

Danger in Deadwood

A complete adventure for characters of 2nd to 4th level.
Requires use of the DUNGEON & DRAGONS® *Player's Handbook*, published by Wizards of the Coast®.

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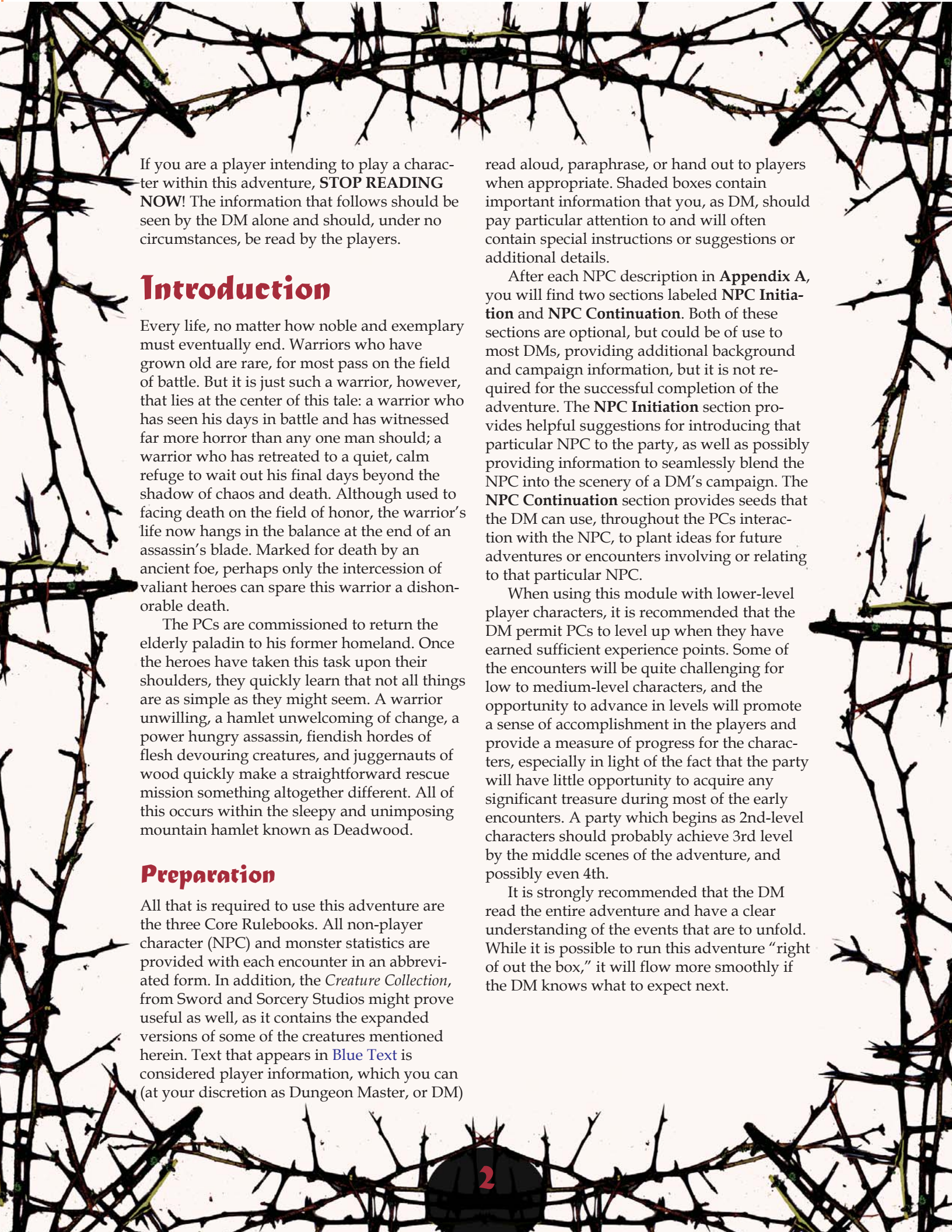
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Dedications: "To my beloved, Heather, the heart and soul of my inspiration. - BLH"
"For Diana, thank you for the encouragement and the tolerance. - KLM"

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If you are a player intending to play a character within this adventure, **STOP READING NOW!** The information that follows should be seen by the DM alone and should, under no circumstances, be read by the players.

Introduction

Every life, no matter how noble and exemplary must eventually end. Warriors who have grown old are rare, for most pass on the field of battle. But it is just such a warrior, however, that lies at the center of this tale: a warrior who has seen his days in battle and has witnessed far more horror than any one man should; a warrior who has retreated to a quiet, calm refuge to wait out his final days beyond the shadow of chaos and death. Although used to facing death on the field of honor, the warrior's life now hangs in the balance at the end of an assassin's blade. Marked for death by an ancient foe, perhaps only the intercession of valiant heroes can spare this warrior a dishonorable death.

The PCs are commissioned to return the elderly paladin to his former homeland. Once the heroes have taken this task upon their shoulders, they quickly learn that not all things are as simple as they might seem. A warrior unwilling, a hamlet unwelcoming of change, a power hungry assassin, fiendish hordes of flesh devouring creatures, and juggernauts of wood quickly make a straightforward rescue mission something altogether different. All of this occurs within the sleepy and unimposing mountain hamlet known as Deadwood.

Preparation

All that is required to use this adventure are the three Core Rulebooks. All non-player character (NPC) and monster statistics are provided with each encounter in an abbreviated form. In addition, the *Creature Collection*, from Sword and Sorcery Studios might prove useful as well, as it contains the expanded versions of some of the creatures mentioned herein. Text that appears in **Blue Text** is considered player information, which you can (at your discretion as Dungeon Master, or DM)

read aloud, paraphrase, or hand out to players when appropriate. Shaded boxes contain important information that you, as DM, should pay particular attention to and will often contain special instructions or suggestions or additional details.

After each NPC description in **Appendix A**, you will find two sections labeled **NPC Initiation** and **NPC Continuation**. Both of these sections are optional, but could be of use to most DMs, providing additional background and campaign information, but it is not required for the successful completion of the adventure. The **NPC Initiation** section provides helpful suggestions for introducing that particular NPC to the party, as well as possibly providing information to seamlessly blend the NPC into the scenery of a DM's campaign. The **NPC Continuation** section provides seeds that the DM can use, throughout the PCs interaction with the NPC, to plant ideas for future adventures or encounters involving or relating to that particular NPC.

When using this module with lower-level player characters, it is recommended that the DM permit PCs to level up when they have earned sufficient experience points. Some of the encounters will be quite challenging for low to medium-level characters, and the opportunity to advance in levels will promote a sense of accomplishment in the players and provide a measure of progress for the characters, especially in light of the fact that the party will have little opportunity to acquire any significant treasure during most of the early encounters. A party which begins as 2nd-level characters should probably achieve 3rd level by the middle scenes of the adventure, and possibly even 4th.

It is strongly recommended that the DM read the entire adventure and have a clear understanding of the events that are to unfold. While it is possible to run this adventure "right of out the box," it will flow more smoothly if the DM knows what to expect next.

Adventure Synopsis

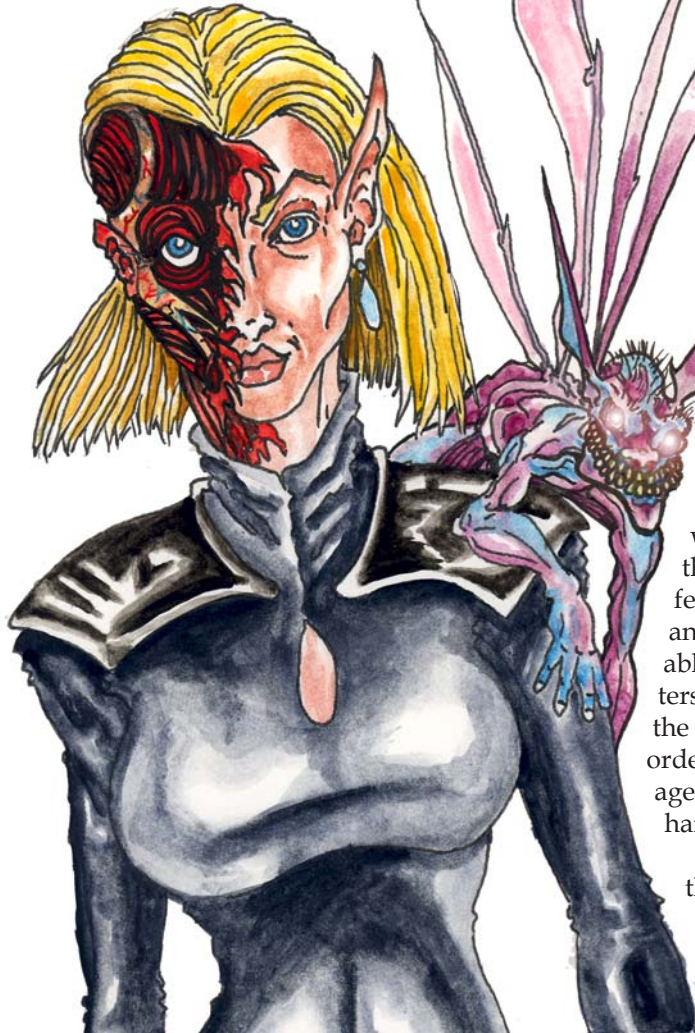
An ancient war hero, Argus Yorehammer, has retired to the sleepy mountain hamlet of Deadwood. Tired of fighting, he wishes only to be left alone to live his final years in peace. However, the once-mighty warrior's arch-nemesis, Lord Fenrius, a dark warrior and mage, has risen to power and Fenrius still desires vengeance on Argus. Lord Fenrius has spent many years trying to draw his ancient enemy from hiding and has finally formulated a plan to exact his revenge upon Argus (see **Fenrius's Plan** below).

Lord Fenrius contracts the characters to retrieve the ancient hero, telling them that he has knowledge that could provide the key to defeating the kingdom's worst enemies. The party is hired to find, protect, and escort the aged warrior back to an audience with Lord Fenrius. Further, Lord Fenrius warns the characters that assassination attempts (supposedly dispatched by the aforementioned

enemies) are to be expected. There is an assassin, Moloch, dispatched by Fenrius himself to ensure that the mission will fail, and perhaps leave Argus dead or humiliated.

Once the party arrives at the tiny hamlet of Deadwood, they begin to encounter problems. First, in the matter of Argus himself, who resists their entreaties, despite the most well spoken pleas of the party. Second, an attempt upon the warrior's life by a shadowy assassin casts a dark pall over the entire town. Third, the forces of nature seem to work against the group, and they soon find themselves trapped in the valley by a terrible storm which closes the only pass between Deadwood and the outside world. Fourth, the hamlet falls under attack by fearsome creatures born of nightmare and terror, which have an unquenchable taste for flesh. Finally, the characters must battle the assassin, as well as the tremendous deadwood golems, in order to save themselves as well as the aged warrior and the once peaceful hamlet of Deadwood.

In the end, PCs will be faced with the dilemma of how to deal with Argus and Fenrius. Do they risk the wrath of Fenrius by returning without Argus? Or will they



somehow compel the paladin to accompany them, possibly to his own death!

Setting the Stage

In order to fully understand the actions of many of the primary NPCs within this adventure, such as Moloch, Argus, and Lord Fenrius, some background information is helpful. While this information in no way affects the actual flow and play of the adventure, it does come in handy when trying to “slip into character” as one of the NPCs. Of course, the backstory is optional, so DMs should feel free to mold and shape (or discard entirely if necessary) this information so that it best fits and serves their current campaign.

Primary Antagonist – Moloch, Skin Devil Assassin

Moloch is a warped and twisted creature of malice and evil. While he does not particularly disdain killing, Moloch is not devoted to his career as an assassin and aspires to be something much greater. The skin devil would much rather live a pampered life impersonating a powerful lord or noble. This is perhaps why he veers from what seems like a simple job of assassinating a single individual (or, at worst, a small group of individuals, i.e., the PCs) into an attempt to control a massive golem to further his own twisted schemes for the future. That there is no love or loyalty lost between him and his current employer, Lord Fenrius, does little to improve this situation.

Moloch has had opportunity to visit Deadwood prior to events detailed in this adventure to study the inhabitants, case the major establishments in town, and even acquire some documents in the form of notebooks and research journals of the elder Gristwheel wizards discussing the construction and animation of the deadwood golems. These documents provided the seed of Moloch’s evil schemes (see **Moloch’s Plan** below).

Moloch has also on his previous visits to the area, made contact with the Tribe of the Bloody Frost, a band of hideous ice ghouls (see **Appendix B: Monsters** that dwell amid the snowy

peaks and glaciers of the high mountaintops beyond Deadwood and its valley. The Bloody Frost is dominated by Gor, an ice ghoul of terrifying ferocity, whom Moloch has *charmed* and bribed into aiding his schemes.

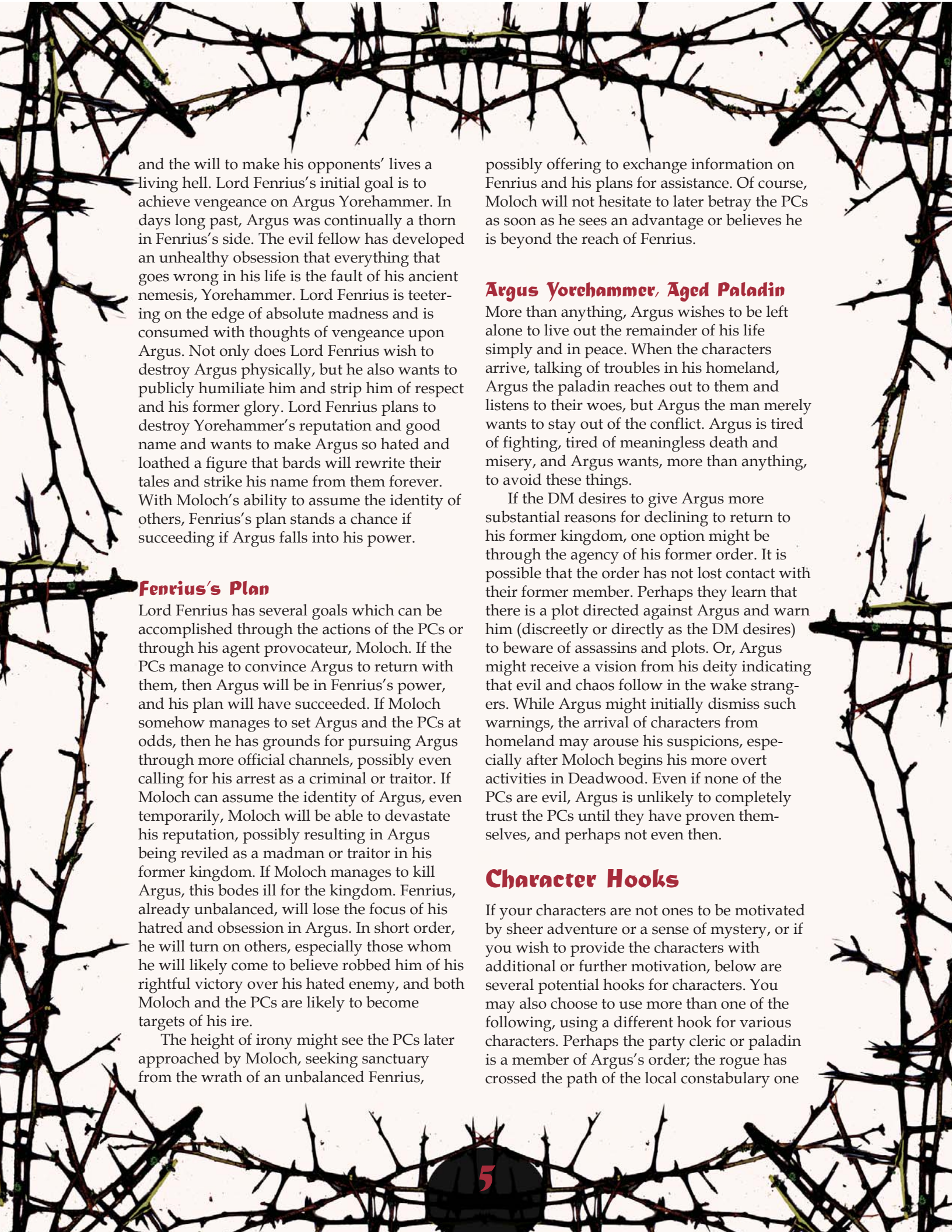
Moloch’s Plan

It is Moloch’s (or Iccus’s, should Moloch be captured, slain, or disabled) intent to animate the giant deadwood golem, which is fully twice the size of the others in town, under his control. The skin devil then hopes to use the giant golem to destroy the PCs, capture Argus, and further his own dark and twisted plans. Moloch desires more power, despises serving as the errand-boy of Lord Fenrius, and plans to use the monstrosity to subdue Argus return to Lord Fenrius. Then, with the giant golem safely hidden away, the assassin will bide his time until he can strike at Lord Fenrius. Once this time has come, Moloch plans to use the giant golem to break the body of Lord Fenrius. The assassin plans to keep Fenrius alive, keeping a steady flow of debilitating poisons in his system, so that Fenrius will have a continuous supply of fresh skin, permitting Moloch to assume Fenrius’s identity.

Secondary Antagonist – Lord Fenrius, Minister of Security

Lord Fenrius, while seen only at the onset of this adventure, could very well develop into a major opponent for the PCs in an ongoing campaign. He has power, wealth, influence,

DM’s Note: It is unlikely that the PCs will encounter Moloch in his own identity until the final scenes of the adventure. By the time the PCs will have arrived in Deadwood, it is likely that Moloch’s scribe disguise will be on the verge of complete decay, and he will immediately begin seeking a new victim who will not be missed and will offer him freedom of movement throughout the hamlet. Horace Hedgewyn, a local beggar, offers the perfect victim, and Moloch will slay him and assume his identity on the first evening he arrives.



and the will to make his opponents' lives a living hell. Lord Fenrius's initial goal is to achieve vengeance on Argus Yorehammer. In days long past, Argus was continually a thorn in Fenrius's side. The evil fellow has developed an unhealthy obsession that everything that goes wrong in his life is the fault of his ancient nemesis, Yorehammer. Lord Fenrius is teetering on the edge of absolute madness and is consumed with thoughts of vengeance upon Argus. Not only does Lord Fenrius wish to destroy Argus physically, but he also wants to publicly humiliate him and strip him of respect and his former glory. Lord Fenrius plans to destroy Yorehammer's reputation and good name and wants to make Argus so hated and loathed a figure that bards will rewrite their tales and strike his name from them forever. With Moloch's ability to assume the identity of others, Fenrius's plan stands a chance if succeeding if Argus falls into his power.

Fenrius's Plan

Lord Fenrius has several goals which can be accomplished through the actions of the PCs or through his agent provocateur, Moloch. If the PCs manage to convince Argus to return with them, then Argus will be in Fenrius's power, and his plan will have succeeded. If Moloch somehow manages to set Argus and the PCs at odds, then he has grounds for pursuing Argus through more official channels, possibly even calling for his arrest as a criminal or traitor. If Moloch can assume the identity of Argus, even temporarily, Moloch will be able to devastate his reputation, possibly resulting in Argus being reviled as a madman or traitor in his former kingdom. If Moloch manages to kill Argus, this bodes ill for the kingdom. Fenrius, already unbalanced, will lose the focus of his hatred and obsession in Argus. In short order, he will turn on others, especially those whom he will likely come to believe robbed him of his rightful victory over his hated enemy, and both Moloch and the PCs are likely to become targets of his ire.

The height of irony might see the PCs later approached by Moloch, seeking sanctuary from the wrath of an unbalanced Fenrius,

possibly offering to exchange information on Fenrius and his plans for assistance. Of course, Moloch will not hesitate to later betray the PCs as soon as he sees an advantage or believes he is beyond the reach of Fenrius.

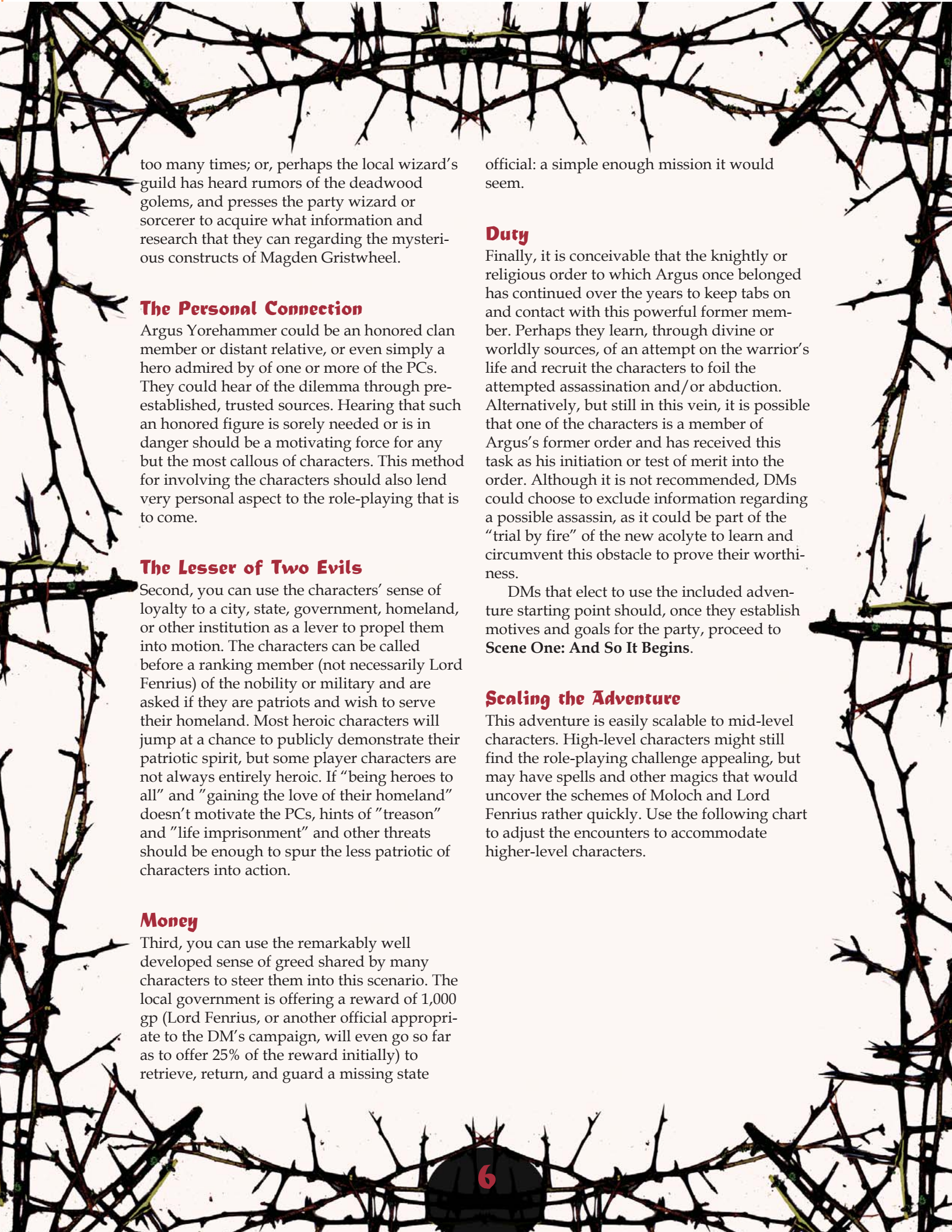
Argus Yorehammer, Aged Paladin

More than anything, Argus wishes to be left alone to live out the remainder of his life simply and in peace. When the characters arrive, talking of troubles in his homeland, Argus the paladin reaches out to them and listens to their woes, but Argus the man merely wants to stay out of the conflict. Argus is tired of fighting, tired of meaningless death and misery, and Argus wants, more than anything, to avoid these things.

If the DM desires to give Argus more substantial reasons for declining to return to his former kingdom, one option might be through the agency of his former order. It is possible that the order has not lost contact with their former member. Perhaps they learn that there is a plot directed against Argus and warn him (discreetly or directly as the DM desires) to beware of assassins and plots. Or, Argus might receive a vision from his deity indicating that evil and chaos follow in the wake strangers. While Argus might initially dismiss such warnings, the arrival of characters from homeland may arouse his suspicions, especially after Moloch begins his more overt activities in Deadwood. Even if none of the PCs are evil, Argus is unlikely to completely trust the PCs until they have proven themselves, and perhaps not even then.

Character Hooks

If your characters are not ones to be motivated by sheer adventure or a sense of mystery, or if you wish to provide the characters with additional or further motivation, below are several potential hooks for characters. You may also choose to use more than one of the following, using a different hook for various characters. Perhaps the party cleric or paladin is a member of Argus's order; the rogue has crossed the path of the local constabulary one



too many times; or, perhaps the local wizard's guild has heard rumors of the deadwood golems, and presses the party wizard or sorcerer to acquire what information and research that they can regarding the mysterious constructs of Magden Gristwheel.

The Personal Connection

Argus Yorehammer could be an honored clan member or distant relative, or even simply a hero admired by one or more of the PCs. They could hear of the dilemma through pre-established, trusted sources. Hearing that such an honored figure is sorely needed or is in danger should be a motivating force for any but the most callous of characters. This method for involving the characters should also lend very personal aspect to the role-playing that is to come.

The Lesser of Two Evils

Second, you can use the characters' sense of loyalty to a city, state, government, homeland, or other institution as a lever to propel them into motion. The characters can be called before a ranking member (not necessarily Lord Fenrius) of the nobility or military and are asked if they are patriots and wish to serve their homeland. Most heroic characters will jump at a chance to publicly demonstrate their patriotic spirit, but some player characters are not always entirely heroic. If "being heroes to all" and "gaining the love of their homeland" doesn't motivate the PCs, hints of "treason" and "life imprisonment" and other threats should be enough to spur the less patriotic of characters into action.

Money

Third, you can use the remarkably well developed sense of greed shared by many characters to steer them into this scenario. The local government is offering a reward of 1,000 gp (Lord Fenrius, or another official appropriate to the DM's campaign, will even go so far as to offer 25% of the reward initially) to retrieve, return, and guard a missing state

official: a simple enough mission it would seem.

Duty

Finally, it is conceivable that the knightly or religious order to which Argus once belonged has continued over the years to keep tabs on and contact with this powerful former member. Perhaps they learn, through divine or worldly sources, of an attempt on the warrior's life and recruit the characters to foil the attempted assassination and/or abduction. Alternatively, but still in this vein, it is possible that one of the characters is a member of Argus's former order and has received this task as his initiation or test of merit into the order. Although it is not recommended, DMs could choose to exclude information regarding a possible assassin, as it could be part of the "trial by fire" of the new acolyte to learn and circumvent this obstacle to prove their worthiness.

