as possible, but balk at taking on their old colleagues (aside from the halfling brigands) or the evil priests.

Finally, there is one unhappy acolyte from the Hidden Temple, a 1st-level priest of Nergal named Duranki whom the delighted bugbears intend to torture very slowly over the next month or so until he finally expires. He is gagged and both his hands have been broken, preventing him from casting any spells. His injuries require a *cure light wounds* spell to be cast on each of his hands for them to be restored to normal use. He also bears a number of cuts, bruises, and slashes, some of which have been rubbed with salt. Duranki will be very glad to be rescued from the bugbears—a likely occurrence if the adventurers are in "kill the monsters, free the prisoners" mode. If identified as a priest of the Hidden Temple he reluctantly admits this and attempts to persuade them that the Temple's goal is to restore order to this valley, eliminating the chaotic humanoids and forever ending the threat they pose to peaceful human settlement of the area. He denies that they mean any harm to the Keep or its inhabitants, and offers to set up a meeting between his superiors and the adventurers to "reach a better understanding" and possibly broker an alliance. Duranki helps the PCs against the humanoids in any ways possible. Given a chance, however, he slips away and reports back to the High Priestess and her advisors, who then prepare a reception for the adventurers' foray against them that they now know is sure to come. Duranki has lost his holy symbol but can easily make another; it is simply a piece of bone (human or demihuman bone is best) with a skull

carved on one side and a lintel (flattened arch with crossbar) on the other, representing death and the door to the tomb.

**Duranki (1st-level Priest of Nergal):** AC 10; MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SD spells; SZ M (5'9"); ML elite (14); Int very (12); AL LE; XP 15 (without spells) or 35 (with spells).

None of these unfortunates has any treasure.

## Cave I: The Labyrinth

With the possible exception of the Hidden Temple, this cave is the most dangerous location in the Caves of Chaos. Should the PC party be ill-equipped to handle the challenges it poses, the Dungeon Master should give them clear warnings early on while they still have a chance to withdraw.

The labyrinth links all the caves in the Caves of Chaos, but a spell of confusion affects all who enter, making it impossible for them to keep directions straight. Even those with direction sense are baffled; only an *arrow of direction* can combat the magic of this place, and even it will malfunction 25% of the time (on a roll of 1 on a d4). The Dungeon Master should simulate this confusion by rolling a die each time they come to an intersection; if the result is odd, they go left when they meant to go right and vice versa (or forward when they meant to go back, etc.). Each time they pass through the same intersection he or she should roll again.

Characters attempting to map this place will soon find their maps filled with hopeless contradictions. Splitting up will almost certainly prove disastrous, as the party members will find it very difficult to find one another again. The confusion extends even to things like which direction a shout came from, or whether it is getting louder or softer (until it is too late, of course—the echoes are very deceiving). Those who try to maintain line-of-sight corrections, a good idea in theory, are baffled in practice by the twists and turns the passages make; it is rare that one can see more than a short way ahead or behind. The kobolds navigate this place by linking themselves together with cords sixty feet long and knotted at five-foot intervals. The minotaurs are amused by their persistence and only occasionally spear one for their presumption (besides, having the kobolds frequent the maze provides a steady source of meals for the labyrinth's masters).

The minotaurs who are the masters of this place are immune to the confusion effect, of course, enabling them to swiftly overtake and destroy intruders. While wandering these tunnels, the characters should occasionally come across the skeletal remains of previous adventurers who entered the maze and wandered until they died from lack of food and water. These skeletons are often huddled in despair or stretched in the corridor as if they died while crawling. No valuables remain with any of these unfortunates, as they have all been looted by the minotaurs; at most a broken weapon or empty waterskin are near the bones. The minotaurs are also careful to remove and destroy any maps or trail-markers (such as pieces of chalk) and to obliterate any such marks on the floors or walls. In fact, if PCs enter the maze the minotaurs will be aware of them within a turn and one will stalk them thereafter, taking care to keep out of sight, wiping off any signs they make and removing or moving any items they drop to mark the trail. They are quick to attack a lone character who has gone ahead as a scout or otherwise become separated from the main party. His fellows often hear shouts and cries but can seldom locate their friend in time—at best they later find a gored corpse, or a body pinned to the wall with a great spear, or perhaps merely a bloody patch. This hit-and-run attacks continue at irregular intervals for as long as the party remains in the maze.

The Labyrinth is a deadly place, and low-level parties will come to grief here unless they are clever and resourceful. Fortunately, roleplayers are exceptional inventive and are likely to come up with a number of possible solutions to navigating the maze. If your group becomes well and truly stuck, wait until they are desperate—low on food and water and almost out of torches—then have them encounter a group of kobolds cautiously making their way through the maze with their knotted cords.

Depending on what happens next, they might be able to force the kobolds to show them the way out (hopefully taking care to guard against treachery on the part of their unwilling guides), bargain with the little monsters to achieve the same end (probably by bribing them extravagantly), shadow the kobolds to the nearest exit (difficult but just possible), or devise a similar strategy to the knotted cords used by the kobolds to keep together. A second strategy is to pray for divine inspiration, in which case either the cleverest, wisest, or most simple-minded of the characters has a dream in which he or she realizes some important clue—for example, if they met Bethany (see I1) and talked to her, they should know that her snakes can come and go without problem. This is because the confusion only works on intelligent beings; thus an animal (say a familiar, war-dog, pack-pony, or pet) could easily lead them to water and hence the exit. Failing that, a character who was blindfolded and deafened should also have a chance equal to her Wisdom score  $\times$  5% of smelling her way out—although a cruel Dungeon Master would surely note that a blinded and deafened character makes a tempting target for the lurking minotaur(s). Any character who actually makes it to an exit is safe, as the minotaurs never pursue prey beyond the Labyrinth. Characters who reach one of its "empty rooms" are also safe, as the minotaurs prefer not to fight in areas where foes can gang up on them, keeping to the passages where their greater size and strength give them the advantage in most one-on-one confrontations. Note that although there are a total of five minotaurs in the maze the characters will never encounter more than one at a time. If they slay it, the others will spare no pains to recover the body; it should seem to the characters as if they have one relentless foe that cannot be stopped even by death.

**Minotaurs (5):** AC 6; MV 12; HD 6+3; hp 27, 28, 42, 32, 30; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/1d10+2 (gore/greataxe plus Str bonus)\*; SA double damage for gore attack (2d4 $\times$ 2) on a charge; SD infravision, excellent sense of smell (track prey with 50% accuracy in total darkness), +2 bonus to all surprise rolls; SZ L (7½' tall); ML fearless (19); Str 18, Int very (12); AL CE; XP 1,400 each. Special Equipment: Greataxe (double-headed long-handled labys).

\*if too close to gore, the minotaur can bite instead for 1d4 points of damage.

### I1. Bethany

Not too far into these twisting, winding passages you come across a chamber carved into the rock. Someone has set up a simple altar in the back of the room by draping a white cloth over what looks suspiciously like a large box. Two bowl-like lamps burn on the altar, filling the room with a pleasant spiced scent. A dark-haired woman in a sleeveless white dress with sandals is kneeling before the altar with her back to you, her head bowed, apparently lost in prayer. A black cloak is spread across a small neat pallet set against one wall, beside which is what looks like a scrollcase, a waterskin, a small cage filled with mice, and a bowl and sponge.

Bethany is a recent arrival to this valley, and has gone to a lot of trouble to make this place look neat and clean. Formerly she worshipped the little-known Lawful Good snake-god Hispis ("Swallower of Small Evils") but had the misfortune to be driven insane by a cursed magic item she found on her very first adventure, causing her to convert to the worship of Apep the Devourer ("He Who Shall Devour the World"). She hopes to found a shrine to Apep and thought this cave looked more like the Duat, or Egyptian Underworld, than did any other she had come across. The minotaurs are amused by her presumption and decided to leave her in peace, believing it's best not to meddle with holy madness (gods having a notorious tendency to smite those who mess with their chosen followers). They may eventually decide to lure her deeper into the labyrinth and mate with her, but for now they are content merely to watch her devotions. She often



feels that she is being watched by unseen eyes, but ascribes this to the Favor of Apep and merely redoubles her prayers and praises.

Despite her piety, Bethany is very friendly and warmly welcomes any visitors, offering them what little she has (some dried rations and fresh water) and asking if they would like to join her in a prayer service. In truth, she is lonely and glad for a little company. Should characters notice and comment on the many tiny snakebites that cover her bare arms, she proudly shows off her little pets—1d6 snakes are present at any given time, usually curled up near the lamps or on the bedroll under the cloak. All of these are harmless wild snakes that she has captured and tamed, as she has a great affinity with all reptiles. The mice are snakefood.

Bethany can be used in the campaign in a number of ways. She gladly heals any PC who is obviously injured or in distress and promises to do the same again on any return visit, as she would be very glad to see people now and again. She may even be persuaded to join them in their forays, as she wishes to gain experience in order to better further her god's worship. She will be disappointed if all the characters refuse to join her in prayer but not take offense unless they actively deride her beliefs, in which case she asks them to leave. She defends herself if attacked but does not initiate hostilities, as she is desperate to found a congregation to the greater glory of Apep. Whether or not it might be possible to convince her to leave and relocate to the Keep is up to the Dungeon Master, assuming the PCs even try—certainly Abercrombie the chaplain would be mightily displeased by any attempts to establish a foothold for an evil faith within his parish. The question of whether or not Bethany can be cured of her madness is also beyond the scope of this adventure, but might make a good hook into the next stage of the campaign (whatever the Dungeon Master has decided that is to be). Hotheads who simply attack and try to kill her will probably be able to do so, but those who subdue or leave her bound and unconscious find

her gone when next they return, carried deeper into the labyrinth and hidden by the minotaurs.

**Bethany (1st-level Cleric of Apep):** AC 10 (unarmored) or 4 (chainmail, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (snakeshead flail); SD spells; SW obsession with cleanliness (must always wear only pure white, bathes every few hours); SZ M (5'2"); ML elite (14); Str 14, Dex 15, Con 7, Int 10, Wis 17, Chr 16; AL LE (formerly LG); XP 65. Spells: *animal friendship*, *command*, *cure light wounds*. Special Equipment: ankh (holy symbol, worn on chain around neck), golden snake amulet with ruby eyes (worth 1200; if broken up the tiny rubies are worth 100 gp each).

Bethany has only 3 sp in cash, as she has spent almost all her money equipping this place. Inside the box that currently serves as the altar are a number of several jugs of scented lamp-oil (enough to keep the two lamps here burning for weeks). The box also holds her armor; the flail is laid alongside her sleeping pallet. She openly wears her ankh, explaining that it is her holy symbol to anyone who asks. However, she keeps her chief treasure, the golden snake amulet, hidden under her pillow. This is a cursed magic item that has no powers other than to convert anyone who carries it to the worship of Apep; it radiates but magic and evil if these are detected for. If the character is Lawful Good, he or she becomes Lawful Evil; otherwise, the character becomes Chaotic Evil and is filled with missionary zeal to spread the word about mighty Apep, He-Who-Shall-Devour-the World.

## 12. Empty Room

The winding passage opens into a chamber carved from the rock, about thirty feet across and some twenty feet wide. Several other passages lead into and out of this room. The room seems to be empty, save for a skeleton curled up in a fetal position against one wall.



This encounter can occur several times, as there is more than one such room in the labyrinth. Characters will be safe from minotaur harassment here and may sleep and regain spells in peace—although they won't know that; make sure they are faced with the dilemma of keeping a light going and thus expending their limited supply of torches, candles, and lamp-oil or letting the light go out and risking some monster creeping up on them unseen by any look-out. Characters who let their lights go out without at

least someone in the party having flint & steel with them are going to be in a lot of trouble when it comes time to relight the torch or lantern and start moving again. If he or she wants, the Dungeon Master can eliminate the skeleton from the description. If the skeleton is tampered with by the PCs, the minotaurs either restore it to its original position and condition or remove it entirely so that characters coming across a similar room or back to this one will be unable to tell if it's the same place.

