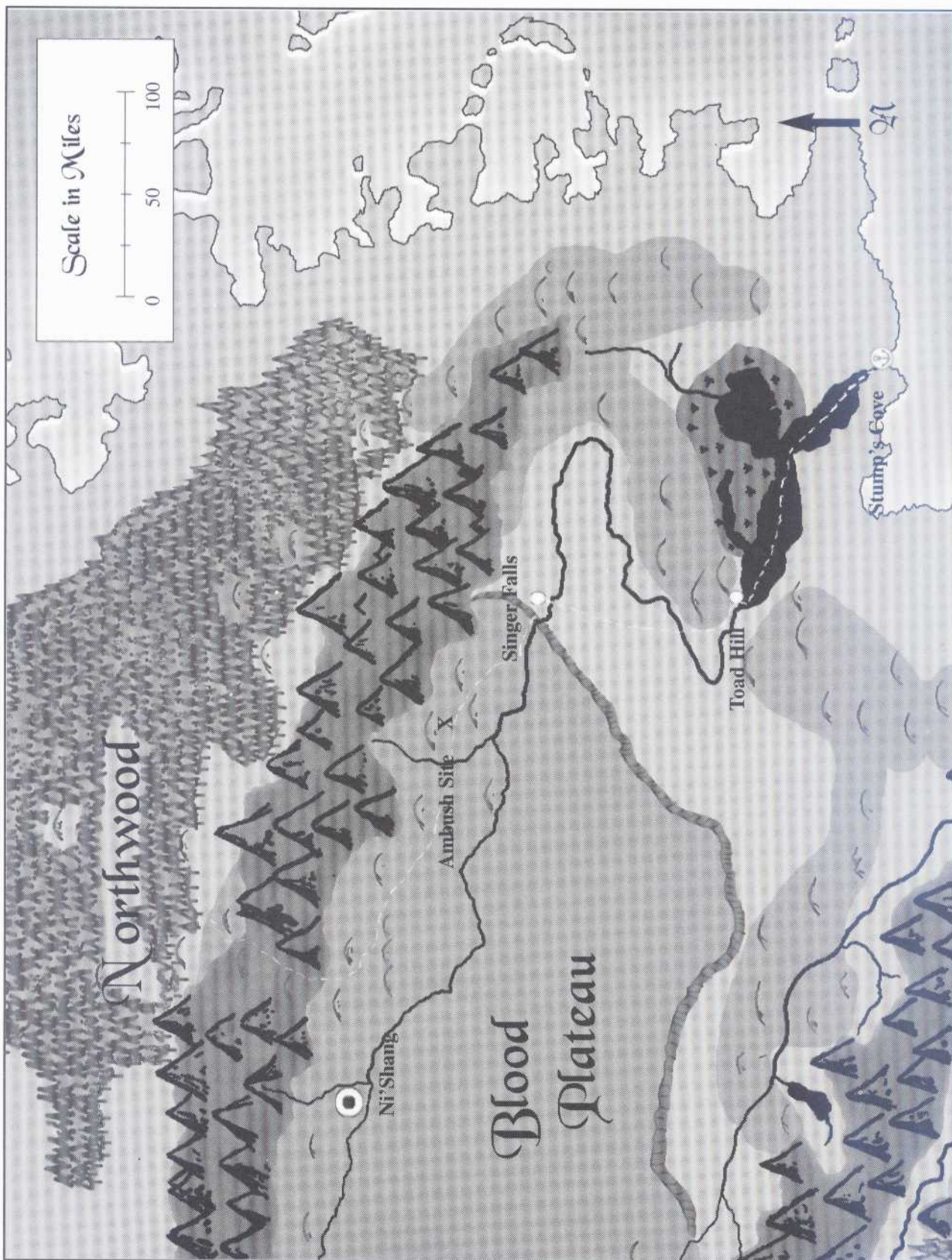


# The Debated Lands



Map by Stephen J Tierney III



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## Introduction

Welcome to the Debated Lands.

This vast region is composed of the Badlands, Blood Plateau and Brambles. South of the Brambles coils the decadent Dragon Empire. Far to the north rule the icy elves of the Northwood. Though both have laid claim to various portions of the Debated Lands, neither has been able to subdue the free-spirited inhabitants of this region. Politically, the Debated Lands are a collection of small kingdoms and free cities separated by large stretches of wilderness. There is no central government to safeguard the region, making it a fertile ground for trouble and adventure.

**Tales from the Blood Plateau: Caravan of Hope** is the second in a series of adventures by MonkeyGod Enterprises and uses the D20 system. It is suitable for four 3rd to 4th level characters. Each encounter possesses an overall rating called the encounter level. This estimates a given encounter's level of difficulty for a typical party of four adventurers.

In **Caravan of Hope**, the adventurers set out on a mission of mercy to the Elves of the Northwood. During their travels through the Debated Lands, they will meet some of the inhabitants of this area, while discovering some of the interesting features of these lands, such as the Blood Plateau.

### The Blood Plateau

The Blood Plateau is said to have gained its unique name from the spectacular blood red sunsets it experiences, but others claim it is from the perpetual maelstrom of violence found on the plateau. These highlands are home to numerous tribes of savage orc horsemen. Politics on the plateau are dominated by four large hordes (the Bloods, Fangs, Black Riders, and Red Eyes) of these nomadic orcs. In times of invasion, the orcs of the Blood Plateau unify under one Great Khan, but most often they bicker and war with one another over small territorial disputes. Thanks to this constant infighting, the lands south of the plateau are generally safe from marauders. Trade across the Blood Plateau is reasonably safe (usually) so long as the local towns pay tribute to the controlling horde. When groups cross lines however, all bets are off.

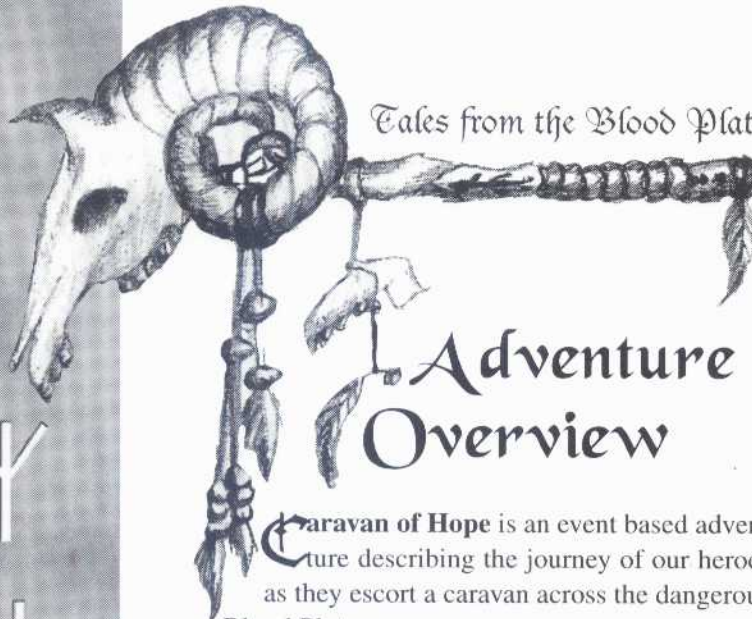
### Preparation

You, as the Dungeon Master (DM), need a copy of the *Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* to run this adventure. Text found on gray parchment is player information that should be paraphrased or read aloud to the players. Text in sidebars contains important DM notes. Monster and NPC statistics are provided at the end of the adventure. The maps in this module are on a scale of five feet per square. Before running *Caravan of Hope*, you should read the entire module to get an idea of the overall plot. Just before play, you should also review the NPC and creature statistics to refresh your memory of their abilities.

This adventure is very difficult and might result in the death of a few characters unless the players are careful and sensible. Depending on the skill of your players, you may wish to weaken the opposition, particularly in the final scenario.

### Customization

This adventure, although set in The Debated Lands, is designed to be easily adaptable to nearly any fantasy setting. The types of towns and features of The Debated Lands are fairly common in most campaigns. Town descriptions, such as Stump's Cove, are left intentionally vague to make this adventure as portable as possible. When placing *Caravan of Hope* into your own world, feel free to change town names and travel times to suit your needs. A few features, however, should be maintained. The rural lands between Stump's Cove and Singer Falls, although generally peaceful are still somewhat wild. This is the edge of the civilization and no powerful central government exists. The Blood Plateau is the wilderness, and is claimed only by the nomadic orc tribes who live there. If you do not have orcs conveniently located near your cities, you can substitute your own barbarian horde. Remember, once you purchase this adventure, it is yours. Feel free to make any changes you feel fit, and have fun.



## Adventure Overview

**Caravan of Hope** is an event based adventure describing the journey of our heroes as they escort a caravan across the dangerous Blood Plateau.

After saving his life from a savage assassination attempt, the PCs are hired as bodyguards by the merchant Finial Sixtoes. Finial is transporting a shipment of "medicine" (a rare herb called Gromon) to the forests located to the northwest. A plague is allegedly effecting the Elves of the Northwood and this drug will immunize those yet unaffected and heal those who are afflicted.

### The Journey

Finial's chosen route first takes the PCs north toward Singer Falls, where Finial's partner Armand will join the caravan. On the journey, the PCs will foil a second murder attempt against Finial. In Singer Falls, the PCs must solve a mystery of disappearing babies and cleanse a nearby mine of an infestation of Goblins.

From Singer Falls, the caravan continues north through the Blood Plateau, a territory controlled by nomadic orc tribes. The orc tribes are presently at peace with most outsiders, but are warring with one another over control of the plateau. Late one evening, an orc raiding party attacks the caravan, but is successfully fended off. While Finial and the PCs track down the remnants of the raiding party, a second force of orcs overcomes the caravan's remaining defenders and steals the medicine. After the PCs return to the remains of the caravan, they must then track the orc nomads to rescue their precious cargo.

### Stump's Cove

**Nonstandard;** AL CN; 8000 gp limit; Assets 280,000; **Population;** 7000; Mixed (human 66%, Half elf 9%, elf 8%, halfling 6%, gnome 4%, Dwarf 3%, half-orc 2%)

### Authority Figures

**Mayor:** Castor Flavis  
**Notable Characters:** Hiro Azama (head of the assassin's guild) Chiang Chow Foo (Head of merchant's guild) Bergen Twofists (barkeep of the Slimy Eel)

## Background

Finial is not actually transporting medicine to the Elves, but rather a potent hallucinogenic drug called Gromon, which many of the elves have become addicted to. When this "medicine" is inhaled as smoke, it presents the user with extravagant visions and a feeling of euphoria. While under its influence, the user's surroundings will change and distort rapidly—the ground will shift and bend, pillars of stone will rise, and creatures of unnatural countenance will materialize from purple mists. The effect is generally exhilarating if the user is aware of what is happening and believes himself safe. However, if the user is under stress or in a dangerous situation, the drug's effect will combine with his subconscious fears to create horrific nightmares.

Finial and his partner Armand are involved in a drug smuggling operation. They have purchased a large quantity of Gromon in port and intend to transport it to the elves living in the Northwood. Now that the goods are in their possession, Armand does not want to share the profits and has hired the Stump Cove assassins to kill his partner. Finial is unaware of the plot against him.

### Stump's Cove.

This small port city is home to a powerful merchants guild, which has a high degree of influence over the elected mayor. It is also home to a number of criminal guilds, each of which also has a say in policy. The city was originally named after a pirate who frequented the hidden coves in this region about 400 years ago. Little has changed.

### Rumors

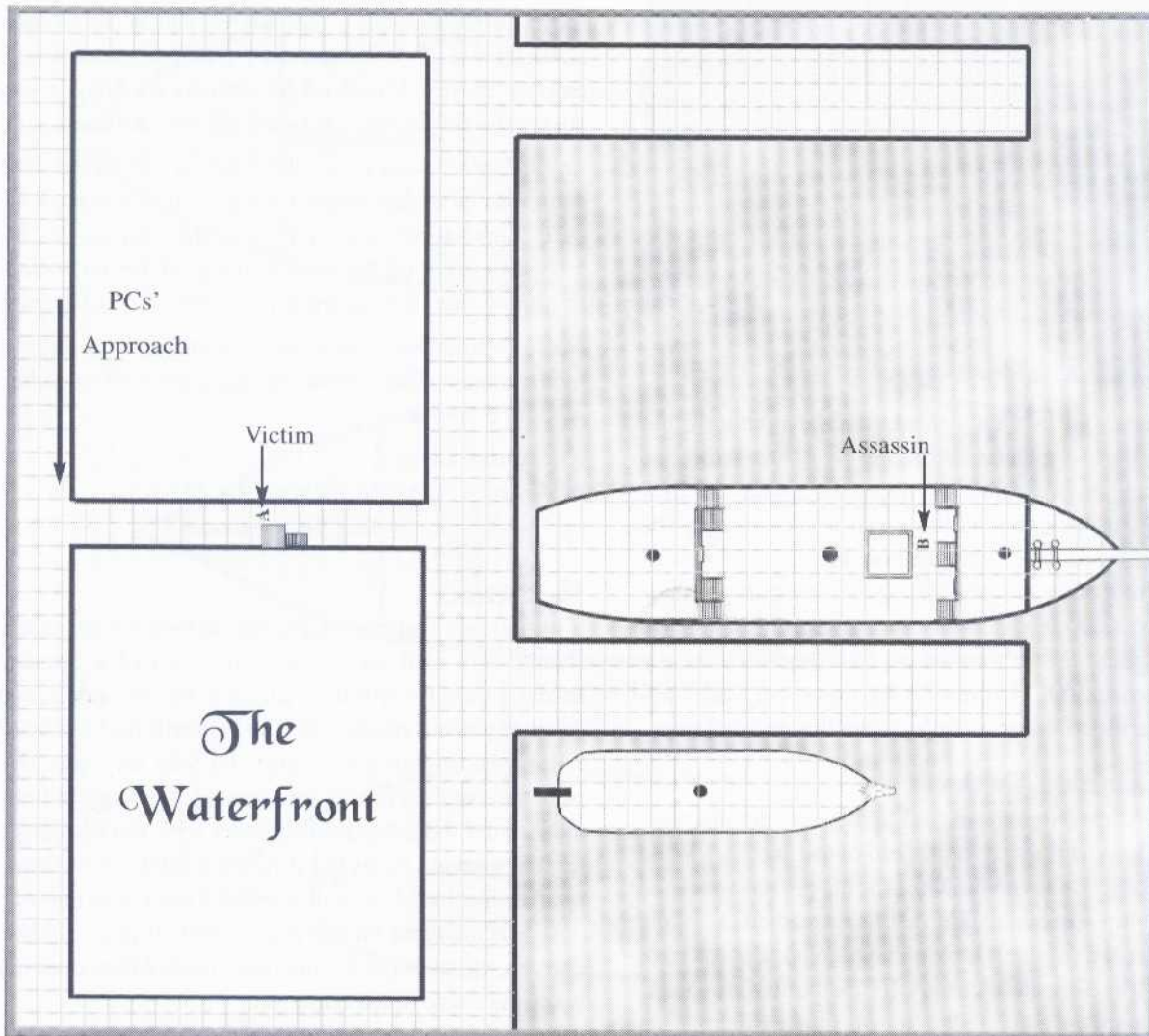
- The Elves of the Northwood are suffering the effects of an unknown plague.
- The Great Khan of the Blood Plateau has died under mysterious circumstances. The Khan's of four orcish hordes are claiming the vacated position.
- There have been some mysterious disappearances at the docks. Rumors are spreading that the Arcathian Empire is acquiring these people as slaves.
- A fleet from the Dragon Empire is blockading the Elven ports to the south.