DMs that elect to use the included adventure starting point should, once they establish motives and goals for the party, proceed to **Scene One: And So It Begins.**

Scaling the Adventure

This adventure is easily scalable to mid-level characters. High-level characters might still find the role-playing challenge appealing, but may have spells and other magics that would uncover the schemes of Moloch and Lord Fenrius rather quickly. Use the following chart to adjust the encounters to accommodate higher-level characters.

Section

Into the Mountains
Down in the Valley
Sensational Sawmill
Reinforcements
Mill Melee

Original

Wolves(3)
Ice Ghouls (3)
Golem (4 HD)
Ice Ghouls (6)
Golems (2, 4 HD)

Level 5-6

Dire Wolves (2)
Ice Ghouls (4)
Golem (6 HD)
Ice Ghouls (12)
Golems (2-5, 6 HD)

Level 7-8

Girallon
Ice Ghouls (8)
Golem (8 HD)
IceGhouls (23)
Golems (2-5, 8 HD)

Scene One: And So It Begins (EL 2+)

This scene works best if set in a city close to or on the northern borders of the kingdom. The characters, perhaps returning flush from a recent successful adventure, arrive to find the town buzzing with rumors regarding the arrival of one of the kingdom's more powerful ministers, Lord Fenrius, Minister of Security. Official channels report that Fenrius is here to inspect the local garrisons and exercise justice in the king's name, but the season is wrong. Rumors on the street variously report that Fenrius is hunting a traitor, rooting out a spy, recruiting spies to be sent into one of the neighboring nations, in exile from the court of the king, preparing a secret attack on one of the bordering nations, and visiting a secret mistress among the lesser aristocracy.

Whether or not the visit of a powerful noble means anything to the characters, their names, activities, and reputations eventually reach the ears of Fenrius, who realizes that the heroes may be the perfect pawns for his game of vengeance. The PCs receive a summons to attend Fenrius's court, ostensibly to congratulate them on their recent successes. Whether this summons takes the form of a simple invitation delivered by a messenger, or a secret meeting with one of Fenrius's agents, is up to the DM. Use whatever means likely to prick the interest and curiosity of the characters.

The characters are summoned to an early morning audience in the private chambers of one of the most powerful nobles of the kingdom, Lord Fenrius, who meets them with only his tight-lipped female scribe present. As he speaks to the characters, the severe, pale, blonde-haired woman diligently scratches out words in a sharp, angular script.

The morning light streams in through the long windows of Lord Fenrius's chamber, casting his reclining figure into stark, gold-limned shadow. While you cannot clearly see his face in this light, you have no doubt as to his identity, having heard his speeches time and time again, speaking of the future of the kingdom. He is without a doubt, one of the most powerful men in the government and a political force to be reckoned with.

"Greetings to you all," he begins, and although his voice rough with much use, it is still a voice clearly used to commanding men. "Our beloved and treasured homeland is in need and we look to you in this dark hour for aid. We seek knowledge; but this knowledge only one man possesses, and he has been lost to us for many long years.

"However, my informants have recently discovered the location of the man I seek. His name is Argus Yorehammer — " Lord Fenrius lapses into a fit of harsh coughing. Dismissing his fit of coughing as the harsh northern winter, he continues, "He disappeared into the mountains far to the north some years ago. Go seek him out and bring him home. But beware, for there are forces at work that oppose the return of Argus Yorehammer, and you may find the way is not without its dangers. Know, however, that if you fail in this task and we may all be doomed."

Development: Fenrius provides the characters with a merchant's map of the northern roads and trade routes marked with the location of Deadwood. If PCs question Fenrius's choice in selecting them for this important mission, he explains that he hopes their relative obscurity

DM's Note: Bear in mind that Lord Fenrius's "scribe" in this encounter is in fact the skin devil assassin Moloch who begins shadowing the PCs. Moloch already knows how to get to the valley hamlet and after he gets some idea of the party's composition, strengths, and weaknesses, he will head to Deadwood and begin his preparations for their arrival and his bloody deeds.

will help misdirect the enemy. He adds that he will be sending a number of decoy missions to different portions of the kingdom to further confuse enemy spies, so it is imperative that the party act quickly and efficiently. He does not elaborate on the doom which hangs over the kingdom, indicating that it is a state secret. Lord Fenrius tells them little more and has them shown out.

It is now up to the characters to find their way to Deadwood, and a bit of checking around town before they leave would be most wise. Bards, or characters possessing the

Bardic Knowledge skill, can learn a bit about this fellow whom they seek, but not an overly large amount, as Lord Fenrius has been careful to expunge most official records of his old enemy from the public eye. However, even the most powerful king cannot totally wipe away all knowledge of a veritable legend. Tales of an ancient and powerful warrior for good are summoned forth at the mention of the name, as well as mention of his archenemy, an evil warrior-mage named Falvian Darkroot (Lord Fenrius before assuming a new identity).

Whatever the method of introduction or motivation, the group will receive initial supplies and equipment refurbishing at the expense of the employing institution. No magic items are provided, as those will be left up to the individual to procure. Once they are sufficiently equipped (if they happen to mention that they are headed into the mountains, they will be advised to purchase the appropriate cold-weather clothing and gear) they can begin their journey to Deadwood, which lies several days north of their current location.

Scene Two: Into the Mountains (EL 3)

Although their journey initially seems to be unopposed, the PCs are about to learn that there are indeed, sinister forces at work in the world, and they seem to have discovered the parties.

DM's Note: Use this encounter to establish a sense of gathering danger and overhanging doom that will reach its zenith within the mountain valley's sheer, stark walls. Feel free to use other elements of nature, such as the lengthening shadows at dusk, the stark contrast of the bare and life-less seeming trees, the barren and rocky landscape, the distant howling of wolves, the gathering of a dark and ominous storm, or perhaps the flickering of shadows from a weak and sputtering campfire to accent the eerie and creepy mood as the PCs journey into the mountains.

As the characters trudge along the winding, ever-rising paths into the mountains, read the following:

It seems that the higher you traverse, the more the landscape around you becomes barren and nearly devoid of all life. Stunted, gnarled trees sway in the harsh, biting wind and strange, wind-hewn boulders cast oddly shaped shadows in the fleeting evening light. Long gone are the comfortable and reassuring sights, sounds, and landmarks of the familiar territory near your home. As you trudge along the upward winding path, the sun setting in the distance, you realize that you are in wholly unfamiliar territory. Other than the moaning wind, there are no sounds, no birdcalls, and no insects chirping or buzzing. All is eerily silent, until, off to your right, in a twisted copse of

stunted fir trees, you think you hear the crashing and snapping of branches, as if something approaches...

Something approaches indeed: a pack of fierce and enraged wolves which have been stirred from their slumber by the assassin, Moloch. The devious skin devil, hoping to catch a glimpse of the party in action, located a couple of inhabited hornet nests and tossed them into the cave where three wolves were sleeping. The angry hornets emerged and began mercilessly stinging the wolves, sending them into a rage. Now they bear down upon the characters, which are unfortunately the only targets within sight and range for the wolves to vent their anger on.

The enraged wolves burst forth from the copse of fir trees with blood-curdling howls, each of them peppered with dozens of swollen red blisters all over their bodies, apparently diseased in some fashion.

Wolves (3); hp 12, 10, 7.

Tactics: The enraged wolves will immediately charge the party attacking people and mounts alike. The wolves are beyond all sense due to the hornet stings, and attack until slain.

During the combat, Moloch, remains hidden a nearby rock outcropping,

watching the scene unfold. Although it is unlikely that he is noticed in the heat of combat, particularly alert or astute characters may make a Spot check to notice Moloch (DC 33).

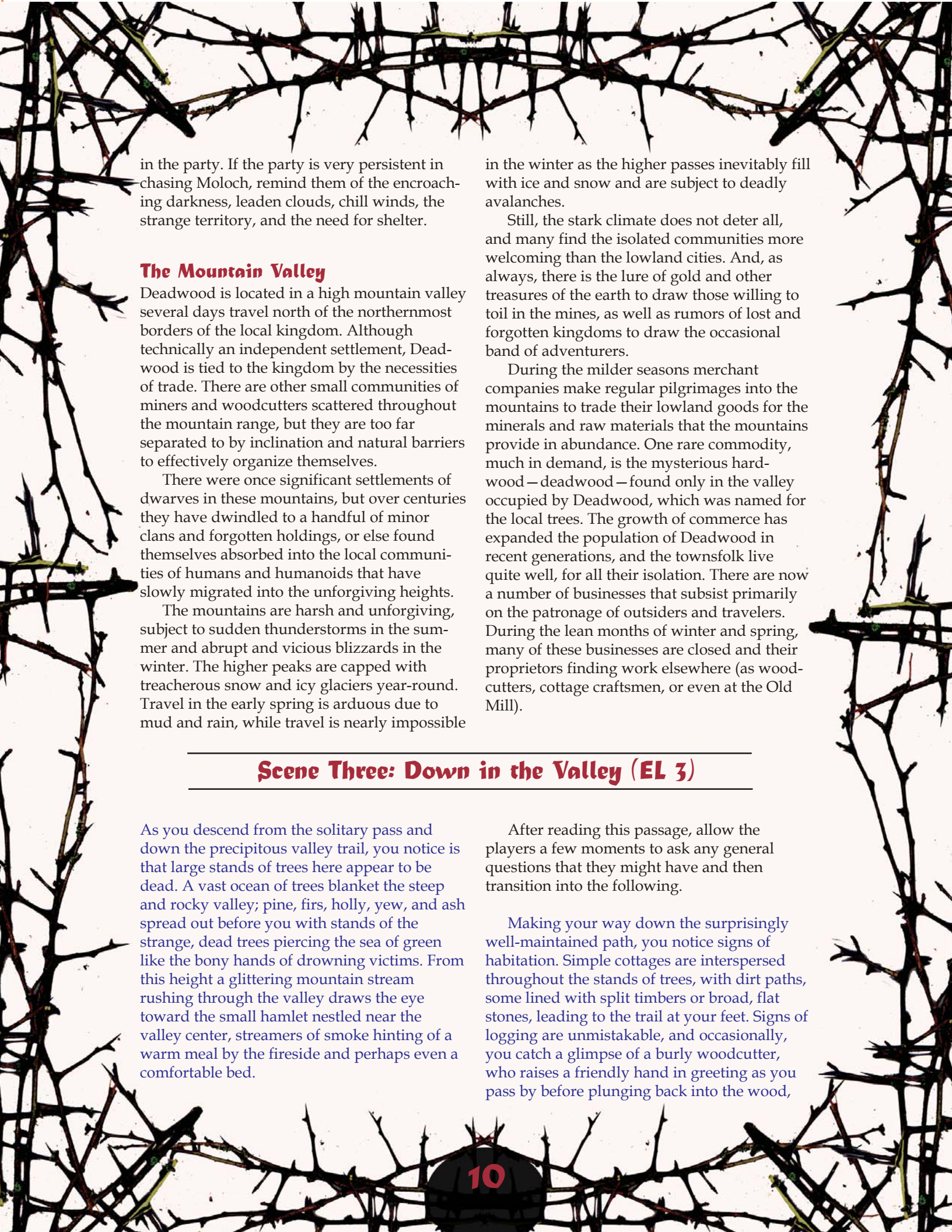
Development: If the corpses of the wolves are examined after the combat, a Heal check (DC 12) reveals that the inflamed blisters are in fact stings and not symptoms of a disease. With this information, a Wilderness Lore check (DC 12) will reveal that the stings are hornet or yellow jacket stings which do not leave a stinger, and also that such insects do not normally attack animals such as wolves. The wolves can be tracked with relative ease (DC 12) back to their lair, a shallow cave, where the hornet nests (clearly torn from the branches they hung on) can be discovered (as well as a number of still-angry hornets).

Should the characters search a larger area and discover Moloch's tracks (DC 25), it probably avails them little. Moloch can move at half speed (Spd 30) and still conceal his tracks (DC 20). If followed, Moloch leads the party on a wild goose chase through the hills, possibly precipitating additional random encounters. Should the party somehow manage to close with him, he begins moving at his full normal movement (Spd 60) and tries and lead the party into ice ghouls territory (use the statistics for the ice ghouls in **Scene Three:**

Down in the Valley).

As a last resort, Moloch uses his *expeditious retreat* spells to put greater distance between himself





in the party. If the party is very persistent in chasing Moloch, remind them of the encroaching darkness, leaden clouds, chill winds, the strange territory, and the need for shelter.

The Mountain Valley

Deadwood is located in a high mountain valley several days travel north of the northernmost borders of the local kingdom. Although technically an independent settlement, Deadwood is tied to the kingdom by the necessities of trade. There are other small communities of miners and woodcutters scattered throughout the mountain range, but they are too far separated to by inclination and natural barriers to effectively organize themselves.

There were once significant settlements of dwarves in these mountains, but over centuries they have dwindled to a handful of minor clans and forgotten holdings, or else found themselves absorbed into the local communities of humans and humanoids that have slowly migrated into the unforgiving heights.

The mountains are harsh and unforgiving, subject to sudden thunderstorms in the summer and abrupt and vicious blizzards in the winter. The higher peaks are capped with treacherous snow and icy glaciers year-round. Travel in the early spring is arduous due to mud and rain, while travel is nearly impossible

in the winter as the higher passes inevitably fill with ice and snow and are subject to deadly avalanches.

Still, the stark climate does not deter all, and many find the isolated communities more welcoming than the lowland cities. And, as always, there is the lure of gold and other treasures of the earth to draw those willing to toil in the mines, as well as rumors of lost and forgotten kingdoms to draw the occasional band of adventurers.

During the milder seasons merchant companies make regular pilgrimages into the mountains to trade their lowland goods for the minerals and raw materials that the mountains provide in abundance. One rare commodity, much in demand, is the mysterious hardwood—deadwood—found only in the valley occupied by Deadwood, which was named for the local trees. The growth of commerce has expanded the population of Deadwood in recent generations, and the townsfolk live quite well, for all their isolation. There are now a number of businesses that subsist primarily on the patronage of outsiders and travelers. During the lean months of winter and spring, many of these businesses are closed and their proprietors finding work elsewhere (as woodcutters, cottage craftsmen, or even at the Old Mill).

Scene Three: Down in the Valley (EL 3)

As you descend from the solitary pass and down the precipitous valley trail, you notice is that large stands of trees here appear to be dead. A vast ocean of trees blanket the steep and rocky valley; pine, firs, holly, yew, and ash spread out before you with stands of the strange, dead trees piercing the sea of green like the bony hands of drowning victims. From this height a glittering mountain stream rushing through the valley draws the eye toward the small hamlet nestled near the valley center, streamers of smoke hinting of a warm meal by the fireside and perhaps even a comfortable bed.

After reading this passage, allow the players a few moments to ask any general questions that they might have and then transition into the following.

Making your way down the surprisingly well-maintained path, you notice signs of habitation. Simple cottages are interspersed throughout the stands of trees, with dirt paths, some lined with split timbers or broad, flat stones, leading to the trail at your feet. Signs of logging are unmistakable, and occasionally, you catch a glimpse of a burly woodcutter, who raises a friendly hand in greeting as you pass by before plunging back into the wood,

with axe in hand. As you round a bend in the path, your keen ears detect a tinny sound on the cool morning air, followed by a gravelly scream of terror and rage. Through the dark boughs of the trees, you can barely make out a pair of woodcutters, fending off a cluster of revolting creatures with blue-tinged skin, ragged, unkempt hair, and barely clothed in rotting animal skins. One of these horrors lie upon the ground, unmoving and there appear to be four additional brutes bearing down on the woodcutters, one of which is already bleeding profusely.

While the burly woodcutters are a match for one or two of the creatures, they stand little chance against four of them. As the ice ghouls outnumber the woodcutters nearly two-to-one, they will likely overwhelm the two men in short order. The PCs must act quickly or both of the woodcutters will be cut down and literally devoured before their eyes.

Woodcutters (2) (Ranlin Quickaxe, Turl Boughsplitter); hp 11, 3 (wounded).

Ice Ghouls (3); hp: 20, 17, 16.

Tactics: The PCs begin the combat 60 feet distant from the ice ghouls and the woodcutters. The ice ghouls want to take the woodcutters as quickly as possible, but they are wary of the heavy axes the two wield in their defense.

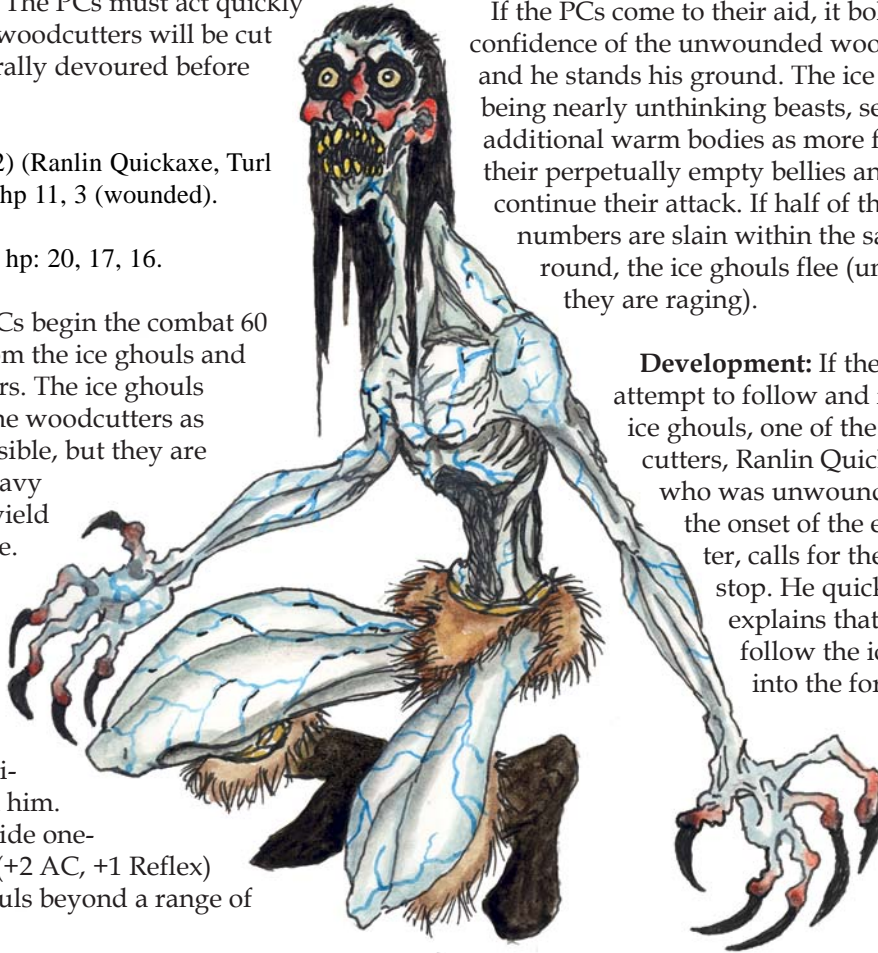
If either woodcutter goes down during the combat, half of the ice ghouls immediately fall upon him.

The trees provide one-quarter cover (+2 AC, +1 Reflex) for the ice ghouls beyond a range of 30 feet.

DM's Note: It is important that the woodcutters survive the encounter with the ice ghouls. If the PCs ignore their plight or fail miserably in defending them, the death of one or both casts a pall over the town, and the initial encounters and interactions with the inhabitants of Deadwood are subdued and of an entirely different character than indicated in the provided text. Presuming they are rescued by the PCs, Ranlin and Turl can act as informal guides for the characters during their first day or two in Deadwood, though they shortly have to return to their duties and their families. Ranlin and Turl can make additional appearances in later encounters such as **Meeting the Warrior** or **Sensational Sawmill Stirrings** to add a more personal aspect to these encounters.

If the PCs come to their aid, it bolsters the confidence of the unwounded woodcutter and he stands his ground. The ice ghouls, being nearly unthinking beasts, see the additional warm bodies as more food for their perpetually empty bellies and continue their attack. If half of their numbers are slain within the same round, the ice ghouls flee (unless they are raging).

Development: If the PCs attempt to follow and fleeing ice ghouls, one of the woodcutters, Ranlin Quickaxe, who was unwounded at the onset of the encounter, calls for them to stop. He quickly explains that to follow the ice ghouls into the forest is to



invite death: Many more ghouls probably await in the dark depths woods. Further, he asks for aid for his companion and cousin, Turl Boughsplitter, and for himself if he is wounded. If Turl is unconscious, a Heal check (DC 15) is required to stabilize him. Ranlin can direct the party to the local Temple (see Deadwood Area 4, below) and requests their assistance if he and Turl are injured.

If they survive, the woodcutters are extremely grateful to the PCs. In addition, word quickly spreads throughout Deadwood regarding the heroic actions of the PCs if even one of the woodcutters survives. The residents of Deadwood are quite friendly toward the PCs during their initial stay.

When they recover, Ranlin and Turl are more than willing to inform the characters about the ice ghouls, the valley, Deadwood, or anything else that they want to know. They can direct the PCs into town, and recommend the Old Mill as a place to stay (actually, it is the only tavern and inn in the town).

The Hamlet of Deadwood

The characters eventually arrive in the sleepy hamlet known as Deadwood. Named for the seemingly endless stands of dead trees that fill the valley, it is home to some 300 souls, who for the most part enjoy their isolation from the hubbub of the lowland cities.

Deadwood (hamlet): Conventional; AL NG; 100 gp limit; Assets 1,350; Population 271; Mixed (human 95, halfling 2, dwarf 1, gnome 1, other 1).

Authority Figures: Magden Gristwheel IV, male half-elf Ari2; Daonis Rockgirder, female human Clr4; Bethany Streamswift, female human Clr1/Wiz1, The Borderwalker, female dryad Rgr3.

Important Characters: Argus Yorehammer, male human Pal9; Moloch, male skin devil Ass1/Rog1/Sor1; Iccus, male advanced murdersprite; Galyn Lyrestringer, male halfling Brd2/Rog1; Gh'rus Forgefire, male dwarf Rgr2; Harrak Forgefire, male dwarf Exp4; Haldren Smithson, male Exp1/War1;

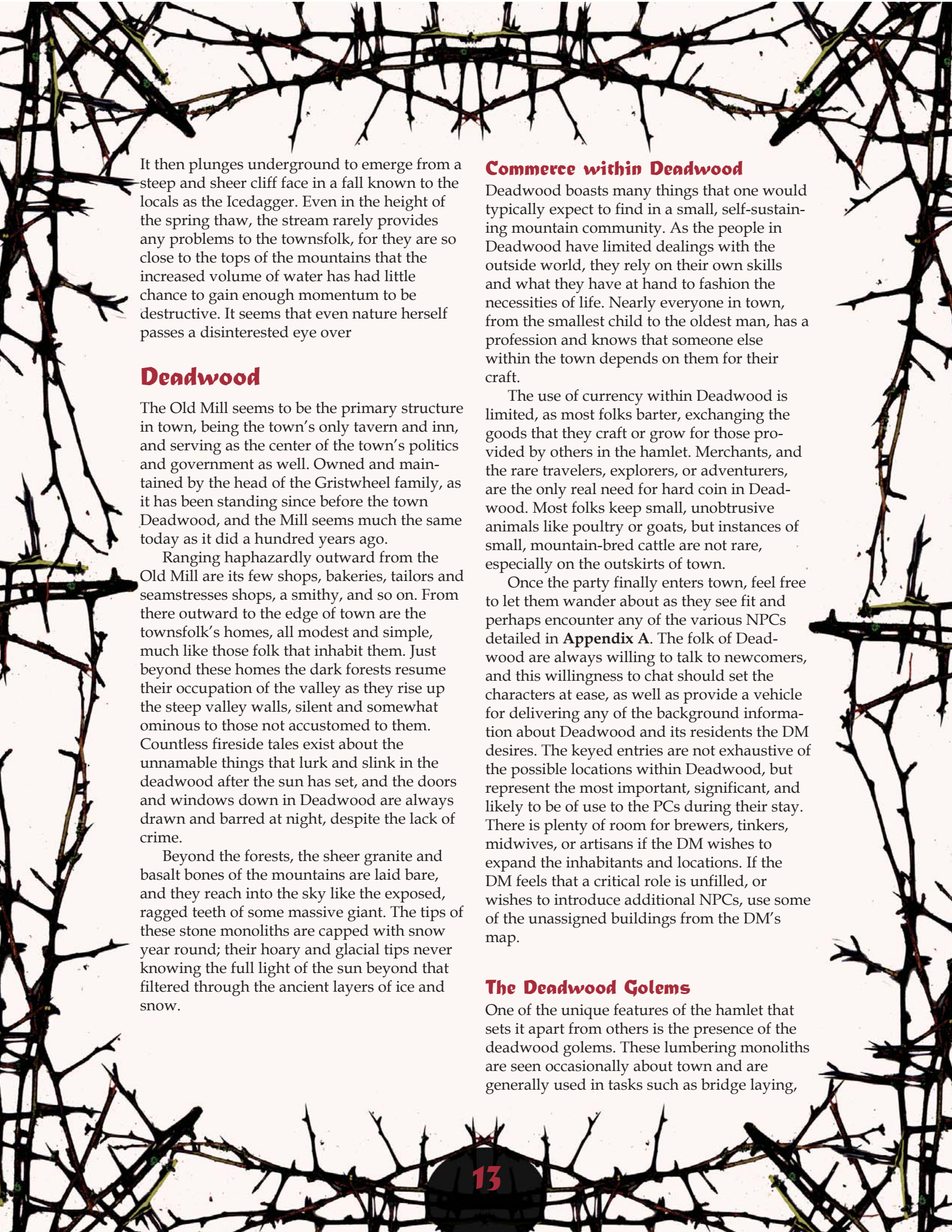
Nim, male gnome Sor2/Rog1; Ulyk Woodhewer, male half-orc Com2;

Despite its small size, the hamlet is largely self-sufficient and even manages to export sizeable amounts of deadwood (which is not actually dead, but has a very short life cycle and a high reproduction rate to match), which is known for its hardness and unusual grain. Deadwood is used for crafting anything from ships to curios to fine furniture. Generally, this wood is exchanged for items that cannot be obtained in the tiny village, such as salt, wheat, and fish, as well as luxury items such as fine cloth and spices. The folk of Deadwood are simple, if not a tad isolated, but they are by no means xenophobic.

The folk of Deadwood govern themselves for the most part by consensus, but informally look to Magden IV (see **Appendix A: NPCs**) to guide them in times of need or crisis. Any lawbreakers are rounded up by a hastily formed posse and brought before Magden for judgment and sentencing, which usually consists of banishment and exile from the valley, or more rarely, execution. Fortunately, the simple people of this tiny hamlet have little occasion to deal with these sorts of odious occurrences, and there has not been a crisis of lawlessness for quite some time.