### 13. Medusa

This thirty-foot by twenty-foot room has been lavishly furnished: A simple but well-carved divan that could double as a bed dominates, with an elegant table beside it bearing a goblet, an (unlit) lamp, and a checkered gameboard with many small stones as markers. A sumptuous many-colored rug on the floor feels soft on your feet after walking on so much stone. A brazier glows faintly, providing welcome warmth in the chill labyrinth. A chest is pushed back against one wall. A shrouded figure wrapped in a cloak or blanket lies stretched out on the couch—apparently sleeping, if the light breathing is any indication. As you enter the figure stirs and she calls out "Who's there?"

Some time ago the minotaurs managed to lure a young medusa into their maze and have kept her here ever since. Although treated well, she is a prisoner and desperately wants to escape, as she has heard about minotaurs capturing young women and mating with them—a prospect she finds repulsive in the extreme. Therefore rather than killing the intruders she attempts to persuade them to take her with them, keeping her head cowed to protect them from an accidental glimpse of her face. She presents herself as someone under a horrible curse, so that any who look on her face will die. She begs them to let her accompany them, or at least show her the way out, and promises them anything within her power in return. Sapphira is Lawful and thus will keep her word if a bargain is made (plus, she will naturally be grateful for being rescued from a fate almost worse than death). If attacked she defends herself as best she can, and starts by pulling back her cowl and staring straight into the eyes of her attacker. Anyone who meets her gaze and then fails a saving throw vs. petrification is turned to stone (permanently, unless the characters later gain access to high-power magic such as the 6th-level *stone to flesh* spell). If faced with certain death she will flee blindly into the maze, hoping to lose her would-be slayers in its trackless passages.

**Sapphira (young Medusa):** AC 5 (AC 3 with *cloak of protection* +1); MV 9; HD 6; hp 29; THACO 15; #AT 1 (melee attack) or 2 (shortbow); Dmg 1d4 (dirk) or 1d6 + poison/1d6 + poison (arrows); SA petrification gaze (30' range, save vs. petrification to resist), snakehair bite (save vs. poison or die), arrowheads are dipped in snakehair-poison (save vs. poison or die); SW vulnerable to own gaze (reflection in mirror turns her to stone as well); SZ M (5'); ML steady (11); Str 13, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 13, Chr 18\*; AL LE; XP 2,000. Special Equipment: 18 poisoned flint-

headed arrows (Sapphira will use these carefully, as she cannot get more within the confines of this adventure).

\*18 when face and snake-hair remain unseen, -18 when these are seen clearly.

During the months she has spent here, Sapphira has thoroughly explored this chamber (there has been little else to do). She found the secret door to the treasure room in the west wall and appropriated the jewelry therein for her own use. At present she wears only earrings in both ears (tasteful amber pendants with gold settings, worth 100 gp each), a bracelet on her left wrist (bronze, worth 10 gp), a ring on her right forefinger (a silver band inscribed with unreadable hieroglyphs chased in gold worth 80 gp), and another on her left thumb (a bronze seal-ring bearing the emblem of a labys). Given the chance, she fetches the rest from where she has stashed it in the chest—two more bracelets (one of silver set with turquoise and worth 20 gp, the other of ivory links and worth 130 gp), a platinum necklace designed to be worn with a very low-cut dress, in the form of a very fine chain with a ruby pendant (worth 3,000 gp altogether), and four more rings (one of copper set with carnelian and worth 40 gp, one of white gold set with a single pearl worth 200 gp altogether, one of blackened silver set with a small diamond worth 1,000 gp, and one of electrum and blue quartz worth 15 gp). Also in the chest are her pack, a jug of lamp-oil, flint and steel, and several changes of expensive and becoming clothes made of various rare fabrics (worth a total of 400 gp). Note that there is nothing edible nor any fuel to replenish the brazier in this chamber; food and wine left her at regular intervals in one or another of the passageways by the unseen minotaurs, along with other necessities and occasional gifts of yet more immodest clothing.

If Sapphira befriends the adventurers or at least strikes a bargain with them, she shows them the secret treasury; otherwise they will have to find this secret door for themselves. Like all the other secret doors in the labyrinth, it can only be opened by means of a *knock* spell or presentation of a labys (Sapphira's thumb-ring works). The small chamber is stuffed almost to overflowing with loot, probably more than the average party can carry away: 11,309 copper pieces, 5,459 silver pieces, 3,773 electrum pieces, and 776 gold pieces. The wealth is in twenty-two man-high jars of archaic design, several of which Sapphira has overturned to find out what was in them and thus now lay broken on their side, spilling coins everywhere. The medusa disdains mere coins and thus leaves it to her new friends how much of this coinage they wish to burden themselves with. Also here is a stone kobold who tried to pick-pocket the necklace Sapphira was wearing one night and unluckily startled her awake; she moved the ugly little statue in here so she wouldn't have to look at it. Finally, the relics of deceased foes of the minotaurs litter the place. No less than a dozen suits of armor hang from the walls. Most are useless, bearing clear signs of the goring attacks that killed their previous owners, but some either survived the impact (although their wearers did not) or were taken off the bodies of explorers who starved to death in the maze: a suit of human-sized *ringmail* +2, a suit of undamaged chainmail made entirely from silver (actually *elven chainmail*), and a suit of bronze platemail of archaic design. A large shield (*shield* +1, +4 vs. *missiles*) leans against the wall beside a broken staff (formerly magical but now damaged beyond repair). Two broadswords and a double-bladed battleaxe are mounted out of reach. If retrieved, each radiates magic (in fact, this is a false *dweomer*; each appears to have a +2 bonus but in fact has been subtly weakened by the minotaurs and has a 30% chance of shattering each time it is used in combat). Last of all, a huge bronze *two-handed sword* +3 hangs point-down on the inside of the secret door, where careless treasure-seekers who do not thoroughly search the room could easily miss it.

The Dungeon Master should decide whether or not attempts to help the medusa escape and/or looting the secret treasury will bring down the minotaurs' wrath on the PCs. If the PCs have been killing everything in sight and Sapphira has some kind of warning that bloodthirsty adventurers are approaching, she may (at the Dungeon Master's option) flee into the secret room and hide in one of the emptier jars, no doubt giving a nasty shock to anyone who climbs up and peers within.

# Cave J: Former Gnoll Lair

This complex was once home to the tribe of gnolls currently encamped south of the river; every other turn that the PCs spend in this place they have a 10% chance (non-cumulative) of encountering a solitary gnoll scout who has returned to spy out the current situation and evaluate his people's chances of retaking their ancestral home. He avoids conflict with humans or demihumans but can be used by the Dungeon Master as a wild card if things go very badly for PCs here—he may, for example, belong to the flind faction that advocates alliance with the humans of the Keep to destroy a common enemy.

Now that the gnolls have been expelled, the High Priestess of the Hidden Temple has turned this cave complex over to her recently acquired ally, the Necromancer Tarlech. If she succeeds in her goal of gaining control of the entire valley, all the other caves will one by one be delegated to allies and subordinates of the Hidden Temple: bandits, evil halflings, intelligent but easily-controlled undead such as the skeltar and zombire, Tarlech, and hopefully eventually an order of evil knights. Tarlech has installed a monster to discourage trespassers through the cave-mouth (he always uses the secret passage in room J6 to come and go); see area J1.

## J1. Owlbear Cave

The foul odor of some great unwashed beast comes overpoweringly to your nose when you approach within forty feet of this cave entrance. You recognize the unmistakable smells that accompany a great predator—fur, offal, and rotting meat from discarded meals. A low, deep growl that resonates in your bones indicates that the creature, whatever it is, has noticed your approach. You hear the slight clanking of a chain—perhaps the beast is restrained and cannot reach the entrance?

Entering, you see what at first looks like a great cave bear fully eight feet high. Then you notice that instead of a snout filled with teeth this creature has a powerful beak; its matted coat seems to be a mix of blackish-brown fur and yellow-brown feathers. It suddenly lunges at you, surprisingly agile for so bulky a beast, swiping with its mighty paws and snapping with that wicked-looking beak.

The necromancer had the good fortune some time ago to capture an owlbear, which he has chained here. Manacled on its lower right foot to a sturdy staple driven into the floor of the entry-cave, the owlbear attacks anything that wanders within its range. Its chain actually allows it to go outside within fifty feet of the cave-mouth and into room J2 and as far as the bend in the corridor beyond. Note that on an attack roll of 18 or better with either paw, the target is *hugged* and automatically takes 2d6 damage per round thereafter until either the victim or the owlbear dies. The owlbear uses both paws to crush its victim but can continue to make beak attacks on that target; he or she must make bend bars/lift gates to break free. The owlbear always attacks until slain or until all potential targets retreat out of its reach. Being a prisoner itself, the owlbear has no treasure; only well-gnawed bones (most split open to peck out the marrow) litter the chamber.

**Owlbear:** AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/2d6 (claw/claw/bite); SA hug (see above); SZ L (8' tall); ML fearless (20); Int low (5); AL N; XP 420.

## J2. Abandoned Guard Post

Once a station for gnoll look-outs, this room has been stripped of all valuables and the remaining furniture smashed to flinders by the owlbear as a way to relieve some of its frustration at enforced captivity. Nothing of interest remains here.

From the base of the stairs, PCs will see a chamber opening up off of the tunnel ahead and also a tunnel running off at an oblique angle to their right. Reflected light on the tunnel wall shows that the room ahead is lit; the tunnel to the right, if they

peer down it, is dark but an opening in the left side some thirty feet down is dimly illuminated by some flickering light within. The room ahead is J3; the flickering light comes from J4.

Tarlech's pet rust monster prowls these halls looking for a stray bit of metal to dissolve into powder and then lick up. It can be met with anywhere in the downstairs corridors, in room J3, or in J4. The rust monster ("Spotty") is very friendly; if it spots the PCs, many of them no doubt encased in tasty metals (which it can smell from 90 feet away), it dashes forward to greet them and sample the unintended treat they have brought him.

One of the strangest creatures you've ever seen bounds toward you out of the darkness, for all the world like an overeager puppy. Its lumpish body rises in a great hump covered with stony plates like a turtle's shell. The face is merely two eyes and a tiny beak at one end, out of which a short sturdy tongue hangs. Two large antenna whip about, quivering in the creature's excitement as it pads forward on oversized three-toed feet. The rear legs are noticeably longer than the front ones, giving it an uneven, almost comical gait. The flexible segmented tail ends in two bony plates that the creature seems to use for balance as it moves.

Spotty will stop a few feet before the first character and bob his front section up and down while making a strange clicking nose with his tongue (this is how he begs for food). Characters who somehow guess what the creature wants can appease the rust monster with any piece of ferrous metal (iron spikes, a dagger, an extra shield, a shortsword, etc.). The creature dislikes precious metals (gold, silver, etc.) and ignores bronze. If they cannot figure out what it wants or guess wrong, Spotty leaps forward after three rounds of begging and touches his antenna to the largest piece of iron or steel present (typically a large shield, suit of armor, or large weapon like a broadsword). The item in question instantly crumbles into dust, which the rust monster happily licks up with its short black tongue, no doubt much to its owner's dismay. Magical items gain a 10% chance to resist disintegration per "plus" of the item (thus *chainmail* +3 would have a 30% chance of being unaffected). Characters who attack Spotty may regret it: Touching any metal weapon to the rust monster's body causes it to disintegrate, just as if the creature had attacked it with its antenna (clubs, staffs, and spells work normally, of course). Spotty, for his part, will be very taken with his new friends and follow them about thereafter.

