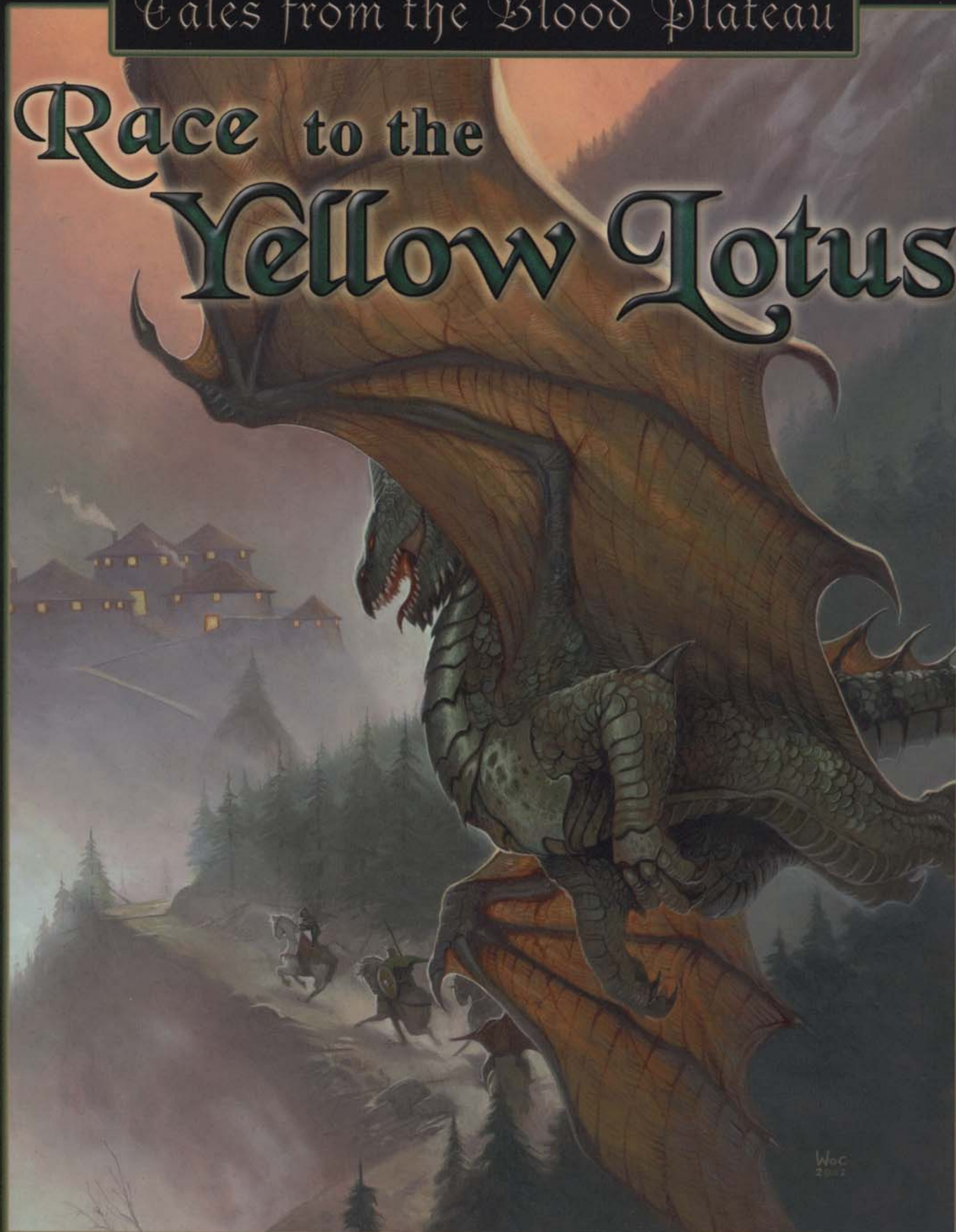




Tales from the Blood Plateau

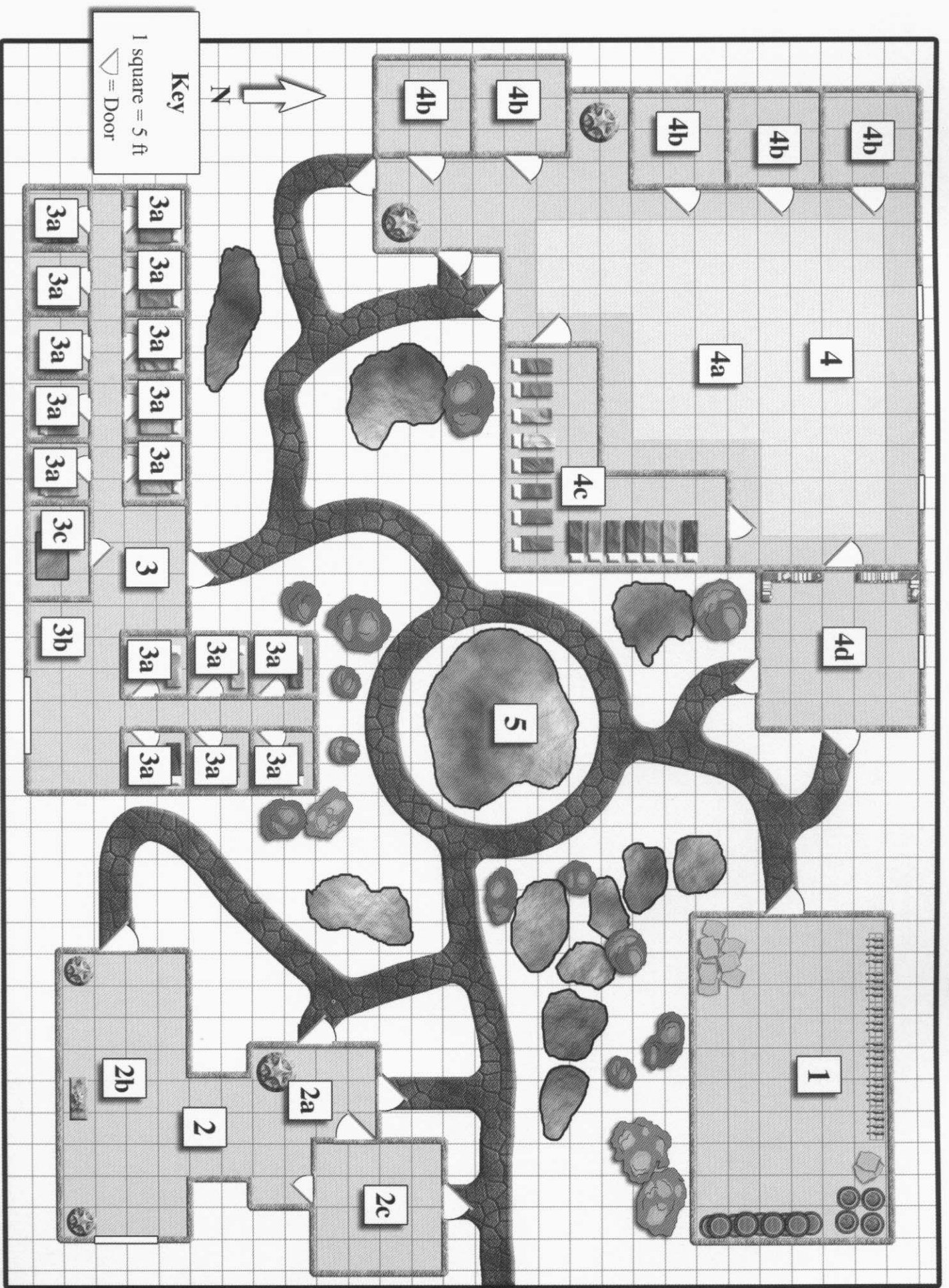
Race to the Yellow Lotus



WOC
2002

by Travis Stout

Yellow Lotus Monastery



Race to the Yellow Lotus

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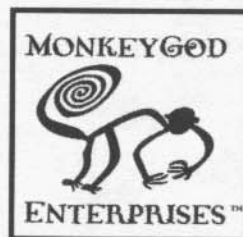
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Introduction

Preparation

You, as the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the Dungeons and Dragons® *Player's Handbook* to run this adventure. Text found on gray parchment is player information that should be paraphrased or read aloud to the players. Text in the sidebars contains important DM notes. Before running *Race to the Yellow Lotus*, you should read the entire module to get an idea of the overall plot. Just before play, you should also review the NPC and creature statistics to refresh your memory of their abilities. *Race to the Yellow Lotus* is the second adventure in the Pale Knight series, which centers around the tragic tale of a hero of old and the quest to undo the evil he has now become. Though it is designed for use as the second adventure in a series, *Race to the Yellow Lotus* can easily be played as a stand-alone with only a little modification.