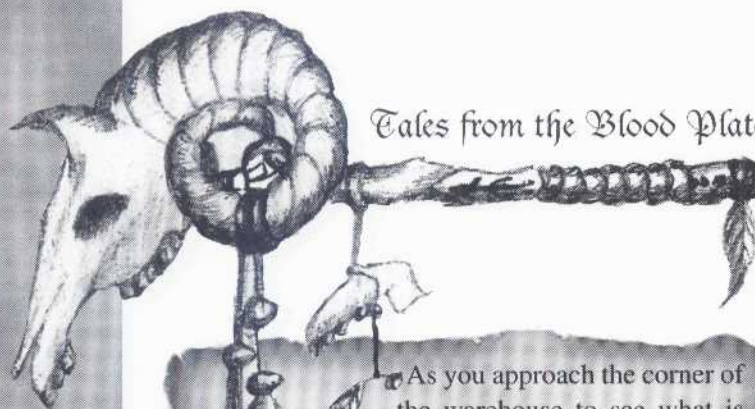
## Act One: Assassination

The story begins as the party travels from a reputable downtown tavern (Rothgar's Kegroom) which has just closed, to the Slimy Eel—a more rowdy portside tavern which has no closing time. A surprise awaits the PCs, as they will interrupt an assassination attempt.

It is an overcast evening, making your drunken trip to the Slimy Eel all the more treacherous. The cobblestone road passes along a number of dark, featureless warehouses on the left and a variety of closed shops on the right. The masts of the ships in port are barely visible above the shadowy buildings. From up ahead you can hear the sounds of revelry. The road's only light shines through the windows of the Slimy Eel Tavern, about 4 blocks distant.

Suddenly a scream snaps you out of your drunken stupor. It came from an alleyway up ahead.





As you approach the corner of the warehouse to see what is happening, you can hear the sounds of combat (feet scuffling, swords clanging). Turning the corner, you see a large shadowy figure remove his blade from a smaller figure which then slumps to the ground. The villain, realizing he has been spotted, runs down the alley toward the docks.

#### Saving the victim

The victim, Finial Sixtoes, is down but still living and can easily be restored by a healing spell or potion.

He is currently at -1 hit points.

The alley runs between two large warehouses and is very dark. A wooden stair leads to a second floor office entry on the right. Under the stair you can see a number of barrels and some loose rubbish. The victim, a human merchant, lies bleeding just a few feet from the stairwell. A quick inspection reveals he is still alive. He has a crossbow bolt stuck in his ribs and a nasty puncture wound in his abdomen.

As you round the far corner of the warehouse, you can see a long boardwalk with piers jutting out into the cove. Two ships (the Southern Wind and The Silver Drake) are moored on the next pier. A splash can be heard in the vicinity of the two ships. The fleeing attacker is nowhere to be seen.

The assassin, a half elf named Allain Nighthorn, has climbed onto a galleon called the Southern Wind and thrown a crate overboard. He hopes the splash will trick the PCs into believing he has dived into the water. The PCs can not see which ship he is on, but will find the correct dock and hear the splash. A tracking check (DC21) to see an occasional drop of blood will guide the PCs to the correct ship while a spot check (DC 15) reveals the crate, only half submerged in the water between the ship and pier.

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#### Assassin Tactics

Allain Nighthorn has hidden on the stairwell leading down into the hold of the Southern Wind and is watching the rail for his pursuers (see the ship schematic). He will fire a readied crossbow at the strongest looking target who tries to climb aboard. It is difficult to climb over the rail (DC15) without a gang plank and a failure results into a 10' drop into

the water between the ship and pier. While climbing, the PCs will be an easy target for a sneak attack but will have 25% cover (+2 to AC). Before being attacked directly, Allain Nighthorn will cast a darkness spell and slip down into the hold. If for some reason the PCs do not pursue, he will work his way down into the lower levels of the ship and hide out till morning. If he is followed, he will use the cover of darkness and his blind fighting feat to ambush the party.

If the battle in the hold is loud or goes on for more than 5 or 6 rounds, the PCs will be joined by 3 sailors from the aft crew quarters. This is simply going to complicate matters as the PCs, the sailors, and Allain Nighthorn will not know who is friend or foe.

#### In the Dark

*Unless a PC can cast a magical light spell of equal level (daylight for example), the combat will occur in total darkness and all combatants will have total concealment. (see the Players Handbook for details). Nightvision and darkvision do not function under magical darkness.*

*Any PCs who guess where the enemy is will have a 50% chance to miss their target even if a hit is rolled on the d20. Combatants lose any dexterity bonus to AC (although PCs with the uncanny dodge ability do not lose this bonus) and their speed is reduced to 50% of normal.*

*Note: Rogues don't get to sneak attack an opponent in total darkness. They cannot see the target well enough to pick out a vital area.*

#### Encounter Level 6

- Assassin Allain Nighthorn (hp 27)
- 3 Sailors (hp 14, 12, 10)

#### The Escape

If things go badly enough, the assassin will cast a change self spell and assume the form of a drunken human sailor. He will then retreat to the main deck and throw his sword overboard. The PCs will find a startled sailor who simply points over the side and says "He went that way". If the PCs see through the disguise (they must touch the assassin or interact with the illusion to receive a saving throw) or if Allain Nighthorn is somehow incapacitated, he will surrender and claim the incident was a simple mugging gone bad. If pressed however, he will admit to having been hired. Allain does not know the name of his employer.

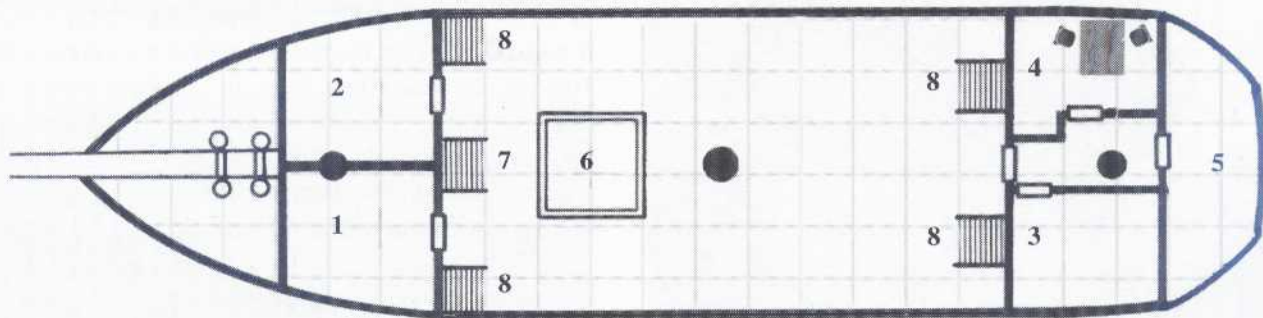
#### Blindfighting

*For PCs with the Blind-Fighting feat (and Allain Nighthorn) it's just a 25% chance to miss. Dexterity bonuses are not lost, and movement is reduced to 75% of normal.*

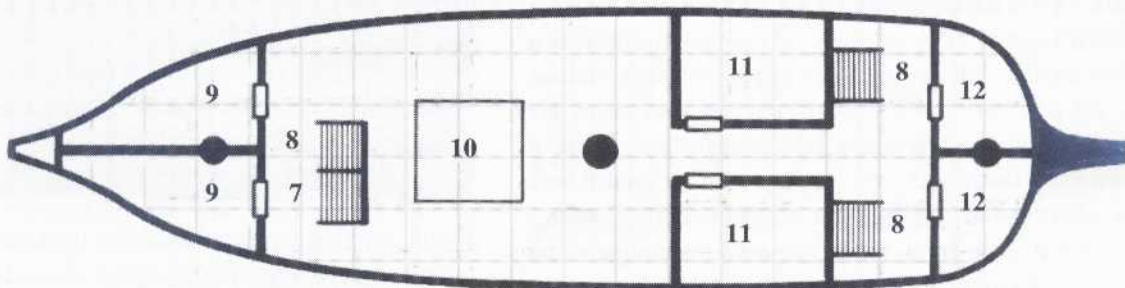
# The Southern Wind

## Galleon Key

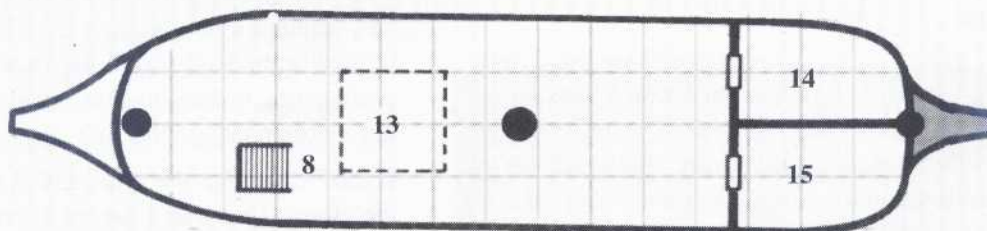
1	Captain's Quarters	6	Cargo Hatch	11	Crew Cabins
2	Stateroom	7	Stair Down	12	Crew Quarters
3	Galley	8	Stair Up	13	Cargo Hold
4	Chart Room	9	Officer Quarters	14	Pantry
5	Storage	10	Cargo Hold	15	Brig



Main Deck



Cargo Deck



Steerage Deck





### Finial's Story

After the PCs revive him, Finial Sixtoes will be very grateful and offer them drinks at the tavern. Finial is a charismatic, middle aged man, of average human height and build with a slight paunch that belies his unusual agility. His attire has contributions from a myriad of lands and cultures. In combat Finial favors the short sword and is quite adept at fighting with a weapon in each hand. Finial acquired his unique name when he lost four toes due to a foolish bet.

Once at the Slimy Eel, Finial bribes a small group to give up their table and asks the PCs to sit and drink with him.

The Slimy Eel is teeming with boisterous sailors and cheerful locals. The smoky air smells of alcohol and sweat. Three buxom waitresses and a largish bartender serve the throng. Finial thanks you three more times

before the drinks arrive. After gulping down half a tankard and preemptively ordering another round, Finial begins his tale.

"Now that my nerves are a bit less frayed, let me make formal introductions. I am Finial Sixtoes of the Northwood. I'm a merchant by trade and have been staying in Stump's Cove for over two weeks now waiting for the Southern Wind to arrive in port. I heard from the locals here at the Slimy Eel that she was finally in port, so I took a little stroll down to the docks to see for myself. Sure enough, she was there. I had started back to the tavern to celebrate the arrival of my goods when I got jumped in the alley by that loathsome assassin."

If asked, Finial says there was no attempt at robbery, the assassin just shot a bolt from the shadows, then leapt from the darkness and began his assault. He is unsure why someone would want him dead but suspects it might be related to his very valuable cargo.

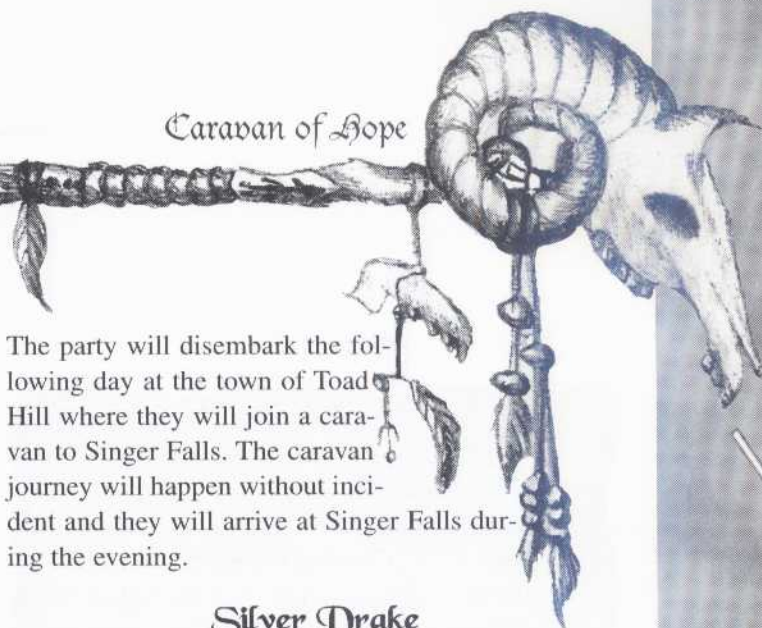
After finishing off his first tankard and starting the second (which just arrived), Finial continues.

"From the look of you folks, you've been through a few battles. Perhaps you would be willing to accompany me north to Singer Falls.

I can offer you 100 gp each for your protection. Please, I beg you, my cargo is very important to the elves in the north and I'm concerned that I'll never get that far without an escort."

Finial is going north half way by boat and the rest by caravan to a town called Singer Falls. At Singer Falls he will meet his partner Armand G. Thornhill who has made arrangements for crossing the Blood Plateau with their goods. If questioned about the cargo, Finial has acquired a rare medicinal herb that is desperately needed in the Northwood. He expects to make quite a profit in the seller's market, provided of course he is not murdered along the way.

If the PCs accept the offer, Finial purchases rooms at the closest tavern and moves in with them. Two days later, the journey begins.



## Act Two: Traveling North

The party departs Stump's Cove, going north up the Clearbourne River aboard the riverboat Silver Drake. The boat has one sail and a number of benches along the side used for rowing when the wind is calm. During the trip, each of the PCs should take at least one turn with the oars. The boat crosses the Three Sisters, a series of large lakes which combine with the Clearbourne to form a clover leaf pattern. It will take about three days to reach Toad Hill where they can continue their voyage by land along the Clearbourne river to Singer Falls. It is during the trip across the Three Sisters that a second attempt is made on Finial's life.

The party will disembark the following day at the town of Toad Hill where they will join a caravan to Singer Falls. The caravan journey will happen without incident and they will arrive at Singer Falls during the evening.