The hamlet is situated in the bottom of a steep valley, with a single, well-traveled and maintained pass leading to the outside world. There are no gates or fortifications. There simply is nothing here that anyone could ever want that they could not find elsewhere with less effort. The people of Deadwood are protected from invasion not by a show of arms and defense, but rather by a cloud of disinterest and obscurity. No matter what the reason, it seems that they are, for the most part, content to live out their lives in relative solitude.

A single stream, known as the River Hoarfrost, is as cold as the icy snowcaps from which it issues, and runs through the center of the town. South of the Old Mill, which has long since been converted from a gristmill to a tavern, the frigid river vanishes into the forest, and meanders southward for about 200 yards.



It then plunges underground to emerge from a steep and sheer cliff face in a fall known to the locals as the Icedagger. Even in the height of the spring thaw, the stream rarely provides any problems to the townsfolk, for they are so close to the tops of the mountains that the increased volume of water has had little chance to gain enough momentum to be destructive. It seems that even nature herself passes a disinterested eye over

Deadwood

The Old Mill seems to be the primary structure in town, being the town's only tavern and inn, and serving as the center of the town's politics and government as well. Owned and maintained by the head of the Gristwheel family, as it has been standing since before the town Deadwood, and the Mill seems much the same today as it did a hundred years ago.

Ranging haphazardly outward from the Old Mill are its few shops, bakeries, tailors and seamstresses shops, a smithy, and so on. From there outward to the edge of town are the townsfolk's homes, all modest and simple, much like those folk that inhabit them. Just beyond these homes the dark forests resume their occupation of the valley as they rise up the steep valley walls, silent and somewhat ominous to those not accustomed to them. Countless fireside tales exist about the unnamable things that lurk and slink in the deadwood after the sun has set, and the doors and windows down in Deadwood are always drawn and barred at night, despite the lack of crime.

Beyond the forests, the sheer granite and basalt bones of the mountains are laid bare, and they reach into the sky like the exposed, ragged teeth of some massive giant. The tips of these stone monoliths are capped with snow year round; their hoary and glacial tips never knowing the full light of the sun beyond that filtered through the ancient layers of ice and snow.

Commerce within Deadwood


Deadwood boasts many things that one would typically expect to find in a small, self-sustaining mountain community. As the people in Deadwood have limited dealings with the outside world, they rely on their own skills and what they have at hand to fashion the necessities of life. Nearly everyone in town, from the smallest child to the oldest man, has a profession and knows that someone else within the town depends on them for their craft.

The use of currency within Deadwood is limited, as most folks barter, exchanging the goods that they craft or grow for those provided by others in the hamlet. Merchants, and the rare travelers, explorers, or adventurers, are the only real need for hard coin in Deadwood. Most folks keep small, unobtrusive animals like poultry or goats, but instances of small, mountain-bred cattle are not rare, especially on the outskirts of town.

Once the party finally enters town, feel free to let them wander about as they see fit and perhaps encounter any of the various NPCs detailed in **Appendix A**. The folk of Deadwood are always willing to talk to newcomers, and this willingness to chat should set the characters at ease, as well as provide a vehicle for delivering any of the background information about Deadwood and its residents the DM desires. The keyed entries are not exhaustive of the possible locations within Deadwood, but represent the most important, significant, and likely to be of use to the PCs during their stay. There is plenty of room for brewers, tinkers, midwives, or artisans if the DM wishes to expand the inhabitants and locations. If the DM feels that a critical role is unfilled, or wishes to introduce additional NPCs, use some of the unassigned buildings from the DM's map.

The Deadwood Golems

One of the unique features of the hamlet that sets it apart from others is the presence of the deadwood golems. These lumbering monoliths are seen occasionally about town and are generally used in tasks such as bridge laying,



house building, and other jobs that require immense physical strength. It seems that the golems understand the natives and, in as much as their limited intelligence allows, they follow instructions given to them. However, if given a command that they do not understand by an individual who is not a Deadwood native, or if asked to harm another native of the hamlet, they stand unmoving. Only the *amulet* that controls them can override these established instructions and behavior patterns, but this is a fact known by none of the natives and only suspected by Magden IV. The only structure within the village that the golems are regularly seen is the sawmill to the south, where they provide the bulk of the brute force needed to move the massive deadwood trees through the giant, whirling saw blades.

The deadwood golems have never intentionally harmed a soul, and the folk of Deadwood believe that they would come to the aid of the town if it were ever to come under attack. Whether this is true or not is anyone's guess. For the most part, the golems are thought to be so innocuous by the locals that they rarely even take notice of them anymore. It is almost as if, when asked about the presence of the lumbering behemoths, they have to pause a moment to recollect exactly to what one is referring.

Key to Deadwood

The following is a list of places that the characters might happen upon during their time in Deadwood. This list is by no means meant to be all inclusive, as there would undoubtedly be various other small residences and places of business, such as brewers, hunters, scribes, etc., that are simply not detailed here. DMs should feel free to add or expand upon these places as they see fit, or as they characters happen upon them.

1. The Old Mill

The Old Mill is located in the near center of Deadwood and is a large, three-storied, oval structure on the verge of the River Hoarfrost.

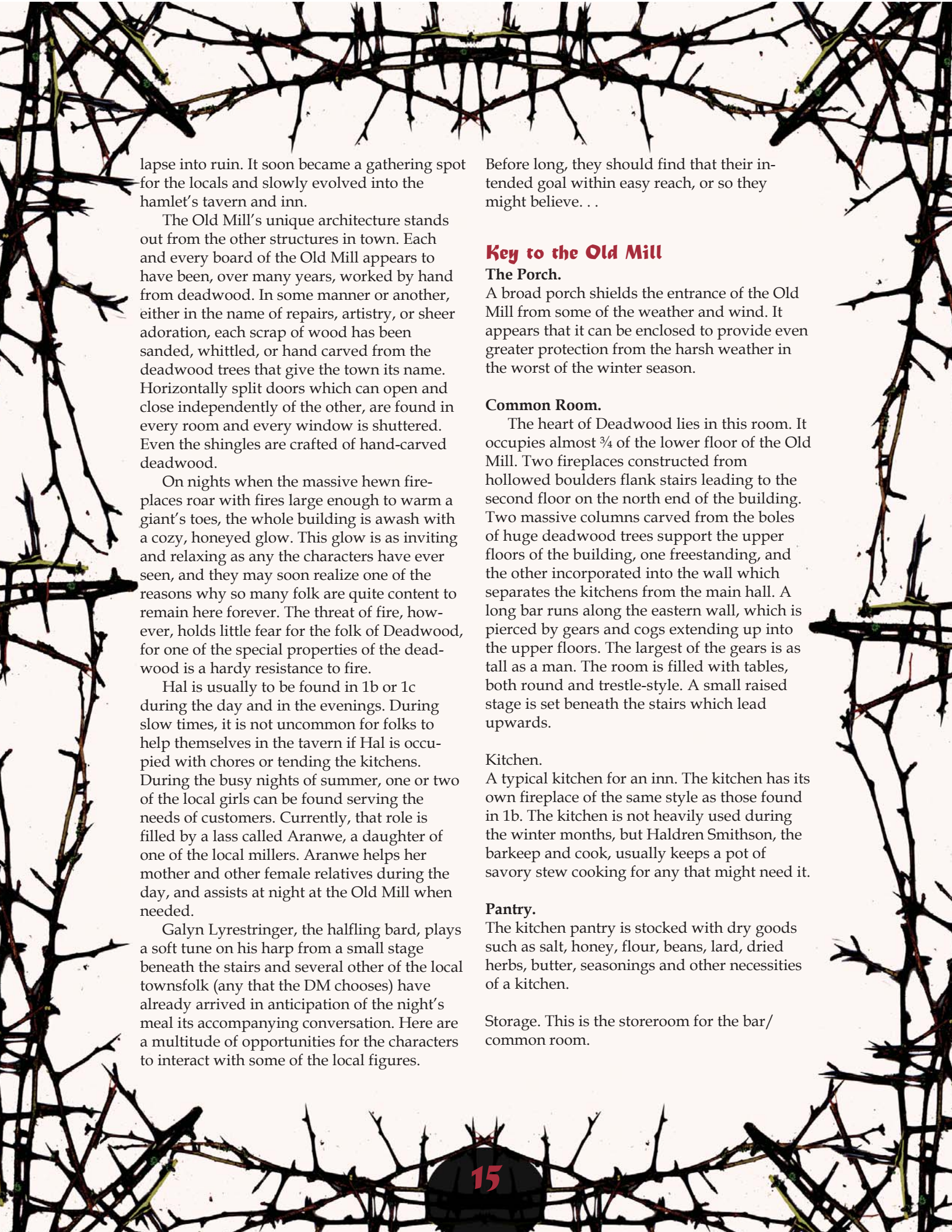
Eventually, the PCs will need lodging, food, and drink, and if not already there, they can be directed to the Old Mill by any of the local

inhabitants. Upon their initial arrival at the heart and soul of Deadwood, read the passage below.

As you approach what seems to be the central structure in this small town, you are struck with an unmistakable sense of antiquity. A massive mill, fully three stories tall, oval in shape stands before you, its weathered millwheel forever stilled though still washed by the chill waters of the mountain stream. Great boulders pierce the sides of the building at three places on the lower floor, and smoke issues from chimneys that have been worked into them. The building itself appears to be constructed almost entirely from the local wood. It appears that every piece of the dark wood of the structure was worked and fitted with meticulous care, and the signs of age and wear seem only to add to its rustic and homey appearance, rather than detracting. A plaque hangs over the door, which plainly states, "The Mill," and the lilting sounds of laughter and song, and the honeyed light of a blazing fire, issue forth from the half-opened split-style door before you.

The Mill was established before the first cornerstone of the hamlet of Deadwood was laid down. Magden Gristwheel the Elder, the great grandfather of Magden IV, discovered this small, secluded valley and the unique properties of the deadwood trees that filled it. Magden the Elder, a shrewd businessman as well as talented wizard, decided to use the strong mountain stream to run a mill (originally a sawmill, and then a gristmill, before becoming a tavern after the new sawmill was constructed), but revealed only a few of the secrets of the deadwood for the folk at large. Thus, he made his fortune.

The fortunes of Magden drew others to the valley, and the hamlet of Deadwood was born. The Mill, now generally referred to as the Old Mill by the locals, has always been the heart and soul of the tiny mountain town, and has always held a cherished and special place in the hearts of the townsfolk. When the larger, newer sawmill was later built downstream, the Old Mill could not be allowed to simply



lapse into ruin. It soon became a gathering spot for the locals and slowly evolved into the hamlet's tavern and inn.

The Old Mill's unique architecture stands out from the other structures in town. Each and every board of the Old Mill appears to have been, over many years, worked by hand from deadwood. In some manner or another, either in the name of repairs, artistry, or sheer adoration, each scrap of wood has been sanded, whittled, or hand carved from the deadwood trees that give the town its name. Horizontally split doors which can open and close independently of the other, are found in every room and every window is shuttered. Even the shingles are crafted of hand-carved deadwood.

On nights when the massive hewn fireplaces roar with fires large enough to warm a giant's toes, the whole building is awash with a cozy, honeyed glow. This glow is as inviting and relaxing as any the characters have ever seen, and they may soon realize one of the reasons why so many folk are quite content to remain here forever. The threat of fire, however, holds little fear for the folk of Deadwood, for one of the special properties of the deadwood is a hardy resistance to fire.

Hal is usually to be found in 1b or 1c during the day and in the evenings. During slow times, it is not uncommon for folks to help themselves in the tavern if Hal is occupied with chores or tending the kitchens. During the busy nights of summer, one or two of the local girls can be found serving the needs of customers. Currently, that role is filled by a lass called Aranwe, a daughter of one of the local millers. Aranwe helps her mother and other female relatives during the day, and assists at night at the Old Mill when needed.

Galyn Lyrestringer, the halfling bard, plays a soft tune on his harp from a small stage beneath the stairs and several other of the local townsfolk (any that the DM chooses) have already arrived in anticipation of the night's meal its accompanying conversation. Here are a multitude of opportunities for the characters to interact with some of the local figures.

Before long, they should find that their intended goal within easy reach, or so they might believe. . .

Key to the Old Mill

The Porch.

A broad porch shields the entrance of the Old Mill from some of the weather and wind. It appears that it can be enclosed to provide even greater protection from the harsh weather in the worst of the winter season.

Common Room.

The heart of Deadwood lies in this room. It occupies almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the lower floor of the Old Mill. Two fireplaces constructed from hollowed boulders flank stairs leading to the second floor on the north end of the building. Two massive columns carved from the boles of huge deadwood trees support the upper floors of the building, one freestanding, and the other incorporated into the wall which separates the kitchens from the main hall. A long bar runs along the eastern wall, which is pierced by gears and cogs extending up into the upper floors. The largest of the gears is as tall as a man. The room is filled with tables, both round and trestle-style. A small raised stage is set beneath the stairs which lead upwards.

Kitchen.

A typical kitchen for an inn. The kitchen has its own fireplace of the same style as those found in 1b. The kitchen is not heavily used during the winter months, but Haldren Smithson, the barkeep and cook, usually keeps a pot of savory stew cooking for any that might need it.

Pantry.

The kitchen pantry is stocked with dry goods such as salt, honey, flour, beans, lard, dried herbs, butter, seasonings and other necessities of a kitchen.

Storage. This is the storeroom for the bar/common room.

Woodboxes.

Two are located in the common room, and one in the kitchen. They are stocked with large quantities of split wood for feeding the fireplaces of the Old Mill.

Hallway.

This hall runs along the western wall of the Old Mill and provides access to the guest rooms and to the Gristwheel private study. The hall terminates at a heavy, reinforced, and locked door (Open Lock DC 30) at the southern end.

Storage.

This open area off the stairs on the second floor is used to store blankets and linens and other such articles for the guest rooms on this floor.

Guestroom.

Simple, but functional. A wooden bed frame with rope suspension and a mattress stuffed with soft grasses, leaves, and herbs. A small nightstand, stool, and a small chest are also in the room. The floor has plain, but thick carpets to keep out the cold. The doors do not have true locks, but do have simple latches (Open Lock DC 8).

Private Study

This was the private study of the elder Gristwheels. The room is dominated by a large desk and is lined with shelves and cubbyholes. The desk, corners, shelves, and cubbies, are stuffed to overflowing with papers, scrolls, and books, along with the occasional knickknack. It is obvious that much of the material goes long periods without being disturbed as everything is covered with a layer of dust. A few piles appear to have been moved recently, and the desk appears to have suffered some attempt to clear a working space upon its surface, with little avail.

The private study has two doors, one opening onto the hallway and the other provides access to the Gristwheel laboratory. Both are always locked with good quality

locks (Open Lock DC 30) and are always kept locked by Magden IV. Magden himself only rarely ventures into the chambers.

Laboratory


The laboratory occupies approximately half of the second story of the Old Mill, and the third floor as well. The eastern portion of the room is largely occupied by the gears and cogs of the old mill apparatus, but is dominated by the figure of a gigantic deadwood golem. The third floor is an open mezzanine looking out onto the second floor, and is occupied by bookshelves, tables, and cabinets, all stuffed to overflowing like the private study. The giant golem is obviously incomplete to anyone with a modicum of arcane education (Knowledge (arcana), DC 10). There is, however, a curious depression in the chest of the monstrous golem, as if something was intended to be fitted there.

Laboratory Mezzanine

A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 12) reveals that this is indeed a laboratory intended for magical research. A variety of potentially useful items could be found here at the DMs discretion, including spell components, old spellbooks, or even scrolls. There are enough materials available yet to produce several potions if someone has the Brew Potion feat, and there may even be a few scrolls penned by various Gristwheel magicians, now buried beneath piles of other works. Magden IV himself is largely ignorant of the function of the devices and apparatus in these chambers, and knows little more than not to tamper with them.

2. The Hushed Hammer

There is but a single smithy in town, and it is owned and staffed by a friendly gnome known only as Nim. Bent by life many years and hard work, Nim is wispy haired and gray whiskered, but his eyes still shine despite the passage of time. The aging gnome lives and works in his shop, with only his owl familiar, Muffles, at his side. Nim is deaf and mute but has managed to function quite well in the tiny hamlet, despite having what some might see as



a handicap. Nim communicates primarily by writing messages, but has developed a language of hand signs that most folk in the hamlet now understand. The hand signs are for simple and commonly used words, like "food," "drink," "work," and so on, and any character making an Intelligence check (DC 12) should be able to piece it together quickly enough.

3. Saws o' Silver

While the mountains that enclose Deadwood are not rich in gold, silver, mithral, or adamantine, there is some to be found, and where these metals are found, you are bound to uncover at least a dwarf or two. Two is, in fact, the exact number of dwarves that one will find in Deadwood; both are proprietors of the well-known shop, Saws o' Silver.

Gh'rus and Harrak Forgefire are cousins native to the mountain ranges around Deadwood, and they are the last residents of a dwindling clan. Their clan suffered from a slow birth rate and the lack of new blood, and those family members that have not moved to greener pastures have long since passed away.

It is a good thing for the folks of Deadwood that the Forgefires, Harrak and Gh'rus, have remained behind. The two dwarves are the only two living souls that know the secrets of crafting the special saw blades and axe heads that can cut and fell the deadwood trees. If it were not for these two enterprising and resourceful dwarves, the town would probably have dwindled away without its primary export.

Gh'rus, the elder of the two, is the miner and often disappears into the gloomy peaks around the valley for weeks at a time. Usually remaining in Deadwood, Harrak is in charge of smelting the ores and mixing the alloys, a guarded secret of adamantine, mithral, and silver. The two work together to forge the resulting metal into the remarkable saws which are essential to the harvesting and milling of the deadwood trees.

The Forgefire dwarves have been in Deadwood for so long that there is no one living that can recall a time when they were not present. Despite their advanced ages, they are

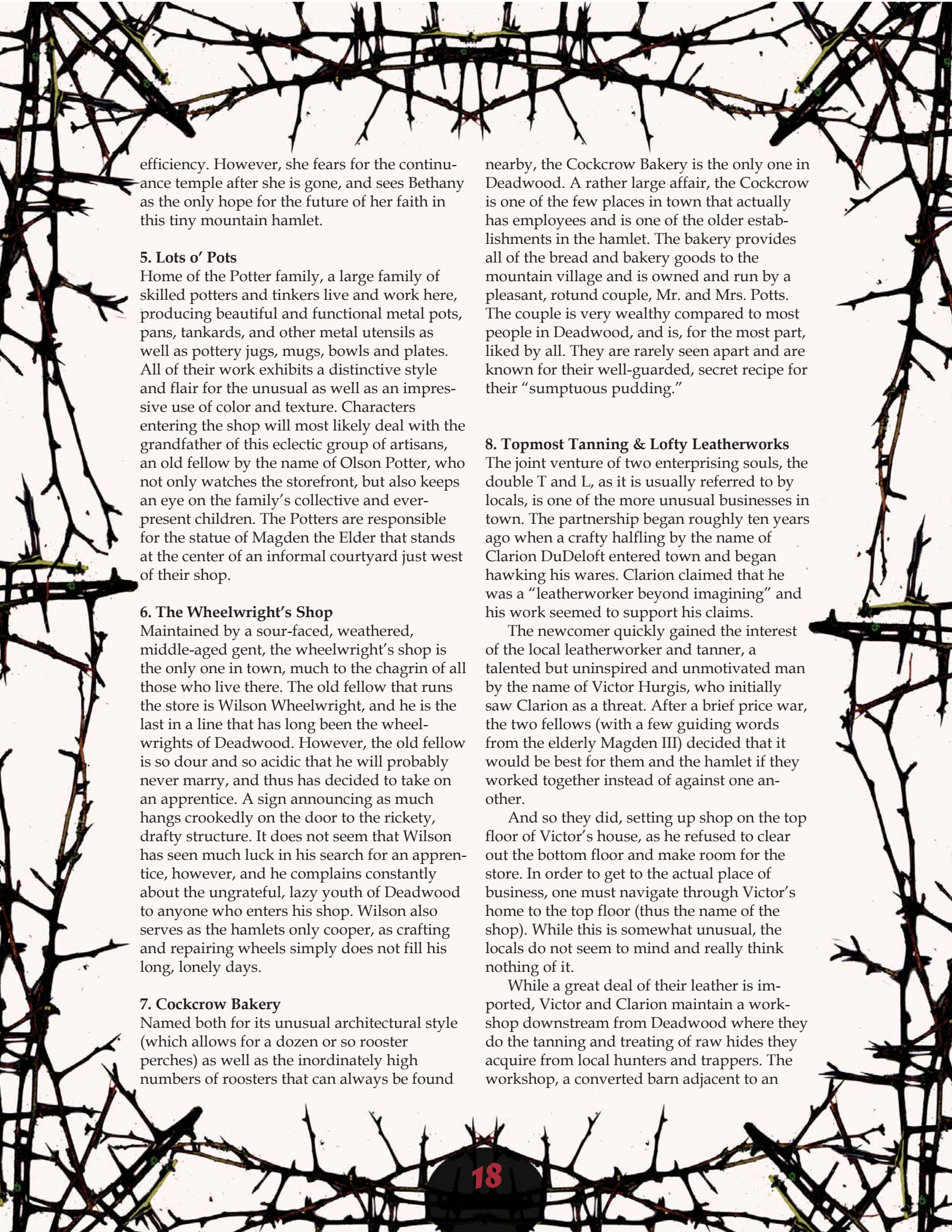
still robust, vigorous individuals who delight both in drinking and in their work. It is these passions to which they attribute their youthful vitality.

The Mountain Temple was founded by one of the Forgefire clan, but oddly, both dwarves are silent if asked about the subject. Granted each one deals with the question in his own way: Gh'rus masterfully changing the subject by starting a grandiose tale of the glory of the ancients of his race, while Harrak simply stares a hole through the questioner, but neither dwarf will expand on the subject.

4. The Mountain Temple

The Temple of the Mountain God is a small, four-room structure, constructed from blocks of granite and basalt native to the peaks surrounding Deadwood, and was raised within the first few years of the town's founding. The sanctuary takes up the majority of the building. Ironically, it is the least used of the four rooms as active worship of the Mountain God has never been overly popular in Deadwood, but Daonis keeps it clean and tidy nonetheless. The other three rooms serve as a tiny, but surprisingly well-stocked library, a makeshift herbalist's laboratory, and Daonis's frugal living quarters. In times past, when the temple housed several priests and clerics, these three rooms were usually dedicated to the higher ranking clergy and the faithful sought their shelter within the town itself.

The Temple has always been a quietly respected power in Deadwood, and while many folks do not profess to follow the Mountain God or his teachings, the few priests and clerics at the temple have always been able to draw power from the mysterious, but dependable, source. There have never been many priests or clerics at the temple at any one time, and currently there is only a single priestess, Daonis Rockgirdler, who manages the temple single-handedly and does not seem to mind the dearth of worshippers. However, she does have semi-regular help in the form of Bethany Streamswift who helps out when she can take time from her duties as schoolmistress and in times of need. Daonis is a self-assured, stolid individual and runs the temple with calculated



efficiency. However, she fears for the continuance temple after she is gone, and sees Bethany as the only hope for the future of her faith in this tiny mountain hamlet.

5. Lots o' Pots

Home of the Potter family, a large family of skilled potters and tinkers live and work here, producing beautiful and functional metal pots, pans, tankards, and other metal utensils as well as pottery jugs, mugs, bowls and plates. All of their work exhibits a distinctive style and flair for the unusual as well as an impressive use of color and texture. Characters entering the shop will most likely deal with the grandfather of this eclectic group of artisans, an old fellow by the name of Olson Potter, who not only watches the storefront, but also keeps an eye on the family's collective and ever-present children. The Potters are responsible for the statue of Magden the Elder that stands at the center of an informal courtyard just west of their shop.

6. The Wheelwright's Shop

Maintained by a sour-faced, weathered, middle-aged gent, the wheelwright's shop is the only one in town, much to the chagrin of all those who live there. The old fellow that runs the store is Wilson Wheelwright, and he is the last in a line that has long been the wheelwrights of Deadwood. However, the old fellow is so dour and so acidic that he will probably never marry, and thus has decided to take on an apprentice. A sign announcing as much hangs crookedly on the door to the rickety, drafty structure. It does not seem that Wilson has seen much luck in his search for an apprentice, however, and he complains constantly about the ungrateful, lazy youth of Deadwood to anyone who enters his shop. Wilson also serves as the hamlets only cooper, as crafting and repairing wheels simply does not fill his long, lonely days.

7. Cockcrow Bakery

Named both for its unusual architectural style (which allows for a dozen or so rooster perches) as well as the inordinately high numbers of roosters that can always be found

nearby, the Cockcrow Bakery is the only one in Deadwood. A rather large affair, the Cockcrow is one of the few places in town that actually has employees and is one of the older establishments in the hamlet. The bakery provides all of the bread and bakery goods to the mountain village and is owned and run by a pleasant, rotund couple, Mr. and Mrs. Potts. The couple is very wealthy compared to most people in Deadwood, and is, for the most part, liked by all. They are rarely seen apart and are known for their well-guarded, secret recipe for their "sumptuous pudding."