This adventure is targeted at PCs of 4th or 5th level, though as always it can be modified for PCs of lower or higher level. A well-rounded group

(including a warrior-type character, a spellcaster, a healer, and a rogue) is practically a must for this adventure, as there are a wide variety of challenges the party must overcome. Barbarians, druids, and rangers in particular will find their wilderness skills useful in the latter portion of the adventure, when the PCs must delay the orc horde on its way to the Yellow Lotus monastery with woodland traps and ambushes. Rogues, especially those who have specialized in the placement and removal of traps, will find their skills in great demand, both in the Maze of the Goblin King and when the party attempts to delay the marching orc horde. As mentioned in *The Lost Outpost*, the first adventure in this series, it is strongly recommended that the party include a paladin, especially in the later adventures.

This adventure series is written assuming that the PCs are primarily of good or neutral alignments. Evil PCs may require additional incentives to participate in the Pale Knight adventures. Where applicable, suggestions will be made in the adventure text as to how evil PCs might be motivated to undertake these quests.

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Background: The Lost Outpost

The first adventure in the Pale Knight series, *The Lost Outpost*, saw the PCs fend off an attack by orcish terrorists in a tavern. As a consequence of their bravery and skill, they were conscripted by the captain of the Ni'Shang city guard to travel into the Dragonspine Mountains to re-take an old elven outpost that had been occupied by orcs. Unfortunately, the path to the outpost had been blocked by an avalanche, forcing the PCs to seek an alternate route to the outpost. They found it in the form of Kurd, a 'friendly' ogre who led them through abandoned goblin warrens to reach the outpost. The PCs then liberated the outpost, only to find themselves besieged by a small orc war-band, which had come with the intent of reinforcing their comrades at the outpost. Once the PCs repulsed this attack, they were relieved by an elven occupational force. Upon examination of the body of the shaman leading the orc band, the PCs discovered a mysterious set of orders, signed only "C," which instruct this shaman to take his band to reinforce this outpost, while the majority of the force marches to the Yellow Lotus Monastery to retrieve "*The Flower That Does Not Bloom.*" If you are reading this adventure, then it