**Rust Monster:** AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 15 (treat all antenna attacks against metal armor and weapons as if against AC 10, Dex and magical bonuses do apply); #AT 2 antennae; Dmg none; SA dissolve metal; SD metal dissolves upon touching any part of the rust monster's body; SW spells, wooden weaponry, and unarmed attacks have normal effects; SZ M (5' long); ML average (9); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 270.

## J3. Unsleeping Sentinels

Characters rounding the corner from the tunnel to the south see a barred door in the far north wall and a small (twenty-foot by twenty-foot) chamber opening out of the far south corner. Out of that large alcove come the undead guards Tarlech has set in this place. If turned they retreat back into their sentry post; otherwise they attack anyone who comes into this room except the Necromancer, his assistant, or his pet. Note that all the undead here have maximum hit points; Tarlech is very demanding and destroys any result of his work that fail to meet his high standards.

**Skeletons (3):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (clubs); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear, poison, death magic, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons*; SW blunt weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

**Zombies (3):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 16 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (fist); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death*

magic (already dead), poison, and cold-based spells; SW always lose initiative, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

There is no treasure here. The door to the prison cell (room J4) has no lock or key, being secured by a bar on the outside that can easily be lifted.

#### J4. Research Subjects

A dismal sight greets your eyes as you open the creaking door to this room. Several men and women—emaciated, pale, and dressed in rags—shield their eyes from the sudden light. From their miserable condition, these wretched folk must have been here for some time.

These live captives (two men, three women) are part of Tarlech's ongoing experiments; he seeks to convert them into juju zombies through a special diet and lengthy series of ceremonies. This is the third group that he has tried the experiment on (the two previous batch of failures he has converted into zombies and sent to the Hidden Temple as part of his "rent" for this complex). Unknown to Tarlech, his apprentice has spoiled the experiment by slipping these unfortunates a little untainted food from time to time—not enough to keep them healthy, but enough to keep them alive a little longer and also disrupt his delicate experiment. If the PCs have been fairly expeditious in clearing out the Caves of Chaos, they find Chantel, Mendel the Slaver's former associate, in the cell as the sixth captive—having been cast off by her former master and, too late, freed from her ensorcelment. Otherwise, Chantel has already been made the subject of one of Tarlech's special experiments and can be encountered in room J6.

#### J5. Necromancer's Library

This room is filled with more books than you've seen in any one place in your whole life before. There must be several hundred of them! Scrolls line the shelves, all apparently neatly catalogued by some system. Twelve polished skulls, each belonging to a different species, stand atop the twelve tall, narrow bookcases that line the walls. A large table dominates the center of the room, its beautiful inlay work almost obscured by the papers scattered across its surface. A young woman of perhaps fourteen in a short black dress is working at the table by the light of a single candle, copying something out of a great black folio onto a sheet of parchment with a rather ratty looking quill pen; she looks up as you enter and says "Well, it's about time!"

This is Arpad, daughter of Asham the Cooper (see the description for area 7i at the Keep). She was kidnapped several months ago by Mendel the Slaver in order to ensure her father's continued cooperation in providing the barrels Mendel uses to smuggle victims in. Realizing that she was a clever girl and already literate, the evil clerics passed her along to Tarlech as an assistant. Tarlech has great hopes that, once corrupted, she will make a superb Necromancer. Despite all she's gone through, however, Arpad remains completely uncorrupted: she has learned some interesting and unpleasant things in the last few months but has no intention of spending the rest of her life mucking around with dead things. Confident that her parents will find a way to rescue her, she has played along and awaited her chance to escape and carry back a warning to her family and friends of just how great a danger the Hidden Temple and its allies pose to the Keep. That moment, she believes, has now arrived.

Arpad will not confront Tarlech directly, knowing full well that he is too potent a wizard for her efforts to be of any avail. Rather, she will either remain here or ask to accompany the rescued prisoners from room J4 (informing the characters of these unfortunates' dire need if the PCs have not yet explored in that direction) and keep guard over them outside until the heroes return.

**Arpad (unwilling apprentice Necromancer, 1st level):** AC 10; MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spell; SD spell; SZ M (5'3"); ML champion (15); Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 16, Chr 14; AL NG; XP none. Spells: *chill touch*, *read magic*. Special Equipment: one of the smaller books on the tenth bookcase is actually Arpad's spellbook, containing the spells she currently has memorized plus *erase*, *identify*, *light*, *magic missile*, *unseen servant*. \*boldface indicates Necromancy spell.

This chamber is full of books about magic. Apart from Arpad's personal spellbooks, none of these are spellbooks (unless the Dungeon Master rules otherwise, as this is a good spot to insert a desired spell into the campaign). Nevertheless they are arranged by school of magic, with extra bookcases devoted to the school of necromancy. Proceeding widdershins (counterclockwise) from the entrance, the bookcases are: I. Universal Magic (a halfling skull); II. Abjuration (a tanar'ri skull); III. Alteration (a dwarf skull); IV. Charm & Enchantment (an elf skull); V. Conjunction & Summoning (a goblin skull); VI. Divination (a kobold skull); VII. Illusion (a gnome skull); VIII. Invocation & Evocation (an orc skull); IX–XI. Necromancy (three shelves, with a human skull atop the midmost bookcase); and XII. Clerical Magic (a massive bugbear skull; these shelves are mostly devoted to prayers and stories concerning Wee Jas, goddess of death and magic but also contain material on Erishkigal and Nergal and many legends regarding the grim reaper).

The book Arpad currently has open on the table is *The Book of Dead Smiles*, a massive folio containing the research notes of Tanith, a sorceress especially interested in researching enchantment/charms and necromancy spells. It contains every necromancy and enchantment/charm spell that the Dungeon Master wishes to exist in his or her campaign, including any from *PHBR4 The Complete Book of Wizards* (TSR #2115), *DMGR7 The Complete Book of Necromancers* (TSR #2151), *Return to the Tomb of Horrors* (TSR #1162), or the *Wizard's Spell Compendium* (four volumes, TSR #2165, 2168, 2175, & 2177). Alternatively, if the Dungeon Master does not want PCs getting access to a number of new spells in this way, then the book contains only notes and ideas for research, not fully developed ready-to-cast spells—spells with names like *sexton's delight*, *more flies with honey*, *bone (fracture)*, *good-looking corpse*, *mend corpse*, *cannibalize*, *banish ghost*, *mortal curse*, *living ghost*, *native ground*, *hands of death*, *extract bone*, *purge life*, *snuff the wick*, and *whistle ceremony*.

If Aseneth is with the party (see "Potential Henchmen & Allies" for her description), she will do everything in her power to prevent PCs from destroying any of these books, rightly arguing that they represent a treasure trove beyond price (any sage would gladly pay 12,000 for the set, or roughly 1,000 per book-shelf). She will also attempt to claim *The Book of Dead Smiles* as her own reward, renouncing all other shares in the treasure in exchange for this one volume. Whether or not the other characters agree to this lies, of course, within the realm of role-playing.

#### J6. Tarlech's Chambers

The door to this chamber is guarded by a *sepia snake sigil* that takes the form of a glowing amber skeletal snake; the *sigil* is disguised as part of a brief inscription on the outside of the door ("Tarlech says [zap!]"). Note that illiterate or exceptional impatient characters are safe from this trap. The door is *wizard locked*, the former locking mechanism having been replaced by knobs and escapements made entirely of wood (to keep the rust monster from eating them). It can be broken open via successful bend bars/lift gates rolls (double normal chances of success on a running start, up to two characters at a time can crash into the door) or chopped through (AC 8, 20 hp). Either approach alerts the wizard inside, who immediately begins spellcasting. He begins with either *levitation* or *spider climb*, following this up with *protection from normal missiles* and *minor globe of invulnerability*, sacrificing his undead mistress and deceased familiar if necessary to hold back the intruders. Thus secure, he casts *fireball* from the safety of his *minor globe*. Thereafter he summons up a *spectral hand* and uses it to deliver his various touch spells. If things turn

nasty, he casts *wraithform* on himself and attempts to escape through the secret door in the north wall, running for all he's worth once safely on the other side. Since the secret door is made of solid stone and secured with a *wizard lock*, this should slow down pursuers who need either a *knock* or successful find & remove traps to open the door.

**Tarlech the Necromancer (5th-level Specialty Wizard):** AC 1 (*bracers of defense* AC 4, *cloak of protection* +2, *ring of protection* +1); MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells; SD spells; SW cannot cast illusions or enchantment/charm spells; SZ M (6'0" but very lean); ML elite (13); Str 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 16, Chr 10; AL NE; XP 3,000. Spells (7/5/3): 1st—*burning hands\**, *chill touch\**, *magic missile* (×2), *shocking grasp\**, *spider climb*, *unseen servant*; 2nd—*levitate*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *pyrotechnics*, *spectral hand*, *web*; 3rd—*fireball*, *vampiric touch\**, *wraithform*. Special Equipment: special *ring of wizardry* (allows wizards to gain bonus spells from high Intelligence just as clerics gain them from high Wisdom), scroll with *minor globe of invulnerability*, *protection from normal missiles*.

boldface indicates **Necromancy** spell.

\*indicates spell that may be delivered through the *spectral hand*.

**Chantel:** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (kick, bite, fist); SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, death magic (already dead), poison, and cold-based spells; SW always lose initiative, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M (5'6"); ML fearless (20); Int 0, Chr 18; AL N; XP 65.

**Mummy-Cat:** AC 3; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 28; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d6 (claw/claw/bite); SA disease (bite infects victim with mummy-rot, a disease that prevents magical healing and is fatal in 1d6 months unless relieved by *cure disease*), terror (anyone seeing the mummy-cat must save vs. spell or be paralyzed with fright for 1d4 rounds); SD immune to nonmagical weapons, half-damage from magical weapons (round down); SW fire (1d3 damage from torch, 1d8 [1st round] then 2d8 [2nd round] from flaming oil), holy water (3d4 points of damage per vial), may be turned; SZ S (2' long); ML fanatic (18); Int low (7) but cunning; AL CE; XP 975. Special Equipment: collar acts as *ring of fire resistance*.

Chantel and the mummy-cat are Tarlech's two most successful experiments so far, and he is very proud of both. Chantel is essentially a perfectly preserved zombie, will-less but exhibiting no sign of decay. She does not speak of her own volition but obeys any order given to her (Tarlech's override all the rest, so long as he is present); thus if ordered to speak she mindlessly repeats the phrase she was told to say. Player characters may assume that she is under the influence of some strange spell; only close examination (listening for heartbeat, feeling for a pulse, checking her breath with a mirror) reveals that she is ambulatory but dead.

The mummy-cat was once Tarlech's familiar. When it began to grow old, he had it wrapped and buried alive, interring the beast with great ceremony. Three years later he removed it from its sarcophagus and found to his delight that he'd succeeded in creating a lesser mummy of sorts. The mummy-cat is very dangerous, not only for the relentlessness of its attacks but because of the disease carried by its bite; it darts in and out in order to infect as many victims as possible.

Tarlech's spellbook is hidden inside the secret passage that links this room with the Hidden Temple. It is stashed in a small hidden compartment in the roof of the tunnel (easily accessible to anyone with *spider climb* or *levitation*) that must be detected for normally. Inside are scribed all the spells Tarlech currently has memorized (see his stat block above) plus the following: *erase*, *feather fall*, *find familiar*, *identify*, *knock*, and *wizard lock*.