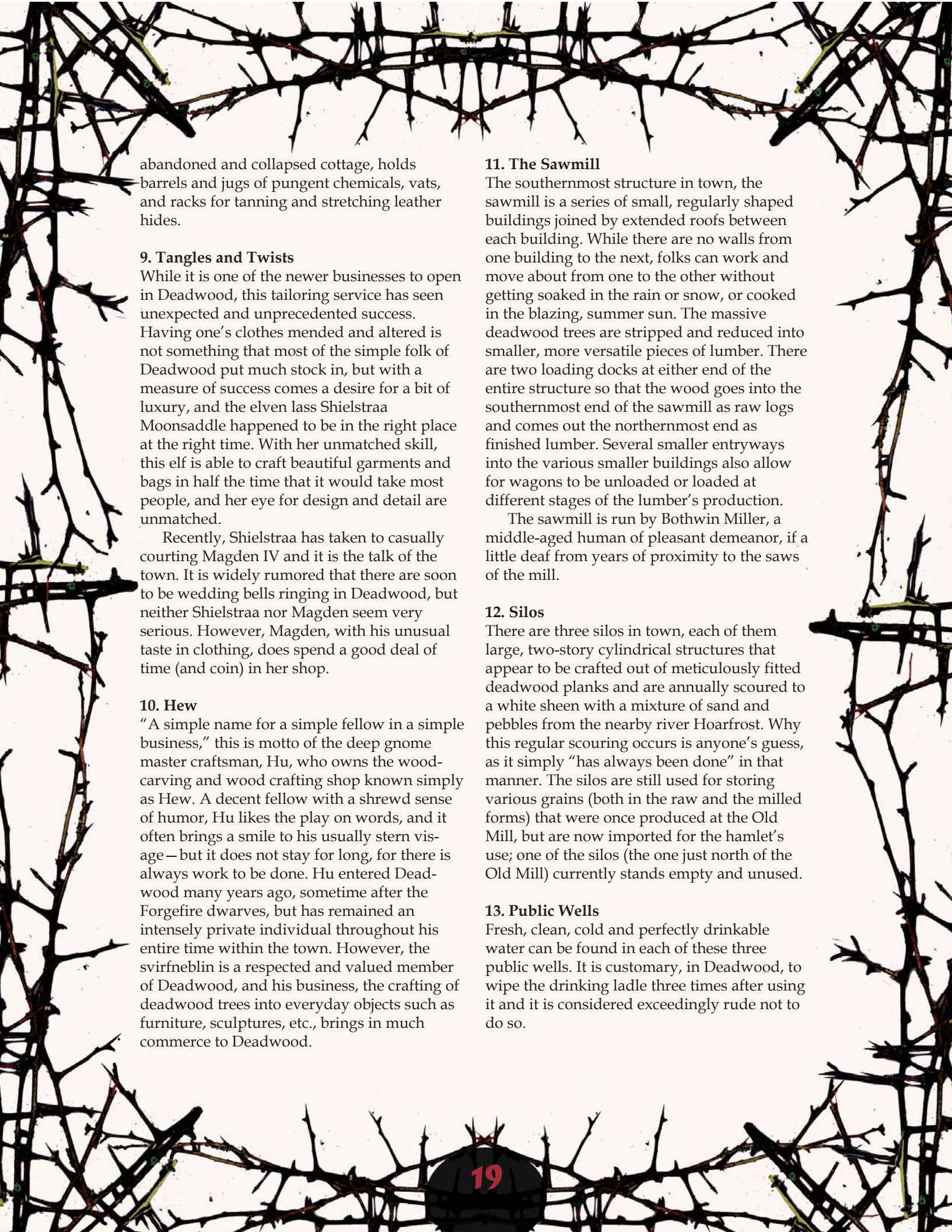
8. Topmost Tanning & Lofty Leatherworks

The joint venture of two enterprising souls, the double T and L, as it is usually referred to by locals, is one of the more unusual businesses in town. The partnership began roughly ten years ago when a crafty halfling by the name of Clarion DuDeloft entered town and began hawking his wares. Clarion claimed that he was a "leatherworker beyond imagining" and his work seemed to support his claims.

The newcomer quickly gained the interest of the local leatherworker and tanner, a talented but uninspired and unmotivated man by the name of Victor Hurgis, who initially saw Clarion as a threat. After a brief price war, the two fellows (with a few guiding words from the elderly Magden III) decided that it would be best for them and the hamlet if they worked together instead of against one another.

And so they did, setting up shop on the top floor of Victor's house, as he refused to clear out the bottom floor and make room for the store. In order to get to the actual place of business, one must navigate through Victor's home to the top floor (thus the name of the shop). While this is somewhat unusual, the locals do not seem to mind and really think nothing of it.

While a great deal of their leather is imported, Victor and Clarion maintain a workshop downstream from Deadwood where they do the tanning and treating of raw hides they acquire from local hunters and trappers. The workshop, a converted barn adjacent to an



abandoned and collapsed cottage, holds barrels and jugs of pungent chemicals, vats, and racks for tanning and stretching leather hides.

9. Tangles and Twists

While it is one of the newer businesses to open in Deadwood, this tailoring service has seen unexpected and unprecedented success. Having one's clothes mended and altered is not something that most of the simple folk of Deadwood put much stock in, but with a measure of success comes a desire for a bit of luxury, and the elven lass Shielstraa Moonsaddle happened to be in the right place at the right time. With her unmatched skill, this elf is able to craft beautiful garments and bags in half the time that it would take most people, and her eye for design and detail are unmatched.

Recently, Shielstraa has taken to casually courting Magden IV and it is the talk of the town. It is widely rumored that there are soon to be wedding bells ringing in Deadwood, but neither Shielstraa nor Magden seem very serious. However, Magden, with his unusual taste in clothing, does spend a good deal of time (and coin) in her shop.

10. Hew

"A simple name for a simple fellow in a simple business," this is motto of the deep gnome master craftsman, Hu, who owns the wood-carving and wood crafting shop known simply as Hew. A decent fellow with a shrewd sense of humor, Hu likes the play on words, and it often brings a smile to his usually stern visage—but it does not stay for long, for there is always work to be done. Hu entered Deadwood many years ago, sometime after the Forgefire dwarves, but has remained an intensely private individual throughout his entire time within the town. However, the svirfneblin is a respected and valued member of Deadwood, and his business, the crafting of deadwood trees into everyday objects such as furniture, sculptures, etc., brings in much commerce to Deadwood.

11. The Sawmill

The southernmost structure in town, the sawmill is a series of small, regularly shaped buildings joined by extended roofs between each building. While there are no walls from one building to the next, folks can work and move about from one to the other without getting soaked in the rain or snow, or cooked in the blazing, summer sun. The massive deadwood trees are stripped and reduced into smaller, more versatile pieces of lumber. There are two loading docks at either end of the entire structure so that the wood goes into the southernmost end of the sawmill as raw logs and comes out the northernmost end as finished lumber. Several smaller entryways into the various smaller buildings also allow for wagons to be unloaded or loaded at different stages of the lumber's production.

The sawmill is run by Bothwin Miller, a middle-aged human of pleasant demeanor, if a little deaf from years of proximity to the saws of the mill.

12. Silos

There are three silos in town, each of them large, two-story cylindrical structures that appear to be crafted out of meticulously fitted deadwood planks and are annually scoured to a white sheen with a mixture of sand and pebbles from the nearby river Hoarfrost. Why this regular scouring occurs is anyone's guess, as it simply "has always been done" in that manner. The silos are still used for storing various grains (both in the raw and the milled forms) that were once produced at the Old Mill, but are now imported for the hamlet's use; one of the silos (the one just north of the Old Mill) currently stands empty and unused.

13. Public Wells

Fresh, clean, cold and perfectly drinkable water can be found in each of these three public wells. It is customary, in Deadwood, to wipe the drinking ladle three times after using it and it is considered exceedingly rude not to do so.

14. Ruintowne

This area of Deadwood was flooded many years ago by the spring thaw of the River Hoarfrost, and has never been repaired or reclaimed. This section of town has, over the years, fallen into ruin and disrepair, and almost no one lives there. It is just a lonesome, abandoned section of town filled with eerie, empty, ghostly ruins, a lean-to here and there, and the ever-present beggar or two. The bridge just north and west of Ruintowne was destroyed in the flood and has never been repaired. While it is a bit of an inconvenience to have to walk to the other bridge, it is something that most of the folk in Deadwood have simply grown accustomed to.

15. Schoolhouse

The schoolhouse of Deadwood is a large, stone building—the original home of the Gristwheel family. It was converted to a school some 70 years ago and has served as such ever since. The long structure is largely open and filled with desks, crafted with care and love by the woodworkers of the hamlet (in fact, it is said that Hugh crafted many of them with his own hands). There are a few isolated areas of the building that are used to teach smaller groups and for private studying. The schoolhouse is entered through the wide front doors that face the street to the south, but a rarely used back door exists on the northwestern corner of the school as well.

16. Residence of Argus Yorehammer

This small, unassuming structure does not strike one as the place that a mighty paladin would retire to, but nevertheless, this is the place Argus Yorehammer calls home. Directly across from the Mountain Temple, Argus' home is a two-room, one-story building composed of deadwood from floor to shingles. The main room serves as living area and the eating area, and then smaller room Argus' sleeping quarters. Sparsely furnished and devoid of decorations or personal items, it seems more fitting for a monk than a war hero. Argus stores his armor in a massive, locked (Open Locks DC 25) chest in the bedroom. His

greatsword is wrapped in oiled leathers and canvas and is stored under the bed.

17. Residence of Magden Gristwheel

Directly across from the Old Mill is the home of Magden Gristwheel. While not quite as large as the Old Mill itself, Magden's home is far and away more opulent and luxurious of all the houses in Deadwood. With several rooms filled with stuffed and hand carved deadwood furniture, and two privies with copper basins, this affluent home is simply the talk of the town.

18. Residence of Galyn Lyrestringer

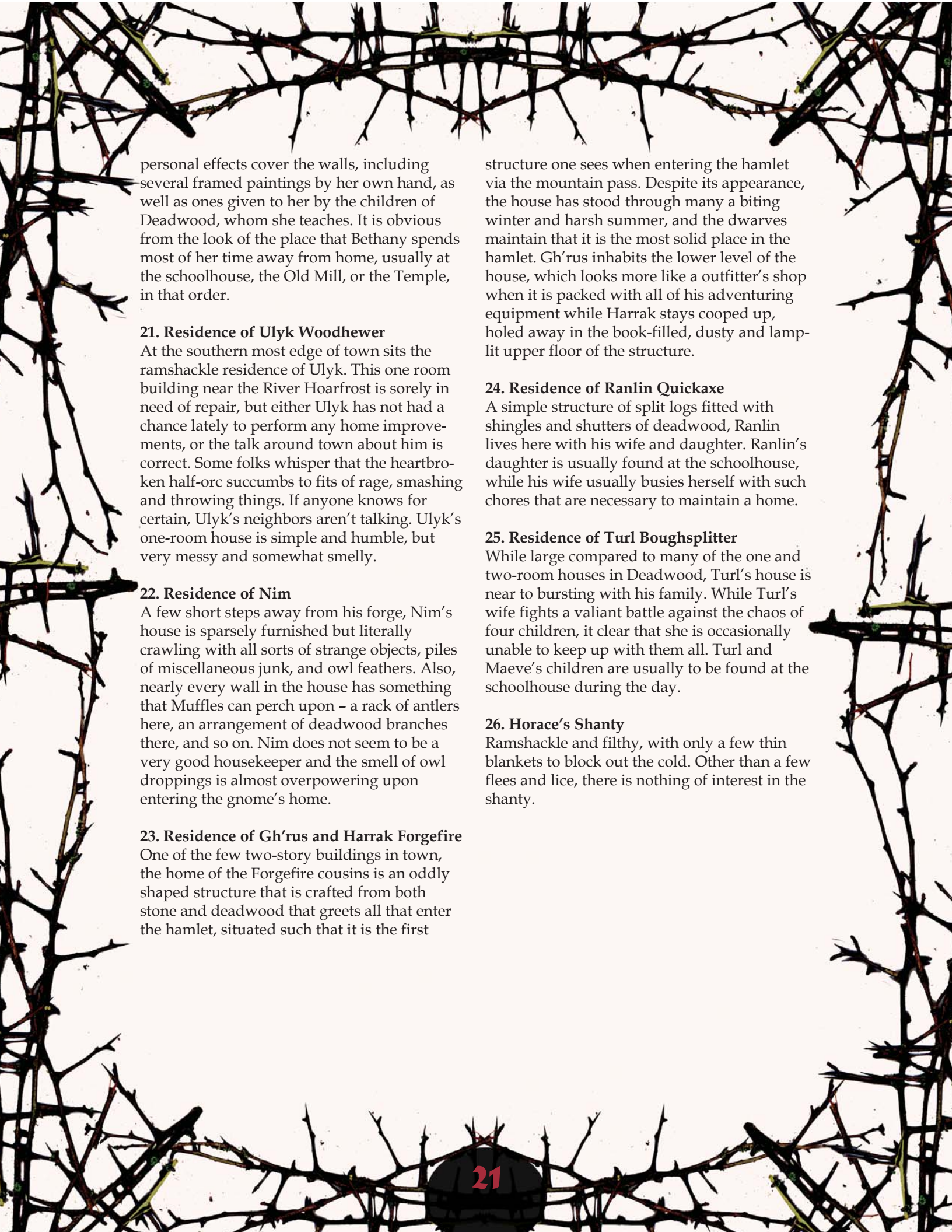
Galyn does not actually own a home within Deadwood, but instead rents a small structure on the outskirts of town from Magden Gristwheel. Barely more than a hovel, this small, one room affair is no more than a stopping off point for the halfling bard, as he spends most of this time (and many of his nights as well) at the Old Mill. Dirty and unkempt, this place seems more like a den than a true home, but it is amongst these piles of filth and trash that the crafty halfling hides his treasures.

19. Residence of Haldren Smithson

Hal's home is simple, clean, and austere. Whether this is because he spends most of this time away from home at the Old Mill, or a true indication of his nature is unclear. Hal does run a very neat bar if that is any indication. Hal's house is a small, two-room structure consisting of a living and a sleeping area that is a few moment's walk from the front door of the Old Mill. Hal does not seem to mind the small space, as he lives alone and spends most of his waking hours at the Old Mill.

20. Residence of Bethany Streamswift

On the far southeastern edge of town lies the tidy, peaceful abode of Bethany Streamswift. It is readily apparent that this busy woman's home is a reflection of her personality, as despite the fact that from the outside, it is a single room and could very easily be classified by many as a hovel, inside the structure is bright, clean, and well-organized. Curious and



personal effects cover the walls, including several framed paintings by her own hand, as well as ones given to her by the children of Deadwood, whom she teaches. It is obvious from the look of the place that Bethany spends most of her time away from home, usually at the schoolhouse, the Old Mill, or the Temple, in that order.

21. Residence of Ulyk Woodhewer

At the southern most edge of town sits the ramshackle residence of Ulyk. This one room building near the River Hoarfrost is sorely in need of repair, but either Ulyk has not had a chance lately to perform any home improvements, or the talk around town about him is correct. Some folks whisper that the heartbroken half-orc succumbs to fits of rage, smashing and throwing things. If anyone knows for certain, Ulyk's neighbors aren't talking. Ulyk's one-room house is simple and humble, but very messy and somewhat smelly.

22. Residence of Nim

A few short steps away from his forge, Nim's house is sparsely furnished but literally crawling with all sorts of strange objects, piles of miscellaneous junk, and owl feathers. Also, nearly every wall in the house has something that Muffles can perch upon – a rack of antlers here, an arrangement of deadwood branches there, and so on. Nim does not seem to be a very good housekeeper and the smell of owl droppings is almost overpowering upon entering the gnome's home.

23. Residence of Gh'rus and Harrak Forgefire

One of the few two-story buildings in town, the home of the Forgefire cousins is an oddly shaped structure that is crafted from both stone and deadwood that greets all that enter the hamlet, situated such that it is the first

structure one sees when entering the hamlet via the mountain pass. Despite its appearance, the house has stood through many a biting winter and harsh summer, and the dwarves maintain that it is the most solid place in the hamlet. Gh'rus inhabits the lower level of the house, which looks more like a outfitter's shop when it is packed with all of his adventuring equipment while Harrak stays cooped up, holed away in the book-filled, dusty and lamp-lit upper floor of the structure.

24. Residence of Ranlin Quickaxe

A simple structure of split logs fitted with shingles and shutters of deadwood, Ranlin lives here with his wife and daughter. Ranlin's daughter is usually found at the schoolhouse, while his wife usually busies herself with such chores that are necessary to maintain a home.

25. Residence of Turl Boughsplitter

While large compared to many of the one and two-room houses in Deadwood, Turl's house is near to bursting with his family. While Turl's wife fights a valiant battle against the chaos of four children, it clear that she is occasionally unable to keep up with them all. Turl and Maeve's children are usually to be found at the schoolhouse during the day.

26. Horace's Shanty

Ramshackle and filthy, with only a few thin blankets to block out the cold. Other than a few flees and lice, there is nothing of interest in the shanty.

Scene Four: Meeting the Warrior (EL 2)

DM's Note: Throughout the following conversation, Argus will employ his Sense Motive skill as well as *detect evil* power. Characters that have magical resistance or might somehow be aware that they are being magically divined may detect Argus's use of his detect evil power. While Argus will openly speak about nearly anything, he seems more than a bit reserved when the characters suggest he return home. Argus thinks that this is a very disturbing and curious request, and knows that he has little, if any knowledge that could possibly be of value to the military or intelligence of his former kingdom. He does not reveal this immediately to the characters, however, hoping to draw them out about their motives and reasons for their mission. His curiosity is peaked and he wishes to know more, so he essentially plays along for now. Argus does not, however, use his *detect evil* power or Sense Motive skill when approached by Moloch in the form of Horace. The paladin thinks nothing strange of the beggar approaching him, as it is a regular occurrence

If the PCs visit this location very early in the adventure, there is a slim chance of encountering Moloch here in disguise as Horace.

27. Residence of Daonis Rockgirder

Daonis currently maintains this home in addition to her quarters at the temple. Upon the characters' initial meeting with Argus Yorehammer, the ancient warrior for whom they have come to Deadwood, read the following:

As your eyes roam over the folk of Deadwood who have gathered, many who have a kind word and a friendly smile, they fall upon a grizzled, scarred, but quite content looking fellow. As he stands at the bar, talking jovially with some of the other folks, his vibrant blue eyes fall upon you and they seem to greet you, smiling of their own accord. He speaks a

farewell to those near him, and approaches your party. Nearing you, he raises a glass to you and his action affords you a glimpse of his scarred forearms; you no longer have any doubts of this man's identity. However, his rich baritone voice confirms what you believe before you can again draw breath, as he greets you. "Greetings, and welcome to humble Deadwood. I was once like you, an outsider among these good folk, but fear not: I am sure you will find them as welcoming and accommodating as I have. I am called Argus. I have heard of your deeds this day and am at your service! Pray, permit me the honor of your company for a while this evening. "The mightily built fellow bows slightly to you, showing his balding crown, surrounded by a bushy halo of gray hair, still worn in the style of his old order, and then downs his remaining ale in a single gulp, and then calls for another round for himself and for your party. He smiles openly gestures to a table, where he calls for food and drink for you all...

Argus is more than happy to sit and talk with the PCs, as he seems to have an idea that they are from his former homeland. If asked how he knows this, he responds simply that the cut and cloth of their clothing gives them away; he adds that it is easy to spot a journeyman or adventurer by the wear of his or her boots as well. Overall, the characters should gather a very good impression of Argus; He is almost like a kindly grandfather, who delights in nothing more than schooling his grandchildren with delightful, but insightful tales. He smiles often, and has a habit of pulling on his right temple-braid from time to time as he is thinking or speaking with some deep, shrewd thought.

Even though Argus is open and friendly, he keeps the characters talking more about themselves and what they think of Deadwood than about himself or his past. Eventually, the talk turns to the subject of the characters' visit. Argus will begin asking his own probing questions as well. He seems particularly

intrigued by any information the characters have about Lord Fenrius and this danger that threatens the characters' homeland. During this questioning, the aged warrior often narrows his eyes, studying the PCs, as if sizing them up or peering at something that lies just beyond them. Argus seems genuinely sympa-

thetic to the characters' mission, but will in no way commit himself to any course of action. However, as Argus and the characters become deeply involved in matters regarding his hoped for return, they are interrupted.

Scene Five: Ruckus at the Mill (EL 2)

The interruption takes the form of Moloch, the skin devil assassin, setting a snare for the aged Argus. Moloch has taken the form of Horace Hedgewyn, a sickly-looking beggar, and approaches the table as while they sip their ale and ciders. The arrival of Horace/Moloch triggers the next scene, entitled, **Ruckus at the Mill**. While the PCs sit speaking and eating alongside Argus Yorehammer, Moloch, now in the form of a local beggar, seeks his target and with luck, his next victim. His current disguise was taken his first night in Deadwood, a destitute and simple-natured beggar named Horace Hedgewyn.

Horace lived alone, within a shanty in the area of the hamlet known as Ruintowne (Area 14) and was occasionally, but not often, a visitor to the Old Mill where he often begged for food or a warm bed. Like most beggars, Horace was a well-known but rarely noticed individual within the hamlet. Truly more lazy than destitute, Horace was a relatively young man with thin, angular features, graying, shaggy hair, and a sharp, prominent chin. While scouting for a potential base of operations within Deadwood, Moloch quickly dispatched the fellow and hid his body in the empty silo just north of the Old Mill. However, the skin disguise grown from the pathetic beggar is not bearing up well, and though less than a week old, is beginning to decay.

Moloch has decided that an indirect attempt on Argus is his best opportunity to overcome the paladin, and plans to poison Argus with a deadly contact poison. If the poison is effective, Moloch will have a new disguise and might be able to deliver a *coupe de*

grace to the weakened paladin. If nothing else, Moloch hopes to secure at least secure a piece of Argus' skin in the attempt.

Moloch will ambush Argus after his poison, *nitharit* (see Core Rulebook II, Chapter 3), has had an opportunity to act. Since the skin devil cares little for the skin currently upon his hands, he places the poison directly upon them in order to apply it to Argus. Moloch knows that he will soon strip this skin away from his hands, so he does not fear being affected by the poison. Once the poison has been delivered, the assassin exits the Old Mill and takes a position to await the departure of Argus.

Once you are ready to begin the encounter, read the following to the PCs:

A *sallow, rather unkempt villager that smells far worse than he looks approaches the table as you sit talking with Argus Yorehammer. Argus looks in his direction and sighs slightly, raising a silvered eyebrow. "Not feeling yourself, Horace? What can I do for you?"* The man, obviously a beggar, begins pawing Argus as he whines, "Not feelin' too well, Argus. Ya gots any food for Horace to eats? I'm awful hungry. . ." Argus, apparently taking pity upon the man, smiles apologetically at the party and stands. Taking his partially finished plate, he escorts Horace to an unoccupied table near the entrance. "Here, Horace. May the Light go with you." He pats the beggar on the shoulder and returns to your table, smiling slightly. "Charity is a privilege as well as a duty, friends. Now, where were we?"

It is the contact with Argus that the assassin seeks, not the food, and he departs almost immediately after Argus regains his place at

DM's Note: The DM must adjudicate how the *nitharit* poison affects Argus. While Argus has an excellent Fort save, he is not anticipating a poison, and Moloch had plenty of opportunity to assure the contact poison was efficiently delivered. In addition Argus is old, and has been drinking in moderation. The DM has the option of raising the DC for the *nitharit* Fort save by +2 or +4 in order to account for these factors.

the party's table. Characters making Sense Motive checks (DC 20) will feel that something is somehow amiss with this beggar. Allow observant PCs (those who indicate they are keeping an eye on the beggar or watching for something suspicious) a Spot check (DC 23, DC to 17 if they are alert to the fact that something is amiss due to a successful Sense Motive check) to notice that the beggar immediately abandons his plate of food and slips out the door.

Be aware that the full effect of the poison could slay Argus outright, being capable of inflicting as much as 18 points of Constitution damage if the Fort save is failed! The DM should apply the effects of the poison as necessary to create the appropriate air of drama. If the DM wants Argus to fall over unconscious at the table, he can do so. But, a greater drama is created if Argus is partially affected by the poison, perhaps taking 7-9 points of Constitution damage. He can then plead off further conversation with the characters for the evening due to a headache or unsettled stomach, and exit the Old Mill in order to trigger Moloch's attack.

Moments after Argus sits again, he begins to pale, and a distinct trembling is detectable in his hand as he clutches his mug of cider. How much *has* he been drinking this night?

Abruptly ending his conversation with the party, Argus rises, steadying himself on the chair back.

"You must excuse me, good people, but I must retire for the evening. Be assured that I will give your words their due accord as I


meditate on them this night. I bid you a good night's rest" Argus makes his way to the door on unsteady legs.

He will politely decline any assistance, assuring any who ask that he is fine, just his age and the change of seasons taking their toll upon him. Shortly after he exits, a woman's scream brings an abrupt and utter silence to the room, but for the fire which continues its cheery crackling. Within moments, a second scream, laced with horror and pain, transforms the tavern into chaotic swirl of faces as people surge to and fro, many struggling to reach the door. Any character that wades through the crowd and forces their way to the door can observe a grisly and unsettling scene.

A short distance from the door of the Old Mill, at the edge of the light fanning out from the doorway, lies an elderly man, his throat a ragged wound from which blood slowly wells and pools on the dark ground. A younger woman, her clothing soaked in blood, kneels beside the man, clasping his head to her bosom and rocking back and forth. Her faint groans of, "No...no...no..." barely audible above the shouts and cries of the inn's patrons. In the shadows of the Old Mill, Argus too lies bloody and gasping. His eyes are huge in the darkness, and he seems to be desperately trying to say something, but his words are drowned in the chaos spilling out from the Old Mill.

The old man, Nolan, is quite dead and beyond the aid of skill or magic, his fragile life snuffed out in a brief flash of violence. The woman is his daughter, Lycia, who is wounded herself, but overwhelmed by shock and grief and unaware of her own injury. Argus is in bad shape. In addition to the effects of the *nitharit* poison (don't forget to reduce Argus's hit points due to his lowered Con score), he has suffered a deep stab wound in the abdomen and has a jagged cut on his right hand as well. Argus lapses into unconsciousness in 1d4 rounds after the characters emerge from the Old Mill (if they emerge), but has barely enough strength to whisper a warning to anyone who aids him.

"Beware..."



Argus tries to insist that Nolan be attended to first, but has not the strength to fend off aid for long. If Bethany Streamswift is present, she can convert any of her prepared cleric spells to cure spells, possibly assuaging the worst of Argus's injuries. Any PC clerics present may attempt to heal Argus as well (or Nolan for that matter, but he cannot be helped by simple curative magics). Lycia is too confused to realize that she has been injured.

Tactics: Moloch was lying in wait for the weakened paladin in the darkness outside the tavern. When Argus exited the Old Mill, he caught a glimpse of Horace crouching in the shadows. Concerned that Horace might be ill as well, he approached the beggar, hoping to offer him a helping hand, even in his weakened state. As Argus leaned toward him, Moloch plunged his dagger into Argus's belly. Unfortunately, Nolan and Lycia were close enough to see the attack and Lycia screamed as Argus staggered against the Old Mill, leaving a trail of blood as he collapsed. Moloch, knowing that he had only seconds to act, leaped at the couple and with a quick slash, slew Nolan. Another quick, but nonfatal blow to Lycia netted him a prize in the form of enough skin to offer Moloch a new disguise. Moloch was unable to complete his deadly work as Argus threw himself at the assassin, distracting him. Moloch briefly struggled with Argus, and was disarmed by the aged paladin who suffered an additional wound to his hand in the process. Knowing that at any moment more people would arrive on the scene, Moloch fled, hoping to evade any pursuers and seeking shelter in order to prepare his new disguise.

While ambitious PCs may try and locate or Track Moloch, it is quite difficult. With Moloch's lead, his speed, the darkness, and confusion of the milling townsfolk, there is almost no chance to Search for tracks in the immediate vicinity of the Old Mill. Moloch can take double moves and very rapidly achieve the forest where he has cached his equipment, including his *cloak of elvenkind*, which will make Moloch's escape almost certain.

For this encounter, assume that Iccus, Moloch's murdersprite companion, is on an errand for the assassin (most likely one that will prove ill for the PCs) and thus is not involved in this encounter.