### Silver Drake

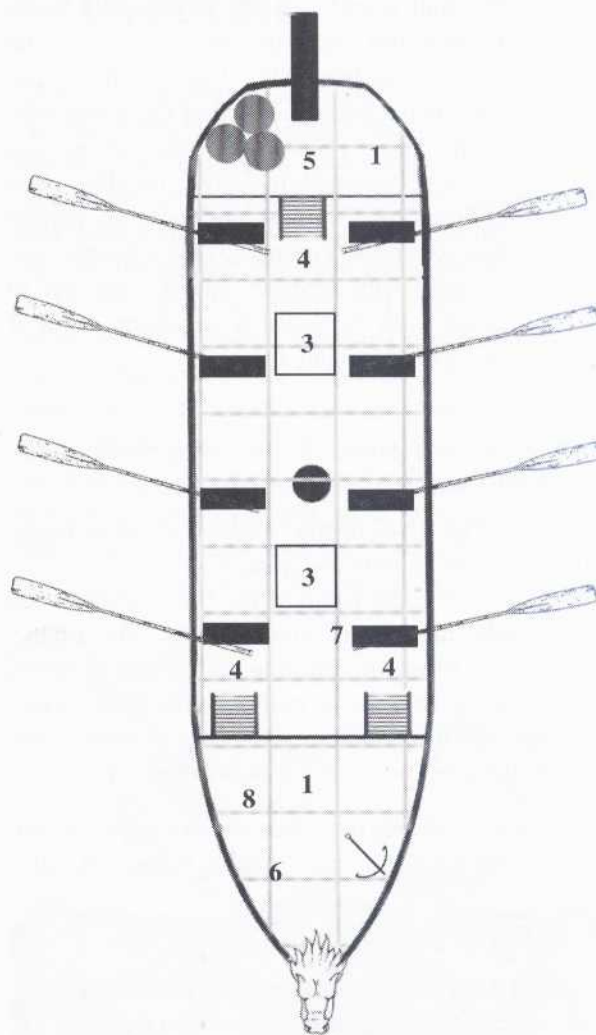
1. Raised Deck	5. Helmsman
2. Main Deck	6. Lookout (Finial)
3. Cargo Hatch	7. Grom Earbiter
4. Steps Up	8. Gibbering Mouter

It is the second day of your journey across the Three Sisters. Finial has gone forward and is looking over the prow. You spot an object rolling towards him, it appears to have been tossed by one of the sailors working the oars. It comes to a stop just behind Finial's position. Before you can act, the ball erupts in a cloud of smoke from which materializes a blasphemous aberration seemingly formed from a sickening array of gaping mouths, baleful eyes, and twisted flesh.

One of the sailors, a half-orc named Grom Earbiter, was hired by a member of the Stump's Cove assassin's guild. His instructions were to place the globe near Finial by whatever means necessary. Little did he know a Gibbering Mouter was bound within. The Gibbering Mouter materializes during the surprise round and will attack anybody within reach once regular rounds begin. Once the Gibbering Mouter has been defeated the players may question the sailor. In the course of the interrogation they will learn he believed he had been hired to play a little joke on Finial and was not aware of the danger the globe contained. He does not know the person who hired him.

#### Encounter Level 4

- Gibbering Mouter. (hp 26)



## Tales from the Blood Plateau



### Singer Falls

As the sun sets over the western mountains, its red light sparkles on the falls like thousands of cascading rubies. The falls are magnificent. The Clearbourne River drops hundreds of feet as it pours over the edge of the cliff that marks the beginning of the Blood Plateau. Only after minutes pass do you notice the small town nestled in the hills at its base.

#### Singer Falls

Standard; AL CG;  
800 GP limit;  
Assets 38,400 gp;

Population; 960; Mixed  
(human 66%, elf 11%,  
half-orc 8%, Half elf  
7%, halfling 5%, gnome  
2%, Dwarf 1%)

Notable Characters:  
Armand G. Thornhill,  
Old Man Jasper

Singer Falls is a small town located at the base of the Blood Plateau where the Clearbourne River pours over the edge of the escarpment. The trail north out of Singer Falls heads through the orc territories en route the Bloodbourne Pass. After dealing with the animals, Finial and the PCs find the town's only tavern, Singer's Siren, where they are greeted by a concerned-looking, middle aged halfling. Finial briefly introduces his partner then goes off to a corner to have a private conversation with Armand. The PCs are free to mingle with the dozen or so patrons, most of whom are just traders passing through.

#### Rumors

While in Singer's Siren, the following facts can be learned with gather information skill checks.

- (DC 20) The Elves of the Northwood are suffering the effects of an unknown plague.
- (DC 15) The Great Khan of the Blood Plateau has died under mysterious circumstances. The Khan's of 4 orcish tribes are claiming the vacated position.
- (DC 15) Something is polluting the river water. Animal and townsfolk are becoming ill from drinking it and now the town's well is drying up.

If the PCs wish, one or more may eavesdrop on the conversation between Finial and Armand. (Listen DC20)

"OK Finial, what's with the brute squad?"

"I hired them back in Stump's Cove, they saved my life twice. I think someone has put a hit on me."

"A hit? Hmm, I wonder who else knows about our cargo? Are these guys trustworthy?"

"I think so. They seem pretty good in a fight, and they seem sympathetic to the elves' plight."

"Why are you so late? Is the shipment OK? I was getting nervous."

"The ship took extra time down in the Brambles, problems with the weather I guess. How are things at this end?"

"Good and bad. The teamsters have been hired and the caravan is ready. The problem is, I believe someone new is operating on the plateau. I haven't heard from our last caravan. I don't know if it was orcs or if we've been double-crossed. Maybe it is related to your little problem? In any case, I think we should go along on this trip."

"Little problem? Hmff! Maybe we should hire these guys as guards. If it is orcs, we'll need extra swords."

"I'll think about it."

At about this time, Finial approaches the PCs with an offer of continued service. He does not trust his partner ("he seemed little surprised and even less concerned that I was nearly killed"). The offer is 100 gp up front and another 200 gp on arrival for each PC. As the adventurers consider the offer, they hear screaming in the distance. The piercing shriek comes from a middle aged human nanny who crashes through the tavern door, short of breath from the unexpected run and the continuous shrieking. She is clearly panicked and close to fainting from hysteria. A number of townsfolk settle her down and offer her brandy. Once she is calm, she tells this story.

"Stolen she was. Ripped from her cradle in the dead of night. I could hear her screaming and wailing, yet I could not even move. It was as though my bones had set and my muscles frozen. I just lay there listening to the crying and then, all of a sudden, the crying stopped. As I awoke from whatever dream held me, I could hear the madam screaming 'She's gone! She's gone!', and sure enough little Jessica was missing."



As the story is completed, additional cries of dismay break the night's silence. A stablehand and a old maid burst into the tavern.

"Aphiel has been taken" shrieks the old maid. The stablehand goes on to explain. "We saw em, we did! Short and all stunted like, they was, black pointed teeth and hairless skulls they had, crowned with pointy ears and bulging yellow eyes. The sight of them nearly put old Gilda here in her grave. They busted into little Aphiel's chambers and took her all screaming and flailing. Old Man Jasper told us to fetch aid and he went after them."

When the PC and townsfolk pursue, they will find the mayor, Old Man Jasper, on the ground dying. His belly will show a number of wounds, most of which appear to be teeth and claw marks of some sort. A few wounds, however, appear to be dagger marks. If his wounds are healed, but not completely cured, he will die a number of days later of some strange sickness. In any case, he will tell the following tale.

"I chased the freaks as fast as my old legs could carry me. I was gaining ground on them despite my age—their stubby legs seemed better for creeping than running. Up ahead, I could see a number of them carrying my lovely Aphiel. A few of the loathsome beasts were lagging behind to slow my pursuit. The monsters fell upon me and I cut into them with my trusted ax. The first fell easily, but the others were able to drag me down. The twisted little monsters were quicker than I would have thought. I could feel their teeth and claws rending at my legs and stomach, but I was still able to get another swing with my ax. A second fell, then a third, when all of a sudden I was struck from behind. One of them had a sword and drove it deeply into my side. I lay here bleeding and could do nothing as they dragged their dead away." He points toward the center of town then passes out.

It is about this time that other folks emerge from their homes. Having been awakened by the shouts of alarm, they too have come to realize that their own children are missing. A total of 7 babies (ages between two months and four years old) have been taken.

The trail of the kidnapers is easy to follow (track DC15 or search DC20) and leads to the dry well at the center of the town.

## Act Three: Goblins

The disappearances are due to a tribe of goblins who have tunneled out a small section the Blood Plateau. They have been burrowing under it for years, seeking the ores present there. The goblin chief, a bugbear named Gurthlug, has decided his clan is becoming a bit inbred and seeks new blood for breeding purposes. Actually, they have been mining pitchblende (uranium ore), which is the true cause of their degeneration. Goblinoids will occasionally attempt to breed outside their own species in order to improve the gene pool. Otherwise, inbreeding causes them to become too warped to function normally. The problem is that most non goblinoids will have nothing to do with them. Gurthlug hopes the infants, after being raised by his tribe, will not have any prejudices.



## Tales from the Blood Plateau



### The Well

The goblins have found a passage from their mines leading to the town of Singer Falls. This passage connects to the bottom of the old town well. The water feeding the old well traveled along an underground passage which, once diverted, made a perfect goblin tunnel

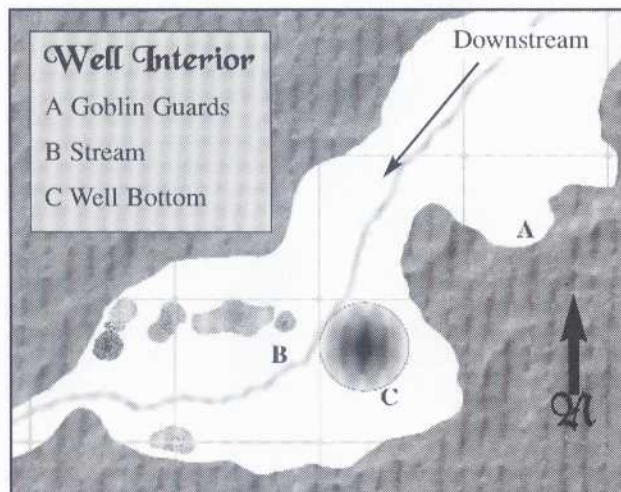
As the panicking families arrive in the town square their torches reveal many footprints, drag marks, and drops of blood on the ground surrounding the old well. The well itself is only about 3 feet across and has a winch with an attached rope and bucket. The rope and bucket are invisible within the darkness of the well.



## Caravan of Hope

A tracking roll (DC20) around the vicinity of the well indicates that a group of goblins (14 in all) passed down into the well. A light source is required to see into the well itself, the bottom of which is 60 feet down. Those with night vision can barely see the bottom, which appears to open up into a small cave. There is a slight amount of water at the bottom, but the well is mostly dry. Climbing down the rope is an easy climb (DC10) while climbing down the rocky sides of the well is much harder (DC25) because of their steepness, dampness, and crumbly nature.

The goblins, realizing they may have been discovered, have left three guards in the cave at the base of the well. Once the first PC has reached bottom, a goblin will emerge from his hiding place and run down the cave to raise the alarm. In the meantime, unless the PC has somehow been alerted to the ambush or spotted their hiding place (spot DC28), the other two goblins will make a surprise attack. If the two goblins are subdued or captured, they will reveal their king's plans and provide a crude map in exchange for their lives.



### Encounter Level 1

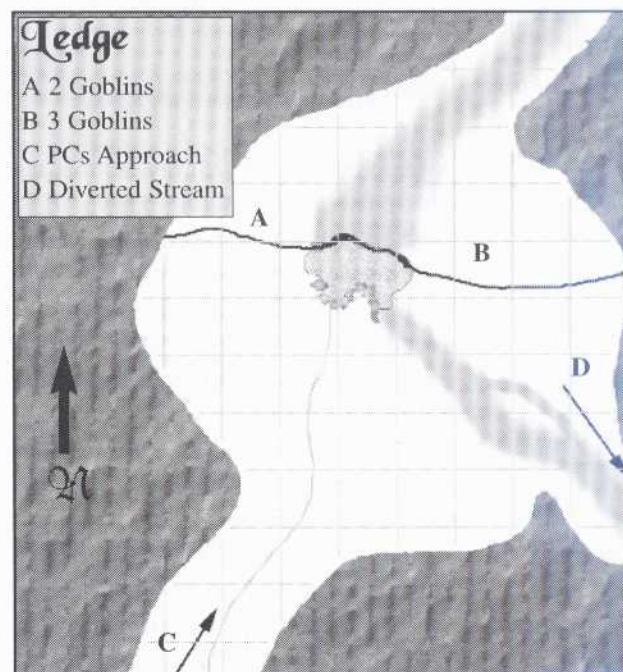
- 3 goblins (hp 2,3,4)

The tunnel heading north is rocky and well-worn from centuries of erosion. It is mostly dry (just a trickle remains from the underground stream which once supplied the village) with dimensions ranging from 5' to 12' in height and 3' to 8' in width. The tracks are extremely difficult to follow; a tracking check at DC 25 is required to locate the occasional smear of blood. No footprints are visible. Any attempt to pursue the running goblin is fool-

hardy. The goblin moves at a full run and is able to avoid obstacles with his dark vision and familiarity with the route. A PC without dark vision can take a double move at best; those with dark vision may run down the goblin if they wish. Remember to track how much of a head start he has. The passage goes on for about 500 yards to encounter 2.

### Diverted Stream

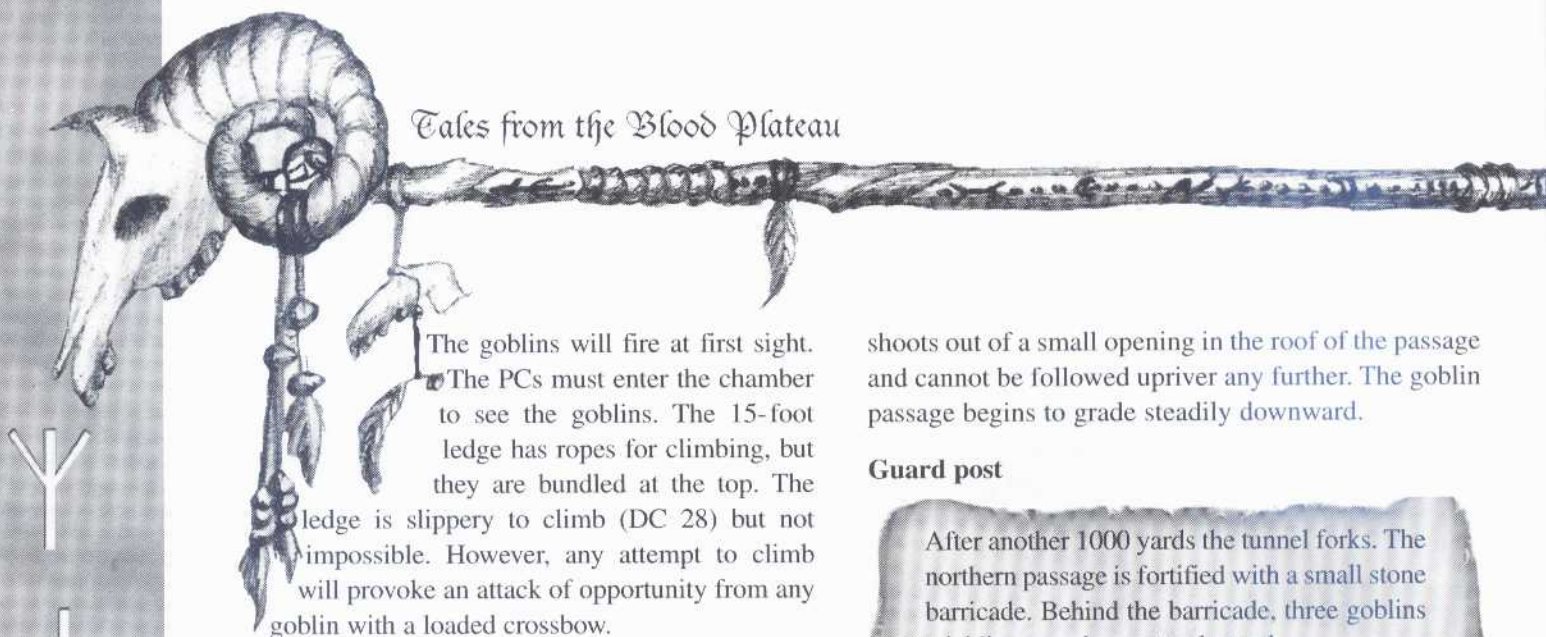
From a distance, you hear the sound of rushing water. As you approach the source of the sound, a cool mist begins to strike your face. Eventually, the passage opens up into a cavern with a thirty foot diameter which is perhaps 40 feet high. A subterranean waterfall cascades 15 feet over a ledge directly ahead. At the base of the falls, you see a hastily constructed dam that diverts the river to the south. Up on the ledge (on either side of the falls) stand 5 alert goblins wielding light crossbows.