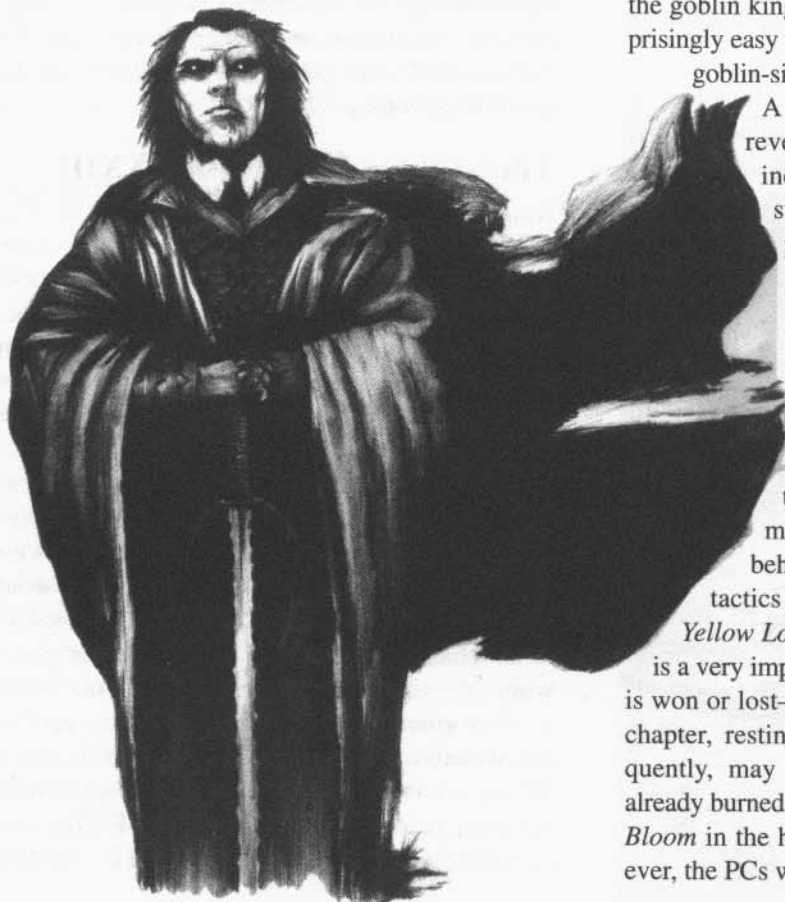


Introduction

may be assumed that the PCs agreed to travel to the Yellow Lotus Monastery and defend it against the depredations of the orcs.

The Flower That Does Not Bloom

These orcs are in the thrall of Calibourne the Pale, the vampire blackguard who has sworn to destroy the human lands of the Blood Plateau. While the orcs under Gruslagg the shaman tried to take the outpost, the remaining members of the band, under their ettin commander (perhaps slave-driver would be a more appropriate term) marched onward to the Monastery to lay claim to the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*. The Flower is a golden sculpture of a lotus, which the monks here have safeguarded for centuries. Despite its fell purpose, they have kept and studied the artifact in hopes of finding a redeeming use for it. *The Flower That Does Not Bloom* is the creation of an ancient and forgotten necromancer—its purpose is to allow *any* creature, not just humanoids, to become lichs. The monks, however, believe that if the rituals are altered just slightly, they might be used to reverse the process that creates an undead being and restore the unfortunate to life. As the PCs will later discover,



Calibourne is searching for this item to allow his draconic ally, K'tulrassass the Green Wurm, to undergo the process that will change her into a lich, as per the pact they have made.

Plot Synopsis

Chapter 1—The Goblin Warrens: In order to reach the monastery ahead of the orcs, the PCs must take a shortcut through an ancient, dwarf-built tunnel that bores through the Shadowstar Peak. Naturally, however, the goblins who dwell there today do not take kindly to humans invading their homes, and attempt to fight back. After several encounters with goblin bands, the PCs find themselves shunted via a chute trap into a small corridor. A brief exploration reveals to them that they are trapped in a maze. Naturally, this maze is quite simply crawling with traps and monsters of various stripes. As the PCs wander through the maze, they begin to see signs of the madness—or perhaps stupidity—of whatever being(s) controls the maze. Doors are scrawled at random with strange phrases (actually just “funny pictures” that the illiterate goblins liked), leading to much confusion as to their meanings. Finally, the PCs manage to find their way out of the maze, and into the lair of the goblin king. While the king himself proves surprisingly easy to dispatch, his bodyguard—a strange, goblin-sized golem—is a bit more challenging.

A quick look around the chambers reveals a treasure chamber, which includes a very curious shard of a sword blade, and a straight, narrow passage that leads to the northwest—the direction the PCs must travel to get ahead of the orcs.

Chapter 2—The Race is On: Once the PCs emerge into daylight, they find themselves in a lush forest of pine. Depending upon how long they took in the goblin caves, the PCs may come out ahead of the orcs or behind them, which will dictate the PCs' tactics in dealing with the orcs. *Race to the Yellow Lotus* is somewhat unusual in that time is a very important factor in whether the adventure is won or lost—PCs who meander through the first chapter, resting to heal and memorize spells frequently, may arrive at the monastery to find it already burned and looted, the *Flower That Does Not Bloom* in the hands of their enemies. Ideally, however, the PCs will find themselves emerging slightly

Race to the Yellow Lotus



ahead of or just behind the orcs. They must then attempt to delay the orcs as long as possible without spending so much time setting traps that their lead is rendered pointless. Naturally, they must do all this while fending off the local monsters and other denizens of the forest—including a young adult green dragon that has only recently left its nest and is very eager to accumulate its own hoard. This dragon, while not K'tulrassass herself, is one of that great wurm's offspring. Unbeknownst to the PCs, slaying this dragon will bring K'tulrassass's wrath down upon them.

Chapter 3—The Monastery of the Yellow Lotus: Finally, the PCs make it to the monastery. Again, the state in which they find it depends greatly upon whether or not they beat the orcs to it. Depending upon their actions, the PCs may very well arrive to find a burned-out ruin or a peaceful enclave, blissfully unaware of the terror about to descend upon them. Once there, PCs face a very different tactical situation than they faced at the outpost; the monastery has no outer walls and nothing even vaguely resembling a defensive perimeter. The PCs plainly do not have enough time or manpower to create a perimeter, and so they must steel themselves for a conflict within the simple gardens, ponds and footpaths of the monastery....