Development: The chaos continues as people begin shouting for Magden and Daonis, stumbling against each other and confusing the scene even more. A few grab makeshift weapons in the form of heavy mugs or handy walking sticks, while others grab lanterns and candles from the Old Mill and begin spreading out looking for signs of the attacker. PCs can try to calm the crowd or cow them into obedience with Diplomacy or Intimidate checks respectively. (Intimidating the crowd can help prevent destruction of evidence or further injury to Argus or Lycia, but it can have unfortunate consequences when dealing with the townsfolk later in the adventure.) Bard characters can attempt to use their class abilities to calm the crowd as well. If no one else succeeds in calming the frightened villagers, the presence of Magden or Daonis eventually brings order to the situation.

The three fallen are carried into the Old Mill, Nolan wrapped in linens that are quickly soaked with his thin blood. Daonis uses cure spells to heal Argus of any remaining damage and will use her Heal skill to examine the injured and dead. A Successful Heal check (DC 13) reveals that Argus was likely poisoned. A successful Heal check (DC 12) will reveal that injury to Lycia as well, though it is difficult to spot with her blood-soaked clothing. Hal will usher everyone but Bethany, Daonis, Magden and the PCs from the Old Mill, telling them to go home and see to their families while Magden and Daonis see to matters.

Daonis will favor the characters with a penetrating gaze, then inform Magden that she and Bethany will escort Lycia to her home where Bethany will remain with her through the night. Lycia will go with them, clearly completely numbed and devastated with grief. Daonis will return to tend Argus after she has seen Lycia safely to her home.

Magden, takes a seat near the fireplace, and stares at the PCs for several long moments. Then, shaking his head, he finally speaks, "Well, strangers...?"

The PCs are free to speak in their defense, and Hal can vouch for the fact that they were in the tavern when the attack took place. He also notes they were the last ones with Argus before he left. Argus confirms any relevant facts if he is conscious. Magden is inclined to believe the PCs innocent; after all, they only recently rescued some of their own townfolk. If it hasn't occurred to the PCs yet, Magden suggests that they accompany Hal to Horace's shanty in Ruintowne (see Deadwood Area 26). Argus initially insists on going but can be persuaded to stay with Magden until Daonis can return, though Argus is still insistent that he not be harmed until it can be determined why he acted in such a bizarre manner. Any PCs with a religious background or healing skills are permitted to stay if they wish. Magden quietly listens to Argus's account of events, trying to absorb the enormity of these events which threaten the peace of his home.

The Investigation (EL variable, 3+)

PCs now enter a new phase of their quest. It is hoped that they will be inclined to investigate the curious and horrifying events of the evening of their own initiative. However, if they are unwilling, various NPCs can apply pressure to try and persuade them to take up the cause. Argus can refuse to see them while he recuperates, or drop not-so-subtle hints that he won't even consider cooperating with them until they seek out his would-be assassin, or Magden can suggest that it might be in their best interest to seek information regarding the murder lest folk come to see them as being in league with the assassin.

The DM should assign an EL to the investigation depending on the relative success of the party's efforts and the average level of the participants. A successful investigation should offer a significant XP award, encouraging role-playing and interaction over brute force. There

will plenty of opportunities for the more combat-oriented characters to flex their muscles later in the adventure.

The Shanty: Horace's shanty is much the same as always. Ramshackle and filthy, with only a few thin blankets to block out the cold. A character with the Track feat can attempt a Wilderness Lore check (DC 22) to determine that someone has slept in the shanty the past few nights, but there is nothing to indicate that it was anyone other than Horace. A Search check (DC 18) reveals a few small flakes of decayed skin. Other than a few fleas and lice, there is nothing of interest to find in the shanty.

The Scene of the Fight: PCs may also wish to examine the "scene of the crime" outside the Old Mill. Magden permits them, and requests that they report any discoveries or evidence to him as soon as possible.

The Trail: Moloch did leave a trail that could possibly be followed. A Search of the area outside the Old Mill can still reveal a number of clues. The Search check to locate Horace/Moloch's tracks is difficult (DC 20, plus any modifiers for darkness), but faint footsteps are revealed. A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 20, plus darkness modifiers) permits the trail to be followed to the west. It is clear that the person that made these tracks was moving quickly. However, within a few rounds of tracking, a new Wilderness Lore check is required (DC 25, plus darkness modifiers) as Horace/Moloch slowed down and began to try and hide his trail. The DM can call for additional Wilderness Lore checks as he sees fit, as many of the townfolk departing the Old Mill have crossed Moloch's tracks since the fight outside the tavern. If PCs persevere, they may eventually discover the place where Moloch stashed his gear while preparing for his attack on Argus. A Search check in the area (DC 16) reveals several large flakes of decayed skin. PCs can attempt to follow Moloch's trail further into the forest, but they run the risk of attacks by any ice ghouls which might be prowling the night. Moloch meanders through the forest, frequently

doubling back, and attempting various tricks to discourage followers. Eventually, he makes his way back to the sawmill where he takes refuge and plans his next move.

The Clues: In addition to Moloch's trail, there are a number of clues to be found in the vicinity of the Old Mill. Characters that make a successful Search check can discover the following bits of information depending on the success of the roll:

DC	Information Discovered
10	The villager is of average height and weight, judging by his running pace and tracks
12	The skin from a pair of hands-inverted and gruesome. The skin seems to have been very roughly flensed from its owner, but there is very little blood (see <i>DM's Note</i> , below)
14	You find a section of fresh and still-bloody skin roughly two inches long (torn from Nolan when attacked by Moloch)
16	In a pool of muddy water near the Old Mill, you find an oddly serrated knife


If the PCs find the piece of bloody skin and examine Nolan's corpse, then a successful Healing check (DC 17) will find that it matches Nolan's wound exactly and that the wound is curiously ragged, almost as if it was torn rather than cut. If the PCs have discovered the knife, then it should be easy to connect the knife to the wound in Nolan's neck. The knife is designed in such a way as to rip skin from them as opposed to slicing, as with most bladed weapons, being serrated across the blade. If none of the characters possess the appropriate skill to assess the weapon's purpose, a quick trip to the Hushed Hammer (see Deadwood Area 2) is all that is required to unlock its secrets.

Questioning Argus: Either before or after they begin their search for clues, the PCs can question Argus or listen in while he tells his tale to Magden. While weakened and

DM's Note: If characters find and handle the skin that Moloch stripped from his hands, they run the risk of coming in contact with the *nitharit* poison. Even though the poison has lost a majority of its potency, characters must still make a save (DC 7) or be affected. DMs may elect to lessen the poison's effect as well.

wounded, Argus is able to tell his tale. First, his sudden weakness and feeling light-headed and dizzy; leaving the Old Mill; seeing Horace crouching in the shadows; the attack and the screams of Lycia; Nolan's death; and finally his disarming of Horace (which may lead the PCs to search for Horace's weapon if they have not already located it). None of the inhabitants of Deadwood can conceive of any reason why Horace would behave in the violent manner he displayed this evening. He was considered somewhat irritating by those who were his usual targets for his whining manner of begging. The PCs must locate Horace and question him in order to clear the matter up. Argus soon tires and lapses into unconsciousness and a fitful sleep unless the poison is somehow neutralized. Unless a PC can convince Magden that they have a hope of treating Argus's condition, he does not allow them to disturb Argus until Daonis returns. Even if the poison is neutralized and he is healed, Argus

This meeting with Magden can also be an opportunity for the DM to introduce some minor treasure in the form of *potions of healing* or a scroll with a low-level spell or two inscribed on it in order to bolster the strength of the PCs in upcoming encounters. Of course, any treasure the party gains from Magden in this encounter should be considered part of their reward for successfully completing the adventure and should count against the total wealth of the party. The meeting can also be used by the DM to provide crucial clues to the nature of the deadwood golems in general and/or the giant deadwood golem encountered in **Scene Twelve: Mill Melee**.



still wishes to go home and makes it clear that he wants to be away from the PCs for a while. The weight of Nolan's death weighs heavily on Argus' soul.

The Return of Daonis: Eventually, Daonis returns from Lycia's house bearing her healer's kit and such herbal remedies she believes might succor Argus. Her features are drawn into a frown, and she reports to Magden that while she and Bethany were putting Lycia to bed, they discovered that she had been wounded in the attack. Covered by her bloody garments, Daonis and Bethany discovered a shallow laceration on the woman's abdomen. While it bled profusely, the wound was not especially harmful, and Daonis was easily able to heal the damage with a minor *cure* spell.

Examining the Corpse: If any PCs have the Healing skill, they are permitted to examine the corpse of Nolan under the watchful eye of Daonis. Unfortunately, there is little to learn from the frail old man's body. If the skin as not been located (see **The Clues**, above), a Heal check (DC 12) reveals that a large piece of flesh has been ripped from his throat by the weapon which slew him. The only additional information be gained is that his death was likely swift following the deadly blow, and Lycia can be provided slight comfort by the knowledge that he did not suffer.

The Missing Papers: At some point during their investigations, Magden approaches the PCs and asks to speak to them discreetly. He asks them to follow him to his house (Deadwood Area 17) where he invites them to make themselves comfortable in his den. Magden explains that he has some information that may be of use to the characters. As they may have learned from speaking to various townfolk of Deadwood, his fathers were known as mages (wizards), though he has never had the desire, talent, or interest to pursue the ways of magic. However, over the course of three generations, his ancestors accumulated a great deal of paraphernalia associated with magical research. In fact, the deadwood golems were the creation of his great-grandfather. Although much of this material has lain untouched since before the death of his father, recently he has noticed that

on several occasions it appears that someone has been going through the books and scrolls left by his forefathers. Several papers containing notes made by his great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather regarding the construction of golems are missing. Normally, he would not have noticed their absence, but in light of recent events, he thought it best to inventory certain items.

Magden does not know the details of what is contained in the missing documents. He is aware of their general content from comments made by his father and from glimpses of diagrams and sketches contained in the notes. He is reluctant to permit strangers unfettered access to the libraries and laboratories of his forefathers as he does not have a clear grasp of the function and nature of much of the material and information. Many of the papers are written in languages (both magical and mundane) that Magden IV does not understand. However, persuasive characters might be able to convince Magden to let them examine a limited selection of books and scrolls. Magden's initial attitude should be considered Unfriendly for purposes of persuading him to grant the PCs access to his fathers' notes (although he can be considered Friendly or Indifferent for most other purposes depending on the characters' previous actions). If successful Diplomacy checks can convert Magden's attitude to Friendly or Helpful, he permits them to examine some of the books, journals,

If the PCs have dealt with a skin devil before, the dead skin and the unusual behavior of Horace may clue them in to the identity of the assassin. Knowing that they are facing a skin devil may not be anti-climactic, even this early in the story. In fact, it may heighten the suspense for the PCs now know (or *think* they know) that their foe can be literally anyone that they meet in Deadwood. However, if the PCs are unfamiliar with malevolent skin devils, they will probably be unable to deduce the nature of their opponent until later in the adventure, though some PCs might jump to the conclusion that some sort of doppelganger or other

DM's Note: This is a good opportunity to reintroduce some of the characters the PCs may already have interacted with such as Ranlin Quickaxe, Turl Boughsplitter, or Ulyk Woodhewer (see **Appendix A: NPCs**). Images of the burly woodcutters scurrying away from the golem in fear may give lower-level party's pause to consider the danger of directly confronting the golem if they are not yet strong enough to overcome it in combat.

scrolls, and notes which he has inherited. It is extremely unlikely that he permits the heroes access to the upper floors of the Old Mill, though if brought to Helpful, he might bring specific items they request for them to examine in his home. Of course, less honorable or

unscrupulous PCs might employ shadier means to gain access to the treasures of the Gristwheels.

With luck, the PCs will be drawn into the intrigue and the mystery of the murder in Deadwood. They should be permitted to continue their investigation in Deadwood over the course of the next day or two, speaking to witnesses, gathering information, collecting clues. During the initial course of the investigation, Argus should be unavailable to the PCs. He can decline to meet with them until he recovers from his poisoning, or refuse on the grounds of religious observations: whatever is necessary to encourage the PCs to do a little investigation on their own before meeting with Argus again. If the players become bored or follow too far along a false trail, the following scene, **Sensational Sawmill Stirrings**, can be employed to shake things up.

Scene Six: Sensational Sawmill Stirrings (EL 3)

This scene can be run anytime during the next few days following Moloch's attack on Argus to stir things up a bit, and perhaps provide some impetus to a stalled investigation. The scene can be initiated anytime the PCs are near the sawmill, and as the only access to Ruintowne is the southern bridge, perhaps as the PCs are returning from an excursion to examine Horace's shanty in the daylight hours. The scene should begin when the PCs are close enough to witness the initial action as the golem goes berserk and drives the millers from the sawmill.

Crossing the bridge from the shattered wreckage that is Ruintowne, shivering from inescapable bite of the cold wind, you hear a bone jarring crash from the sawmill. Shouts and screams emerge from a cloud of sawdust billowing up from the sawmill as the shrieking of tortured metal and deafening cracks of snapping lumber reverberate from the shuddering mill. As you stare in wonder, overwhelmed by the cacophony that has suddenly swept over Deadwood, the dark figures of millers scatter from the chaos, their faces gaping with terror and surprise. As the fleeing millers bolt for cover, clearly trying to put as much distance as possible between themselves

and the sawmill, the source of their fear is revealed amid a shower of splintered deadwood fragments to be one of the normally placid deadwood golems. As the golem emerges from the clouds of sawdust, it pauses and looks around for new target. The sunken pits of its eyes turn toward you, and without hesitation, begins striding forward, deadly fists raised threateningly, its heavy tread like the thunder of doom.

Deadwood Golem (1): HP: 20.

Tactics: The golem is "controlled" by Moloch, who has taken refuge in the sawmill after his attempted assassination. Moloch has acquired the *amulet of deadwood golem control*, which he learned about from the notes of Magden II, stolen from the upper floor of the Old Mill and has chosen this time to experiment with it. Unfortunately, Moloch was not prepared for the overwhelming power and destructive force that the golem contained and quickly lost control. Moloch's last command to the golem via the *amulet* was to "destroy them" (originally intended only for those within the sawmill only), but this command is vague enough to include anyone in front of it, including the PCs.

The golem continues to attack any living beings it spies, no matter what gets in its way, until either there is no one left to smash, it cannot move, or it moves outside of the *amulet's* area of control (see **Appendix C: New Magic Items** for details).

Quick-thinking PCs have several options open to them for vanquishing this foe:

Lead the golem into the river: PCs can lure the golem into the near by River Hoarfrost, where it quickly becomes mired in the soft mud and unable to free itself, attack them (unless they foolishly get into range), or pursue them. Eventually, Moloch's control will lapse and the golem will return to its normal behavior.

Lead the golem out of the range of the controlling *amulet*: The golem will target and pursue the PCs until it leaves the area of the *amulet's* influence. As the assassin will not leave his current hiding place, the area of the *amulet's* effect ends just at the edge of town, where the forest begins. Upon reaching this limit, the golem simply stops and takes no additional action until commanded by the *amulet* or a native towns person.

Lead the golem back into the sawmill: Use the massive saws within to disable the golem. While this is extremely risky and quite dangerous, resourceful and quick acting PCs could make excellent use of the existing sawmill equipment to make quick work of the golem.

Disable the golem: Either tangling up the thick, trunk-like feet of the golem or targeting its "knees" will bring the golem toppling down, where it is no longer able to attack or pursue.

Destroy the golem: While this is possible, it is may not be likely. Further, destruction of the golem will poorly impact the attitude of the townsfolk toward the PCs. The locals see the golems as an almost sacred symbol of their tiny town.

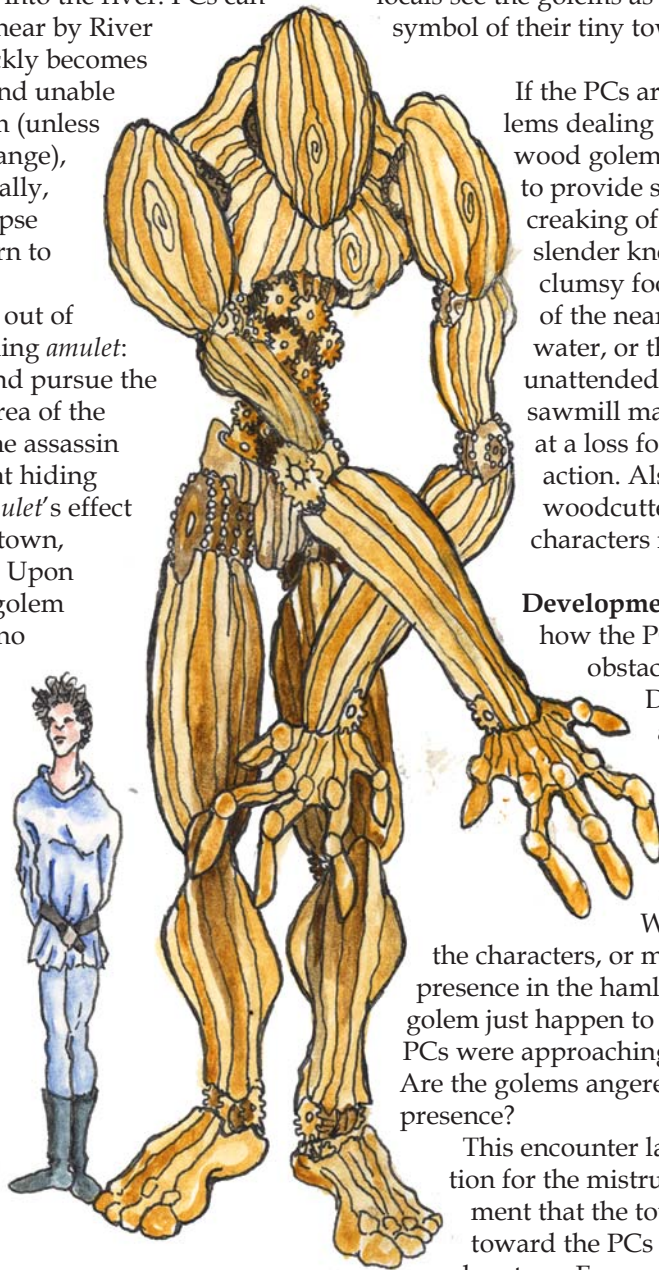
If the PCs are having problems dealing with the deadwood golem, you may want to provide some hints: the creaking of the golem's slender knee joints, or its clumsy footfalls, the sounds of the nearby rushing water, or the grinding of the unattended saws from the sawmill may assist a player at a loss for appropriate action. Also, the millers or woodcutters may assist the characters if need be.

Development: No matter how the PCs overcome this obstacle, the folk of Deadwood see it as an ill omen.

Never before has one of the golems attacked another living soul — why now?

Was it caused by the characters, or merely their presence in the hamlet? Why did the golem just happen to go berserk as the PCs were approaching the sawmill? Are the golems angered at the PCs presence?

This encounter lays the foundation for the mistrust and resentment that the townsfolk develop toward the PCs later in the adventure. Formerly friendly folks



cease to talk to or look at the PCs unless spoken to; or, they turn the other way or cross the street when they see the PCs coming. People that bought them drinks and laughed

with them just the evening before now will have little to nothing to do with them. Word travels fast in a small, mountain village, for good or ill.

Scene Seven: No Place Like Home (EL 3)

The party once again finds itself in the presence of Argus Yorehammer.

DM's Note: This encounter does not have to run in any particular sequence, but can work well to trigger **Scene Eight: The Perfect Storm**. However, the DM can use it anytime he or she desires, in order to move events along. If the DM doesn't wish to use the scene at this point, running it following **Scene Eight**, or **Scene Nine: Schoolhouse Rock** can work as well. The purpose of the encounter is to raise tension and put pressure on the PCs to get involved in the events occurring in Deadwood. If delayed too long, the scene loses some of its effect in light of later developments. If the characters happen to be outside during this encounter, or for a substantial amount of time prior to this encounter, note that it is growing increasingly cold. If they do not seem too alarmed by this fact, feel free to drop hints about snow beginning to fall or the occasional gust of wind. The weather can be used to gently prod the characters to the Old Mill which is perhaps the best location for the encounter. In any case, the encounter should take place in a highly visible and public place, where there are several Deadwood inhabitants gathered. The Old Mill is an ideal location, as the PCs will eventually need to return there to rest for the night or to seek shelter from the cold, but the Mountain Temple (Deadwood Area 4), one of the many local shops, or just on the streets of Deadwood should work if necessary. In this and in following scenes and encounters with the folk of Deadwood, the DM should emphasize that despite their heroic efforts with the Deadwood golem at the sawmill, the PCs are becoming increasingly less popular within town. Frowns, scowls, and snubs become more common, and even those they have helped, such as Ranlin or Turl, might hesitate before speaking to them in view of other townfolk.

The exact manner in which this encounter begins, however, depends on the way the PCs approach Argus. The easiest way is for the PCs to approach Argus and initiate conversation with him. Perhaps they are ready to leave this town that is filled with strange folk that would rather take the side of lumbering, unstable giant golems than a group of intrepid and helpful heroes. Perhaps they have seen all they need to see of this town and feel that they will have little trouble finally convincing Argus to leave the hamlet for his homeland. Whatever their reasoning, if the characters again confront Argus on the issue of leaving Deadwood and returning to the kingdom, read the following:

Argus looks into your eyes and again, you get the feeling as if he is looking for something that is not visible to you, almost as if his vivid blue eyes are trying to pierce the veil of your very soul and peer within. Whatever he sees, or does not see, seems to puzzle him and he frowns slightly, shaking his head to and fro. Speaking clearly in a voice which rivets the attention of his audience, easily cutting through the ambient noise,

"Truly, I do not know why you seek me, outsiders, or why you have brought evil and death into this hamlet. I left the life of warrior and champion behind long ago and wish to never return to it. What you ask of me summons immense pain within my soul. I ask you to leave me be and let me live out my final years in peace. I ask you to leave me be and involve me no more in this matter!" Argus's last words are a near bellow, and as your eyes leave his face you begin to see the scowling faces of his townfolk. At first there is complete silence, but then people begin muttering in low, angry voices.

Development: Argus will have nothing to do with the PCs, fearing his involvement will only precipitate more violence and chaos. Ignoring their entreaties, perhaps even warning them to keep their distance from himself and his home, he shuns them and thereafter the places they frequent, even the Old Mill. This further arouses the ire of the townsfolk, as they are quite fond of the old man and resent the presence of the PCs which suddenly seems to be anathema to the aged paladin.

Should the PCs press the paladin, despite his warnings and the reaction of the townsfolk, the DM can use the following speech by Argus to emphasize their predicament. Perhaps they follow him from the tavern, or stop at his house to try and convince him of their sincerity. Again, the encounter should occur within earshot of several other Deadwood inhabitants who can be used to emphasize the danger path the PCs are treading on.

Once again you feel the soul-touching probe of Argus's startling blue eyes. His brow creases as he looks at you, as if he does not see what he expects, or perhaps does not expect what he sees, and then he shakes his head slightly. "I welcomed you, outsiders," the word is almost an insult as he spits it at you, the heat of his breath a stirring vapor in the bitter cold and whipping wind, "into our peaceful hamlet with open arms. You repay us with death, chaos and destruction, and with words of dissent. You try to lure me away from my chosen home with

only care for those who spurned me long ago. An ill wind stalks your every step, and you may well have stirred a blood lust in the gentle golems. Leave me be, outsiders! Leave us be!" These last words are spoken by Argus, but quickly echoed by the gathered throng as well.

Tactics: The townsfolk are angered to the edge of violence, buzzing like a nest of angry hornets. The townsfolk are not a threat individually, but in a large group, they can be dangerous, and if the PCs are not careful the scene could erupt into unintended violence. If the PCs do not withdraw, the watchers are liable to begin pelting with PCs with clods or dirt, balls of dirty snow, or even rocks. Argus intervenes to prevent undue harm coming to anyone, but does not permit the PCs to hurt any of the villagers.

Development: Word of this encounter rapidly spreads throughout Deadwood and has a detrimental effect on their investigation. The attitude of most villagers becomes Hostile, or at best, Unfriendly with regard to future interaction, although important NPCs are generally Indifferent. The DM can permit the PCs to continue their investigation if they still have information to uncover or clues to acquire, or move directly into **Scene Eight: The Perfect Storm**. If violence seems unavoidable, having the storm sweep over Deadwood may be the opportunity both sides need to prevent unnecessary bloodshed.

Scene Eight: The Perfect Storm (EL Variable)

Just as the PC's learn that they are not in quite as familiar territory as they perhaps thought, things take a turn for the worse.

DM's Note: This encounter can be run immediately after the previous encounter, **Scene Seven: No Place Like Home**. You may have to alter the following description somewhat if the characters have previously encountered the Borderwalker.

Just as the muttering of the townsfolk reaches a low roar, and folks begin angrily shaking their fists, another voice is heard over the din. This voice comes from the rear of the gathered throng and is terribly winded, as if its owner had just run a long distance. In fact, it is a surprise that it was heard at all over the growing angry voices. The throng parts to reveal a long and lanky elfin female, dressed in the garb of a woodsman, and nearly doubled over from exertion. Her clothing,

hair, and boots are soaked, and her lips are nearly blue. "Terrible...news..." she gasps, struggling for her breath. "A storm...unnatural...it is... the pass...is...already buried...seek your shelters...it will...soon...be upon us..."

Any townsfolk present react strongly to this news, since it has been brought by a well-known and trusted source, the ranger known as the Borderwalker (see **Appendix A: NPCs**), and forget about the characters for a moment. If the PCs seize this opportunity, they can slip away without attracting unwelcome attention. However, as they are now trapped within the mountain valley with a brutal storm bearing down on them, they have precious few options at hand. The best solution would be to stand and try and rationalize with the townsfolk, who could be persuaded, if roleplayed well enough, to believe that not all of these occurrences are the responsibility of the PCs. Magden or Daonis intervene as well, knowing that there is only circumstantial evidence pointing to the PCs as the source of the problem. If necessary, Daonis or Argus can attest (through the use of their divinatory powers or spells) that the PCs are not (hopefully) evil. However, if the characters are brash, harsh, or insulting with the townsfolk, it can only make matters worse.

Unless the PCs have done something rash or foolish (such as attacking the townsfolk), the crowd only remains together long enough for the first peals of thunder to shake the ground and the first sheets of cloud-dancing lightening to arc across the dark skies. As the snow begins to fall in earnest, whipped by the icy winds into a near blizzard, the folk of Deadwood disperse, although many of them still shaking their heads and grumbling to themselves. If the characters are already at the Old Mill or elect to return there (which is by far the most logical choice with a colossal storm rolling in), they find it nearly empty. It seems that most folk have left their concerns about the PCs for now, and are focusing on weathering the unusual storm.

The night is filled with the sounds of the storm and anyone unwise enough to venture out into it soon find themselves lost, frozen, or much worse. Any unprotected person subject to the storm's fury risks frostbite and exposure (see Chapter 3, *Core Rulebook II* for rules on weather hazards). And remember, a skin-changing assassin still lurks the streets at large, and the stands of deadwood trees are known to harbor dark and fearsome creatures at night!