Lying just inside the passage is the body of an unfortunate thief. Even a cursory glance shows that he is long dead, his body reduced to a mere skeleton inside moldering leather armor and rotted cloth. A closer examination shows that he must have died from a broken leg. The body seems to have been looted long ago, as witnessed by the slit belt-purse. His

weapons have rusted away, and they crumble if disturbed, as does the rest of his gear. A strange coating of yellowish fungus seems to cover all his bones.

The unfortunate thief's body has been left here as a trap, as the remains are infested with yellow mold that has a 50% chance of releasing its spores each time it is disturbed. The spore-cloud fills the tunnel for ten feet in all directions, asphyxiating anyone caught in the cloud unless he or she makes a saving throw vs. poison (a successful save means he or she held his or her breath; otherwise the lungs fill with the yellow spores). A character killed by yellow mold spouts a new colony of the fungus within 24 hours unless the corpse is treated with *cure disease*. Only *cure disease* followed by *resurrection* can restore a character slain by yellow mold to life and health.

**Yellow Mold:** AC 9; MV 0; HD N/A; hp N/A; THAC0 N/A; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA spores (cloud fills tunnel for 10' in all directions, anyone in the area of effect must save vs. poison or die); SD immune to all physical attacks; SW rendered dormant by sunlight (or *continual light*), destroyed by fire; SZ M; Int non (0); AL N; XP 65.

## Cave K: The Hidden Temple

This site serves in some ways as the climax of the adventure; herein are the evil clerics who are at present the prime movers and shakers in the Caves of Chaos. Their goal is nothing less than total control of the valley, after which they mean to infiltrate and take over the Keep itself, moving those of its people who resist their dominance into slave quarters in the caverns. With the Keep and Caves as a power base, they should be able to bring more and more of the surrounding region under their control.

Already the Hidden Temple has destroyed or expelled the orc, gnoll, and hobgoblin communities from the Caves of Chaos, settling various groups of their allies or followers—a band of bandits, two undead wizards, and a Necromancer—in their place. Currently only the kobolds, goblins, bugbears, and a solitary troll seem to stand in their way (the minotaurs of the Labyrinth remain aloof and mysterious as always). Into this volatile situation arrive the PCs, innocently shifting the balance of power one way or the other . . .

If at any point the adventurers stage a raid on the Hidden Temple and then withdraw, the high priestess summons all her allies to help defend against any second foray. Assuming they have not been destroyed prior to this point, the bandits (from Cave B; see also Wilderness Encounters) will be placed around the corner of the main corridor, just west of the entrance to room K5, where they can bring their missile weapons to bear on anyone entering from K1. Tarlech the Necromancer (see Cave J) stands just within the door at the top of the stairs, leaving the door ajar so he can fire spells

down the corridor toward the entrance while still remaining mostly under cover. The skeltar and zombire (see Cave F) take command of the undead in rooms K3 and K4 and take up their position at the bend in the corridor south of the entrance, supporting the attack of the skeletons and zombies with their spells. If things go disastrously wrong for the defenders (that is, if the PCs are successful) then they withdraw into the Temple of Erishkigal (room K9) and prepare a final defense.



## K1. Entrance to the Underworld

From up close you can see that what appeared to be a natural cave mouth is actually an ancient stone lintel, like that of a tomb. Inside, the stone is blood-red with black veins separating the strata. The floor is smooth as if with the passage of many feet over the years. The air is cold and still, with a faint inescapable smell of corruption.

The entrance to the Hidden Temple is meant to resemble that of a mausoleum or tomb-chamber within a barrow. After only about twenty-five feet the passage ends by opening at an angle into a wide hallway running directly north-south. The floor of the hallway is covered with red and black marble tiles, beautifully polished—in fact, any character with stoneworking skills (such as a typical dwarf) who enters the Hidden Temple can tell at once that it is not a “cave” but very old excavated tunnels carved with consummate skill. The entire upper level of the Hidden Temple (that is, rooms K1 through K11) is carved from this black-streaked red rock; the lower level (rooms K12 through K16) is rougher and carved from the gray rock common to this valley. Characters who listen for sounds can hear a very faint moan or whisper the entire time they are within the upper level of the Hidden Temple; it seems to be a woman’s voice but never becomes audible enough to be understood. In addition, most of the upper level of the Hidden Temple is illuminated by a soft red light that casts a bloody tinge over everything.

The priests and priestesses have posted a sentinel here in the form of a lurker above, which adheres to the ceiling and drops upon any intruder who does not openly display the sign of Erishkigal (the holy symbol used by the evil clergy). This particularly lurker is darker than most, and its textured underbelly blends in well with the darkish stone of this place; explorers have only a 10% chance of spotting it before it pounces.

**Lurker Above:** AC 6; MV 1 (crawl), fly 9 (B); HD 10; hp 45; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 per round (constriction); SA victim suffocates in 1d4+1 rounds, attacks with 90% chance of surprise; SD once enwrapped, target can only attack with a small weapon already in hand; SZ L (20' wingspan); ML steady (12); Int non (0); AL N; XP 2,000.

When it attacks, the lurker drops and wraps itself around a chosen victim (typically the largest character present). He or she suffers constriction damage every round and suffocates within five rounds despite any remaining hit points. A victim can only fight back if he or she had a small weapon in hand at the time he or she was enveloped.

## K2. Passage to Quasqueton

A wide passageway leads off to the southwest at this point; characters exploring down this way eventually, after some 700 yards, reach the chamber marked on the area map; see the entry under Zombies in the Wilderness Encounters section.

## K3. The Pious Dead

This chamber seems to be some kind of audience hall, forty feet wide and sixty feet long. A number of skeletons in robes—some black, some red—kneel in prayer, facing the figure at the far end. There on a raised dais is a stone throne in which sits one of the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. She sits motionless, her arms on the arms of the throne, staring straight ahead with an enigmatic, unreadable face. She stares right through you as if you did not exist, as if you were not real enough for her to see.

This shrine is blessed with an actual vision of the goddess Erishkigal, a *permanent illusion* created long ago by a wizardly devotee of the cult. Anyone gazing upon her must make a saving throw vs. death magic; Wisdom bonuses or penalties, if any, do apply. Failure indicates that he or she is overcome by the goddess’s majesty and unearthly beauty and falls to his or her knees in adoration, adopting the exact position of the pious skeletons (note that this could be very bad if that character is a

paladin or cleric devoted to another god or goddess, as his or her own patron deity is liable to be seriously offended). The character ignores everyone and everything except the vision, literally staying here until he or she starves to death at his or her prayers. If led from the room, he or she will return to normal in 1d6 turns but may lapse again if presented with the goddess’s image later on (see area K9 and K16). The skeletons ignore any turning attempts and do not defend themselves if attacked. However, touching the dais or disturbing the image of the goddess in any way causes them to rise up and attack the defiler of the fane.

**Skeletons (13):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (rusty mace, flail, or scythe); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear*, poison, death magic, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons; SW blunt weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

The image of the goddess can be disrupted only by *dispel magic*; the original spell was created by a wizard of 13th level. Success is therefore difficult but the rewards are great if it can be achieved; thereafter all clergy of the Hidden Temple suffer a –1 penalty to all attack rolls and saving throws. There is no treasure here.

## K4. The Unquiet Dead

The silence of the grave fills this mausoleum. The room is twenty feet wide and sixty feet long, the walls lined with dark niches cut into the stone. A few of the niches are occupied, each by a single body wearing either a red or a black robe. It’s hard to tell from the decay, but the bodies in black seem to all be those of women and those in red of men. The bodies begin to stir as you enter, tossing restlessly as if these dead no longer sleep in peace.

Characters who withdraw at once avoid this encounter. Those who remain see the undead priests and priestesses begin to crawl from their grave-slabs to attack those who disturbed their rest. If turned, the zombies return to their niches but will awaken again if characters re-enter the room. There is no treasure in this room, although characters with a mind for subterfuge might want to don some of the robes found here or in room K3 in hopes of moving about less conspicuously.

**Zombies (20):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (fist); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death magic* (already dead), poison, and cold-based spells; SW always lose initiative, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

## K5. Reception Chamber

This room is lavishly furnished, with a thick black rug that stretches from wall to wall, a black and red sofa, three comfortable chairs, and several small end tables, which hold a variety of wines and sweetmeats (candied fruits, nuts, and muffins). The red stone walls have been polished to a high shine. There is an actual fireplace with marble mantelpiece holding great scented candles, some red and some black.

This chamber serves to welcome and entertain honored visitors. The most attractive Acolyte of the appropriate sex (Tishpak or Ninurta) will be assigned as the guest’s escort for the duration of his or her stay. For more important visitors, one of the Adepts (Wer or Nisir) is assigned to make him or her feel welcome. Mendel the Slave is a frequent guest, coming by to pay his devotions and receive new orders every month or so; therefore there is a 20% chance he will be present, accompanied by Sascia, and his omnipresent bodyguards, Ohtar and Devdas. Note that Mendel is not above pretending to be a prisoner “being fattened up for the sacrifice” and will express great relief to the adventurers at their having arrived in the nick of

time to rescue him from "a fate worse than death." Usually, however, this chamber will be empty when PCs arrive. There is a secret door to the labyrinth inside the fireplace that can be opened from this side either via a *knock* spell or presentation of a labys. The temple denizens are not aware of the door's existence and are baffled by the occasional disappearance of food and drink from this chamber (carried off by the omnipresent kobolds, who are careful to always hide their sooty footprints). If Mendel is not here, there is a 10% chance PCs interrupt a kobold raid; if so, the 1d4 kobolds flee back through the secret door if at all possible, shutting it behind.

#### K6. Shrine of Nergal

The red stone walls of this place have been left dull and unpolished, but the four great black pillars that rise twenty-five feet to hold up the roof have been polished till they gleam in the reflected light of the two braziers that flank the altar. The floor is a checkerboard of black and red squares, the altar a rough block of black rock with red veins—the exact opposite of the walls. The altar is heavily stained with the dull brown of old dried blood. Atop the altar rest four bronze vessels that look very old: a shallow bowl, a pair of goblets, and an ewer—all bloodstained. The walls are carved with images that seem to tell the story of a man, a warrior in red robes, who fights his way past monsters who guard seven gates (each shaped like the lintel-door to a tomb) to win the hand of a beautiful woman in black sitting on a stone throne. The final scene shows the two sitting side-by-side on a double throne built of skulls.

Those who have seen the image in room K3 recognize the woman in the carvings as the same queenly figure as in the vision; bards with Legend Lore or clerics with religion may recognize the story of Erishkigal's courtship by Nergal. Known to the clerics here as the Esizkur (House of Prayer), this chamber is a shrine to Nergal, Erishkigal's consort. One of the acolytes will be stationed here at all times except during emergencies; when the PCs enter it will be Hanigalbat (a novice priest of Nergal). He hides behind one of the pillars upon hearing the characters coming, moving to keep out of sight. If given the chance, the acolyte makes a break for it and runs full-tilt up the corridor to raise the alarm, fighting desperately with mace and spells if cornered. If captured, he refuses to tell them anything, defiantly chanting prayers and calling upon his god and goddess for deliverance. There is a 5% chance per round (cumulative) that his prayer is answered; if so, he lets out a gasp as his heart stops suddenly, dying the next round.