Chapter 4—The Endgame: The Monastery is assaulted by the orcs and their ettin general. Once defeated by the PCs and the stalwart monks, *The Flower That Does Not Bloom* is transported back to Ni'Shang. But the PCs have one last surprise awaiting them.

Geography

Race to the Yellow Lotus takes the PCs through a wide variety of terrain, from subterranean goblin tunnels to mountain forests to a secluded monastery in the peaks. Several of the more important sites are described herein.

The City of Ni'Shang

The Lost Outpost begins in the city of Ni'Shang, a large, predominantly human city located on the Blood Plateau. The population is mostly human and half-orc, with some orcs and representatives of other PC races occasionally present. Though it is ruled by a human governor, it also serves as the official capital for the orcs of the Blood Plateau, and a large section of the city is set aside for their

use. In addition to allowing the orcs to use a large portion of its land as their capital, Ni'Shang pays the tribes a yearly tribute to ensure the safety of the city and its trade routes.

The Old Dwarf Road

Centuries ago, the Old Dwarf Road referred to a massive trade route winding its way through the Dragonspine Mountains, uniting the Elven kingdom of the Northwood with the human-dominated lands south of the mountains. Caravans regularly traveled along the flat, smooth road of stone crafted by dwarven transmuters, and guard outposts stood at regular intervals to ward off orc and goblin raiders. Unfortunately, the road fell into disuse and disrepair after more powerful armies of humanoids and giants began making regular raids upon the caravans. Today, only a few, comparatively small spans of the Old Dwarf Road are still recognizable. Most notable of these is what was once called the Tunnel: a massive, semicircular tunnel that bores arrow-straight through the Shadowstar Peak. A marvel of magical artifice and structural engineering, the Tunnel, which is now referred to as the Old Dwarf Road as if it were the entirety of it, has been used as a pass through the treacherous mountains, a resting place during storms, and more recently as the central tunnel of a vast goblin warren under the dominion of King Nilbog XXIII.

The Maze of King Nilbog XXIII

King Nilbog XXIII (Nilbog being a very common name in Goblin) is a fairly typical goblin king with a fairly *atypical* lair. While most goblin warrens could be described as mazes due to the sheer randomness of their construction, Nilbog's warrens are quite specifically designed to be a maze, replete with numerous deadly traps, and even the obligatory minotaurs. Calibourne the Pale originally had this maze constructed by his undead servitors to guard one shard of *Dandural*, his +5 *holy avenger* longsword. Several decades later, King Nilbog's tunnelers broke into the maze. Realizing that it would make a fine lair, the goblin king led his armies in a bitter combat against the undead guards placed within the maze. This battle wiped out the maze's primary guardian, an allip, as well as the zombies and skeletons that patrolled the corridors. It also set off and wasted most of Calibourne's magical traps, but three years ago a human sorcerer, Krazatz, was captured by goblin bands along the Old Dwarf Road.



Introduction

Deprived of his material components and thrown into a jail cell, Krazatz was threatened with an agonizingly slow death if he did not construct traps for the King Nilbog's protection. Krazatz is still in the same cell within the maze, long since reduced to gibbering madness, but somewhere in his brain lie the keys to bypass his traps.

Icefang Wood

This large expanse of forest lies just below the tree line on the northern slopes of the Dragonspine Mountains. It is, technically speaking, a part of the Northwood, but the elves seldom venture here, and so it is part of their kingdom in name only. Over the centuries, many forest dwelling creatures, both good and evil, have migrated into this area and made their lairs. The forest is home to, among others, a small grove of dryads, a clan of bugbears, and, most impressively, the young adult green dragon Ssikariastiskr'it. This dragon has only recently begun exploring the world on his own, and has chosen this high, rocky forest as the prime site for his first lair. The forest is also where the PCs must spend much of their time attempting to slow the orcs' march on the Yellow Lotus monastery by constructing pit traps, barricades, and other distractions. Intelligent PCs might be able to convince the gnomes or the pixies, if they find them, to lend aid with their illusion spells. Less intelligent, or more belligerent, PCs may have to make do on their own.