Explaining/Altering the Storm

Players might balk at a storm of this magnitude blowing up at a moment's notice. Feel free to use the following reasons to support this event, or the alterations to change it to suit your needs. Of course, if you elect to alter the storm from snowstorm, some of the following explanations will need to be modified. If you have placed this adventure in an area that is normally more temperate in climate, and thus a freakish snowstorm would seem oddly out of place, you will have your work cut out for you. For the most part, however, the dynamics of the adventure should remain intact no matter how the pass is blocked, as long as it is, in fact blocked.

Explanations

- Despite the normal weather patterns or particular season, the extremely high altitude of the mountains in which Deadwood is found is conducive not only to extraordinarily colder temperatures, but also to these freakish, sudden, and incredibly severe storms.
- The snowstorm is freakish in nature, even to the locals of Deadwood. It is one of those bizarre, once-in-a-lifetime occurrences.
- The snowstorm has the air of foul magic and sorcery to it, and the locals feel that it is merely another sign of the misfortune that the party has brought down upon their sleepy mountain home.

Alterations

- Perhaps it is not a snowstorm at all, but rather a massive thunderstorm, complete with thunder and lightening, hail, tornadoes and

destructive wind. The crags to either side of the pass were either struck by lightning, or perhaps a small avalanche caused by the destructive winds and thunder has sealed it up.

· Perhaps there is no need for a storm of any sort, perhaps an avalanche or mudslide has closed the mountain pass to travelers.

· Something even darker, more sinister, and mysterious has happened – the pass has vanished completely!

Scene Nine: Blood in the Snow (EL 1)

The morning after the huge storm, the PCs awaken to the sounds of alarm and cries of “murder!” that ring through the still, freezing morning air. Depending on their actions the previous night, the characters may well be in for some more trouble, or they could lend a crumb of credence to their story. If they elected to stay at the Old Mill and bed down for the night (which both Hal, who remained to weather the storm in the main floor of the inn, and Magden can attest to), then they may be able to sway some of the townsfolk to their side. However, if they chose not to go to the Old Mill and instead weathered the storm elsewhere, or tried to leave the valley (which probably ended very badly for them, considering the fierceness of the storm and potential nighttime encounters), then the suspicions of the folk of Deadwood will only be further aroused: their distrust of the PCs will continue to grow.

Wherever they managed the stay the night, he PCs are now startled into wakefulness by the shouts of several townsfolk, cries that slowly begin to build into a great clamor. Before long, nearly the whole town is awake and even the bells at the schoolhouse are ringing. There are looks of fear on the faces of the townsfolk and the word “murder” is on the tip of everyone’s tongue.

Several large men (Ulyk is among them) arrive at the front steps of the Old Mill, slipping on the icy flagstones and the snowy stoop, calling for Magden. Between them they carry a large blanket bearing a body, partially decayed, but still recognizable. As the snow begins to fall again, folks crowd around the body, and each and every one gasps and turn their eyes to the PCs, looks of confusion, doubt, and even fear readily apparent. Al-

though peppered with questions from all sides, the men will inform the gathered throng that the body, the body of the beggar, Horace Hedgewyn, was found in the empty silo just north of the Old Mill. Apparently, one of the men was caught in the storm during the night and slipped into the silo to escape its ravages. Once the fellow was inside the long vacant silo, the smell of the corpse was nearly overwhelming. Originally concerned that an animal had become trapped within the silo and died, he eventually discovered the reek was no animal, but rather one of their own.

Once the characters view the body, they can see that it is that of the crazed villager who attacked Lycia, Nolan, and Argus outside the Old Mill. However, it is hard to believe that this man was even alive then, given his body’s current state of decomposition. A Heal check (DC 12) will reveal that Horace was stabbed to death with an unusual blade. A Heal check (DC 15) reveals the previous information as well as an additional shallow wound where a section of skin was removed. A Heal check (DC 22) reveals both pieces of information as above, and the examiner can determine that this fellow has likely been dead for several days at least (choose a date appropriate to the timeline of events, placing the death 1-4 days prior to **Scene Five: Ruckus at the Old Mill**). This time of death seems unlikely in the face of events only a few days prior. Everyone is aware of the time of the attack, and many villagers witnessed with their own eyes Horace’s presence at the Old Mill that night.

While the PCs are examining the body, allow a couple of the more perceptive PCs to make a Spot checks (DC 15) and then read the following:

Raising your eyes from the morbid sight of the dead beggar lying at your feet you gaze the sea of faces surrounding you. Only days ago, many of these same faces were smiling warmly, but now stare back at you with dread, doubt, and confusion. Among them you notice Lycia, the woman wounded in the attack only days before, her face pallid with shock and confusion, and her hand to her open mouth. And yet — you have to blink your eyes to clear them, as through the crowd over Lycia's shoulder you see her face again! You wonder briefly if your eyes are playing tricks on you, perhaps an effect of the falling snow, but you are certain that this is the same woman or perhaps a twin. This face in the crowd however is not the gentle caring face of the woman that stands nearby. This twin scowls at you with a visage filled with hate and malice and then before you can draw breath, she disappears into the blowing snow beyond the crowd.

Tactics: Moloch is quite irritated to be discovered and will not wait around to be confronted by the PCs. While the PCs are free to react as they will, Moloch (now disguised as Lycia) is on the far side of the crowd and will be gone from the immediate vicinity before the PCs can reach her. However, upon reaching the approximate place where the second Lycia stood, they might be able to locate her tracks with a successful Search check (DC 11). Any character with the Track feat making a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 13), can find the path that the skin devil took and follow it. The skin devil initially moves at half speed (30 ft.) through the town in order to better conceal his path. Trackers note that the woman is taking special care in selecting where she places her feet. The trail leads away from the inn wending between houses, eventually fading out near the schoolhouse, but they lose her trail amid a multitude of other footsteps. Moloch has taken shelter in the schoolhouse, and if the characters elect to pursue the woman into the schoolhouse, proceed to the next encounter, **Schoolhouse Rock**.

Scene Ten: Schoolhouse Rock (EL 6)

The PCs seek a mysterious double within the town's schoolhouse, and perhaps discover more than they expected. Due to the unusual storm the previous night, there are no classes today, so the schoolhouse is empty. When the party enters the schoolhouse, they should immediately notice snowy footsteps and melting snow on the plain, hardwood floor (unless they have taken an unusual length of time to arrive, in which case, there will be only water and small bits of snow). The footsteps (which even an individual unskilled in tracking can see are at a running pace) lead right up to the wall of the structure and then simply vanish. Two items, a very small puddle of melted snow and an empty flask decorated with a spider motif (the discarded *potion of spider climb* container), denote the spot of the last footprint, and then nothing... Of course, this is where Moloch knocked the last of the snow from his boots and stood while drinking his potion. If the PCs spend several rounds in the location, a drop of icy water will fall from

Moloch's boots, possibly alerting the PCs to his presence above, or at least giving them a bonus (+4 circumstance) to their Spot check to locate the assassin.

Moloch, (appears to be a female human); HP 48.

Iccus, HP 13.

Moloch is indeed hiding within the schoolhouse, using his *cloak of elvenkind* and a *potion of spider climb* to hide amid the beams of the roof (Hide DC 33). Iccus, his murdersprite companion, awaits (Hide DC 28) in the shadowy corners of the main room to attack at his master's signal. The assassin could not entirely conceal his tracks, his boots being caked with snow from his escape from the PCs. If any of the PCs manage to spot him, Moloch immediately launches an assault against the PCs, hoping to catch them off guard and leave them confused or disabled. Moloch can remain on

the ceiling for approximately 30 minutes before the magic of the potion fails.

Tactics: Moloch doesn't want to confront the PCs just yet. He had intended merely to gather information from the milling crowd of villagers when detected by the observant PCs. Moloch uses all of his skills, magic, and gear to avoid a direct confrontation and escape from the PCs. Iccus aids as he can, preferring to avoid direct combat, but he will slip in and prick a PC (spellcasters and rogues in preference to fighters and barbarians) with his poisoned pin.

If he is spotted, the assassin uses all of his skills and tools to their utmost to escape. He first tosses his *smokesticks* onto the floor, quickly filling the entire schoolhouse with thick, billowing smoke. He then targets any spellcasters the party has (Moloch has been watching the PCs long enough to know which ones rely on magic) with his *tanglefoot bags* in order to cut down on any spell slinging that might hamper his movements. He uses the cover of the smoke, the confusion, and of course, his *cloak of elvenkind* and the effects of the *potion of spider climb* to escape out the back door of the schoolhouse, which the PCs likely do not know about, or out the front door if necessary (see Deadwood Area 15).

Development: In the unlikely event that the assassin is captured (or even killed) in the schoolhouse encounter, then the adventure is not necessarily completely derailed. In fact, only if Moloch is killed in this encounter must you even alter the adventure to compensate for that fact! Even if the assassin is captured, his murdersprite companion, Iccus, calls in reinforcements, as detailed below. Moloch uses the ensuing pandemonium of the ice ghoule attack upon Deadwood to make his escape and the adventure can proceed as written.

However, if Moloch is killed in this encounter, or somehow incapacitated, the complexity increases somewhat for the DM, but it is still not impossible to arrange events to arrive at similar results. Iccus picks up where the assassin left off and try to complete the plan. Iccus knows what Moloch intended, but sadly,

the murdersprite lacks a greater portion of the intelligence to carry out Moloch's plan without aid. So, the story could progress along the lines as laid out, but with some minor alterations.

For example, Iccus might not understand the subtle reasoning of waiting to have the ice ghouls attack the town to "take the heat" off of itself and its master, so it might have both the ice ghouls and the golems attack at once. There is some doubt that the fey can control the deadwood golems for very long, so they will most likely begin acting strangely in the final scenes, almost of their own accord. There are several circuitous routes that the clever DM could take to make the PCs think that their adventure has not quite ended with the death of the assassin.

It is, however, important that either Iccus or Moloch retain control of the *amulet of controlling deadwood golems* for the time being. Without the amulet, neither Iccus nor Moloch are able to command the golems as laid out in **Scene Twelve: Mill Melee**, below. If the PCs capture the *amulet* from Moloch, then the ice ghouls may have to entirely substitute for the golems in later scenes.

Alternatively, since Moloch currently controls the deadwood golems, his last thought to them could be to "destroy it all," which the golems will immediately set out to do. They will begin literally razing the town, pounding it into dust, along with everyone they encounter in it. The only hope that the PCs likely have of destroying this new threat is to find out what is controlling them (they may have received from clues from Magden during their investigation) which will prove to be a difficult task, to say the least, with the golems bearing down on them. There is a chance, however, that they could guess that it is something on the assassin's body, and if they can identify the

DM's Note: If the deadwood golems drive the townsfolk into the forest, the ice ghouls likely take the opportunity to attack the populace while they are disorganized and demoralized, with much the same result as if they had attacked the town as indicated in **Scene Eleven: Reinforcements**, below.

amulet of controlling deadwood golems, then they will have time to gain control of the golems before too much damage is done and too many lives are lost.

It is best if Moloch survives the encounter at the schoolhouse, but the outcome does not have to be forced. If fate, the dice, or the quick thinking of your players decree that the skin devil assassin should meet his end here, then so be it; but make sure that your PCs understand that for each action there is an equal and opposite reaction...

If Moloch is not Discovered

If Moloch is not discovered by the PCs, he still feels that he was much too close to discovery or worse. Moloch decides it is time to bring in some "reinforcements" to provide a distraction which permits him to execute the final elements of his scheme—activating the giant golem in the upper floors of the Old Mill. He seeks refuge in the sawmill again (for it, too, is closed due for repairs and in light of the unusual weather, not to mention the unusual behavior of the golems) to rest and begins his preparations for what is to come.

The Investigation: At this point the PCs are free to pursue their own agenda for a time. If they have not managed to puzzle out the various clues regarding Moloch and his activities, it may be necessary for the DM to provide a hint or two to ensure the PCs are not taken entirely by surprise in the following encounters. Magden may call on them to report their findings so far, concerned that the attitude of the villagers is turning ugly, and if

the PCs cannot provide some evidence of their innocence in the near future, they may be in danger.

If the PCs have not uncovered evidence of the assassin's machinations, Magden can present them with a sheaf of his great grandfather's notes on the deadwood golems, explaining that since their last meeting he has spent some time reviewing the journals and notes of his grandfather and great-grandfather. Perhaps these notes indeed reveal that the elder Magden intended to establish some firm means of control of the golems. The notes might even provide several possible options the old wizard considered, such as a deadwood staff, a miniature articulated golem statue, a coronet of deadwood, etc., and might or might not specify that he ultimately decided on the amulet.

When the DM is ready, move on to **Scene Eleven: Reinforcements**, though in the interest of survival, the PCs may require some time to recuperate and prepare, and follow up any leads they may have uncovered in the course of their investigation. If Moloch was injured during the encounter in the schoolhouse, he will remain in hiding, even at the risk of losing his disguise, until he is completely healed. Alternatively, if the DM feels that Moloch is too tough an opponent for a low-level party to face, then the DM can have the assassin call in his reinforcements the next day, regardless of his current health, perhaps while the PCs are out and about finalizing their investigation.

Scene Eleven: Reinforcements (EL 6+)

Through Iccus, Moloch maintains communications with the Tribe of the Blood Frost, a vicious tribe of ice ghouls, lead by a ghastly individual known as Gor. The Tribe of the Blood Frost has long plagued Deadwood, but usually their attacks have targeted the lone traveler, the small and the weak, or the wounded. Since his first visit to the hamlet, Moloch had heard the fearful tales of the ice ghouls told by the villagers and knew that the

ice ghouls could be a valuable asset. He contacted them, and with promises of food, loot, and with a subtly placed *charm person* spell or three, he managed to gain Gor's support and capture the horrible barbarian-beast's ear.

The ice ghoul chieftain leads his horrific band of flesh-eating followers with a merciless iron will and a mastery of weapons that most of these hideous creatures only dream of

The number of ice ghouls listed above is merely the number in the immediate vicinity of the characters. There are many more ice ghouls waiting in the wings, if these 6 should be readily or quickly slain. The DM can reduce the number of ice ghouls the PCs have to deal with if 6 would be too much for them overcome at their level. If PCs overcome all of the ice ghouls in their vicinity, there are as many ice ghouls available as the DM needs to drive the PCs toward the final climactic act of this adventure, detailed in **Scene Twelve: Mill Melee.**

possessing. Never before have they had the reason or (deep down, being the cowardly beasts that they are) the courage to attack anything as large as the hamlet *en masse*. Now Gor and his bloodthirsty tribe crouch, both literally and figuratively, at the edge of the forest, awaiting the signal from the dark-hearted assassin or his minion, Iccus. Soon their hunger will be sated, and they will be the only living things in the valley of Deadwood, making this place truly live up to its name...

When Moloch sends them the signal, via Iccus, (or Iccus acting in Moloch's stead) the ice ghouls descend upon the town in a ravenous fury. The sheer savagery of the assault leave the majority of the townsfolk paralyzed with fear and confusion, and unless the PCs quickly rally them, very few folk of Deadwood will make it to the safety of their homes unscathed. Meanwhile, Moloch makes his way to the Old Mill and enters the upper floors where he hopes to achieve his goal of activating and dominating the unfinished giant golem. When you are ready to unleash this horror, read the following:

Suddenly, the snow-filled skies are torn asunder with a horrible, disjointed cacophony of hoots, screams, and bestial cries, muffled by the sounds of what seem like hundreds of feet pounding the power covered ground... All around you the once sleepy town of Deadwood explodes into horror, mayhem, and blood. Horrific blue skinned, slaving crea-

tures charge into the streets from the forest, cutting people down left and right and then falling upon them, devouring the flesh of their still warm bodies. Crimson stains the white snow as these things that you find hard to call human assault the unsuspecting hamlet. Your sight is filled with gore, blood, and carnage; your hearing with the horrified screams of the dying and the howls of these ghoulish creatures; your nose with the stench off of their festering, filthy bodies and the tinny scent of blood. It like some madman's grisly nightmare come to all too vivid life...


Gor; HP 24.

Ice Ghouls (6); HP 17.

Tactics: Gor targets the largest figure in sight, PC or NPC. If none of the PCs prove a tempting target, then Ulyk makes a fine choice, or even Argus. The lesser ice ghouls target individual villagers who are unable to put up a significant struggle against the creatures without help. The ice ghouls are much more interested in sating their ever-ravenous appetite than anything else, and clever players may take advantage of their distraction to make sneak attacks and flank the monsters.

The villagers, for the most part, attempt to flee to their homes or any apparent haven, though many will be cut down in their tracks. A few of the hardier woodcutters make a stand while any women or children flee the scene to safety. They, however, stand little chance against packs of the ice ghouls. Daonis, who detests the ice ghouls, fights for her people with a ferocity almost equal to that of the ice ghouls themselves. She is the last to withdraw from the battle while any inhabitants of Deadwood still remain in danger. Argus, if sufficiently recovered, lays into the ghoulish hordes with his greatsword.

Moloch will use the chaos of the ice ghoul attack to evade or escape capture if necessary, and make his way to the Old Mill, likely ahead of all others. When the townsfolk of Deadwood entrench themselves in the Old Mill against the



assault of the ice ghouls, Moloch takes advantage of the confusion to mix in and hide among the very people he has been tormenting in recent days. It is likely that Moloch requires rest to recover from his previous encounters with the PCs, likewise providing the PCs with the opportunity to rest and recover spells and hit points. Although Moloch would love to listen in to any plans that they might make to deal with the ice ghouls or their other problems, Moloch stays as far as possible from the PCs while they are in the building with him. After Moloch has recovered, he initiates the final encounter, **Scene Twelve: Mill Melee.**

Development: Open battle in the streets of Deadwood spells doom for any not allied with the ice ghouls. There are too many of them, and without some kind of defenses, any group will ultimately be surrounded, slain, and devoured. In order to prevent wholesale slaughter, the PCs must rally the survivors. Only where large numbers of villagers band together and mount a concerted defense is there a modicum of safety. The larger and stronger ice ghouls smash simple wooden doors to splinters in their all-encompassing lust for flesh, but faced with superior numbers, organized, well-armed foes, or displays of magic, they quickly back off seeking easier prey.

The Old Mill and the Mountain Temple offer the best chance of protection from the hordes of ice ghouls, with the possible exception of the Forgefire house. The Temple and Forgefire home, however sturdy, are small and offer protection for a limited number of townsfolk. The Old Mill, with its deadwood walls and spacious interior, offers the greatest hope for the greatest number. If it does not occur to the PCs to rally the townsfolk at the Old Mill, then it will be necessary for Magden or Bethany to round up the terrified villagers and lead them there. Argus and Daonis, if they yet live, can lead a fighting retreat to the structure, permitting the others to achieve safety while they hold off ravaging bands of ice ghouls.

DM's Note: It is a good idea to allow the PCs the time to rest and heal, if need be. If Moloch was injured or expended many of his spells in previous encounters, he may decide to rest before pressing on with his plan. The majority of the ice ghouls will eventually get tired of a prey which they can't reach and will retreat to the gloomy depths of the forest and their lairs to feast on their kills. Wise characters will take the opportunity to rest and prepare during the lull in the violence. If the characters seem to be greatly overmatched, Magden, who has taken refuge in the Old Mill as well, brings some healing potions from upstairs, or perhaps a few scrolls penned by his grandfathers, and offers them to the PCs. If the PCs have had an easy time of the adventure to this point, the challenge can be increased by not allowing the time to sleep and renew spells, or by increasing the number of deadwood golems in the encounter, or adding a pack or two of ice ghouls to the fray.

When you are ready to initiate the final action, you can read or paraphrase the following:

The PCs, of course, are free to take whatever actions they see fit, even flight. Even if they elect to flee, there are encounters before they can reach safety, as there are ice ghouls nearly everywhere. They are few options available to them: The pass is still sealed and ice ghouls stalk the forests, and they are likely without the majority of their gear and food. If they abandon the townsfolk to their fate, it will not go unnoticed and they will find themselves unwelcome and without shelter and faced with hostile forces on every side.

The ice ghouls do not all leave even if their remaining prey has retreated behind apparently unbreachable walls, but rather seek to unnerve any inside pounding on the walls with clubs, rocks, weapons, or even fists. The endless pounding should be enough to rattle even the most seasoned of adventurers, and the already distraught villagers are on the

verge of utter panic. The villagers need to be calmed and their morale strengthened (a perfect opportunity for any bard PCs to shine, but Galyn Lyrestringer can fill that role if there

are no suitable characters). Once you feel that they have had a chance to catch their breath proceed to the final encounter, **Mill Melee**, below.

Scene Twelve: Mill Melee (EL 7)

Once the forces of Deadwood are ensconced within the Old Mill, the final act of this adventure can play itself out. When Moloch is ready to execute his plan, he uses the amulet to summon the deadwood golems to the Old Mill. He then compels them to batter down the doors and attack those within the Old Mill. During the confusion, Moloch creeps upstairs and enters the laboratory of the elder Magden Gristwheel.

The yammering pack of flesh-eating monsters has finally ceased their hammering on the walls, at last giving you a moment's peace to catch your breath. You can still hear the vile creatures as they shuffle about the building, occasionally scratching at the deadwood walls. But it seems that you might have an opportunity to rest your arms, weary from wielding your weapons in the defense of the townsfolk of Deadwood.

You look around at the disheveled crowd, who once more look to you for safety and security. Fear, dread, and sorrow mark many of the faces you have come to know, their eyes haunted by the sights that you too have recently witnessed. Magden, Bethany, and Daonis move among the frightened folk, tending the injured and soothing them, a calming hand here, a reassuring word there. Hal has stoked the fireplaces to provide light and warmth and is passing around cups of brown ale and cider. Soon enough a calm settles over the building, disturbingly like the calm in the eye of a great storm.

For hours now, you've paced the narrow confines of the Old Mill, which seemed open and airy only days before. Worried faces of the Deadwood villagers peer up at you nervously, as if half expecting you to burst into violence and chaos as have so many once-faithful touchstones of their simple lives. Berserk

golems and flesh-eating monsters dance through your mind as you remember recent events, unsure of your next action. As you pace back and forth along the aisle of huddled villagers, you notice that the wind has picked up again, apparently freezing gales have once again begun to rattle the walls of the fortunately stout building which has become a refuge, but which you fear may all too soon become a tomb.

But wait! That is not the wind: it's the sound of massive footsteps approaching from outside—footsteps which are distressingly familiar to you have faced one of the angry deadwood golems before. Very quickly, you begin to feel the jolt of each footstep through the soles of your boots as whatever approaches draws inexorably closer.

The Deadwood villagers draw away from the walls and doors, children clinging to their parents, weeping, and behind you, an infant begins wailing. CRASH!!! With a blow that rattles the teeth in your heads, something strikes the door which nearly buckles in the frame from the force of the blow. CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! The thunderous blows begin falling with a slow, but deadly rhythm. Before your eyes, the nearly indestructible deadwood planks begin to crack and splinter.

In moments, gaps appear in the stout doors, revealing to yourselves and the terrified townsfolk the implacable visage of a deadwood golem. Daonis and Argus grimly take up defensive stances before the door, each chanting prayers to their respective deities, prayers which are lost in the din of this latest assault on the Old Mill.

Deadwood Golems (2); HP 20.

Tactics: Moloch (or Iccus) orders two of the golems to converge on the Old Mill and smash down the doors. It takes 3 rounds for a single golem to batter its way through the heavy deadwood doors. Once the doors are removed, the golems move in, one per round, and attack those within. Once the PCs and any significant NPCs are engaged with the golems, Moloch sneaks upstairs, picks the locks on the laboratory door, and makes his way to the giant golem.

If Moloch has not been killed, then he will remain in control of the golems and things will be a bit more difficult for our heroes, as the skin devil has had the opportunity to learn to control a golem. However, Moloch has not had sufficient practice in sustaining his control over a golem (or several golems) for long periods, and he will soon encounter difficulties if he tries to maintain control of the golems for an extended period of time. Even by Taking 10, Moloch can comfortably control only 2-5 golems, but can do little else while doing so, so his strategy is to get to the second floor of the Mill and conceal himself with the use of his *cloak of elvenkind*. Once the golems have breached the walls of the Old Mill and have been instructed to attack any defenders, Moloch can focus his concentration on entering the Gristwheel laboratory on the second floor.

If Iccus, rather than Moloch, is controlling the golems, they may behave erratically. While the malicious fey has the will to control the golems, he lacks the intellect or creativity to direct them with any skill. It is up to the DM to play this encounter a little "off the cuff" as nearly anything could happen once the murdersprite loses control.

If the characters seem a bit overwhelmed, then the number of golems can be reduced to only one, perhaps backed by a few of the lingering ice ghouls to occupy the NPCs while the PCs to focus on crossing swords with Moloch. On the other hand, if the DM feels that the encounter is going to easily for the characters, he should feel free to bring things up a

DM's Note: If Moloch is not available, then Magden can be suffering from the effects of a dose of *nitharit* poison, or Iccus's poisoned needle, either of which can leave Magden in an appropriately weakened condition. If the DM knows that the party has been unable to uncover information critical to the resolution of the final encounter with Moloch and Iccus (see **The Giant Deadwood Golem**, below), the Magden can remain conscious (barely, he remains at *staggered* unless healed) and insist on being taken with them to the laboratory where he can provide the last crucial bit of incentive: Moloch must not be allowed to attempt the ritual to activate the golem, or else dire consequences are sure to follow.

notch and enable another golem or two, which should keep the characters on their toes considerably.

Launching the Encounter

While the PCs and any combatant NPCs are engaged with the golems, Magden heads upstairs, perhaps hoping to find something which will aid the defenders below. He comes upon Moloch as he is entering the private study. The two struggle, and Magden is dealt a nearly fatal blow by Moloch. Fortunately, Moloch is occupied with thoughts of reaching the giant golem in the Gristwheel laboratory, and does not finish Magden off. Magden, who is now *staggered*, makes his way to the stairs leading to the first floor of the Old Mill, and warn those below that an enemy is in their midst.

As the battle rages below, have one of the PCs make a Spot check (DC 13) to notice a bloody Magden crawl to the head of the stairs and read the following:

As you desperately swing your weapons in defense of the helpless townsfolk trapped within the Old Mill, a flash of color catches your eye. Dodging the flailing fists of the ferocious deadwood golem(s) for a moment,

you see that it is Magden, pale and trembling, collapsed at the head of the stairs, his clothing soaked in crimson blood. Feebly he waves at those below, alarm and pain clearly showing on his aristocratic features. Argus, between slowing blows of his greatsword, grimaces and shouts for you to see to Magden, while he continues to hold off the golems.

Once the PCs break off to go to Magden, continue:

Rushing to Magden's side, you are in time to hear him whisper, "Beware, we are betrayed...." before falling unconscious from the strain of dragging himself to this point. Behind him, a trail of blood leads back along the hall which spans the length of the second floor of the Old Mill, disappearing in the dim light. Something evil clearly lurks beyond your sight.