Hanigalbat has little personal treasure other than an armband of red gold worth 100 gp. However, the bronze ceremonial vessels in this chamber are works of art, valuable but perilous. Each cup is worth 1,500 gp, the ewer and platter each 2500 gp. However, all four items are *cursed* so that anyone picking one up hears a silent voice commanding *Serve Me!* and must save vs. spell at a -2 penalty or be converted to the service of Nergal. His alignment immediately shifts one place toward Lawful Evil; each day thereafter the character must succeed at another save vs. spell or shift another step closer to Lawful Evil (for example, a Chaotic Good character might shift to Chaotic Neutral or Neutral Good, then to Chaotic Evil or Neutral OR Neutral or Lawful Good, respectively, etc.). Inevitably after only four failed saves the character will have fallen wholly under the way of the new devotion, abandoning his or her former friends and associates and swearing fealty to the Hidden Temple as a loyal minion of Nergal (or, if female, of Erishkigal). The curse can only be lifted via *dispel magic* or *remove curse*, with a cumulative 25% chance of failure for each step the victim's alignment has already shifted. Nothing less than a major *quest* followed by *atonement* can restore the character's original alignment.

By contrast, lucky characters who made their initial saving throws feel the pressure of an immense overpowering will but

are able to put down the cursed items in time to avoid being corrupted by them. These holy relics are extremely difficult to destroy, making all item saving throws against any form of attack at +4. These items were stolen in the sacking of the temple two decades ago and were only recovered at great cost by the relentless priests.

**Hanigalbat (Acolyte of Nergal, 1st-level cleric):** AC 3 (platemail beneath red robes); MV 12; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (iron mace); SD spells; SZ M (6'); ML elite (13); Str 15, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Chr 9; AL LE; XP 65. Spells: *command*, *sanctuary*. Special Ability: command undead (any undead within the temple will obey the command of any cleric of Nergal or Erishkigal).

#### K7. Adepts' Chamber

This twenty-foot by forty-foot room has two entrances, one carved with a skull on a throne and the other with a sevenfold gate that looks rather like the linteled opening to a barrow or tomb. Inside, you find what seems to be living quarters for two people. There are two medium-sized beds, two chests, and two chairs drawn up to the table in the room's center. On the table are three clay tablets inscribed with some strange form of writing that looks like chicken scratchings. A small red-leather book, an ink well, quill, and several pieces of scrap paper are neatly stacked

Wer and Nisir, Shamhat and Nabu-Nisir's assistants, share this chamber. Wer is a priestess of Erishkigal, Nisir a priest of Nergal. If anything happens to the High Priestess and high Priest, these two succeed to their positions. Their strategy will be less aggressive than their predecessors', seeking to consolidate their gains and find more allies before expanding further. Each is devoted to the worship of his or her respective deity, however, and the Hidden Temple would continue to thrive under their ministrations.

That the room's residents are a man and a woman can easily be determined by checking the contents of the (untrapped but locked) chests, which each contain a change of robes (black for Wer, red for Nisir) and personal items. The tablets (each "tombstone" shaped with a rounded top and flat bottom) are some two feet long and a foot wide; the writing on them is cuneiform and can be deciphered by a successful ancient languages skill check or via *comprehend languages*. These tablets tell the story of Erishkigal and Nergal: his insult of her messenger, her luring him to the underworld, their resulting passion, his escape back to the sunlit world, her ultimatum to flood the world with undead unless her lover returned, his battle past the seven gates to rejoin her, and their union as queen and king of the underworld, reigning side by side as lords of the dead. The small red book is a glossary, dictionary, and grammar of the ancient language and script in which the tablets are written; the notes contain stray words and phrases translated from the tablets (Wer, with her lover's help, is memorizing an epic poem retelling the central myth of their religion in the original language in order to be able to recite the appropriate lines from it in the ceremonies and rituals commensurate with her rise in the temple hierarchy). The Tablets are priceless to the devotees of the Hidden Temple, who will spare no effort to recover them. Any sage would pay 3,000 gp apiece for the tablets, or 10,000 gp for the set. The book on the language would bring 500 gp from the right buyer, typically either a sage, mage, or cleric of the appropriate pantheon. If no alarm has been raised, there is a 30% chance that Wer and Nisir are here, rehearsing lines from the story like dialogue in a religious drama. Otherwise they will be either away on a mission for the temple or in the main shrine (room K8).

**Wer (4th-level Priestess of Erishkigal):** AC 3 (*chainmail* +2 beneath black robes); MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 18 (17 with *scythe* +1); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (*scythe* +1); SD spells; SZ M (5'); ML elite (13); Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 15, Chr 16;

AL NE; XP 270. Spells (5/3): 1st—*bless, cause fear, combine, command, cure light wounds*; 2nd—*chill metal, hold person, silence 15' radius*. Special Ability: command undead. Special Equipment: *candle of invocation, phylactery of faithfulness*\* (\*permanently set to NE, although the item radiates no evil and seems to function normally).

**Nisir (3rd-level Priest of Nergal):** AC 2 (platemail beneath red robes, shield); MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 20 (18 with *mace +1* and Str bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (*mace +1*, Str bonus); SD spells; SZ M (5'6"); ML champion (16); Str 17, Dex 7, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Chr 13; AL LE; XP 175. Spells (4/1): 1st—*command, cure light wounds, darkness, protection from good*; 2nd—*hold person*. Special Ability: command undead. Special Equipment: *ring of flying*\* (\*actually a *ring of delusion*) carried in an inside pocket—Nisir is aware of the ring's true power and never wears it, carrying it as a nasty legacy to anyone who should slay him and take it), *Keoghtom's ointment* (with three doses remaining).

The two clerics have stashed their savings in the chests: Wer's has 230 gp and 112 sp, Nisir's 430 gp and 231 sp. In addition, Wer wears a low-slung belt with a jeweled golden clasp set with jet (worth 100 gp). She also has a hairpin of blackened silver (easy to miss on a casual examination) set with a black opal worth 1,000 gp. Nisir wears a copper bracelet set with three red pearls worth 100 gp each and a garnet-studded ring worth 200 gp.

### K8. Vestibule

This area serves as a holding room for sacrifices between Holy Days in the adjacent temple. There will typically be five or six captives here at any one time, guarded by three skeletons and three zombies (same stats as undead in area K9). The captives vary from kidnapped townspeople, unfortunate travelers, luckless caravan guards, a merchant who couldn't bribe his way past the bandits, to adventurers left for dead by retreating comrades or bandits who fell from grace for being too greedy or not ruthless enough. Comforting them all will be a fellow captive, the itinerant healer Jude. A complete pacifist who serves a god of healing, he did not resist when captured by the bandits three months ago. They kept him prisoner for five weeks, finding his skill at healing very handy after an unsuccessful raid. Eventually the Hidden Temple's clerics learned of the bandits' captive and demanded he be turned over for sacrifice, but they in turn have delayed sacrificing, fascinated by his (to their minds) warped theology and also benefiting from his healing expertise. An eternal optimist, Jude feels confident that he will be able to soften their hearts eventually (if not, he looks forward to a glorious martyrdom). Player characters who succeed in rescuing him will find in turn his healing spells a great benefit; his frequent sermons to turn away from violence may prove a bit trying to the average adventurer. Similarly, his insistence of always looking on the bright side ("So what if we're all about to die? At least we have a wonderful afterlife to look forward to in the service of our respective gods and goddesses!") may over time pass from being quaint to downright annoying. Still, he means well; installed in the Keep, he could be a valuable addition to the community.

Jude has no treasure and no possessions other than the simple clothing he wears.

**Jude the Healer (pacifist cleric, 1st-level):** AC 10; MV 12; 6 hp; THAC0 N/A; #AT N/A; Dmg N/A; SD spells; SW refuses to defend himself; SZ M (6'); ML champion (16); Str 9, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 13, Chr 13; AL NG; XP none. Spells: *cure light wounds* (×2). Skills: healing (11), herbalism (8), local history (13), religion (13).

### K9. The Hidden Temple: Temple of Erishkigal

There was once a secret door in the bend of the corridor leading to this room, about fifty feet from the temple itself. Knowing that adventurers had learned of its existence, the clergy here turned it into a trap. They filled the short secret passage beyond with loose stones so that anyone opening the secret

door from this end would suddenly find a ton or so of rubble dumped on his or her head (5d4 damage). The passageway that once linked this corridor with room K11 is now impassable, even after the trap is triggered.

This huge room—the largest you've seen in the entire complex of caves—is clearly a temple. Above a floor of polished black stone with disturbing red swirls, dull black walls rise five or six times the height of a man to an arched ceiling of the same dead black material. Only the west wall is different: a mass of polished red rock that throws back light like a bloody mirror. Near the red wall stand three altars: the one of the left of polished black stone, the one on the right of polished red stone, and the central one (the largest) of red and black streaked stone. Behind these, a raised dais holds a double throne. The back of each throne is decorated with a mosaic: one of a beautiful queenly woman in black, the other of a handsome and kingly warrior in red. Red candles burn in wall sconces along the north and south. Finally, a great bell of black iron stands to the left of the entrance, flanked on one side by a skeleton in black and on the other by a zombie in red, each holding a mallet.

This beautiful but unsettling place of worship has a congregation: thirty skeletons and thirty zombies, dressed in black and in red robes, respectively, sit patiently on pews facing the thrones and altars. They seem to ignore your arrival.

Called Egalgina (The Everlasting Palace) by the faithful here, this place is the heart of the Hidden Temple. Sacked and desecrated by adventurers twenty years ago, it has been painstakingly restored by the present-day clerics. The woman in the mosaic is the goddess Erishkigal, ruler of the underworld and lady of the dead. The man is her consort, the warrior Nergal, defender of her realm. Anyone who saw the image in room K2 and was enthralled by the vision of the goddess must make another saving throw upon sight of the mosaic. If it fails, the character once again falls on his or her knees in adoration; if it succeeds, he or she merely suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls due to being distracted and constantly having to look back at the goddess's face and figure.

If the Hidden Temple is subjected to an all-out assault as the culmination of a well-fought campaign to cleanse/purge the entire valley, the High Priestess summons all the surviving lesser clergy and they gather here to defend their holy place. In that case, PCs have a bitter battle on their hands, as undead cannot be turned here (a special blessing from Erishkigal to these faithful). Otherwise, PCs can explore cautiously; the undead congregation attacks only if the intruders attempt to damage the thrones, altars, or mosaics. The two bell-ringers stand motionless until the proper time comes for them to summon the priests and priestesses to the next service (six times a day, at four-hour intervals). If attacked, they sound the alarm by banging wildly on the bell (unless prevented by magical *silence* or swift destruction).

There is no treasure here: everything of value was stolen long ago, and the restoration has focused more on function than luxury.

**Red-robes Zombies (30):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 8 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (fist); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, death magic (already dead), poison, and cold-based spells; SW always lose initiative, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

**Black-robed Skeletons (30):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (rusty shortsword, flail, mace); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear*, poison, death magic, and cold-based spells, half-damage from edged and piercing weapons; SW blunt weapons and fire cause normal damage, may be turned, holy water (2d4 points per vial); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

## K10. Holy of Holies

Surprisingly, this side-chamber of the temple looks more like a bedroom than some place that might serve a ceremonial function—perhaps the clerics nap here between services. A low couch or divan with a headrest at one end, a stand with an iron bottle and two silver goblets, another bearing an hourglass, several robes hanging on pegs on the walls, and sconces for candles on the east and west walls complete the simple but elegant furnishings.

Called the Kurnugi (Land of No Return) by the faithful, this place represents Erishkigal's house (as opposed to her audience chamber, represented by the adjacent main temple) and is reserved for sacred rites and ceremonies that must be performed in private (vigils), or by the High Priestess (acting as Erishkigal) and the Chief Priest of Nergal (reenacting the union of their respective deities). While the furnishings are attractive and well-made, there is no monetary treasure here. The goblets are worth perhaps 10 gp each, the iron bottle perhaps another 5 gp. The wine within is of a good vintage, but PCs may experience some difficulty in finding buyers for used wine, however fine. Should they drink it themselves, they discover that it is a mild aphrodisiac. Have each character who does so roll a saving throw vs. spell; those who fail are strongly attracted to the first character of the opposite sex they see. The ritual wine does not cause those affected by it to lose all self control; it merely arouses their interest.