### Encounter Level 2

- 5 goblins (hp 1, 2, 3, 3, 4)

## Tales from the Blood Plateau



The goblins will fire at first sight. The PCs must enter the chamber to see the goblins. The 15-foot ledge has ropes for climbing, but they are bundled at the top. The ledge is slippery to climb (DC 28) but not impossible. However, any attempt to climb will provoke an attack of opportunity from any goblin with a loaded crossbow.

### Cave in.

As the PCs continue upstream in pursuit of the kidnapers, they must now share the tunnel with the river. Occasionally the PCs are forced to wade through waist deep water or to jump from one side to the other to stay on dry ground. The water is frigid and will eventually sap the PCs' strength. Roll two fortitude checks at DC 20, one for strength and one for constitution. A failure results in the temporary loss of a trait point. After about a quarter mile, the PCs approach a cave in.

The passage ahead ends abruptly. A large boulder has fallen from above and sealed the passage almost completely. A crawl space suitable for a small creature such as a goblin or halfling is all that is left of the passage. The stream wells up from beneath the rock.

### Drowning

PCs can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their current constitution score. After this time, constitution checks (DC10) are required each round to continue holding their breath. Every round you should increase the DC by 1. Once the con check is failed the PC begins to drown. On the first round of drowning, you go unconscious. On the second round of drowning your hit points drop to -1. On the third round of drowning you expire.

A search check (DC15) reveals that the stream is coming out through a hole large enough for an average human and a tight squeeze for a half orc. The only catch is that you must completely submerge to pass through. The water is rapid, but not too rapid to move through (especially if a rope is used to help pull from the other side). If a PC tries to squeeze through the underwater passage they must make an escape artist (or strength) check (DC15 or 20 for large PCs). Each failure results in a minute

(10 rounds) wasted. If someone is pushing or pulling, or a rope is used, then add their strength bonus to the roll.

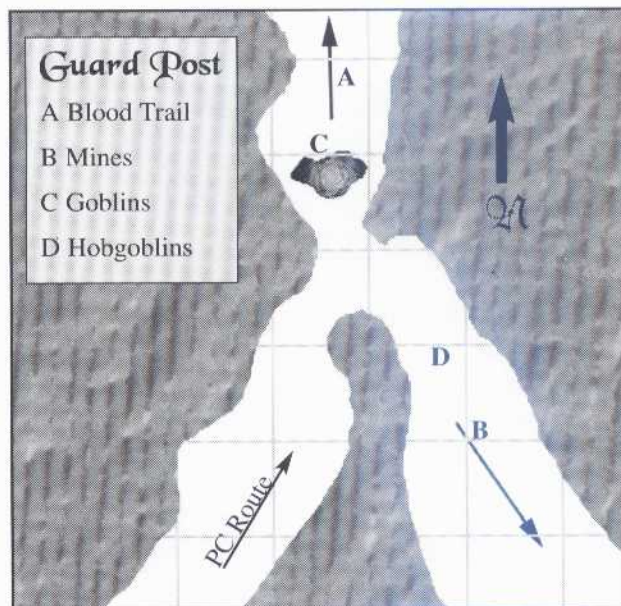
Another hundred yards beyond the blockage, the stream and goblin passage divert. The stream itself

shoots out of a small opening in the roof of the passage and cannot be followed upriver any further. The goblin passage begins to grade steadily downward.

### Guard post

After another 1000 yards the tunnel forks. The northern passage is fortified with a small stone barricade. Behind the barricade, three goblins wielding crossbows stand guard.

Meanwhile, three hobgoblins hide in the southeastern branch which leads to the mines. The hobgoblins will attack the first PC to pass their position while the goblins will fire into the melee hoping to swing the odds. If charged, one goblin will blow a whistle to signal the goblin king that they are under attack. No reinforcements come.



### Encounter Level 2

- 3 Goblins (hp 2, 3, 4)
- 3 Hobgoblins (hp 4, 5, 6)

After disposing of the goblins, a tracking check (DC20), will reveal a blood trail leading toward the goblins lair. The passage to the mines will show a lot of traffic, but no signs of the wounded goblins.

The mines are not part of this adventure. If the PCs choose to explore the mines, create a random dungeon crawl with occasional encounters of 2d4 goblins wielding picks and hammers. Searching the mines will reveal two passages which connect to the surface. Characters with knowledge of mining or metallurgy will also realize the goblins have been mining uranium ore explaining their unusual appearance.

**Throne room**

After another 300 yards, the passage begins to spiral upwards in a series of roughly hewn steps until it opens into a grand cavern. In the center of the chamber stands a 5' high and 10' diameter pedestal, which the goblin king uses as his throne. Thirty or so goblin women and children huddle in the shadows hoping not to be noticed. The goblin king stands on top of his throne holding a dagger to a baby's throat. The other babies are lying about under his feet wailing dismally. Eight hobgoblin guards stand around the base of the throne awaiting orders. In the common tongue, King Gurthlug (a large bugbear) makes you an offer.

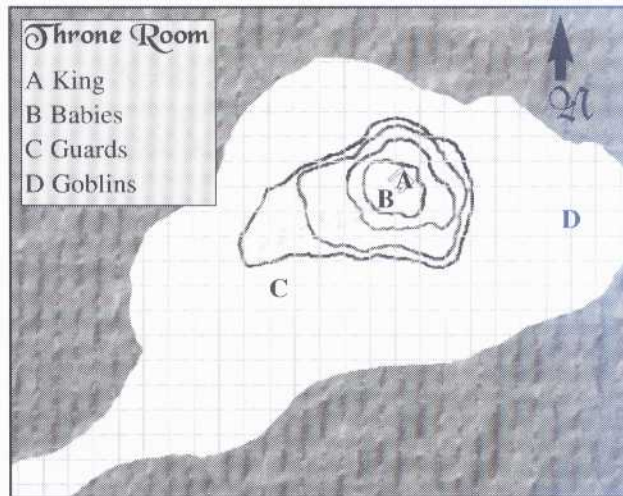
"Stop right where you are. Clearly you are skilled warriors or you wouldn't have made it this far, so I will make you an offer rather than risk my remaining retinue. If you agree to leave now and never return, I will give you half the children. You may have one minute to decide. Otherwise, I will start executing them."



If the party attacks, he will kill the child he holds and attempt to reach another. If Gurthlug is attacked directly he will use the baby he is holding as a shield. Meanwhile, his guards will attack the PCs. If the party agrees but argues about who gets the odd child, he will kill one to make the numbers even. If the party capitulates,

he will have 3 of his guards carry an infant to the PCs. Note: Gurthlug will not kill the last child. Instead he will hold it as a final insurance policy.

The other goblins in the room will not attack or defend themselves. If the party chooses to kill them, they are not worth experience points. If the PCs try to take goblin hostages, the King will order his guard to attack. If the guard is overcome and hostages are taken, Gurthlug will negotiate fairly and eventually return the kids.



**Encounter Level 5**

- King Gurthlug (hp 21)
- 8 Hobgoblins (hp 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 7, 9)

If the party searches (DC15) the goblin lair they will find a hidden compartment behind the throne. Within the compartment is a chest that is protected by a poison needle trap. It is DC 21 to locate the trap and DC 15 to disable it. Within the chest the players will find 587 gp, 473 sp, 2 gleaming red rubies valued at 100 gp each, an engraved ivory goblet depicting a garden scene worth 160 gp, and a potion of invisibility contained in a clear unmarked glass vial. Searching the possessions of the goblins living here produces 1,230 silver pieces, 1,633 copper pieces, and a variety of personal effects including crude pots and pans, small knives and utensils, and other personal effects. Refer to the NPC section for items carried by the king and his guard.







After dealing with the goblins, the PCs will return to Singer Falls. If they have recovered any live babies, the parents will be very grateful and offer rewards from their meager holdings. This includes a work-

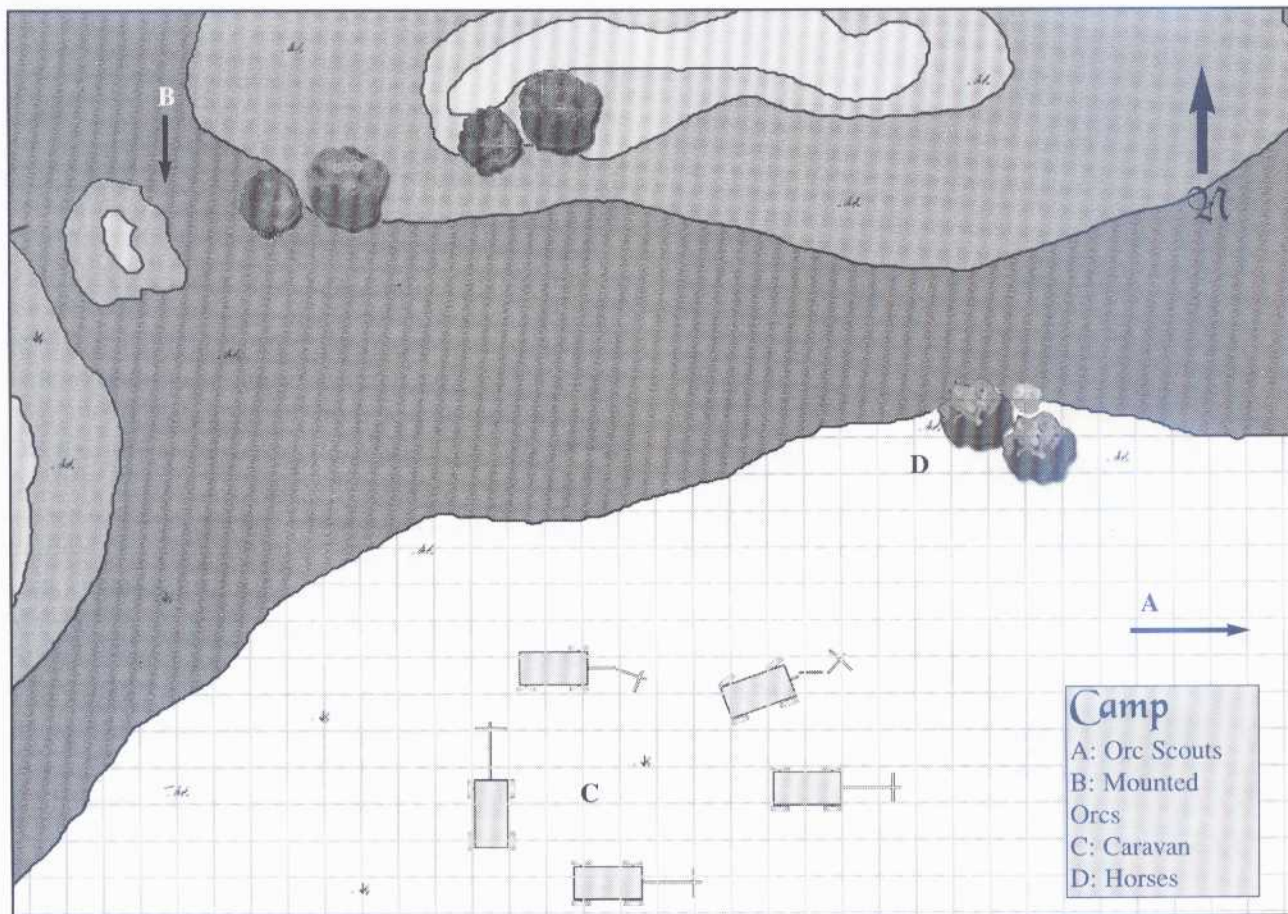
horse, two chickens, a pig and forty gold pieces. The townspeople greatly appreciate the PCs' efforts on the town's behalf. In the future, the PCs will find lodging, food, and drink for free. Their money is worthless in the town of Singer Falls. If any babies were slain and the PCs do not return with the bodies, the townsfolk will beg them to return to the well and recover their slain babies. If necessary, they will offer 10 gp per recovered body.

Later that evening, if the PCs have not yet agreed to accompany Finial north, he will double his offer.

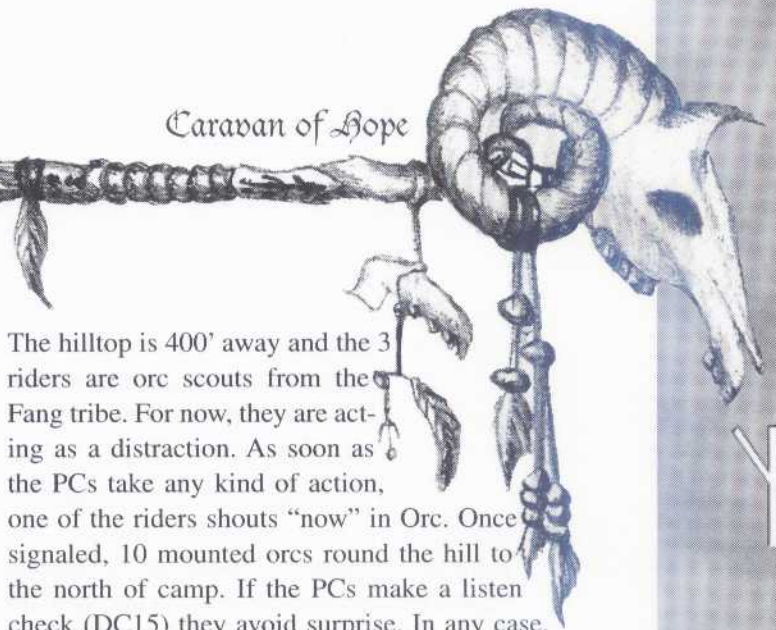
## Act Four: Missing Caravan

A few days after the Goblin menace is removed, a collection of camels and packhorses, three covered wagons, ten teamsters, Armand, Finial, and the PCs begin to work their way up to the plateau. The caravan is underway.

After 3 days of travel, the trail leads through the hilly country that runs along the southern edge of the Dragon Spine Mountains. This region of the Blood Plateau is renowned for its crimson sunsets when the entire plateau seems to glow as though bathed in blood. As darkness falls, the teamsters spot buzzards circling over the wreckage of 2 wagons that lie just off the main road.