Magden clutches a key in his left hand which observant PCs may notice (Spot DC 14 or Search DC 6). The trail of blood continues almost the entire length of the hall, ending in a larger pool just before the door leading to the private study (Area 1m). In order to enter the study, the PCs will require either Magden's key, or they will have to pick the lock (DC 30).

The Final Confrontation

The assassin knows that now, only the party stands in the way of his heinous goal, and he is determined to do anything to stop them.

Refer to Area 1m for a description of the private study on the second story. As the characters enter the open, laboratory area of the second floor of the Old Mill (1n and 10), read or paraphrase the following:

You stand in an open room, extending the length of the Old Mill. There is no ceiling to this room, it shares a roof with the third floor. A partial third floor, more like an enlarged balcony extends out over your heads and numerous shelves, bookcases, and racks line the walls of the mezzanine, each filled to the point of spillage with tomes, scrolls, sheaves of

papers, vials, beakers, and countless other unidentifiable objects. The great gears and axles that were once turned by the massive millwheel take up a majority of the room opposite. Dominating the entire room near the gears and cogs, is a massive statue that resembles a kneeling deadwood golem, yet seems only partly finished. As you gaze around taking in the clutter and the towering deadwood statue, a thunderous explosion interrupts your musings!

Tactics: As the party takes in the scene, Iccus begins throwing his thunderstones at the unsuspecting PCs, hoping to stun them. Moloch has instructed the murdersprite to harass the party's spellcasters and in hopes of keeping them from casting spells while Moloch scales the gears to reach the giant golem. If the party seems too powerful for Iccus, Moloch will hurl any remaining *smokesticks* and *tanglefoot bags* from his inventory and then engage them in combat, hoping to get a sneak attack against them during the confusion engendered by the dense smoke and entangling webs. Moloch will fight all out, knowing that his plans hang in the balance of the outcome of this battle. If he fails here, all of his planning and scheming are for naught. Once Moloch feels the PCs have been sufficiently disabled or appear defeated, he will climb the gears to reach the golem and attempt the ritual.

If Moloch is dead, captured, or completely incapacitated, then Iccus uses his *thunderstones* as a diversion and immediately tries to activate the giant golem.

DM's Note: If Moloch performs any action other than concentration, (i.e., an attack on the PCs or an attempt to activate the giant golem), his control over the golems on the first floor and outside of the Old Mill is severed. While this might not directly impact the characters immediately, it very well could in the rounds to come. Therefore, DMs should rule what happens to each one of the golems that were under Moloch's control; one of four things can occur: 1.

The Giant Deadwood Golem

Through his hasty research, Moloch has recently learned that the *amulet* that controls the lesser golems was intended to be the key to bring this giant golem to life. However, the key must be placed within a specially crafted depression on the chest of the massive construct while performing the final elements of the ritual. Moloch believes that he has pieced together the secrets of the remaining ritual, but his poor grasp of theoretical magics may prove to be his undoing, as well as that of those around him. Moloch does not know is that the complex ritual required to properly activate the golem was never finished (as indeed the construction of the giant golem itself was not) and attempting the ritual without the proper knowledge at this point will cause the golem to be utterly destroyed.

Any character making a Knowledge (arcana) (DC 18) check can deduce that the statue is in fact a golem and that it is not completed, and that the *amulet* is the key to unlocking its powers (the depression is shaped exactly like the *amulet*).

If the characters have obtained the texts from Magden previously or gained them on their own in some other fashion, they most likely have figured the bulk of this out already. Any spellcaster with formal instruction in the magical arts (i.e., most wizards) will be able to quickly determine from their readings of the Gristwheel notes that the construct was left unfinished, abruptly terminated in mid-creation.

If the characters have not had time or access to these magical texts, or if none of these skills are present within the party, or if the die rolls are miserable, then the DM can have Magden recover long enough to stagger to the chamber and warn them against permitting Moloch to complete his ritual, warning them that his father and grandfather cautioned him that never to go near the giant golem with the amulet - that the result could destroy the entire hamlet. This should be enough incentive for the party to try and foil the skin devil's plans.

Iccus knows that the amulet is to be placed within the depression in order to activate the giant golem, but does not know the proper ritual that must be performed in order to make it activate, unlike Moloch. Thus, Iccus cannot possibly activate the golem except by pure chance (i.e. by will of the DM), of course, the PCs will not know this and the danger will seem just as real to them. Here are some possibilities:

- The golem totally ceases to function and becomes inert and motionless.
- The golem goes completely berserk and becomes uncontrollable until out of the range of the *amulet*.
- The golem switches back and forth randomly from inert to berserk.
- The golem reverts back to its initial role (i.e. hauling trees, building walls, etc.).

If the battle going very badly for the PCs and/or the NPCs, the golems might even turn on the ice ghouls if they are still present.

The Battle

This scene begs for an interesting and pulse-quickening fight. Warriors doing battle on the massive millwheel, or climbing the body of a gigantic golem that they know could explode at any moment. If the DM desires, additional obstacles can be added at the DM's whim:

• Spellcasting within the Old Mill's second or third story, with its abundance of old spell components and other odd, old magical components, could prove to be an explosive experience! There is a 25% chance that upon the casting of each spell, something explodes within the room, shaking the building to its foundation (and possibly doing damage to those nearby).

• Using magical items within the room is an excellent idea, but there is little time to learn precisely what they do or how they function. Any character wishing to use any of the myriad of unusual magical items within the room are utterly subject to the mercy of the DM.

Adding more fuel to the fire is completely up to the DM. Do not forget that there are plenty of other opponents (or possible assistance) waiting downstairs and any character that is not engaged in some manner could very well find himself beating back a pair of ravenous ice ghouls, or trying to impede an unreasonable deadwood golem.

Development: There are several possible outcomes to the final, climactic battle. The PCs may stop Moloch and Iccus from activating the golem and take them alive; the PCs may stop Moloch and Iccus by slaying them; the PCs fail to stop Moloch and Iccus, but the golem is not activated; or, the PCs fail to stop Moloch and Iccus and the golem is activated.

Outcome 1: Ideally, this is the best possible outcome of the adventure. Not only has the immediate threat been neutralized but the party also has proof that they have not been behind all of the happenings in Deadwood. Further, they have someone to answer for those crimes, despite the fact that they will soon learn about their employer, if they elect to take Moloch to Lord Fenrius (see **Continuing the Adventure**, below). While the folk of Deadwood may not hail the party as heroes, they apologize for any wrongdoings, accepting the characters as provisional members of their community. Only if the PCs perform some act of unusual heroic proportions are the townsfolk able to overcome their feelings toward the PCs for the chaos and death which has swept into their town on the heels of the PCs.

Outcome 2: While the characters still save the hamlet of Deadwood and will still have physical proof (in the form of Moloch's body, which reverts to its normal, horrific state) to clear their names, they no longer have Moloch and/or Iccus as future adversaries. While from a player's perspective, this might be a good thing, it is not always as good for the DM. Also, the characters may well have to return to Lord Fenrius empty handed (as Argus will definitely refuse to accompany them once the presence of the skin devil has been made

known) and might have to suffer the consequences not only for this, but also for eliminating his errand-boy assassin.

Outcome 3: More likely than not, this only occurs in the situation where Moloch is dead and Iccus simply does not possess the knowledge to activate the golem. However, there is a possibility, however remote, that Moloch and Iccus fail in their attempt and still manage to elude the characters. Amongst the chaos that Deadwood has found itself thrust into, the crafty and resourceful assassin could use his *cloak of elvenkind* and slip off into the woods unnoticed. There, he could lie in wait until he could escape the valley and one day, return to enact his revenge upon the unsuspecting PCs.

Outcome 4: In the event that Moloch manages to activate the golem (or in the remote possibility that Iccus does), the characters will not be very pleased with the results if they survive. An explosion will rip through the second and third stories of the Old Mill, causing damage as per the 3rd-level *fireball* spell, causing 6d6 points of damage (Reflex saves (DC 17) for half damage) and shaking the Old Mill to its foundations.

Further, the characters could suffer damage from falling debris or ensuing magical explosions, but this is totally up to the DM. The second story of the Old Mill will be destroyed, the millwheel will be blown into the River Hoarfrost, and the giant golem will be shattered. Unless there was someone from the hamlet in the room that actually managed to survive the blast, the characters that survive will find it very difficult to satisfactorily explain what happened. If Moloch survives (however unlikely), he will be thrown clear and into the River Hoarfrost, and his body will not be found on any subsequent searches. Thus, he will be able to rise again and menace the PCs (if the DM so chooses). However, a positive side effect of the fiery explosion is that it will scare any remaining ice ghouls off and it will be quite some time before any of them even think of returning again to menace Deadwood.

Concluding the Adventure

Depending on the outcome of the final battle and the light in which the townsfolk of Deadwood view the characters, the results of this adventure could vary from the characters being hailed as heroes to being run out of town at swords' point. Unless the Old Mill exploded, there may still be the issue of defeating the ice ghouls, and assisting in this daunting task is something that the PCs can do to increase their standing in the eyes of the townsfolk. Further, the *amulet* needs to be returned to Magden IV, who at least knows how to calm the golems, if they, too, have not yet been dealt with.

Once all of the immediate threats are resolved, and if the characters are in the good graces of the hamlet, then they might eventually be referred to as heroes and will be permitted to claim some of the captured gear from Moloch. If the DM feels that any particular item is too powerful or unbalancing, rule that it was destroyed in the blast, lost in the river, or is retained by the inhabitants of Deadwood to defend themselves in the wake of recent events. The characters are welcome to remain in the hamlet as long as they like, or at least for the few days that it will take for the pass to thaw, at which point they are free to leave if they wish.

If the characters are not in the good graces of the townsfolk, (for instance, if the Mill was badly damaged, or if there was pre-existing bad blood between the party and the hamlet's inhabitants before the ice ghoul/golem attack), then the party is lucky to reach the woods at the edge of town before the arrows being sailing in their direction. They are free to take what they can lay hands on, but this does little to improve their standing with the locals. Luckily for the characters in this case, the folk of Deadwood will have far too much on their hands at that moment (such as ice ghouls, uncontrolled deadwood golems, town repairs, the wounded, the dying, and the dead) to pursue them. It should not be too difficult for them to hide out in the woods long enough for the pass to thaw, at which point they can escape undetected.

Argus will not accompany them to Lord Fenrius, and what's more, the aged warrior warns them that they should likewise avoid him and his machinations. He tells them that he fears that Lord Fenrius could be his old enemy and that if the PCs return to him empty-handed, their lives may also be forfeit. If the presence of Moloch was discovered, or if Argus saw the skin devil for himself during the final battle, he will only be more adamant.

Continuing the Adventure

Utilizing all of the various story hooks and plot devices that were provided with this adventure provides the DM with numerous possibilities for future campaign development. Many of the NPCs presented herein could very likely appear again in a campaign, whether or not the characters ever return to Deadwood. Further, the characters could have very likely made one, if not several enemies or allies for life, depending on their decisions and actions, and the ramifications thereof. Moloch and Iccus, if they survive, are primed to reappear in the PC's lives at a later date, seeking revenge. Further, as the characters rise in levels, Lord Fenrius himself (who will surely put a price on the character's heads) could eventually become a (or the) primary antagonist that the party must deal with in the future.

Perhaps the characters may one day find themselves again drawn into a plot that centers on the usually quiet and peaceful little hamlet known as Deadwood. The only question then, is will they be welcomed as returning heroes, or dreaded as the sleepy hamlet's most hated villains?

Appendix A: NPCs

Argus Yorehammer

Male human Paladin 9; LG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 64; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 [+1 Dex, +8 full plate]; Atk +11/+6 melee, (2d6+2, greatsword); SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +2, Diplomacy +9, Heal +11, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +4, Search +4, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5; Cleave, Extra Turning, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Gear: Masterwork full plate, +1 greatsword, book of prayers and mediations. Other than these items, Argus has left behind all vestiges of his adventuring past, including his special mount, and only possesses the typical belongings of any villager.

Spells Prepared: **1st** – *bless weapon, divine favor*; **2nd** – *shield other*.

Argus was once a famous and mighty paladin, who served not only his deity, but also his homeland dutifully, tirelessly, and faithfully. Sadly, in the course of that service, the good man saw so much carnage and destruction that his spirit became burdened with guilt. The final straw came when he witnessed with his own eyes the black corruption of greed and crooked politics seep into the heart of his homeland and poison it against virtue. Argus had seen enough; he left the land of his birth, his family, glory, and fame. He sought a place where he could find the one thing that he had lost after gaining so much: peace. He finally found that place in a tiny, obscure mountain town by the name of Deadwood.

Physically, Argus is a large man, but one can tell that the years are beginning to take their toll upon him. Most of his hair is gone, leaving a halo of gray hair encircling a balding crown. His forelocks are braided into thick strands that hang down in front of his ears. He keeps his face meticulously clean-shaven, a hold over from his religious rites that he

practiced (and still does) every day. His vibrant blue eyes stand out in a crowd and still retain a compelling magnetism.

NPC Initiation: Argus is the focus of the encounter, **Scene Four: Meeting the Warrior**.

NPC Continuation: If Argus and the characters learn together that Lord Fenrius was out to get the ancient warrior and basically used the characters as pawns on a chessboard, then any number of things could occur. Argus could join up with the PCs in order to take his vengeance on his ancient enemy (which could potentially and very easily lead into an entire campaign within itself), or he could just as easily shrug his shoulders and walk the other way. However Argus reacts, if he and the characters become allies, then they will be so forever – Argus does not make (or forsake) his friends lightly.

On the other hand, if the relationship between Argus and the characters turns sour, then likewise, they have made an enemy for the rest of their days. Argus will not take lightly to the character's attempt to dupe him, but he will also see in the end that the sly Lord Fenrius duped them, as well. Unless the characters were outright malicious and evil to him, he will more likely than not forgive them and let them go on their way. However, if any of the characters willingly harm (or allow to be harmed) one of his new adopted countrymen (the folk of Deadwood) he will hunt them all down and make them pay for their crimes to the extent that law permits.

Moloch

CR 7; Male skin devil Rogue 1/Sorcerer 1/Assassin 1; LE; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 48; Init +9; Spd 60 ft.; AC 18 (19) [+5 Dex, +1 Dodge, +3 natural]; Atk +5 melee/+8 melee shortsword/+8 ranged; SV Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 20, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +4, Balance +7, Bluff +8, Climb +7, Concentration +6, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +5, Hide +13, Intimidate +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Open lock +10, Search +4,

Spot +4, Use Magic Device +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Disguise), Weapon Finesse (short sword).

Special Attacks: Death attack, poison use, sneak attack +2d6

Special Qualities: Grow new skin

Gear: Cloak of elvenkind, +1 keen short sword, potion of spider climb, smokesticks x4, thunderstones x 7, tanglefoot bags x2, serrated daggers x3, notes belonging to Magden Gristwheel I and II.

Spells: **0-level** - daze, detect poison, mage hand, read magic; **1st** - charm person, detect secret doors, expeditious retreat.

Assassin Spells: **1st** - obscuring mist.

(Creature Collection - Sword & Sorcery Studio).

Moloch, much like others of his kind, lives a solitary and lonely existence. Death, rejection, and the cold shoulder of society is all that he has ever known, but Moloch wants more than this paltry existence. The assassin cares only for his own goals, which are considerably different from those of his current employer, Lord Fenrius.

Moloch normally appears exactly as the individual that he is currently impersonating, even down to their voices, knowledge, and skills. In his native form, however, Moloch appears much like any other skin devil, a humanoid creature whose skin appears to have been flayed away, revealing tissues and veins that lie underneath; the characters are unlikely to see him in this form, though.

NPC Initiation: Moloch's initial appearance is as Fenrius's silent scribe. Later, he indirectly interacts with the party in **Scene Two: Into the Mountains**.

NPC Continuation: Moloch's future within an existing campaign depends wholly on the outcome of this adventure, and he could very well be eliminated at several points in the adventure. Therefore, how Moloch reacts and interacts with the characters in adventures to come will depend on how they deal with him in Deadwood.

Iccus

CR 1; Male advanced murdersprite; NE; Tiny fey; HP 13; Init +6; Spd 15 ft., fly 60 ft.; AC: 17 [+2 size, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge, +2 natural]; Atk: +0 melee/+5 pin/+5 ranged; SA Poisoned weapons; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 4, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Disable Device +2, Hide +6, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +3, Search +1, Spot +3; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (pin).

Special Attacks: Poisoned weapons.

Gear: Pin, thunderstones x3.

(Creature Collection - Sword & Sorcery Studio)

NPC Introduction: Iccus is friend and companion to Moloch and will be encountered in the course of the adventure aiding and assisting the skin devil assassin.

NPC Continuation: It is highly unlikely that the characters will have any interaction with Iccus outside of their dealings with Moloch.

Deadwood NPCs

Bethany Streamswift

Female human Wizard 1/Cleric 1; LG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9 [-1 Dex]; Atk +0 (+1 melee/-2 ranged); SV Fort +1, Ref -2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +5, Craft (painting) +6, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (religion) +7, Spellcraft +7; Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Heal).

Gear: 2 short swords, spellbook, writing implements, painting supplies, scrolls (*bless* x2, *charm person*, *sanctuary*).

Spells typically prepared: Wizard: **0-level** - *mage hand* x2, *dancing lights*; **1st** - *change self*, *silent image*; Cleric: **0-level** - *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, **1st** - *bless water*, *obscuring mist*, *sanctuary*. Bethany usually favors flashy spells,

especially for her arcane spellcasting. If necessary, the DM can give her access to more offensive spells.

Bethany, or Beth as she is usually called, was born and raised in Deadwood, and will most likely die there as well. She loves the town to its core and does everything that she can to help out. She teaches a small school for the hamlet's children, showing them how to read, write, and eventually (if they show promise) teaching them minor cantrips and spells.

She also spends a great deal of time at the Temple of the Mountain God aiding the head priestess with caring for the sick or injured.

She is quite intelligent and very quick-witted, and enjoys sparring words with the Old Mill's patrons, especially Argus, who she finds particularly intriguing.

Beth is highly respected by the folk of Deadwood, and any character not doing like- wise is liable to bring the disfavor of those present upon themselves, especially the displeasure of Ulyk (see below).

NPC Initiation: Bethany can be initially encountered in any one of the following locations, the Old Mill, the schoolhouse, or the temple. If it is nighttime and there is no immediate need for her at the Temple, she can be found at the Old Mill. Her vibrant red hair, striking blue eyes, and quick wit make her very hard to miss.

NPC Continuation: Bethany will under no circumstances leave Deadwood, as she loves the town and those that inhabit it. She is a true patriot of Deadwood, and if things turn sour for the PC's later in the adventure, her voice will be one of the loudest raised against them. It is not that she hates outsiders as much as she seeks to protect Deadwood and its way of life. She would have nothing change it, if she had her way. Further, her voice will weigh heavily on Argus' decision on whether or not to leave with the PCs, so they would do well to gain her favor early on.

Daonis Rockgirdler

Female human Cleric 3 (The Mountain God); LG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 29; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 [-1 Dex, +6 banded]; Atk +3 melee/+1 ranged; SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 13.

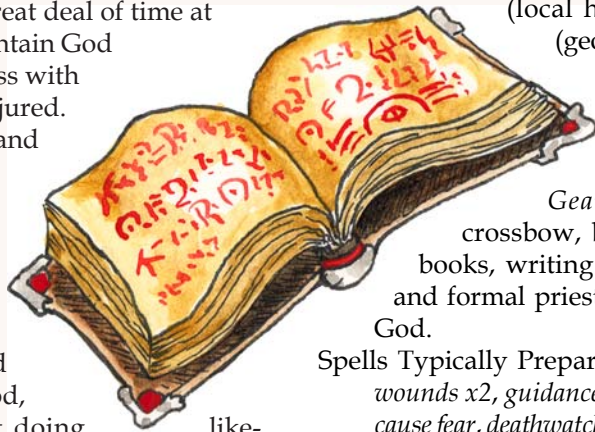
Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (local history) +6, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (religion) +8, Scry +4, Spellcraft +6; Great Fortitude, Spell Penetration, Toughness.

Gear: Heavy mace, light crossbow, bolts x35, climber's kit, books, writing supplies, holy symbol, and formal priest robes of the Mountain God.

Spells Typically Prepared: **0-level** – *cure minor wounds* x2, *guidance*, *detect magic*; **1st** – *bles*, *cause fear*, *deathwatch*, *magic stone*; **2nd** – *bull's strength*, *soften earth and stone*, *sound burst*. (Daonis only prepares non-healing spells when the attacks start occurring.)

Short and solid are nearly the perfect words to describe this priestess that directs the movements of the Temple of the Mountain God in Deadwood. Nearly as wide as she is tall, she always dresses in the dull gray or brown robes of her faith and it is a bit of a joke amongst the local lads that she looks more like a boulder than her god does. Despite the ribbings and the jokes (which she, of course, knows about), Daonis is well liked by most folk in town; which is a good thing, as she is almost their sole source for healing and medicines.

Daonis mostly keeps to herself within the temple and busies herself with her daily routine of prayer, mediation, reading, gardening, and keeping the place spotlessly clean. The solid walls that surround the temple and its gardens are a bit of an unusual item in Deadwood, and Daonis does nothing to dissuade the rumors that they were a direct gift from her god. She also occasionally helps Bethany at the



schoolhouse, giving the children lessons in reading, writing, history, geography, and of course, religion, all in which she is well versed and very well read.

If Daonis has a passion besides her divine calling, it is books. Fully two rooms of the four in the temple are filled with books, all of which she has read at least twice, many countless times. She memorizes them and can quote from their pages as readily as she can read from any holy text of the Mountain God. In fact, she has confided on one occasion to Bethany (whom she considers her only true friend within Deadwood) that if she had not been called to the church, she would have loved to have become a sage, or perhaps even a librarian in a large city. She and Bethany have hopes of one day starting a library within the small town, and have approached Magden IV regarding the proposition several times.

NPC Initiation: Just about the only time that the characters have the opportunity to encounter Daonis is if they suffer any wounds that they cannot heal or tend themselves. If this occurs, they will be either taken or directed toward the temple, where Daonis resides as well as performs her calling. If the party does not meet the priestess of the Mountain God in this manner, then they will most likely not encounter her until Scene Eleven: Reinforcements, but she will be there, helping to defend the hamlet from the wave of "evil" that has descended upon them all.

NPC Continuation: While Daonis is likely never to become a major player within a continuing campaign, she could prove to be the source of many adventure seeds for the crafty DM. Her love of books, of course, is the source of most of these ideas, and a few ideas are presented here:

- Daonis contacts the characters to bring books to her, but one of the books proves to be far more than any of them expected.
- Daonis actually makes the decision to leave the church and follow her secular dream of becoming a great sage or a librarian; she hires the PCs to help her make this happen.
- After leaving Deadwood, the characters are contacted by a powerful priest or priestess in the church of the Mountain God.

Apparently, this deity informed this priest that Daonis must be brought before a holy tribunal because she has "lost her way." The PC's must retrieve her.

Of course, these are merely suggestions and are provided for the convenience of the DM only.

Galyn Lyrestringer

Male halfling Bard 2/Rogue 1; CN; Small humanoid; HP 9; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 [+1 size, +4 Dex, +3 studded leather,]; Atk +1 (+0 melee/+7 ranged); SV Fort -1, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 9, Int 13, Wis 7, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Diplomacy +3, Hide +7, Listen +3, Move Silent +5, Open Lock +7, Perform (lyre) +7, Spot +2, Tumble +6; Alertness, Dodge.

Gear: thieves picks, lyre, various exotic carpets (25gp, 100gp x2, 150gp, 400gp), gems (50gp x3, 100gp x4, 250gp), fine robes.

Spells Known: **0-level** – *detect magic, ghost sound, mending, open/close, prestidigitation*; **1st** – *identify, message, sleep*.

A halfling rogue in hiding, Galyn sees Deadwood as both an unbearable prison and a life saving haven. Galyn once lived the life that most bards only dream of, the personal bard of a rich and powerful land baron. However, greed and lust got the better of this talented musician-rogue, and Galyn tried to make away not only with the baron's prized collection of magical robes and jeweled rings, but his daughter as well! The crafty rogue would have gotten away with it as well, if it had not been for the foresight of the baron, who had for some time suspected that the wily bard was trying to rob him. The baron commissioned his finest sorcerer to charm a cloaker to guard his hoard. Galyn was forced to abandon his prizes and flee, and to this day, harbors a healthy distrust of all wizards and sorcerers.

Knowing that he had a bounty on his head, Galyn sought out a place where he would vanish completely. He found that place in Deadwood, but being used to a finer lifestyle,

he despises the tiny, boring town and all within it. He knows that it is also the only thing keeping him alive, however...

Galyn loves the good life and his taste in clothing shows it, as does his penchant for expensive jewelry, particularly rings. However, his time in Deadwood and the time away from the courts have dulled his fashion sense somewhat. He now holds on to the vestiges of that life as best he can while still staying incognito. His short-cropped auburn hair, abundance of freckles, and his nose, which seems to have been broken at some point in the past, does little for "blending into the crowd."

NPC Initiation: Galyn will most likely only be encountered in the Old Mill, as he rarely spends anytime associating with the folk of Deadwood outside of the establishment. Playing in the Old Mill is his bread and butter, so he is forced to interact with them to some extent.

NPC Continuation: Galyn would pay almost any price to get out of Deadwood, but knows that he needs protection to do so. He sees the characters as his ticket out of town, and given the opportunity, will make a deal to travel with them, provided they supply "around the clock" protection. He will either not say why he needs this protection, or will make up some "bard's tale" about a creature of darkness and claw that is chasing him. Basically, whatever he feels that the PCs need to hear to provide him with protection is what he will tell them.

The rogue is desperate and is willing to part with many of his gems and carpets to ensure his safety and departure. This scenario is ripe with adventure seeds.

Gh'rus Forgefire

Male dwarf Ranger 2; LG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 18; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 [-1 Dex, +4 chain shirt]; Atk +3 melee/+0 ranged; SV Fort +6, Ref -1, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Craft (tool) +3, Intuit Direction +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +1, Profession (mining) +5, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +6; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Track.

Favored Enemy: Ice ghouls

Gear: *Axe of the Snows* (see **Appendix C: New Magic Items**), masterwork chain shirt, sling, sling bullets x24.

Even though he is often alone and away from the hamlet for long periods of time, Gh'rus is by far the more congenial of the two dwarves. It is as if when he is around other folk that he is truly alive, for he loves to tell tales and sing songs of his travels, as well as hear a new tale or three.

He is far more sociable than most dwarves, and there is rarely a scowl seen on his lips, peeking out from behind his red and silver-tipped beard. His slate gray eyes sparkle with enthusiasm when he is around other folk, and he is always interested in any newcomers to Deadwood.