The secret door to the next room is currently hidden behind one of the red robes on the east wall; characters who check behind the robe have the normal chance to find the door. It can be opened by tugging on the wall sconce, which causes it to slide to one side and reveal the hidden room beyond. Only Shamhat, Nabu-Nisir, and Wer know the secret of where the treasury is located and how to open the door, and only Shamhat and Nabu-Nisir are allowed inside room K11 (if Shamhat is killed, then Wer can enter; if Nabu-Nisir is slain, then Nisir can take his place).

## K11. Treasury

Treasure! Lots of it! This small (twenty-foot by twenty-foot) room is packed with loot. Coins of copper, silver, electrum, and gold are spread out beneath your feet, hiding the actual floor from view. Gems glitter here and there on the pile. The heap of coins rises toward the middle, where a depression has been scooped out. Along the walls hang gorgeous robes of black and red in various sizes, each made of the finest fabrics and clearly sewn by a master tailor. Some even have gilded highlights. The room is softly lit although no light source is apparent—it seems as if the very air were vaguely luminescent.

These vestments are holy relics of the Hidden Temple, worn by the reigning High Priestess and her consort (the highest-ranking Priest of Nergal); the black robes are tailored for women and the red robes for men. These vestments are enchanted so that when donned they have the effect of a permanent *prayer* spell—that is, they grant a +1 attack, damage, and saving throw bonus to the wearer and his or her allies and a -1 penalty to all rolls by their opponents. The robes radiate magic but not evil; they only work for the clergy of this particular temple, and even then only if worn by the highest-ranking surviving priestess and priest. The treasure, garnered from many a hapless traveler by the evil clerics' bandit minions, totals 13,942 cp, 4,521 sp, 680 ep, 3,994 gp, and 58 pp (easily mistaken for silver pieces by the inexperienced eye; successful appraising rolls will correctly identify them). There are also 84 semiprecious stones of various types, each worth 10 gp. This sacred treasury is guarded by a slithering tracker which takes no immediate action against unauthorized removals but follows the guilty parties relentlessly thereafter, usually overtaking them after they have stopped for sleep (typically in the early morning hours

of the next day). The tracker attempts to kill one character per night until detected and destroyed, ceasing its efforts only if all the stolen coins and gems are returned to this room.

There are two secret doors in this room: one leading to the blocked corridor to the south and the other in the floor beneath the heap of coins. The latter cannot be detected while buried beneath the coins; if they are moved it can be detected normally. This is another secret door to the Labyrinth and can be opened from this side only via presentation of a labys (a double-headed axe) or a *knock* spell. The depression in the center of the heap formerly held the copper dragon egg currently in the Kobold Cave (Cave A, room A4). The kobolds stole it from the evil priests and are trying to hatch it on their own; the clerics, for their part, have been unable to find out who stole the egg or how.

**Slithering Tracker:** AC 5; MV 12; HD 5; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA touch causes paralyzation (save vs. paralyzation to resist, twelve hours' duration), covers and dehydrates paralyzed victim (takes 1 hour, leaving desiccated corpse); SD transparent (95% undetectable); SZ S (3' long); ML champion (15); Int average (10); AL N; XP 975.

**NOTE:** Unlike the upper part of the Hidden Temple, the lower level is cut through the gray stone typical of this canyon; the passages are also not nearly as well-made or carefully carved as the red and black stone of the Temple proper. The corridors in the lower temple are lit by candles placed either in wall-sconces or on small shelves cut into the rock for that purpose.

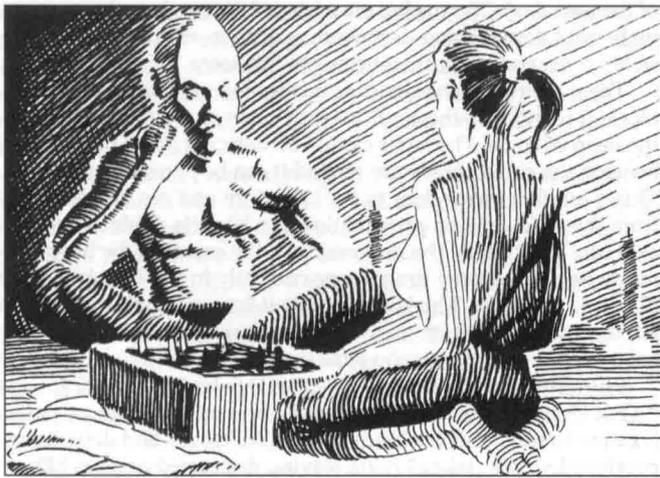
## K12. A Game of Chess

A strange sight greets your eyes as you glance/look/peep into this room. A man and a woman sit on either side of a small table, the top of which is decorated with/divided into small black and red squares. They seem to be playing a game of chess by the light of two candles (one red, one black) that have almost burned out. As far as you can tell by the flickering light, the game seems to be far along—only a few red and black pieces remain on the board. Strangest of all, the man and woman have partially disrobed; several articles of red and black clothing lay strewn about on the floor. They completely ignore you, staring ahead with an odd fixed gaze.

These two acolytes (Tishpak and Ninurta) are relaxing with a friendly game of strip chess. The chessboard is an enchanted one specially made by a devotee of the cult: the black pieces are all female and the red ones all male. The chessboard casts an enchantment upon the chess-players if they fail a saving throw vs. death magic (it is possible for a character to deliberately forgo a save, as have these two), casting them into a state similar to sleepwalking. If the PCs watch for several minutes, they see Ninurta slowly make a move, taking one of Tishpak's bishops; after a long pause he sheds some more clothing, letting his robe slip to his waist.

The two clerics are essentially helpless and can easily be captured. If attacked, they get a saving throw each round (at a cumulative +1 bonus) to throw off the effects of the enchantment. Characters who question them without disturbing the game may, at the Dungeon Master's discretion, be able to extract some valuable information about the Hidden Temple's plans and lay-out, personnel (Shamhat, Nabu-Nisir, Wer, Nisir, Tishpak, Ninurta, Ishara, and Hanigalbat) and their probable whereabouts, etc. If awakened, they reach for their weapons if possible and cast spells if not, throwing the chessmen like tiny missiles (1d3 damage each) if no better option is available to them. Exactly what PCs do with these two enemies that are entirely at their mercy should prove an interesting test of alignment.

**Tishpak (2nd-level Priest of Nergal):** AC 10 or 2 (platemail beneath red robes, shield); MV 0 or 12; hp 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (*flail* +1) or 1d6+1 (iron mace); SD spells; SW currently ensorcelled; SZ M (5'11"); ML champion (16); Str 14, Dex 11,



Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Chr 13; AL LE; XP 120. Spells (4): *bles*, *cause light wounds*, *command*, *protection from good*. Special Abilities: control undead.

**Ninurta (2nd-level Priestess of Erishkigal):** AC 10 or 5 (chainmail beneath black robes); MV 0 or 12; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (scythe); SD spells; SW currently ensorcelled; SZ M (5'10"); ML elite (13); Str 9, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Chr 16; AL NE; XP 120. Spells: *command*, *cure light wounds*, *curse*, *sanctuary*. Special Abilities: control undead. Special Equipment: *brooch of shielding* (20 points of damage absorption remaining).

If Shamhat has raised the alarm, these two may not respond; they must make successful saving throws to throw off their enchantment even when summoned by their High Priestess. If they have, then the room is empty except for the unfinished game and a few unclaimed items of clothing strewn about.

**Treasure:** The main treasure here is the chessboard; the individual pieces are worth 12 gp each (there are thirty-two chessmen in all), or 400 for the set. The chessboard itself is built into the table and cannot be removed without damaging the dweomer; if someone takes the time and effort to get it out intact, it is worth another 300 gp.

In addition, among the discarded items of clothing are several pieces of jewelry—Ninurta's earrings (one with a red pearl worth 200 gp and the other with a black pearl worth 500 gp), Tishpak's bracelet (intertwined twists of silver and gold, worth 300 gp) and bronze armband (a piece of exceptional quality, worth 200 gp). Ninurta still wears a ring (of blackened silver and red gold, worth 150 gp). Neither carries any spending money.

### K13. Acolytes

This room is obviously a dormitory or living quarters, with five simple beds, five chests (one at the foot of each bed), five chairs, two tables, a brazier with a small fuelbox, and a shelf of books. Candles in holders rest on either table, currently unlit.

The five acolytes spend their off-hours here, reading, meditating, socializing, and sleeping. Unless the alarm has been raised, when the characters enter one of the beds is occupied. Having just been relieved an hour ago after an all-night vigil in the House of Prayers (The Shrine of Nergal, room K6), Ishara the acolyte is very sensibly sleeping. She will awaken if intruders make any loud noises, and her actions depend upon the circumstances. If it seems they may overlook her presence, she remains still until they have departed, whereupon she slips out of bed, dresses, and cautiously raises the alarm. If spotted, she casts *sanctuary* on herself, leaps from bed, and makes a run for it. If captured alive, she begs for her life but refuses to betray her superiors by helping her captors in any way. Ishara is the most junior of all the clergy here, being only about nineteen. Her only jewelry is a pendant earring carved of reddish carnelian, worth 50 gp.

**Ishara (1st-level Priestess of Erishkigal):** AC 10 or 5 (chainmail); MV 12; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (scythe); SD spells; SW currently sleeping; SZ M (5'3"); ML average (8); Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 13, Chr 14; AL NE; XP 65. Spells: *command*, *sanctuary*. Special Ability: control undead.

The books are a mix of light reading (love poetry, adventurer's lives), theology (hymnals, books of prayers, catechisms), the Erishkigal/Nergal equivalent of saint's lives, and legends regarding various deities in the pantheon. The five chests belong to the temple's five acolytes: Tishpak (room K12), Ninurta (room K12), Duranki (currently a prisoner of the bugbears in H8), Hanigalbat (room K6), and Ishara. Three of them thus have red clothing for the male priests of Nergal and the other two black clothing for the female priestesses of Erishkigal. The chests also contain miscellaneous personal items (combs, lingerie, small mirror, needle & thread, pouches, cosmetics, perfume, "street clothes" for when they wish to visit the Keep, etc.—basically anything the Dungeon Master deems reasonable), plus a pouch containing that cleric's personal stash: 204 gp and 34 sp (Tishpak), 145 gp and 47 sp (Ninurta), 56 gp and 10 sp (Hanigalbat), and finally 73 gp and 26 sp (Ishara). Since Duranki is missing in action and presumed dead, his fellow acolytes have already divided his stash between them.

### K14. The Black Knight, Huntress

This former prison cell has been converted into a guest room for special recruits. When the adventurers first enter the valley, this chamber will be empty. Two weeks later, a fallen paladin known only as the Black Knight will be in residence, having come to join forces with the Hidden Temple in his quest for some organization to serve. After four weeks a second special ally arrives, a fallen ranger named Kira the Huntress. These two begin to attract henchmen and followers in the weeks that follow (1st-level NPCs, mostly fighters but also a sprinkling of other character classes) so that the longer PCs delay their foray into the Hidden Temple the more foes they will have to face in this encounter. If they have still not dealt with the threat by the two-month mark, the Black Knight leads a force against the bugbear cave (Cave H) and destroys the shaman's tribe. Two weeks later it's the troll's and goblins' turn (Cave D), and a week after that the kobolds (Cave A)—who will flee permanently into the labyrinth.