## Caravan of Hope



### Abandoned Caravan

Armand and Finial are very interested in checking the wagons since they may be from the previous shipment of medicine. A few bodies are still present but are not recognizable due to the work of the carrion eaters. Never the less, they will be identified by Armand based on a few items of clothing and other personal effects found around the sight. These are in fact some of the teamsters sent with the prior shipment.

While Armand is identifying the bodies, Finial will order the teamsters to make camp for the evening. This site, although unlucky for the prior caravan, is off the main road and is sheltered enough to allow a discreet fire if desired. The wagons are circled up with the wreckage of the previous caravan, the horses are watered and then staked out to graze.

While Armand and the teamsters are preparing the camp, the PCs may wish to investigate the area. Searching the grounds near camp and the surrounding area will reveal the following facts.

- (Search DC10) The medicine has been removed
- (Search DC12) Not all the bodies are present.
- (Track DC20) There are signs of a large mounted force. After the battle the victors headed northeast with a large number of heavily laden horses. The tracks appear one week old.
- (Spot DC20) Your caravan is being observed by a distant shadowy figure perched on a hilltop. Once noticed the figure mounts a horse and rides off.
- (Knowledge of Heraldry DC25) The few arrows found bear the markings of the Blue Fang tribe. The Fangs are known for their general lawlessness and are one of the most difficult groups on the plateau to deal with.

Following a short meal the teamsters retire leaving details of the night watch up to the PCs. During the midnight watch the caravan is attacked.

### Sneak Attack

The night is dark and overcast and the moon has just risen over a hilltop to the east. As you watch the hypnotic pattern of moonlight through the clouds you notice 3 shadowy riders crest the hill.

The hilltop is 400' away and the 3 riders are orc scouts from the Fang tribe. For now, they are acting as a distraction. As soon as the PCs take any kind of action, one of the riders shouts "now" in Orc. Once signaled, 10 mounted orcs round the hill to the north of camp. If the PCs make a listen check (DC15) they avoid surprise. In any case, 5 of the orc warriors halt their charge and fire short-bows at whoever is on guard duty and will continue to fire arrows until they are pressed. The sergeant and remaining 4 warriors close the distance and attack with scimitars.

Meanwhile, the 3 scouts will simply watch the spectacle until either the battle goes against the orc footmen, or the 3 they are approached. At this point the scouts will ride off at a gallop.

### Encounter Level 5

- Orc Scouts (hp 5,9,7)
- Orc Sergeant (hp 21)
- Orc Warriors (hp 4,5,3,5,8,5,7,6,7)
- Horses (hp 22 ea)

After the battle is over, Finial and Armand argue about tactics. Finial decides to pursue the three scouts. He fears that they will alert the main force of orcs. A few minutes later after preparing the horses Finial and his escort is off. If any PCs refuse to follow Finial, he reminds them who is paying their salary. If none agree to go, he will take five of the ten teamsters instead.

### No PCs?

A possibility exists that the entire party will not be present at either of the next two encounters, (the ambush and the assault). If this occurs skip the details of the encounter and substitute what is written below.

If no PCs have accompanied Finial, Finial and two of the teamsters will be captured and taken to the orc camp. The remaining teamsters will have been slain. The fate of the mission will now depend on the party's success in defending the caravan against a full assault, a difficult task indeed. After a while, Armand will become worried

### Mounted Combat

Refer to page 138 of the players handbook for complete rules on mounted combat. Riders receive a +1 bonus to hit unmounted targets. The rider can attack and defend if he guides the horse with his knees. (Riding check DC5). Your mount acts on your initiative and you move at its speed, but the mount uses its action to move. You can use ranged weapons while your mount is taking a double move at a -4 penalty. (-2 with mounted archery feat)

## Tales from the Blood Plateau



about his partner and suggest that the PCs go in search of him. Naturally, Armand does not really care about Finial. He is just hoping to rid himself of both Finial and the PCs.

If the PCs are smart, or lucky, they will follow Finial, because while Finial and his escort are being ambushed, the main force of orcs (30 members of the Fang Tribe) attacks the caravan. If no PCs remained behind with the caravan you may skip over the details of the full assault. The orcs will succeed in their attack, plunder the wagons, steal the livestock, and take the few survivors (Armand and three teamsters) back to their camp.

### Ambush

The three orc scouts are not actually fleeing to warn the main force; the main force is well aware of the caravan's location and is preparing to attack. Rather, the orc scouts are hoping to draw some of the defenders away from the caravan and into an ambush. The scouts

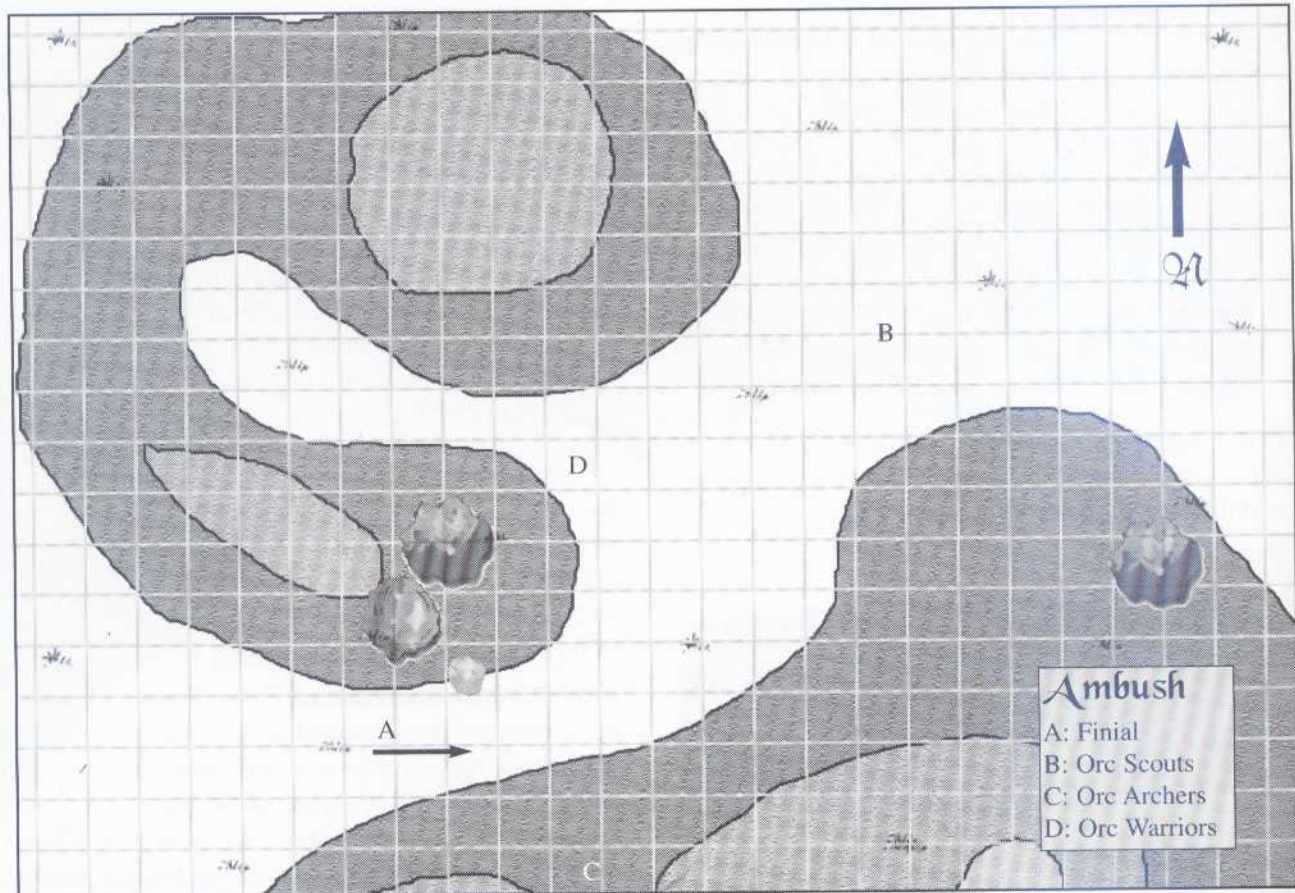
are purposely leaving a trail, so no tracking checks are required. Finial and the PCs will trail the orc scouts for 20 minutes or so before approaching a small pass. Seven orc warriors have prepared an ambush for the party as they ride through the pass.

The trail left by the fleeing orcs leads you through a small pass between two hills. Suddenly, as you enter the pass, three unmounted orcs wielding short bows crest the hill to the south. At the same moment four orc warriors brandishing scimitars charge out from a small gulch to the north to engage in close combat.

If the characters are expecting an ambush they may make a spot check (DC25) to notice the orc archers and avoid surprise. The 3 scouts are waiting at the far end, and will charge back once the trap is sprung.

### Encounter Level 4

- Orc Scouts (hp 5,9,7)
- Orc Warriors (hp 5, 5, 4, 6, 8, 9, 7)



After dispatching the orcs, Finial and the PCs return to camp too late to aid in the defense of the caravan. A tracking check (DC10) or a search check (DC15) is required to pick up the trail left by the orc raiding party. If the PCs are defeated, the orcs will take all survivors prisoner, and then proceed to the main orc encampment.

### Full Assault

The assault on the caravan is a two pronged mounted attack, one coming from the south and one from the north. Both groups of orcs will charge the caravan using similar tactics. Each unit will charge towards the circled wagons. Once within 30 feet, five will stop and proceed to fire arrows at the defenders. The remaining orcs continue to charge and engage the defenders in close combat. After the first wave engages the enemy, the archers

will cease firing, draw their scimitars and charge as a second wave.

When attacked, the teamsters look to the PCs for leadership. They are stalwart defenders and have decent morale but they will not follow foolish or suicidal orders. Armand is somewhat cowardly and when faced with such a large attacking force, he will hide beneath his wagon. Armand is a good hider and will not appear until the battle is over.

### Encounter Level 9

- 1 Orc Lieutenant (hp 30)
- 3 Orc Sergeant (hp 15,18,14)
- 26 Orc Warriors (hp 5 each)
- 30 Horses (hp 22 each)

If the orcs have prevailed, they will perform first aid on anyone who is still alive and take them captive (including Armand). After collecting the prisoners, they will pack the drugs into saddlebags, steal the camels and pack horses, and head northeast toward their camp.

### Cleaning up the mess

Hopefully, at this point some PCs remain alive and free. If the caravan has been sacked, Finial will suggest that they pursue the orcs in an attempt to recover the medicine and free any surviving prisoners.

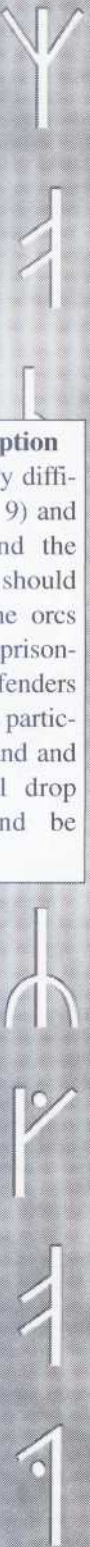
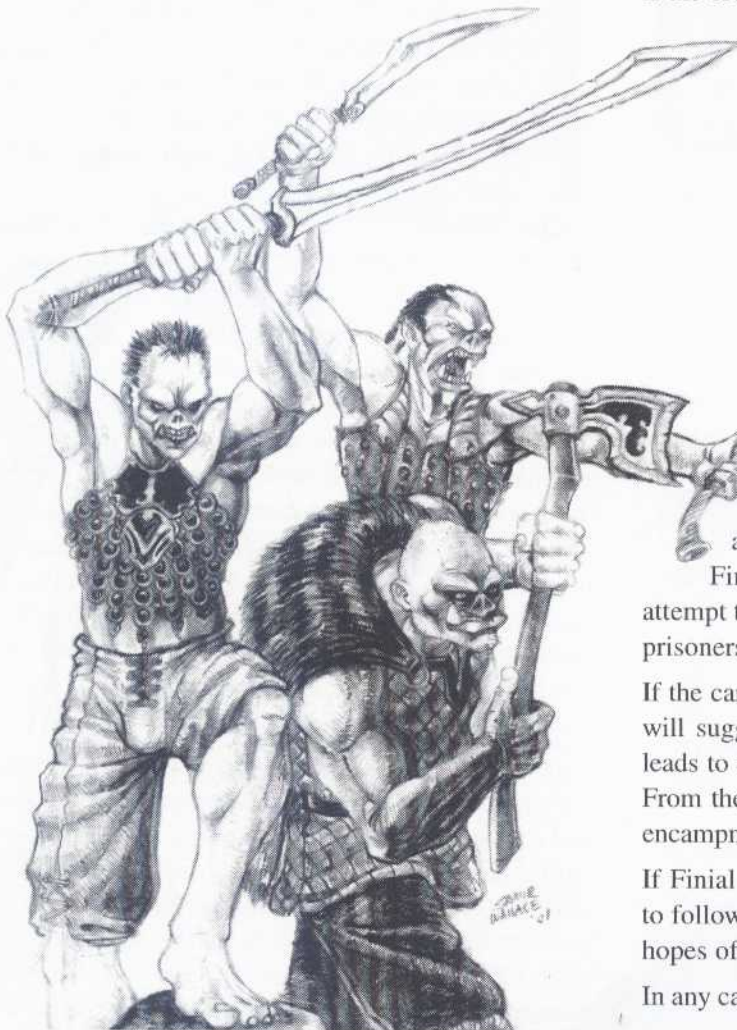
If the caravan has been successfully defended, Armand will suggest that the PCs go find Finial. Finial's trail leads to the site of the ambush where he was captured. From there the PCs can track his captors back to their encampment.