NPC Initiation: With his open mind and friendly manner, Gh'rus is easily introduced to the characters. In fact, the joking, rough-and-tumble dwarf would approach the PCs first, rather than being approached. He loves to talk to folks from outside the valley village and will offer to buy them a round of drinks merely in exchange for their names and from whence they hail.

NPC Continuation: Gh'rus, loving to have folks around him would simply love to have the characters along with him on one of his "mining jaunts" into the mountains. The old, affable dwarf can tell tales of veins of gold and gems that he has seen that would make any PCs head spin with the promise of riches to be claimed.

All Gh'rus asks of the party in return is that they accompany him, and that they not take any of the silver, mithral, or adamantite that he and his brother need for their business. They are welcome to as much as they can carry of anything else that they find.

Haldren Smithson

Male human Warrior 1/Expert1; NG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 11; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 [+6 splint, +1 buckler]; Atk +3 melee; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Innuendo +1, Profession (cook) +4, Read Lips +2, Sense Motive +2, Swim +4; Power Attack, Skill Focus (profession).

Gear: Light mace, 2 long swords, heavy crossbow, 3 daggers, climber's kit.

Haldren, known to all in Deadwood simply as "Hal," is the full time barkeep and cook at the Old Mill. Since the Old Mill never has an overwhelming number of patrons at once, and due to the fact that Hal knows what most folk are going to order it before they do, it is not as tough to handle the cooking and the pouring of drinks as one might think. The son of a blacksmith, Hal didn't take to working the forge and instead became the cook and barkeep at the Old Mill. Despite being heralded as the "best cook ever to grace the kitchen," it is widely rumored that Hal's decision not to continue in his father's footsteps is what killed the old man; folk say that Hal's father died of a broken heart. The subject is still a sore one with Hal, however, and most folk never say anything about it to his face. Doing so is liable to bring the sizeable lad over the bar with clenched fists.

In his younger days, Hal gained some experience with weapons when he would follow Gh'rus Forgefire (see below) off on his jaunts into the mountains, and also serves as the Old Mill's bouncer as needed. While this is a rare occurrence many still remember the night that Hal saved the town from a wandering owlbear using only his trusty frying pans as weapons...

Hal is a lanky man, his long face seems drawn down into a perpetual frown, but one can see at first glance that this is a fellow that does most of his smiling with his wave-green eyes. Always clean-shaven and neat, Hal is about the last thing that an individual would

think of as a blacksmith—perhaps this had something to do with his life's choice, perhaps not.

NPC Initiation: Characters will most likely initially encounter Hal in his role as cook and barkeep at the Old Mill. While Hal is not an overly talkative fellow, he is by no means rude or introverted. He is just the type of fellow that would rather listen than speak, and who keeps an eye on all that is going on around him. Hal only lives a stone's throw away from the Old Mill, but he leaves home early in the morning and returns late at night, long after the patrons have left the Old Mill, so the characters are likely to assume that the fellow lives there.

NPC Continuation: Only under extreme conditions could Hal be persuaded to leave Deadwood, due to his close personal ties to the place and the people. However, he is one of the very few townsfolk that could possibly be convinced to leave the valley and enter the adventurer's life. Other than this, there are only minor possibilities for future development with Hal's character, most of which center around him being a contact within the Old Mill for the PC's.

Hal is a virtual font of information about the inhabitants of Deadwood itself and could be used as a very valuable resource in tracking the moves of Moloch, the assassin, later in the adventure. Further, he can provide the PCs with information about the Old Mill that most folk do not know, including the fact that Magden has two floors of "witchy stuff" locked away above the common room of the Old Mill.

Harrak Forgefire

Male dwarf Expert 4; LG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 20; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 [+1 Dex, +4 chain shirt]; Atk +3 melee/+4 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +8, Appraise +10, Craft (blacksmithing) +9, Craft (smelting) +9, Craft (tool) +12, Knowledge (ancient history) +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local

history) +8, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +4, Search +3, Speak Languages (Elven, Draconic), Spot +4; Alertness.

Gear: Shortspear, masterwork chain shirt, *dust of translation*, 20 oz. (see **Appendix C: New Magic Items**), masterwork craft tools, and many, many books.

Harrak, who rarely leaves his own house, much less the hamlet, is quite the recluse, preferring to stay tucked away within his laboratory, laden with musty tomes and various flasks filled with burbling alchemical mixtures. He rarely socializes with the folk of Deadwood, and when out in public, he is most often silent and taciturn, peering out hawk-like from beneath his bushy, salt and pepper eyebrows and over his half-moon spectacles.

Harrak speaks little, but when he does, it is always with perfect intonation and grammar. It is widely whispered that his speech is as well groomed as are his imported silk shirts, woolen breeches, and his ever-trimmed graying hair and beard. The studious dwarf is also one of the town's few scribes, and prides himself on his penmanship and his imported griffon-feather quill pens.

NPC Initiation: Compared to his cousin, Harrak is considerably harder to introduce to a party, as he is a bit of a wallflower. However, he runs the shop while his cousin is away, so if need be the characters can meet him there. Also, any studious or bookworm-like character will readily identify with this stern dwarf. This sort of "companionship through understanding" could very well be the perfect icebreaker in this case.

NPC Continuation: Harrak is often on the lookout for parties that are willing to track down, acquire and retrieve hard-to-find alchemical components for him. He is willing to pay top dollar for these services, and can be pushed to pay upwards of 15% more than the going price for these services.

Magden Gristwheel IV

Male half-elf Aristocrat 2; LG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 [+1 Dex]; Atk +1 (+2 ranged); SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +2, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +2, Knowledge (local history) +4, Listen +5, Spot +3; Alertness.

Gear: several varieties of adventuring outfits, *ring of mind shielding* (the Gristwheel family signet ring), a *thunderstone* he always carries with him, and 700 gp in various coins and jewels stored away; he rarely carries any of it on him since he needs it so rarely.

Each and every eldest male Gristwheel has succeeded his father as the informal ruler of the town, and Deadwood has continued to prosper under the guidance and tutelage of each. Magden IV is no exception and he is as well loved as any person within the hamlet. Open, friendly, and easy going, the elf is the perfect politician and is most at home shaking hands and patting the backs of the folks that depend on him.

Magden is the first in the long line of Gristwheels that does not have the flair for sorcery and the wizardly arts in his veins. He simply could not grasp the complex gestures, runes, and incantations required to cast spells. As a result, the magical knowledge that controls the Deadwood Golems died with Magden III, unless someone can unlock the secrets from the tomes hidden within the upper two floors of the Old Mill. Magden IV knows that these are very valuable books, and so he keeps them around, but sadly his father, who was killed before his time by a rogue encounter with a mountain beast, had not conferred the books' secrets to his son before he died. A wizard or sorcerer with enough time and *read magic* and *comprehend languages* could discern what lies within the books, for they are not warded or trapped. However, Magden, content and busy with his other pursuits and running the tiny town, has never bothered to have them identified.

Magden IV has a penchant for wearing adventure's clothing, even though he and everyone in town are aware of the fact that he rarely leaves the valley. Yet, he feels that the clothing affords him an air of excitement and mystery that bolsters the confidence that the townsfolk have in him. His thin lips are always ready to leap into a smile, and he almost always wears his long, honey-brown hair pulled back in a ponytail.

NPC Initiation: The best place to introduce Magden IV is by far the Old Mill, but DMs should feel free to introduce this friendly fellow nearly anywhere within the valley walls. Seeing that the characters are new to town, Gristwheel will more than likely approach them and introduce himself. He will spend as much time talking about Deadwood as he will about where the PCs get their superb clothing.

NPC Continuation: Due to the fact that Magden is a bit of a central figure in the hamlet of Deadwood, his continued involvement within an ongoing campaign is a bit limited. He could be a very useful ally and contact within the town itself, of course, but that depends greatly on the outcome of this adventure. If the result is one that is amicable for all parties involved, then Magden will, of course, be grateful to the PCs and will be in their debt. However, if things go poorly for the characters in Deadwood, they will be outlaws and exiled and any future dealings will most likely be conducted with a great deal more hostility.

However, if Magden's need for a spell caster at his side becomes known, this could open up possibilities in many areas. If the party has a mage, he could very well find funding to begin a small mage school within Deadwood, with Magden as a financial backer. Alternatively, Magden could hire the characters to seek out "the finest mage in all the lands" to come and serve at his side. Tracking down and convincing a powerful mage to relocate to an obscure mountain town is the stuff of bard's tales, to be sure, or a pipe dream!

Nim

Male gnome Sorcerer 2/Rogue 1; N; Small humanoid; HP 11; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12 [+2 Dex]; Atk +1 melee/+3 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +7, Appraise +7, Balance +4, Concentration +3, Disable Device +5, Hide +6, Listen +4 (now useless due to his injury), Move Silent +8, Open Lock +5, Profession (blacksmith) +5, Read Lips +7, Scry +4, Search +4, Spellcraft +5, Spot +4, Tumbling +3; Skill Focus (read lips), Heighten Spell.

Special Attacks: Sneak attack +1d6.

Gear: Alchemist Fire x4, smokesticks x2.

Spells Known: **0-level** – arcane mark, daze, detect magic, ghost sound; **1st** – hold portal, summon monster I.

Muffles, owl familiar; N; Tiny animal; HP 5; Init: +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft.; AC 16 [+2 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural]; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Listen +14, Move Silently +20, Spot +6 (in dusk and darkness); Weapon Finesse (claws).

Special Qualities: Empathic Link, improved evasion, shared spells.

Nim was, long ago, an adventurer of the finest sort. He had dreams of making his fortune through adventuring and living out a life filled with riches and splendor. All of that changed when the gnome was double-crossed by his companions over a treasure. Nim's resulting wounds left him deaf, mute, and despondent.

If it had not been for his familiar, Muffles, Nim would surely be dead today, but due to the unique bond that they share, Nim is able to hear and sense things through the owl through their empathic link. Further, Nim has learned to communicate quite effectively through written word as well as an ever-growing series of hand signals, and is quite talented at reading lips.

Wandering and wallowing in a deep well of gloom, Nim eventually found himself in Deadwood. Magden IV took a shine to the fellow and helped him get back on his feet. The town needed a blacksmith, as their last one had

passed on from old age, and Nim knew a bit of metal crafting. Nim got right to work and has never looked back.

NPC Initiation: Nim is easily approachable by the party, as he is a well-known and well-liked member of the Deadwood community. Characters will most likely meet him at his shop while purchasing, repairing, or selling equipment or weapons. The elderly gnome will be most pleased to do business with the PCs due to the fact that he sees little business of this nature (and frequency) in town during the lean weather months.

Nim frequents the Old Mill quite often, as he takes all of his meals there. He is a bit of a fixture at the Old Mill and has a reserved table and all of his favorite meals and drinks are well known to all.

NPC Continuation: The gnome still holds a grudge for the wrongs done to him by his old adventuring group and in his heart of hearts, desires revenge upon them.

Nim would gladly take out a contract with the PCs to track down his old comrades and bring them to justice.

Ranlin Quickaxe

Male human Commoner 3; NG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 11; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 [Dex]; Atk +2 melee/+3 ranged (1d6+1, woodaxe or 1d3, thrown knife); SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (miller) +2, Listen +4, Profession (woodcutter) +3, Spot +4, Swim +2, Use Rope +4; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes.

Gear: Forgefire woodaxe, hatchet, knife, warm clothing, flask of apple brandy.

Ranlin Quickaxe is has long been recognized among the community of Deadwood as being one of their finer loggers. Nearly inseparable from his cousin and closest friend, Turl Boughsplitter, Ranlin is also recognized as being by far the brighter and cleverer of the two. This doesn't seem t bother the two, and their talents are complimentary, earning them and their families a good living in Deadwood. Ranlin shows an early knack for handling the

deadwood logs at the mill, and his talents indicate the he is likely to be chosen lead miller after Bothwin retires.

NPC Initiation: Ranlin will first be encountered in Scene Three: Down in the Valley.

NPC: Continuation: The PCs may call on Ranlin after they rescue him and his cousin from the attack by hungry ice ghouls. While more than willing to assist, guide, or advise the PCs after their good deed, he is not interested in the adventuring life. Even if Turl dies in the attack, Ranlin is not likely to desire to depart Deadwood. He enjoys the simple lifestyle despite the hard work and is devoted to his wife Wolla and young daughter Mira.

The Borderwalker

Female nymph Ranger 3; CG; Medium-sized fey; HP 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15 [+3 Dex, +2 leather]; Atk +4 melee/+7 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +10, Climb +2, Handle Animal +8, Heal +9, Hide +14, Intuit Direction +7, Knowledge (nature) +15, Listen +11, Move Silently +16, Search +5, Sense Motive +8, Spot +10, Wilderness Lore +10; Ability Focus (unearthly beauty), Alertness, Ambidexterity, Dodge, Iron Will, Track.

Favored Enemy: Goblinoids.

Special Attacks: Blinding beauty, unearthly beauty.

Special Qualities: Spell-like abilities: *dimension door* once per day as 7th-level sorcerer, replicate druid spells as a 7th-level caster.

Gear: +1 handaxe, longbow, arrows x20, shortsword, *cloak of elvenkind*, 132 gp, 7 days rations, torches x2, water flask, mirror, backpack.

Beyond these, the Borderwalker appears to have extremely little with her at any time. No one knows where she resides or if she merely sleeps on the ground wherever she stops for the night.

The nymph is a local ranger that is well known to the locals. She does not call Deadwood her home as she prefers the open wilds. She is called the Borderwalker in Deadwood, as when she is in town, she rarely speaks greatly

or openly at all (another reason why her warning has such a dramatic effect on the folk of Deadwood), and no one knows her true name. The Borderwalker takes no offense at the title, as it provides her an air of mystery and enhances her reputation as a loner.

She cares greatly for the folks of Deadwood, not only for the continued kindness that they have shown her, but also because of their careful preservation and outlook on the lands around their town. She knows that the hamlet loves the unique woods that surround and provide for them, and that they would never do anything to harm them. This, to her, is the ultimate test of whether a person (or in this case, a settlement) is good, and Deadwood has passed the test time and time again.

NPC Initiation: The Borderwalker delivers the fell news that they have been snowed into a town that is growing distrustful and angry with them. If the DM wishes to introduce the Borderwalker to the PCs before this encounter, she can easily be introduced either near the mountain range near Deadwood or the valley itself. She can prove to be an invaluable source of information about the area, the hamlet, as well as in giving the party general directions, although in a reserved demeanor.

NPC Continuation: Developing future campaign hooks, threads, or adventure seeds with the Borderwalker is fairly simple. She is a mysterious and wandering local figure that could either need to be sought out and located by the PCs or could be seeking them. Perhaps this mysterious figure has knowledge that a powerful druid seeks. Perhaps she has a long lost relative of noble birth who has sought her out for years on end, and hires the PCs to track her down.

Or, the Borderwalker could require and seek out the assistance of the party. For example, the ranger could need help with the task of delivering a package of herbal cures to a remote mountain citadel many leagues away. She could hire them to travel in her stead to the larger cities of the area (which she is loathe to do) to obtain items that she desires.

Turl Boughsplitter

Male human Commoner 2; NG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 10; Initiative +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, woodaxe); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Profession (woodcutter) +4, Swim +2, Use Rope +1; Skill Focus (profession), Power Attack.

Gear: Forgefire woodaxe, hatchet, knife, warm clothing.

Widely recognized among the folk of Deadwood as a fine woodcutter, Turl is also acknowledged to be a bit dim, especially in comparison to his cousin Ranlin Quickaxe. The two have been nearly inseparable since they were children, and almost always work together to fell the deadwood trees from which they make their living. He and his wife, Maeve, have four children — three rambunctious boys, and a daughter.

NPC Initiation: Turl will first be encountered in **Scene Three: Down in the Valley**, a victim of an ice ghoulish attack.

NPC Continuation: If Turl is rescued by the PCs, he will be quite grateful toward them. The PCs will be able to call on him for advice and guidance in matters regarding Deadwood. If the PCs save Turl's life, he will want to believe in them no matter what happens, but may be too embarrassed to speak up for them before an angry crowd. Turl usually lets Ranlin to the majority of speaking for the two, except when downing a mug of ale at the Old Mill and exchanging stories with other locals, that is.

Turl is absolutely uninterested in a life outside of Deadwood, and is in fact a bit intimidated by the thought of life in a bigger town. Turl is quite happy to live out his days in Deadwood with his wife and family.

Ulyk Woodhewer

Male half-orc Commoner 2; NG; Medium-sized humanoid; HP 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 [+1 Dex, +2 leather]; Atk +6 melee/+2 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Spot +1; Swim +6; Use Rope +2; Wilderness Lore +1; Run.

Gear: Morningstar (nicknamed "Bearcrusher" by locals even though Ulyk has probably never used it on one), 2 daggers, backpack, rope.

Ulyk, although a half-orc, has come to fit in quite well in what serves for Deadwood society. A massive, brawny, and coarse fellow, it is overly apparent that he got far more attributes from his orcish parent than he did his human one, but nevertheless he is as good-natured and good-hearted a fellow as one will ever meet. Ulyk came into Deadwood over 10 years ago, wandering and lost through the mountains, outcast, feared, and hated by all that encountered him. That was, until he met Bethany Streamswift, who saw past his outward appearance to the fine and pure fellow beneath. Only through her standing up for him and on her word was he allowed into town and he has since earned not only the trust of all in town, but also their admiration.

The occasion for him to earn the admiration of the hamlet of Deadwood was a day that changed Ulyk's life, as well as the lives of others within the hamlet. Ulyk had been given a job laboring long hours at the sawmill in town, doing grueling work that many other men in town simply could not do. While Ulyk was helping to load a wagon with massive planks of deadwood, some of the ropes holding the load snapped, spilling the logs into the street. They were headed directly for the little schoolhouse and 12 children (as well as Bethany) inside. There was no time to evacuate the building, or even to shout a warning, there was only time to act. Ulyk rushed in front of the cascading avalanche of logs and grabbed the first two in his massive arms, planting them into the cobblestones at his feet. The remaining wave of logs smashed into this impromptu barrier, shattering them and severely wounding Ulyk in the process. However, the impact was enough to divert the remaining logs and the children were saved.

Ulyk almost died, and spent many weeks in the temple under the care of the priestess and Bethany and the town rejoiced when their "hero" pulled through. From that day forward, Ulyk, despite his looks, has been a loved and trusted member of the hamlet of Deadwood. Ulyk is smitten with Bethany, but it seems to be a love that is unrequited.

NPC Initiation: The PCs will probably encounter Ulyk at the Old Mill initially, as the half-orc is there every night, in hopes to at least catch a glimpse of Bethany. He will defend her fiercely if the characters are at all rude or disrespectful of her, and will come to blows with the slightest provocation. If the characters react offensively to him in this situation, there is sure to be a fight of some manner, but Hal, Magden, or Argus could possibly calm things somewhat.

Ulyk is one of the woodworkers that could be frightened by the deadwood golem in the later encounter entitled **Scene Six: Sensational Sawmill Stirrings**.

NPC Continuation: Ulyk, has potential for use in later adventures or within an ongoing campaign. Other than his intense love for Bethany, there is little to hold him there, or in fact anywhere. If he could be convinced that the feelings he has for Bethany are one-sided, then with his now bolstered confidence from his time in Deadwood, he could easily leave the hamlet with the characters. PCs could later encounter Ulyk as an NPC in another portion of their campaign world, or they could return to Deadwood years later to find him a successful businessman or as leader of the local militia formed to defend the hamlet from the depredation of ice ghouls or other dangerous creatures of the wilderness. However, for the time being (or until he can be shown that Bethany does not, in fact, love him), he is faithful to her and to the town that she loves so dearly.

Appendix B: Monsters

Deadwood Golems

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 4d10 (20 hp)

Initiative: +1 Dex

Speed: 30 ft. (can't run)

AC: 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural)

Attacks: 2 slams +8 melee

Damage: 1d8 +5

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Construct, fast healing 3, magic immunity

Saves: Fort – (+2), Ref +4, Will +2

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 13, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organization: Solitary or Gang (2-4)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 5-10 HD (Large); 11-16 HD (Huge)

The deadwood golems were created generations ago by Magden IV's ancestors to be the brute labor force for the hamlet of Deadwood. They are tireless laborers and with their regenerative capability can withstand most harsh weather.

In order to protect the villagers, the golems are all controllable via a special *Amulet* created for solely this purpose. The wearer must make a Will save (DC 10, +2 for each golem above one) in order to control them. The golems follow their commands until instructed to stop or destroyed.

Combat

Deadwood golems were not designed for combat. However, they do possess exceptional strength capable of overwhelming the unprepared. In combat, deadwood golems batter their opponents with their massive fists.

Magic Immunity (Ex): A deadwood golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. Attacks that deal sonic or acid damage harm deadwood golems normally. Also a *warp wood* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell). They are also susceptible to *antiplant shell* and *repel wood*.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Construction

A deadwood golem's body is constructed from 1,000 pounds of wood from deadwood trees.

The golem costs 10,000 gp to create, which includes 200 gp for the body. Assembling the body requires a successful Craft (carpentry) check (DC 25).

Caster Level: 13th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *bull's strength*, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, and *polymorph any object*. Completing the ritual drains 250 XP from the creator.

Gor: CR 3; Medium-sized humanoid (ice ghou); Barbarian 2; HD 2d8+8 + 2d12+8; HP 38; Spd 50 ft.; Init +2 [Dex]; AC: 14 [+2 Dex, +2 leather]; Atk: +8 melee/+6 ranged (1d10+6, greatclub); SA Rage; SQ Fast Movement, Resistances, Uncanny Dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 7, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Escape Artist +2, Hide +5, Intimidate +3, Intuit Direction +2, Jump +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Spot +4, Swim +7, Wilderness Lore +9; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack.

Special Attacks: **Rage:** +2 Str, +2 Con, +3 Will saves, -2 AC for duration of combat; barbarian rage.

Special Qualities: Immune to natural cold, suffer half damage from cold-based attacks, can go 4 months without food; fast movement; uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC).

(*Creature Collection* - Sword & Sorcery Studio).

Ice Ghouls: CR 1; Medium-sized humanoid (ice ghoule); HD 2d8+8; HP 17 (average); Init +2 [Dex]; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 [+2 Dex, +2 leather]; Atk: +6 melee handaxe/pickaxe/shortspear/+4 ranged shortspear (1d6+4, handaxe, pickaxe, or shortspear); SA Rage; SQ Resistances; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 7, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Escape Artist +2, Hide +5, Intuit Direction +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Spot +4, Swim +7, Wilderness Lore +6; Alertness, Power Attack.

Special Attacks: **Rage:** +2 Str, +2 Con, +3 Will saves, -2 AC for duration of combat.

Special Qualities: Immune to natural cold, suffer half-damage from cold-based attacks, can go 4 months without food.

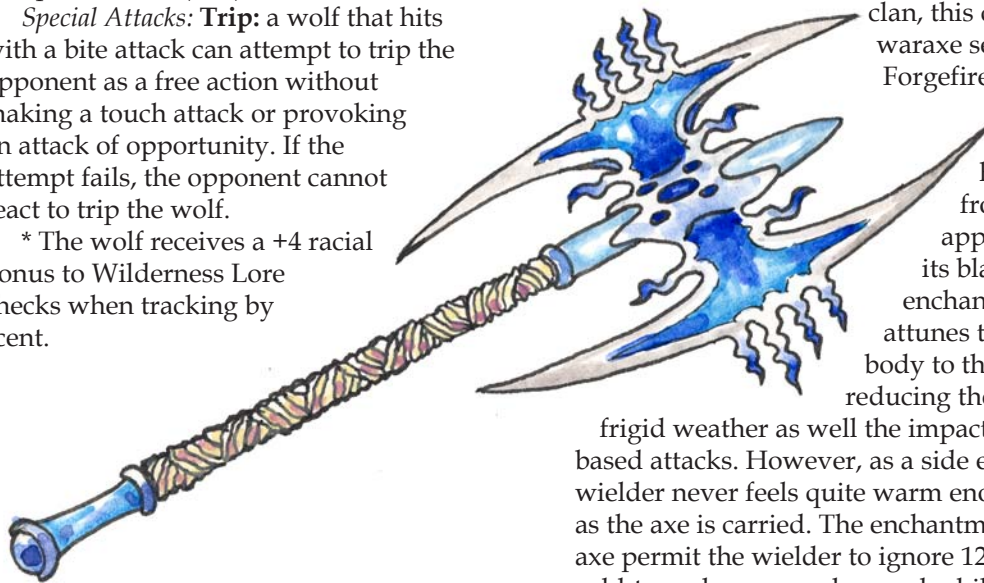
(*Creature Collection - Sword & Sorcery Studio*).

Wolf: CR 1; Medium-sized animal; HD 2d8+4; HP 13 (average); Init +2 [Dex]; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 [+2 Dex, +2 natural]; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA Trip; SQ Scent; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +1*; Weapon Finesse (bite).

Special Attacks: **Trip:** a wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

* The wolf receives a +4 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent.



Appendix C: New Magic Items

Amulet of Deadwood Golem Control: This amulet allows the wearer to control the deadwood golems. The wearer must have the golem in view and be within 125 feet of the target golem in order to establish control. There is a great deal of resistance from the spirit bound within the golem, and the wielder must make a Will save (DC 11, +2 for each golem above one) in order to take control. There is a 5% chance that the deadwood golem will go berserk if the attempt to control it fails. A berserk golem will attack anything in sight, including furniture, people, buildings, and other constructs. Once control has been established over a golem, the possessor of the amulet may give the golem a command, and it will follow that command as long as it is within a mile of the amulet, even if it is no longer in sight.

Caster Level: 13th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Enlarge Spell, *summon monster III*; *Market Price:* 30,250 gp; *Cost to Create:* 15,125 gp + 1210 XP; *Weight:* 1 lb.

Axe of the Snows: A relic of the Forgefire clan, this dwarven waraxe serves Gh'rus Forgefire well in his travels. The axe has a white, frosted appearance to its blade. Its enchantment attunes the wielder's body to the cold, reducing the effects of frigid weather as well the impact of cold-based attacks. However, as a side effect, the wielder never feels quite warm enough as long as the axe is carried. The enchantments of the axe permit the wielder to ignore 12 points of cold-type damage each round while the axe is carried.

Caster Level: 5th; Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, resist elements; Market Price: 30,660 gp; Cost to Create: 15,330 gp + 1,226 XP; Weight: 15 lb.

Dust of Translation: When spread onto non-magical text, this dust makes the words appear in the native language of the user. Each ounce can translate on page. The effect lasts until the dust is disturbed.

Caster Level: 3rd; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, comprehend languages; Market Price: 100 gp per ounce; Cost to Create: 50 gp + 4 XP per ounce, Weight: -.





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Village of Deadwood



Players' Map

Village of Deadwood



DM's Map