This spartan apartment looks more like a prison cell than living quarters. The room's contents are few: a simple bed, neatly made, a shelf holding a pitcher and cup, a good-sized mirror mounted on the wall, a bracket holding a scourge, and an empty armor-stand. Strangest of all, a stone statue of a horse, complete with real saddlebags, stands to one side, taking up fully half the room.

The Black Knight is a fallen paladin who has forsaken his former name. Some of his old habits remain, however; hence his few personal possessions (little more than he can carry with him in belt-pouch or in his steed's saddlebags). Filled with self-loathing, he sometime beats himself with the scourge; unable to control his vanity, he uses the mirror to keep mustache neatly trimmed and his appearance immaculate. The knight does not fear death and so aggressively carries the fight to his enemies, making him a very dangerous foe indeed. He rarely offers quarter beyond "an honorable death" (that is, by his sword rather than on the sacrificial altars) but may decide to disarm and ransom a particularly valiant opponent. If defeated he asks for death rather than imprisonment or disgrace.

Kira the Huntress, by contrast, is vicious and without honor, delighting in shooting unwary opponents from afar. Her bow and wilderness skills make her especially good at ambushes, and should the High Priestess decide that the adventurers need to be assassinated, Kira will be handed the job. Kira was trained as a ranger but came over time to delight

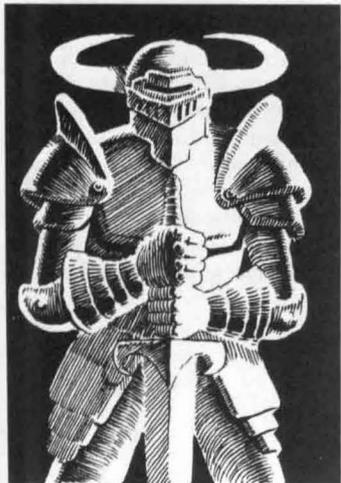
in slaughter, killing animals for the sheer joy of seeing them die and ignoring the ranger's high calling to help others. She is very dangerous because she is entirely without scruples and always willing to kill. If Kira is present when the PCs first explore this area, she stretches her *portable hole* over the entrance, so that all that anyone sees upon opening the door is total darkness; even infravision shows only a black void. Should someone cautiously enter, she slams the *hole* shut, trapping him inside. While the Black Knight fights in the doorway, preventing characters from entering, she takes cover behind the stone horse and prepares to shoot anyone who forces his or her way past the Knight. If engage in melee, she drops the bow and fights with a longsword in one hand and a handaxe in the other, openly gloating each time she wounds an enemy. Should the PCs flee, the Knight mounts his *stone horse* and rides after them (even up stairs, smashing through any door in his way) while the Huntress retrieves her bow and follows more cautiously, stopping to kill any injured. Kira never takes prisoners, accepting an opponent's surrender and then killing them anyway once they have dropped their weapons or been disarmed.

**The Black Knight (5th-level Fighter):** AC -1 (*black platemail* +2, *shield* +1); MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 16 (14 with *sword of wounding* and Str bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+2 (*sword of wounding*, Str bonus); SA *sword of wounding* (all injuries caused by this weapon continue to bleed, causing 1 hp loss per injury for up to 10 rounds or until staunched); SD *ring of spell-turning* (reflects 1d10% of spells targeted on the Black Knight back at the caster); SW sense of honor, self-loathing; SZ M (6'7"); ML champion (16); Str 17, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Chr 17; AL LE; XP 975. Skills: blind-fighting, endurance (15), etiquette (17), heraldry (14), reading/writing (15), religion (14), riding-land based (17). Special Equipment: *ring of sustenance*, *figurine of wondrous power* (*onyx dog*), *stone horse*.

**Kira the Huntress (5th-level Fighter):** AC 5 (studded leather armor, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 16 (14 with *longbow* +1 and Dex bonus, 17 with longsword and 18 with *handaxe* +1 when fighting with two weapons); #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+2/1d8+2 (*sheath arrows* +1, Str bonus), 1d8+1/1d6+2 (longsword and *handaxe* +1 plus Str bonuses); SA two-weapon fighting style (-1 penalty to sword attack, -3 penalty to axe attack [-2 with magical weapon bonus]); SD stealth (see below); SW foolishly ruthless; SZ M (5'11"); ML fanatic (18); Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 11\*, Chr 14; AL CE; XP 650. Skills: animal lore (10), bowyer/fletcher (15), hunting (10), set snares (15), survival (10), tracking (11). Special Abilities: hide in shadows (15% indoors, 31% outdoors), move silently (20% indoors, 40% outdoors). Special Equipment: twelve *sheath arrows* +1, *portable hole*.

\*formerly 14

Treasure: The Black Knight has twelve perfectly matched gemstones in his belt pouch: tourmalines, each worth 100 gp—they vary in color (pale green, pale blue, pale brown, and pale red). He also has 100 pp of traveling funds in the saddlebags (after Kira's advent, she steals the platinum pieces and replaces them with silver instead). Kira has 452 gp, 247 sp, and 120 cp in her pack (stashed under the bed if she has joined the Knight in these cramped quarters) as well as a large piece of polished petrified wood (worth 100 gp) and a huge lump of uncut lapis lazuli (worth 300 gp). She wears a barrette of silver set with lapis lazuli (worth 50 gp), a platinum neck-chain with a star ruby (the chain is



worth 200 gp and the gem another 1,000, or 1,200 for the entire piece), and an armband of wrought gold incised with frolicking dryads, pans, sylphs, and nymphs (gold value 50 gp; total jewelry value 700 gp).

### K15. The Honored Dead

This unlit chamber seems to serve as a crypt. Most of the simple stone tables are blank, but on five of them you see people—three women in black robes and two men in red ones—stretched out, hands at their sides or folded across their chest. You can't tell from a distance if they're living or dead—if living, why are they so perfectly still? If dead, how can their bodies be so perfectly preserved? The room is utterly quiet.

This crypt houses the mortal remains of Shamhat's predecessors as High Priestess of Erishkigal and the two ruling Priests of Nergal who came before Nabu-Nisir. As a grace from their respective deities, the body of each is perfectly preserved. Characters may assume that the deceased clerics are undead, but in fact their bodies are completely inert, their spirits departed. However, that does not mean there is no danger here: five shadows haunt this chamber, attacking any who disturb the rest of the honored dead (simply passing through the crypt does not trigger an attack).

**Shadows (5):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 20, 15, 20, 17, 19; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 + special (touch); SA chill touch drain 1 point of Str (returns 2d4 hours later; characters completely drained become shadows themselves); SD 90% undetectable save in *continual light* or sunlight, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *fear*, *poison*, *death magic*, and cold-based attacks; SW may be turned; SZ M (amorphous, varies); ML fearless (19); Int low (7); AL CE; XP 420 each.

Note that it will be difficult by torchlight or lantern-light to see the shadows before they attack. They pursue intruders for up to fifty feet down either corridor/passage. Closer examination of the slabs reveals that the occupied ones are carved on the sides with scenes from that cleric's life, focusing on his or her deeds done in Erishkigal or Nergal's service. A successful tracking or find & remove traps roll picks up small tracks of wear on top of a sixth slab—Shamhat often comes here to burn incense and mediate, to silently commune with her predecessors, and to lie atop her own future slab and dream (Erishkigal sometimes sends her visions). There is no treasure here: when a cleric of the Hidden Temple dies, all his or her personal possessions (coins, jewelry, magic items) pass to his or her colleagues.

### K16. Shamhat & Nabu-Nisir

Stairs lead down into a room that seems more crypt than bedchamber, despite the luxurious four-poster bed, dresser, desk, armoire, table, and chairs. A rug of concentric red and black circles warms the bare stone floor, and icons hang on the walls. Black and red candles shed soft light and a pleasant spiced scent. A wooden lecture against one wall holds a huge book, the page held open by a heavy bookmark. Oddly enough, the paper seems to be solid black; no writing can be seen against its inky surface.

This room is home to Shamhat, the High Priestess of the Hidden Temple and the prime mover behind recent events. Since coming to the prelacy three years ago when only twenty-one, she has re-energized the temple after years of slow quiet rebuilding. Highly charismatic, a true visionary, she has attracted new recruits (the adepts and acolytes) as well as forged alliances with others of like mind—the undead wizards (Cave F), the bandits (Cave B), the Necromancer Tarlech (Cave J), the Black Knight, and Kira the Huntress (both K14). Surreptitious raiding of abandoned graveyards provided the core of the

undead army that has so far expelled or exterminated the gnoll, hobgoblin, and orc populations of the valley. Soon the bugbears, goblins, and kobolds will follow, after which she has set her sights on the Keep itself. Her ultimate goal is to found a haven for worshippers of her goddess that might someday form the core of a theocracy, if they can attract enough support from like-minded groups. For now, however, gaining control of the valley is the key goal, with maintaining a steady supply of sacrificial victims for their altars (both to honor the goddess and to replenish the ranks of the undead army) and continued recruitment of other evil humans strong secondary goals. In all this she is ably supported by her consort, the senior ranking priest of Nergal (just as Erishkigal and Nergal are wedded, so too does temple doctrine recommend the pairing of the clergy; should Shamhat be killed then Wer becomes the new High Priestess and Nabu-Nisir's new consort; should Nabu-Nisir perish instead, then the adept Nisir becomes Shamhat's new partner). Nabu-Nisir is somewhat older than Shamhat (mid-thirties) and she benefits greatly from his practical experience in strategic planning.

If the alarm has not been raised, Shamhat will either be in the Egalgina (K9, 30%), the Kurnagi (K10, 20%), the crypt (K15, 5%), or this room (45%). Characters who fail their saving throw upon seeing the image of Erishkigal in room K3 must make another save (at a +2 bonus to the roll) upon first seeing Shamhat, as she has made herself look as much like the goddess as possible (died her hair black, used makeup to increase her natural pallor, etc.), the better to reinforce her role as Erishkigal's representative among the faithful). Those failing this save will be awestruck for 1d4 rounds, initially convinced that they are in the presence of the goddess herself. Naturally, Shamhat will use those rounds to attack, cast spells, or escape as seems appropriate. Nabu-Nisir will be here 40% of the time, in the Egalgina (15%) or the Kurnagi (10%); otherwise he is absent from the complex altogether on a grave-robbing expedition, returning in 1d3 days. Naturally, if the alarm has been raised he will be with the High Priestess and, if possible, they will don the magical vestments in area K11 in order to benefit from their *prayer* effect.

**Shamhat, the High Priestess (6th-level Priestess of Erishkigal):** AC 5 (*bracers of defense* AC 5); MV 12; hp 36; THAC0 18 (16 with *scythe* +2); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (*scythe* +2); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5'8"); ML elite (13); Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 16, Chr 17; AL NE; XP 3,000. Spells (5/5/2): 1st—*bless, combine, command, cure light wounds, fear*; 2nd—*aid, chill metal, enthrall, hold person, silence 15' radius*; 3rd—*animate dead, dispel magic*. Skills: ancient history (15), ancient language—cuneiform (16), endurance (14), reading/writing (17), reading lips (14), religion (16), spellcraft (14). Special Abilities: control undead. Special Equipment: *ring of human influence* (only affects evil humans), *phylactery of long years, philtre of love, oil of etherealness, gem of insight* (a ruby, hanging from a silver chain; apparent treasure value: 5,000 gp), *amulet of life protection* (in form of a black sapphire with a red glow at its heart when occupied by a soul; apparent treasure value: 5,000 gp).