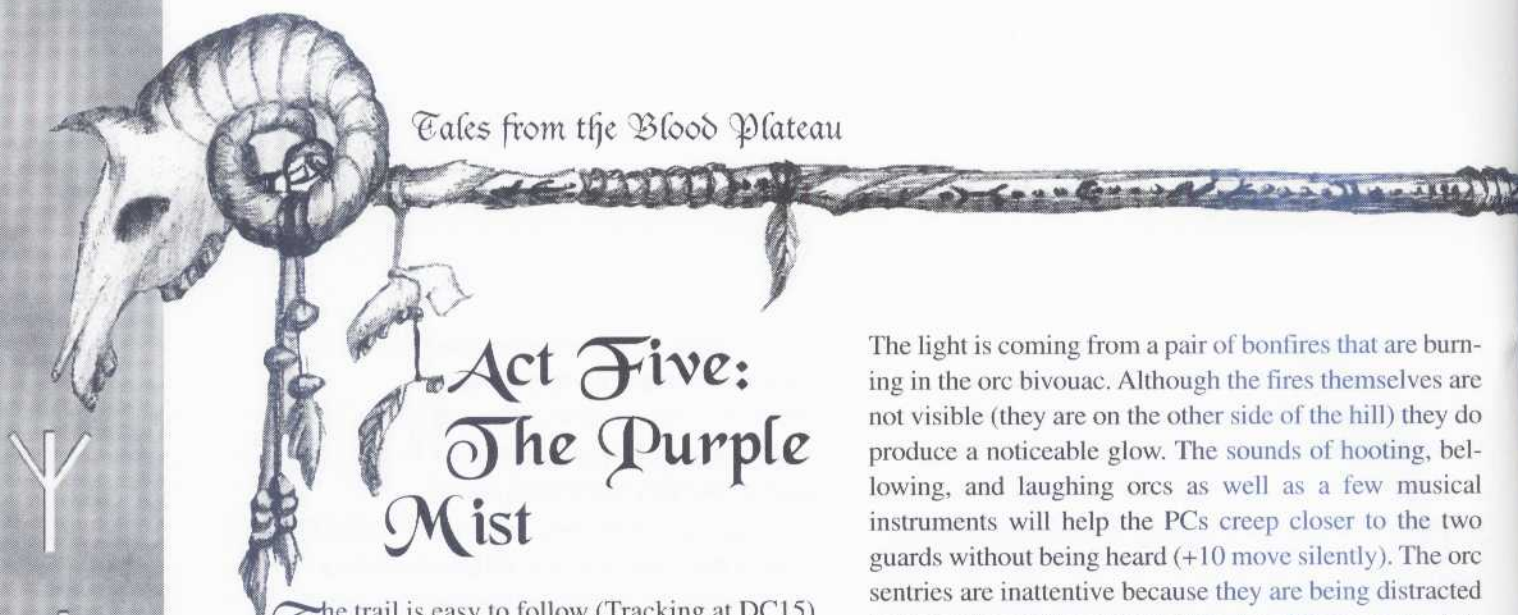
If Finial manages to return, Armand will ask the PCs to follow the trail of the orcs back to their camp in the hopes of recovering the prior shipment of drugs.

In any case, the trail leads back to the orc encampment.

### Surrender is an Option

This is an extremely difficult encounter (EL 9) and is probably beyond the PCs ability. You should stress this fact. The orcs are willing to take prisoners or allow the defenders to flee. If things go particularly poorly Armand and the teamsters will drop their weapons and be taken captive.





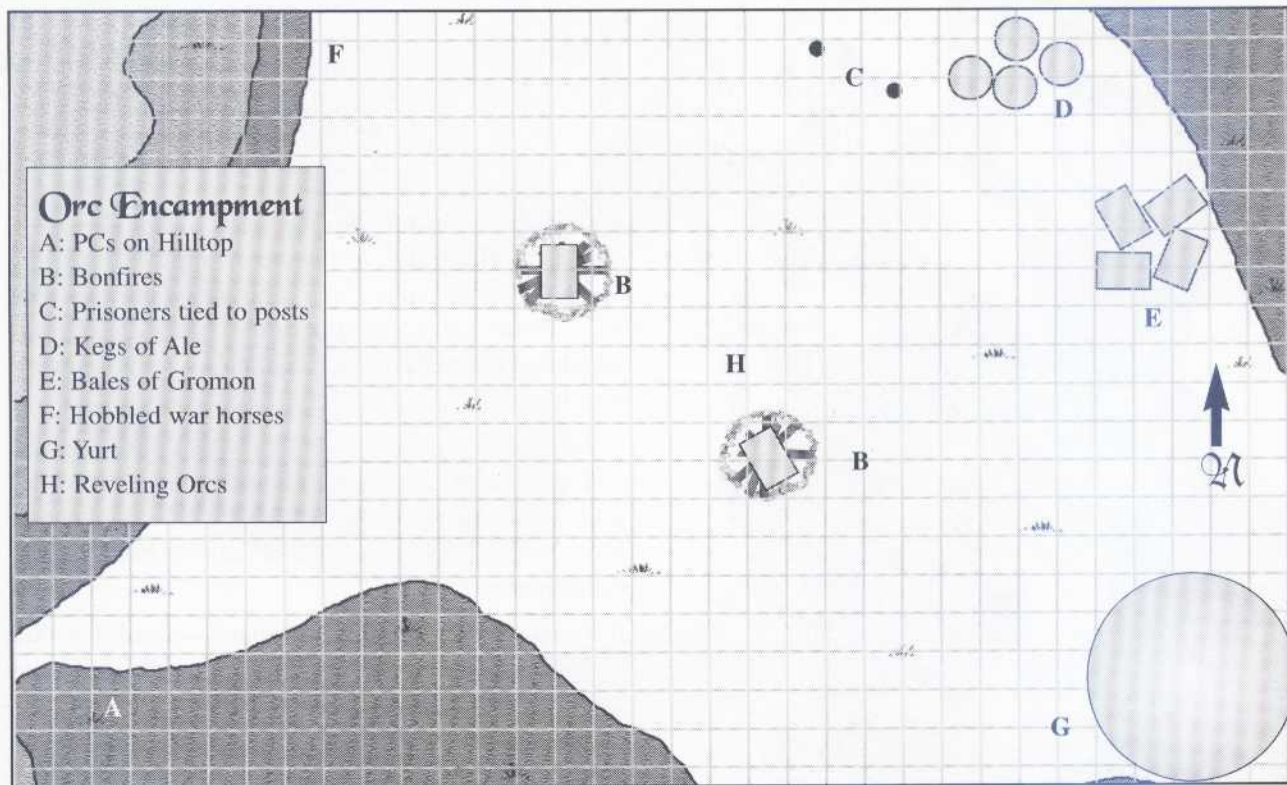
## Act Five: The Purple Mist

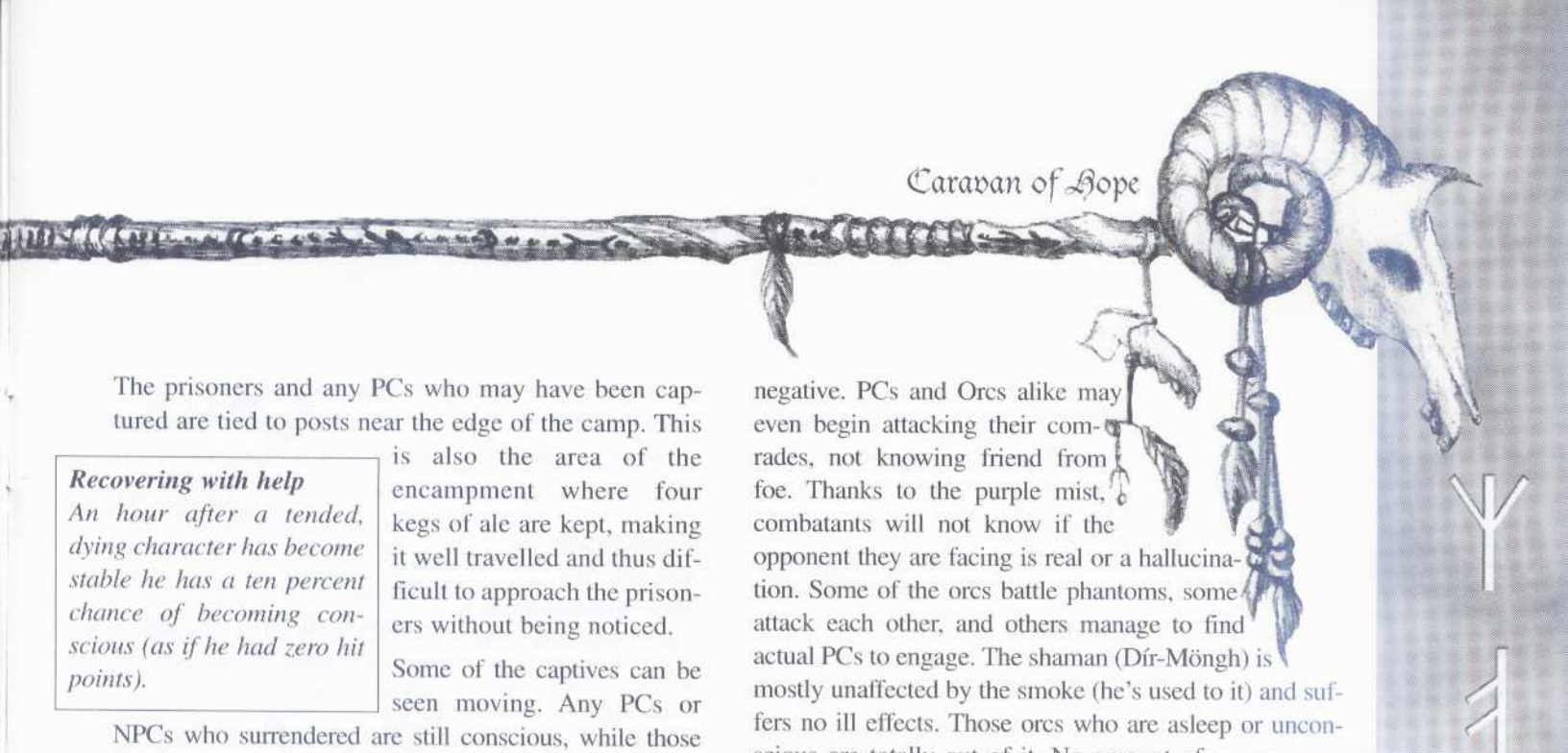
The trail is easy to follow (Tracking at DC15) and leads northeast through some very hilly country. After a few hours, the PCs near the encampment of the Blue Fang orcs.

As you quietly follow the trail left by the orc raiders and the stolen pack animals, you can begin to hear the sounds of revelry. As the next hill is crested you can see sparks rising into the night sky. The glow of firelight is just visible from the valley beyond the next hill. Two orc guards are silhouetted against the glow. They are looking away from you, down into the valley.

The light is coming from a pair of bonfires that are burning in the orc bivouac. Although the fires themselves are not visible (they are on the other side of the hill) they do produce a noticeable glow. The sounds of hooting, bel-lowing, and laughing orcs as well as a few musical instruments will help the PCs creep closer to the two guards without being heard (+10 move silently). The orc sentries are inattentive because they are being distracted by the antics in the valley below. Any PC creeping close enough to overhear their conversation (listen DC21) will hear them complaining about being stuck up here while the others enjoy themselves, (provided the PCs speak orcish). If the guards can be dispatched quickly and discreetly (no lightning bolts, folks) the orcs at the party will not be alerted. Having dispatched the guards, the PCs are granted an excellent view of a raucous celebra-tion in the valley below.

Two bonfires illuminate the valley and produce an odd purple smoke. The orcs occasionally inter-rupt their dancing and cavorting to toss bales of what appear to be the elven medicine onto the bonfire. Showers of sparks fly into the night sky with the addition of each bale.





## Caravan of Hope

The prisoners and any PCs who may have been captured are tied to posts near the edge of the camp. This

### Recovering with help

*An hour after a tended, dying character has become stable he has a ten percent chance of becoming conscious (as if he had zero hit points).*

is also the area of the encampment where four kegs of ale are kept, making it well travelled and thus difficult to approach the prisoners without being noticed.

Some of the captives can be seen moving. Any PCs or

NPCs who surrendered are still conscious, while those who were overcome in battle have a chance to regain consciousness. If any PCs are among the captives and awake, they may attempt to slip their bonds (escape DC21).

At this time 22 orcs including the tribal shaman are cavorting around the bonfires. The remaining thirty, (minus those slain earlier) not currently on guard duty are asleep or unconscious in the tribal yurt.

### A Strange Trip

As the PCs approach the camp, they will breathe in the purple smoke produced by the burning Gromon. PCs will hallucinate after a few rounds of breathing the smoke and shall receive a -1 to all actions unless they make a fortitude save (DC20). If the PCs are attempting to filter the air with wet cloths and the like they receive a +3 bonus to their saving throw. Regardless of the results of the saving throws, the PCs will begin to hallucinate, although at your option a successful save can limit their severity. The hallucinations are minor at first—mostly noises, broken weapons, a dragon shadow from overhead and so forth. The PCs also experience a certain amount of paranoia (the orc is staring right at me, each step I take makes a loud noise, etc.). The hallucinations increase in severity, eventually leading to imagined foes and altered perception. The orcs encountered seem to undergo unnatural transformations—shape shifting, growing pseudopods, and transforming into other nightmarish horrors as the trip turns really bad.

Naturally, the orcs realize the Gromon is a drug, not a medicine, and are purposely burning it. They are enjoying the extravagant visions, at least up until the point when the alarm is sounded. Once the fun ends the chaos begins; the orcs stop their grotesque cavorting and grab their weapons. Their attack is disorganized (the orcs have been breathing the smoke for some time and are at -2 to hit). The stress of the conflict will turn everybody's experience

negative. PCs and Orcs alike may even begin attacking their comrades, not knowing friend from foe. Thanks to the purple mist, combatants will not know if the opponent they are facing is real or a hallucination. Some of the orcs battle phantoms, some attack each other, and others manage to find actual PCs to engage. The shaman (Dír-Mönggh) is mostly unaffected by the smoke (he's used to it) and suffers no ill effects. Those orcs who are asleep or unconscious are totally out of it. No amount of shaking will rouse them. Feel free to add or alter any hallucinations for this encounter. Mix the hallucinations in with some actual orcs. Have Fun! The following are some possibilities you can use.

### Sample Hallucinations

- A rock appears to move slightly. When approached it begins to morph into a chaos beast and attack the PC.
- A PC's blow removes an orc's head. The stump promptly sprouts a large tentacle that grapples the PC and allows the orc's arms to strike freely.
- A blow to an orc removes his head. Even as the body drops, the head sprouts bat wings and its mouth grows to a horrific size. The head swoops and darts trying to latch onto a PC's neck.
- The orc's arms begin to elongate and turn into giant tentacles. As the tentacles are growing, a frightening beak grows out of the orc's stomach. The orc attempts to grapple and drag his foe into the beak.
- The bonfire is alive. The nearest PC is attacked by a small fire elemental. The PC is actually dancing around in the bonfire.
- An orc's neck begins to grow longer and longer. As the head whips about, the face morphs into nothing more than a huge mouth filled with jagged teeth. The head tries to bite the nearest foe within 10 ft.
- The shaman casts a spell and the PC's legs begin to melt. (fortitude DC25)

### Encounter Level 6

- Orc Shaman (Dír-Mönggh) (hp 26)
- 21 Orc Warriors (4 hp each)
- Chaos Beast (hp 42)
- Fire Elemental (hp 26)

### Hesitant to act?

If the party hesitates to act at night, as incentive, have the orcs grab a prisoner and slowly torture him to death (indulge yourself with the description). Ensure that the prisoner screams a lot—the more gruesome the better.



## Tales from the Blood Plateau

The drug Gromon is bad news. any PC (or NPC) who inhaled the purple smoke suffers a 1D6 temporary constitution loss and feels terrible once the effects wear off.

After the hallucinations have run their course (about three hours from last exposure), anyone who has taken damage may recover half the hit points they lost. Some of the damage is not real (don't bother to keep track) and will just go away when the creature sobers up. Those who were killed must make a fortitude saving throw (DC 15). A failed save results in death by heart failure. If the PCs were victorious and the orcs have been slain or captured, they can recover about one quarter of the medicine and save the captives. If they are defeated, those who make their saving throws awake to find the orcs gone and the prisoners unconscious and tied. All the medicine has gone up in smoke.