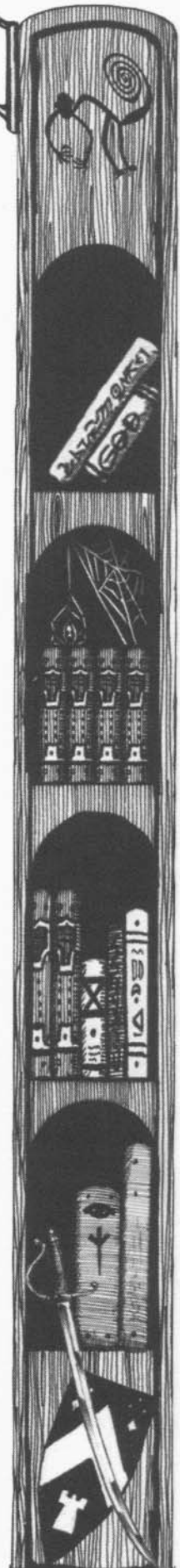
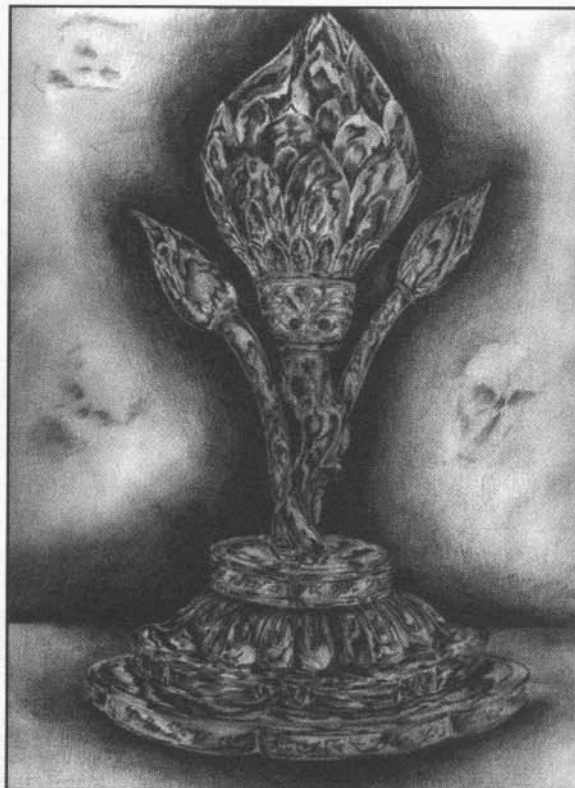
The Yellow Lotus Monastery

The Yellow Lotus Monastery is a small, simple monastery nestled high in the mountains above the Icefang Wood. It is a small collection of simple wooden buildings, narrow, winding paths through rock gardens, and tranquil ponds perched at the highest plateau of Mount Denjang. The Monks of the Yellow Lotus order have lived here for hundreds (maybe thousands) of years, guarding the *Flower That Does Not Bloom* from those who would use its powers for evil purposes. These monks have been isolated for so long that they are quite ignorant of the world around them, to the point that they do not even speak Common (or any language the PCs might know for that matter). Their entire existence is dedicated to spiritual contemplation and, of course, guarding the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*. The monastery is not at all fortified, and is poorly situated for defense.

Getting Involved

It is best that the adventure, for whatever reasons, begin at the lost outpost. If you are playing *Race to the Yellow Lotus* as a stand-alone adventure, the only thing that needs to be changed is the means by which the PCs find their way to the outpost.

- One solution is to have the PCs stumble onto a band of scouts from the outpost who bring them to Valaderion to ascertain their intentions and their purpose in the area. Once Valaderion is convinced of the PCs' good intentions, he will send them on the mission to the Monastery of the Yellow Lotus.
- Alternatively, the PCs might have seen the large orc war band on the move and decided that someone needed to be alerted to their presence.
- If there is a cleric or paladin in the group, visions and portents of a great tide of orcs and a golden flower could lead the PCs to the outpost.
- Or, for GMs with a perverse sense of humor, perhaps the PCs were already looking for the monastery when they became lost and stumbled upon the outpost instead.
- If you are playing *Race to the Yellow Lotus* as a sequel to *The Lost Outpost*, then you are already there.