**Nabu-Nisir, Priest of Nergal (5th-level Cleric):** AC 2 (*platemail of fear* [16 charges], shield, Dex penalty); MV 12; hp 38; THAC0 18 (17 with mace); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 + special (*mace of life-disruption*, Str bonus); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (6'2"); ML champion (16); Str 16, Dex 6, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 15, Chr 15; AL LE; XP 2,000. Spells (5/4/1): 1st—*cause light wounds, command, cure light wounds, darkness, protection from good*; 2nd—*chill metal, hold person, know alignment, silence 15' radius*; 3rd—*animate dead* OR *dispel magic*. Skills: ancient language—cuneiform (13), blind-fighting, endurance (16), religion (15). Special Abilities: control undead. Special Equipment: *horn of valhalla* (summons 2d4+2 zombies), *necklace of prayer beads* (if the Dungeon Master determines that it includes a *bead of summons*, note that Nabu-Nisir will not hesitate to summon his deity in extremis), *potion of extra-healing*. Nabu-Nisir's mace is a special

item; in the hands of an evil cleric it can inflict 5d4 damage against a Good-aligned target. It can only do this twelve times, however; this particular mace has seven charges left.

Both these clerics are intelligent and committed, using their spells and minions to best advantage. If defeat seems certain, Shamhat will either spill her *oil of etherealness* upon herself (60% chance) or upon Nabu-Nisir (40%) in order to escape and rebuild the Hidden Temple from afar, returning when the time seems right. He or she can become a continuing villain in the campaign, and the next adventure could start with the characters suffering the occasional attacks stirred up against them by the vengeful cleric or else pursuing him or her in order to finish what they started.

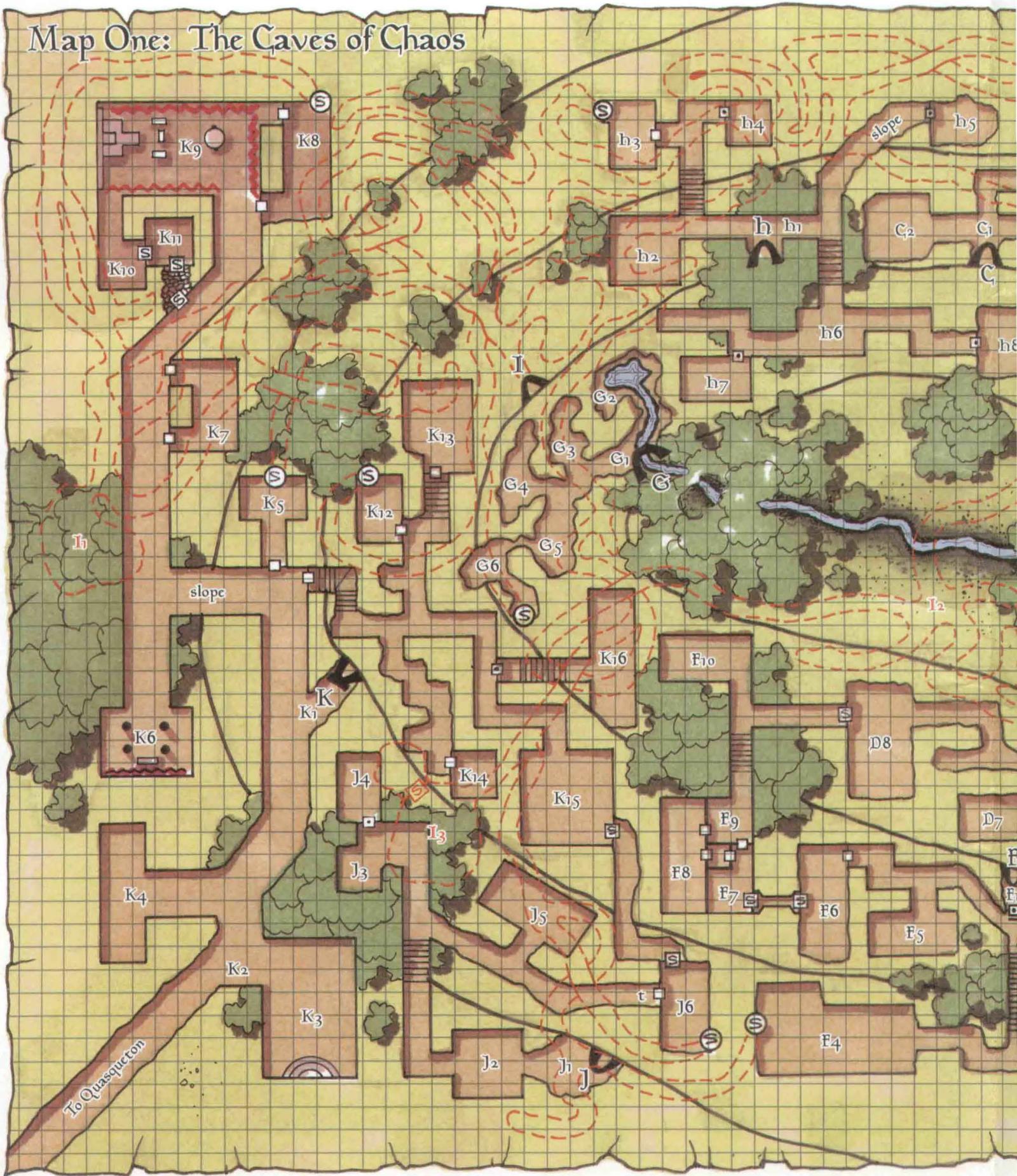
There is little treasure in this room, aside from the personal items worn by each of the residents (which include a matching pair of wedding rings of twisted red gold and blackened silver, worth 200 gp each). The armoire holds a number of fine outfits, mostly black (female) or red (male) but also some nondescript garb for when they wish to travel without drawing attention to themselves. The desk holds many papers relating to the temple and Shamhat's plans, ranging from correspondence with "suppliers" and potential allies, ransom notes, ledgers of sacrifices, and the like; these could be used as adventure hooks if the Dungeon Master wishes. The book on the lectern is a Legendary, holding many tales about Erishkigal, Nergal, and other deities of their pantheon (Tiamat, Marduk, Ishtar, the Anunnaki or "Old Gods," the Igigi or "New Gods," etc.). The pages can only read when a hand is passed over them and the name of any god mentioned in the book is said aloud, whereupon blood-red cuneiform letters appear, fading again after an hour. A sage would gladly pay 1,000 gp for such a tome; any temple devoted to this pantheon would triple that. Naturally, the worshippers of Erishkigal will do their utmost to recover it should it be stolen.

## After the Adventure

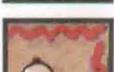
Characters who succeed in ending the threat posed by the Hidden Temple will be treated as heroes back at the Keep, especially if they escort rescued captives home. Putting an end to the bandit threat brings a material reward: Merchants who frequent this road pool their resources and pay a bounty of 300 gp to be divided among the characters however they wish (generous characters dripping with loot from their adventures will give it away to the unfortunates they rescued, but some will no doubt hold that it's not possible to have too much money). Any humanoids that survived will attempt to re-colonize their old homes, as will outside bands who hear of abandoned caves; unless the characters actually move into the caves themselves or set up a permanent guard upon the valley to keep humanoids out, the complex will gradually re-stock itself. Even so, it will be many years before its residents again pose a danger to the Keep or travelers in the area.

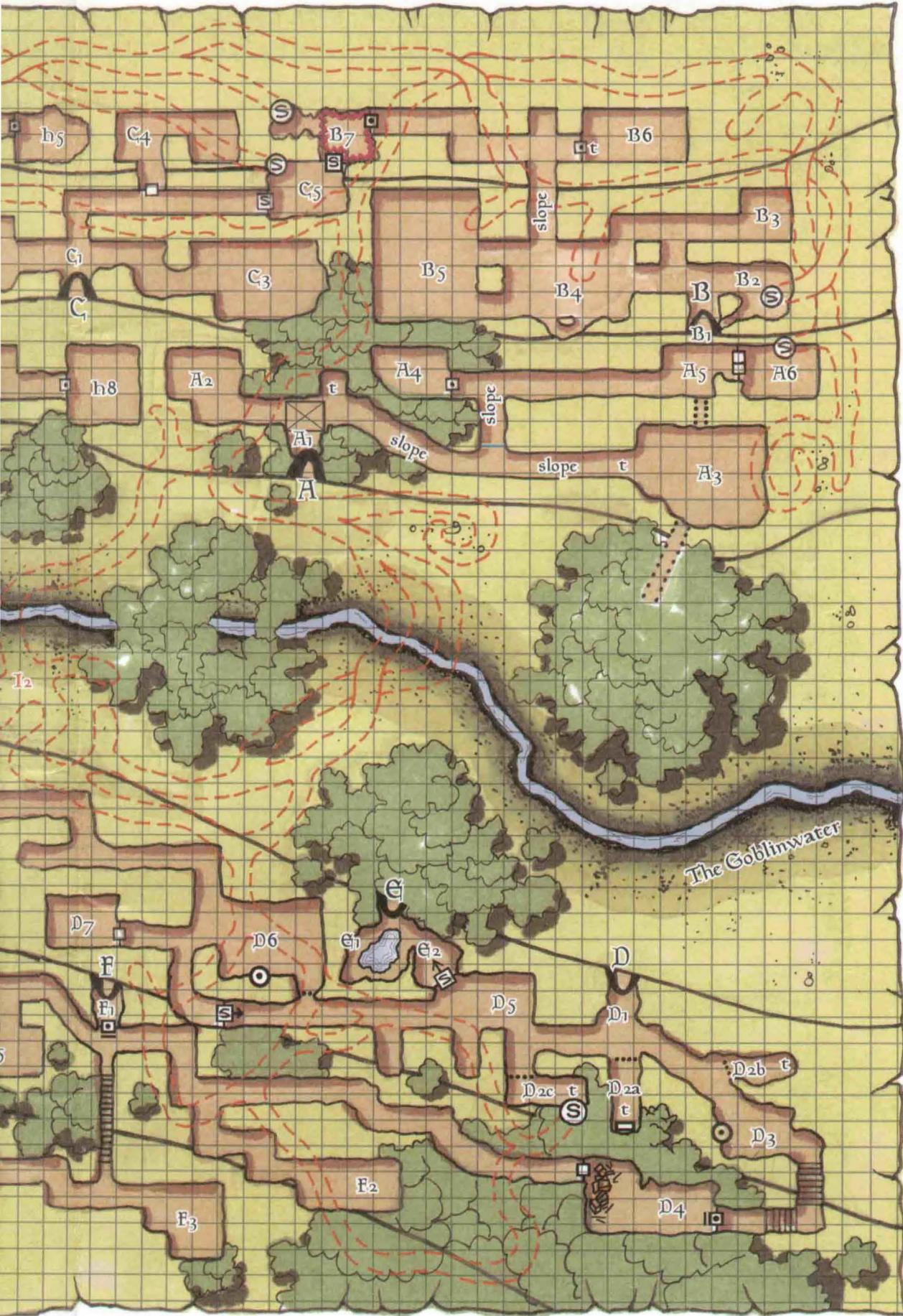
Some characters may wish to settle down and become permanent residents of the Keep. Others may decide to use it as a home base, to which they return between adventures. Still others hear the call of future adventures and will no doubt shortly depart seeking new challenges for their ever-growing skill. As it is likely that a number of characters may be suffering from a variety of loathsome ailments (mummy-rot, ratbite fever, incipient lycanthropy), a quest to find some cure for these diseases before it is too late would be an excellent hook for the next adventure. But for now, allow both the characters and the players—and you yourself—to savor the successful completion of the adventure.

# Map One: The Caves of Chaos



# Key

-  Cave mouth
-  Door
-  Locked door
-  Barred door
-  Secret door
-  One-way secret door
-  Secret door to the Labyrinth
-  Portcullis
-  Trip wire
-  Dit
-  Stairs
-  Slope
-  Trap
-  Escape tunnel
-  Tapestries, curtain, wall hangings



N



One square equals ten feet

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