### **Saving throws and Hallucinations**

*Just as illusion spells deceive the senses, drugs and some states of physical and mental exhaustion may produce similar effects.*

*Hallucinating creatures usually do not receive a saving throw unless they interact with it or have reason to suspect its' reality. If a creature wishes he may attempt a willpower saving throw (DC 20 for Gromon) to disbelieve the hallucination. If successful, it does not suffer the effect of the particular hallucination, but will be subject to further hallucinations requiring additional saving throws.*

## Conclusion

Once the dust has settled there are two possible scenarios. Either all the Gromon has gone up in smoke or the PCs have recovered some. By now, the PCs should have realized they have been duped and the shipment they were safeguarding is not medicine, but rather a powerful illegal hallucinogen, what they do next is up to them.

### **No Drugs Recovered**

Assuming that either Finial or Armand is still among the living, they will want to return to Singer Falls. If accused of any wrongdoing, they will lie and claim that the Gromon really is a powerful curative medicine and has different effects when administered properly. Since no samples remain the two partners will try to bluff their way through the confrontation, although with sufficient

persuasion (ie interrogation or magical means) they will admit the plague story was a lie. The two men are drug smugglers and find it hard to find trustworthy escorts willing to safeguard their goods.

### **Some Drugs Recovered**

Here lies the greatest dilemma. If some of the Gromon is still intact and the pack animals rounded up, Armand and Finial will be eager to continue their journey. They will be quite appreciative of the PCs' efforts up until the time they are confronted about the exact nature of the cargo. The smugglers will first attempt to forge a partnership with the PCs (remember, a good or lawful PC would not consider this option). The remaining Gromon has a black market value of about 12,000 gps. Failing a partnership, they will offer the PCs severance pay and try to continue on without them. If the PCs do the right thing and arrest their former employers, Armand and Finial will not go quietly (see sidebar).

### **Encounter Level 6**

- Armond (hp 18)
- Finial (hp 16)
- Teamsters (3 hp each)

### **Gromon**

Gromon is addictive and unhealthy, and smuggling drugs across the Debated Lands is considered both illegal and unethical. Any PC of lawful or good alignments should not consider keeping the stuff, except perhaps as evidence. Chaotic good characters would probably try to punish the drug traffickers on the spot, while Lawful PCs would prefer to take them into custody to face prosecution. If the two men are indeed brought back (alive or dead), the PC's will happily discover there is a 1000 gp reward for each man. (There is no reward for teamsters)

If arrested, the two smugglers will not go without a fight. They, and any surviving teamsters, will resist arrest until one of the ringleaders falls at which point the rest will surrender.

## NPCs

### Allain Nighthorn

Male Half-elf Rogue/Assassin (levels 5/2); CR: 7; Alignment: Lawful Evil; Initiative: +7; AC: 16; Hit Points: 27; Speed: 30 feet; Attacks: Rapier +8, Crossbow +7; Damage: Rapier 1d6 +4 Crossbow 1d8; Saves: Fort +1, Ref +10, Will +0; Abilities: Str: 14, Dex: 16, Con: 10, Int: 12, Wis: 9, Cha: 8; Skills: Appraise: +7, Climb: +8, Disguise: +3, Escape Artist: +8, Hide: +11, Innuendo: +4, Listen: +9, Move Silently: +11, Open Lock: +8, Pick Pocket: +8, Search: +9, Spot: +6, Swim: -1, Use Magic Device: +4; Languages: Common and Elven; Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative; Special: Dark vision, Evasion, Locate Traps, Sneak Attack (+4d6), Spell 10% failure (change self), Uncanny Dodge; Possessions: +2 Rapier (Darkness 3/day), Ring of Protection +1, Dagger, Leather Armor, Crossbow, Lock pick set, 48 gp 21 sp. Spells: Change Self.

### Armand G. Thornhill

Male Halfling Rogue (level 4); CR: 4; Alignment: Neutral Evil; Initiative: +7; AC: 18; Hit Points: 18; Speed: 20 feet.; Attacks: Short Sword +4 Crossbow +7; Damage: Short Sword 1d6 Crossbow 1d8; Saves: Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +1; Abilities: Str: 10, Dex: 17, Con: 11, Int: 12, Wis: 9, Cha: 11; Skills: Appraise: +6, Balance +2, Bluff +0, Climb +2, Concentration +0, Craft +1, Decipher Script: +4, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +6, Disguise +0, Escape Artist +9, Forgery +1, Gather Information +2, Handle Animal +2, Heal -1, Hide +9, Innuendo +3, Jump +1, Knowledge of Geography +3, Knowledge of Local area +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +5, Pickpocket +4, Ride +3, Scry +1, Search +1, Sense Motive -1, Spot +5, Swim -5, Use Magic Device +0; Languages: Common, Halfling, Elven; Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative; Special: +2 Saving Throws vs Fear, Sneak Attack +2d6, Evasion and Uncanny Dodge; Possessions: Ring of Protection +1, Dagger, Studded Leather Armor, Crossbow, 20 bolts, Lock pick set, 38 gp, 46 sp, 6 c, Explorer's Outfit; Description: Armand stands 3 foot one inch and weighs a hefty 48 pounds. He has short black hair, somewhat balding at the top with long bushy

sideburns. He has a ruddy complexion with brown eyes. His charming smile and twinkling eyes belie the evil in his nature.

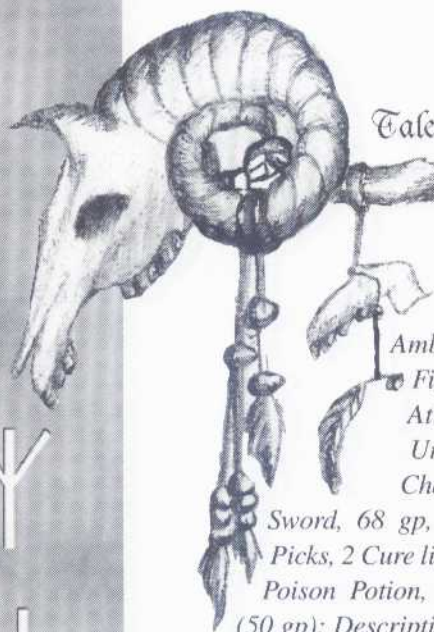
### Dír-Möng

Orc Shaman Adept (level 5); CR: 4; Alignment: Chaotic Neutral; Initiative: +2; AC: ; Hit Points: 26; Speed: 30 feet.; Attacks: Mace +2 Melee; Damage: Mace 1d8; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7; Abilities: Str: 11, Dex: 14, Con: 12, Int: 10, Wis: 16, Cha: 12; Skills: Alchemy +2, Appraise +0, Balance +2, Bluff +1, Climb +0, Concentration +3, Crafts +0, Diplomacy +1, Disguise +1, Escape Artist +2, Forgery +0, Gather Information +1, Handle Animal +3, Heal +6, Hide +2, Intimidate +1, Jump +0, Knowledge (History) +1, Knowledge (Nature) +1, Listen +3, Ride +4, Scry +0, Search +0, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +2, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +4; Languages: Orc and Common; Feats: Drug Tolerance, Brew Potion, ; Special: Darkvision 60 ft, Light Sensitivity, Divine Spells.; Possessions: Mace, Leather Armor, Ceremonial Bone Dagger (25 gp value) Bone and tooth necklace (8 gp value), 2 Cure Light Wounds Potions, 38 gp, 23 sp, 45 cp.; Spells: 0 Level-create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic. 1st level-cause fear, protection from good. 2nd level-invisibility

### Finial Sixtoes

Male Human Rogue (level 3); CR: 3; Alignment: Chaotic Neutral; Initiative: +2; AC: 16; Hit Points: 16; Speed: 30 feet.; Attacks: (2 attacks) Short sword +0; Dagger -1; Damage: Short Sword D6 -1, Dagger D4 -1; Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +4; Abilities: Str 9, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 14; Skills: Appraise: +6, Balance, +0, Bluff +2, Climb -3, Concentration +0, Craft +1, Decipher Script: +2, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +3, Disguise +2, Escape Artist +5, Forgery +1, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +4, Heal +3, Hide +3, Innuendo +6, Jump -3, Knowledge of Geography +4, Knowledge of Local area +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +3, Pickpocket +1, Ride +6, Scry +1, Search +3, Sense Motive +9, Spot +7, Swim -9, Use Magic Device +5, Wilderness Lore +5; Languages: Common, Elven, and Orc; Feats:





Ambidextrous, Two Weapon Fighting, Track; Special: Sneak Attack +2d6, Evasion and Uncanny Dodge; Possessions: Chain Shirt, Masterwork Short Sword, 68 gp, 32 sp, 14 cp, Dagger, Lock Picks, 2 Cure light wounds Potions, Neutralize Poison Potion, Explorer's Outfit, Gold Ring (50 gp); Description: See description page 8;

### King Gurthlug

Male Bugbear Warrior (level 3); CR 2; Alignment: Chaotic Evil; Initiative: +5; AC: 19 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +4 scale mail, +1 small baby as a shield); Hit Points: 21 hp; Speed: 30 feet.; Attacks: Dagger +5, Morningstar +5; Damage: Dagger d4+2, Morningstar d8+2; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Abilities: Str: 16, Dex: 12, Con: 10, Int: 14, Wis: 11, Cha: 9; Skills: Appraise 5, Bluff 2, Diplomacy 3, Hide 5, Intimidate 3, Listen 8, Move Silently 7, Spot 8; Languages: Common, Goblin, Draconic; Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative; Special: Dark Vision 60 feet see new rules regarding unusual shields.; Possessions: Dagger, Morningstar, Scale Mail, see Throne Room page 15.

## Monsters

### Camel

Large Animal; CR 1; Alignment: Neutral; Initiative: +3; AC: 13; Hit Dice: 3d8 +6; Speed: 50 feet.; Attacks: Bite +5 melee; Damage: Bite 1d4+6; Face/Reach 5 ft by 10 ft/5ft; Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1; Abilities: Str: 18, Dex: 16, Con: 14, Int: 1, Wis: 11, Cha: 4; Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5; Special: Scent

### Chaos Beast

Medium-Sized Outsider(Chaotic); CR 7; Alignment: Chaotic Neutral; Initiative: +5; AC: 16; Hit Dice: 8d8 +8; Speed: 20 feet.; Attacks: 2 claws +10 melee; Damage: Claw 1d3 +2, Corporeal Instability ;

Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5ft; Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +6; Abilities: Str: 14, Dex: 13, Con: 13, Int: 10, Wis: 10, Cha: 10; Skills: Climb +12, Escape Artist +11, Hide +10, Jump +10, Listen +9, Spot +9, Tumble +10; Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility; Special: Corporeal Instability, SR 15, Immune to Transformation, Immune to Critical Hits.

**Corporeal Instability (Su):** If struck by a chaos beast a living creature must make a fortitude save at DC 15 or become a spongy amorphous mass. The victim's shape melts, flows, writhes, and boils. The victim cannot use any item. Soft or misshapen feet reduce speed to 10 feet or 1/4 normal whichever is less. Searing pain prevents the victim from casting spells or using magic items. The victim attacks blindly unable to distinguish friend from foe. Each round spent in an amorphous state deals 1 point of permanent wisdom drain from shock. The victim may take a standard action to attempt a charisma check at DC 15. A success allows the victim to maintain normal form for one minute. A restoration, heal or greater restoration spell removes the affliction.

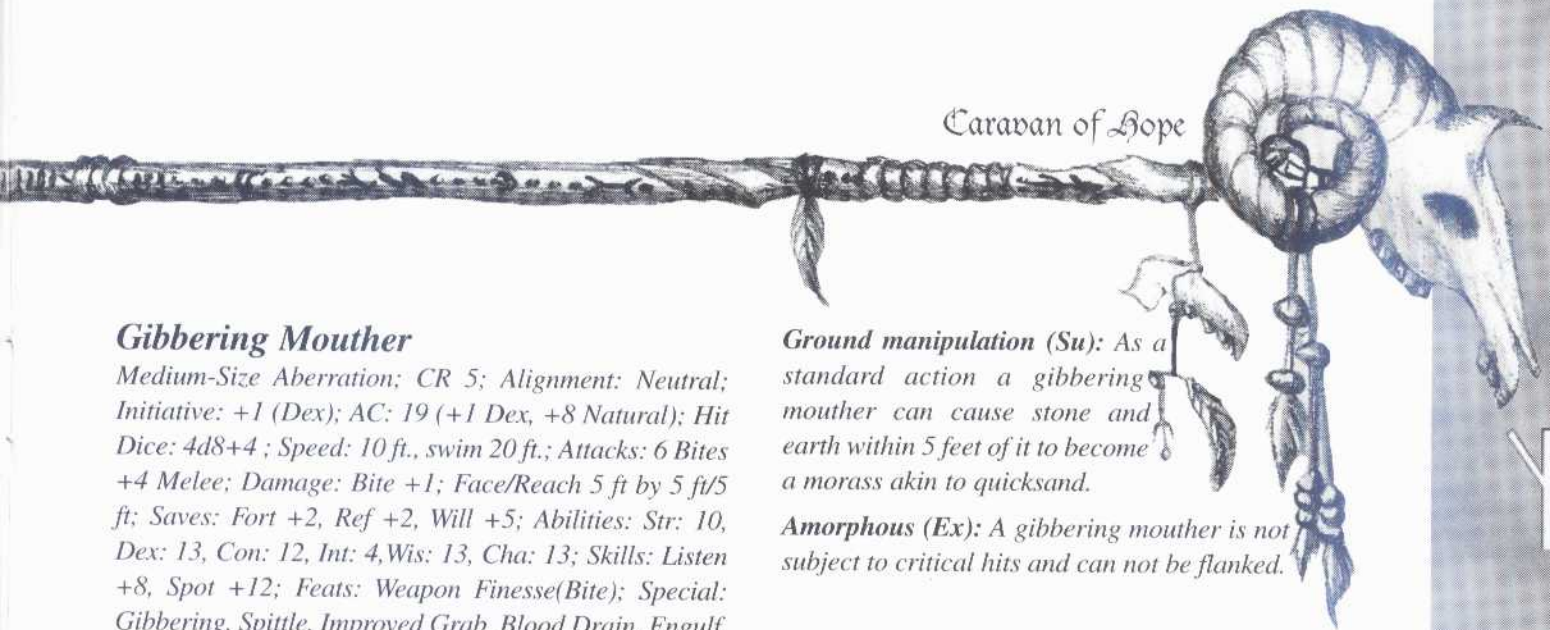
**Immune to Transformation (Ex):** A chaos beast's form cannot be fixed. Effects such as polymorph or petrification affect the creature for only a moment.

### Fire Elemental

Medium sized Elemental (Fire); CR 3; Alignment: Neutral; Initiative: +7; AC: 16; Hit Dice: 4d8 +8; Speed: 50 feet.; Attacks: Slam +6 melee; Damage: Slam 1d6+1 and 1d6 fire; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5ft/5ft; Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1; Abilities: Str: 12, Dex: 17, Con: 14, Int: 4, Wis: 11, Cha: 11; Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7; Feats: Improved initiative, Weapon finesse (slam); Special: Burn

**Burn (Ex):** Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack must make a reflex save (DC 14) or catch fire. A burning creature can take a move equivalent action to put out the flame.

Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons take fire damage as though hit by the fire elemental's attack and may also catch fire.



## Gibbering Moulder

*Medium-Size Aberration; CR 5; Alignment: Neutral; Initiative: +1 (Dex); AC: 19 (+1 Dex, +8 Natural); Hit Dice: 4d8+4; Speed: 10 ft., swim 20 ft.; Attacks: 6 Bites +4 Melee; Damage: Bite +1; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Abilities: Str: 10, Dex: 13, Con: 12, Int: 4, Wis: 13, Cha: 13; Skills: Listen +8, Spot +12; Feats: Weapon Finesse(Bite); Special: Gibbering, Spitfire, Improved Grab, Blood Drain, Engulf, Ground Manipulation, Amorphous.*

Gibbering Moulders attack by shooting out strings of protoplasmic flesh, each ending in one or more eyes and a vicious biting mouth.

**Gibbering (Su):** As soon as an eye spots something edible the mouth begins a constant gibbering as a free action. All creatures within 60 feet must save versus will at DC 13 or be effected as though by a confusion spell for 1d2 rounds. This is a sonic mind - affecting compulsion effect.

**Spittle (Ex):** At the start of combat and every two rounds thereafter a gibbering moulder looses a stream of spittle which ignites on contact with air creating a blinding flash of light. All sighted creatures within 60 feet must make a fortitude save at DC 13 or be blinded for 1d3 rounds.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** If the gibbering moulder hits with a bite attack it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** On a successful grapple check the mouth attaches to the opponent and automatically deals bite damage and drains blood each round. Draining blood deals 1 point of temporary constitution damage each round. A mouth can be ripped off (dealing 1 point of damage) with a successful strength check (DC 12) or severed by an attack that deals at least 2 points of damage (AC 18). A severed mouth continues to bite and drain blood for 1d4 rounds.

**Engulf (Ex):** If a medium sized or smaller opponent is grabbed by three or more mouths, he must make a reflex save at DC 14 or fall and be engulfed. On the next round the moulder makes 12 bite attacks instead of 6 (each with a +4 attack bonus. An engulfed creature cannot attack the creature from within.

**Ground manipulation (Su):** As a standard action a gibbering moulder can cause stone and earth within 5 feet of it to become a morass akin to quicksand.

**Amorphous (Ex):** A gibbering moulder is not subject to critical hits and can not be flanked.

## Goblin

*Medium sized humanoid; CR 1/4; Alignment: Neutral Evil; Initiative: +1; AC: 15 (+1 size, +1 dex, +3 armor); Hit Dice: 1d8; Speed: 30 feet.; Attacks: Morningstar +1 melee, or Javelin +3 ranged; Damage: Morningstar 1d8-1, Javelin 1d6-1; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Abilities: Str: 8, Dex: 13, Con: 11, Int: 10, Wis: 11, Cha: 8; Skills: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Languages: Goblin; Feats: Alertness; Special: Dark Vision 60 feet; Possessions: Morningstar, 4 Javelins, Studded Leather Armor, 2d6 gp.*

## Hallucinations

*CR 3; Alignment: Chaotic Evil; Initiative: +2 as Orc; AC: as Orc; Hit Points: as Orc; Speed: 20 feet; Attacks: Bite +6 melee, Grapple +4 melee, Bash +6 melee; Damage: Bite 1d6+2, Grapple 1d4 (Special), Bash 1d6+2; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/10 ft; Saves: Fort as Orc, Ref as Orc, Will as Orc; Abilities: Str: 18, Dex: 10, Con: 11, Int: 9, Wis: 8, Cha: 8; Skills: as Orc; Languages: as Orc; Feats: as Orc; Special: Improved Grab*

## Hobgoblin

*Medium size humanoid; CR 1/2; Alignment: Lawful Evil; Initiative: +1 (Dex); AC: 15 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 shield); Hit Dice: 1d8 +1 (5hp); Speed: 30 feet.; Attacks: Longsword +1 melee; or javelin +2 ranged.; Damage: Longsword 1d8; or javelin 1d6; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Abilities: Str: 11, Dex: 13, Con: 13, Int: 10, Wis: 10, Cha: 10; Skills: Hide +1, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3; Languages: Goblin, Common; Feats: Alertness; Special: Dark Vision 60 feet; Possessions: Longsword, Small Shield, Studded Leather Armor, Dagger, and 3d6 gp.*



### Light Horse

Large Animal; CR 1; Alignment: Neutral; Initiative: +1(Dex); AC: 13 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +3 Natural); Hit Dice: 3d8 +6 (19 hp); Speed: 60 feet; Attacks: 2 Hooves +2 melee; Damage: Hoof 1d4+1; Face/Reach 5 ft by 10 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Abilities: Str: 13, Dex: 13, Con: 15, Int: 2, Wis: 12, Cha: 6; Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6; Special: Scent.

### Light War Horse

Large Animal; CR 1; Alignment: Neutral; Initiative: +1(Dex); AC: 14 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +4 Natural); Hit Dice: 3d8 +9 (22 hp); Speed: 60 feet; Attacks: 2 Hooves +4 melee, Bite -1 melee; Damage: Hoof 1d4+3, Bite 1d3+1; Face/Reach 5 ft by 10 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; Abilities: Str: 16, Dex: 13, Con: 17, Int: 2, Wis: 13, Cha: 6; Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6; Special: Scent.

### Orc Lieutenant (Warrior)

Medium size humanoid; CR 3; Alignment: Chaotic Evil; Initiative: +0; AC: 16 (+4 Scale Mail, +1 Dex, +1 Shield); Hit Dice: 6d8 (24); Speed: 20 (armor); Attacks: Scimitar +9/+4 melee, Short Bow +7 ranged; Damage: Scimitar 1d6 +3, short bow 1d6; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Abilities: Str: 16, Dex: 13, Con: 11, Int: 10, Wis: 8, Cha: 10; Skills: Listen +5, Ride +9, Spot +6; Languages: Orc, Common; Feats: Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Trample; Special: Dark vision 60 feet, Light Sensitivity; Possessions: Scimitar, Short Bow, Scale Mail, Dagger, Small Wooden Shield, 1 Cure Light Wounds Potion, 3d6 gp.

### Orc Scout

Medium size humanoid; CR 1 Ranger Lvl 2; Alignment: Chaotic Evil; Initiative: +1; AC: 15 (+4 scale mail, +1 Dex); Hit Dice: 2d10; Speed: 20 feet (scale mail); Attacks: Scimitar +3 melee, Short Bow +3 ranged; Damage: Scimitar 1d6+1, Short Bow 1d6; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Abilities: Str: 12, Dex: 13, Con: 12, Int: 9, Wis: 11, Cha:

8; Skills: Listen +5, Ride +6, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +5; Languages: Orc, Common; Feats: Mounted Archery, Track; Special: Dark vision, Light Sensitivity; Possessions: Scimitar, Short Bow, Scale Mail, Dagger, 2d6 gp.

### Orc Sergeant (Warrior)

Medium size humanoid; CR 3/2; Alignment: Chaotic Evil; Initiative: +0; AC: 16 (+4 scale mail, +2 Large wooden shield)); Hit Dice: 3d8 (12 avg); Speed: 20 feet; Attacks: Scimitar +5 melee, Short Bow +3 Ranged; Damage: Scimitar 1d6+2, Shortbow 1d6; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Abilities: Str: 15, Dex: 10, Con: 11, Int: 9, Wis: 8, Cha: 8; Skills: Listen +4, Ride +6, Spot +4; Languages: Orc, Common; Feats: Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat; Special: Dark vision, Light Sensitivity; Possessions:



Scale Mail, Scimitar, Dagger, Shortbow, Large wooden shield, 2d6 gp.

### Orc Soldier (Warrior)

Medium size humanoid; CR 1/2; Alignment: Chaotic Evil; Initiative: +0; AC: 14 (+4 scale mail); Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 avg); Speed: 20 feet; Attacks: Scimitar +3 melee, Short Bow +1 Ranged; Damage: Scimitar +d6+1, Short Bow 1d6; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Abilities: Str: 15, Dex: 10, Con: 11, Int: 9, Wis: 8, Cha: 8; Skills: Listen +2, Ride +4, Spot +2; Languages: Orc, Common; Feats: Mounted Combat; Special: Dark vision, Light Sensitivity; Possessions: Scimitar, Short Bow, Scale Mail, Dagger, 1d6 gp.

### Sailor

Medium size humanoid (npc expert class); CR 2; Alignment: Neutral Good; Initiative: +1; AC: 11(Dex); Hit Dice: 2d6( 7 avg); Speed: 30 feet.; Attacks: Scimitar +1; Damage: Scimitar 1d6; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; Abilities: Str: 11, Dex: 13, Con: 10, Int: 9, Wis: 9, Cha: 10; Skills: Balance+4, Climb+3, Knowledge (ocean)+5, Knowledge (sailing) +5, Spot+4, Swim+5, Use Rope+6; Languages: Common; Feats: Alertness; Possessions: Scimitar, 14 gp, 12 sp, 25 cp.

### Teamster

Medium Sized Humanoid, Expert; CR 1/2; Alignment: Lawful Neutral; Initiative: +0; AC: 10; Hit Points: 1d6; Speed: 30 feet; Attacks: Dagger +0 melee, Light Mace +0; Damage: Dagger 1d4, Light Mace 1d6; Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Abilities: Str: 10, Dex: 10, Con: 10, Int: 10, Wis: 10, Cha: 10; Skills: Handle Animal +4, Listen +3, Profession (Teamster) +4, Riding +2, Spot +3; Languages: Common; Feats: Alertness; Possessions: Whip, Light Mace, Dagger 1d4 gp.

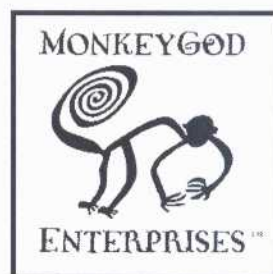
## New OGC

### New Feat: Drug Tolerance

The drug tolerance feat allows a +5 bonus on all saving throws to resist drug effects. Even if the saving throw is a failure, the effects of the drug are halved.

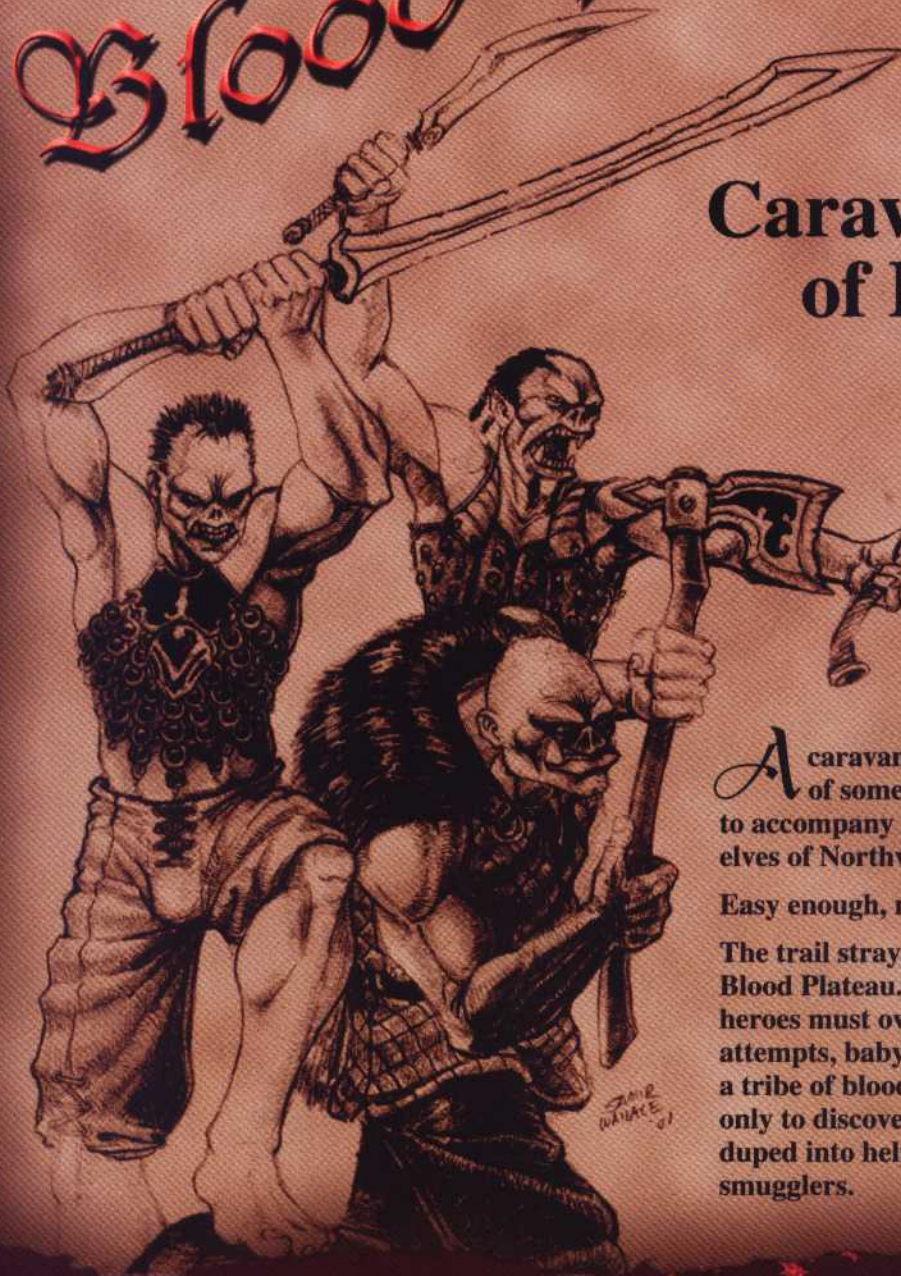
### New Rule: Shield Avoidance

Normally, when an attacker attempts to strike an opponent wielding a shield, he is unconcerned about harming that shield. In this case, the attacker can strike without hesitation. The situation is different, however, if the attacker is actively avoiding harming the shield itself. For example, the goblin king Gurthlug, if attacked directly, will use one of his hostages (yes, a baby) as a shield. This heinous act will provide an interesting dilemma to the heroes. If the hero is actively avoiding damaging a foe's shield (in this case the hostage infant), the shield bonus is increased by 2 (ie the baby is +3 rather than the listed +1 bonus). If an attack fails, the shield is unharmed. This rule reflects the lost opportunities due to the extra care taken in choosing the blows struck. If no care is taken to avoid hitting the shield, and miss is rolled, you may have hit the shield (baby). If the miss is by an amount less than or equal to the shield bonus, the shield is struck.



# Tales from the Blood Plateau

## Caravan of Hope



A caravan of mercy is in need of some worthy adventurers to accompany it to the beleaguered elves of Northwood.

Easy enough, right? Wrong!

The trail strays across the dreaded Blood Plateau. On the way, our heroes must overcome assassination attempts, baby stealing goblins, and a tribe of blood thirsty orcs. All this only to discover they have been duped into helping out a pair of drug smugglers.

Caravan of Hope is a D20 system adventure suitable for third or fourth level characters.



Requires the use of the Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, 3rd Edition published by Wizards of the Coast®



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