Goblin Warrens

Our story begins outside the newly reoccupied outpost as the PCs and the elven commander Valaderion confer over the meaning of the orders discovered upon the body of Gruslagg, the orcish shaman. These orders dictated that, while the shaman was sent to reinforce the outpost, his war leader was to take the remainder of the force to the Yellow Lotus Monastery and seize the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*, an artifact of considerable mystical power. Valaderion requests that the PCs race to the monastery ahead of the orcs to prevent them from seizing the Flower. He feels a large force would take too long and the only hope lies with the fast traveling heroes:

Valaderion smiles warmly at your affirmative response. "Truly," he says, "Truly you are heroes of the finest sort. You have my undying thanks for your willingness to assist us. Though time is most certainly of the essence, if you will consent to spend one more night here, my men shall see to your wounds, and we shall feed you as best we can from our supplies. I shall dispatch my swiftest scouts immediately; when they return tomorrow, we shall have a greater understanding of where and how the orcs are travelling to the monastery. Once we know that, I shall send one of my spell-sergeants with you as a guide. Nelianath knows these mountains well—she may know a shortcut to get you ahead of the orcs. Go now to the camp deeper in the canyon, my friends. I shall see you this eve at vespers. Farewell."

The elven commander summons an aide, who leads you back to the elven soldiers' encampment. Once there, you are greeted cordially by the battle-hardened soldiers, who have a great many questions about your battles. After many tales are told and many drinks consumed, you are taken to the mess tent and treated to what the elves insist is a meager trail supper, but which rivals the finest cuisine to be had in Ni' Shang. After the meal, you are taken to billets to sleep. Somehow, you feel that this may be the last night of decent sleep you get for a long time to come.

GMs whose players are of a more strongly role-playing bent should feel free to expand these scenes to their hearts' content. Otherwise, inform the PCs that elven healers tend their wounds, restoring them to full hit points, while the soldiers provide them with as much non-magical gear (i.e. food, torches, arrows, etc) as the PCs need replacing. GMs should exercise common sense when handing out supplies—after all, the elves need them too. GMs should also consider whether an elven company would carry the equipment the PCs might desire. Throwing axes, for example, are probably not carried by the archery-inclined elves. Once new equipment has been handed out, spells have been prepared, and everything else associated with an evening of rest is taken care of, read the following:

Scarcely have you closed your eyes, it seems, before you are awakened by the touch of an elven hand on your shoulder. The sun is not yet above the mountain peaks, casting a faint red glow upon the horizon, as you are led to Valaderion's command tent. The soldier ushers you inside, and then leaves. The elven commander looks haggard, but he manages a smile as you enter.

"Good morrow, my friends. Forgive me for dispensing with pleasantries, but time is even more of the essence than we had feared." He unrolls a map of the region and draws a line through the mountains with the tip of his dagger. "According to my scouts, the orc horde separated here, which, even at the slowest speed they could march, puts them here, scarcely four days to the monastery. This is the most direct route from here to the Yellow Lotus. Even driving yourselves to near exhaustion, it is a six-day march. There is one other way, however—if you are willing to chance it. There is a tunnel through this mountain, the Shadowstar Peak, called the Old Dwarf Road. It was once a part of a dwarven trade route through the Dragon-spine, but has lain unused for centuries. Goblins make their homes there now, but if you make for it straight away, it would cut several days from your travel time."



Goblin Warrens

"Once you reach the far side, you will emerge ahead of the horde, but only just. You may have to find a way to delay the orcs to afford yourselves time to reach the monastery and warn them of the danger. I wish I could aid you more, my friends, but now you must set off if you wish to reach the monastery ahead of the orcs. May luck be with you."

The Orcs' Trail

The following map shows the mountains and forests surrounding the lost outpost and the Yellow Lotus Monastery. The diamonds mark the orcs' route to the Yellow Lotus. The line of triangles indicate the PCs' most direct overland route to the Yellow Lotus, and the dotted line indicates the route the PCs may take through the warrens. The letter codes indicate the campsites each night—in other words, how far each party traveled during the previous day. In addition to these routes, there are 4 other locations of interest marked on the map.

1. Entrance Cave

This cave marks the entrance to the Old Dwarf Tunnel, which will take the PCs through the mountains to get ahead of the orcs.

2. Exit Point

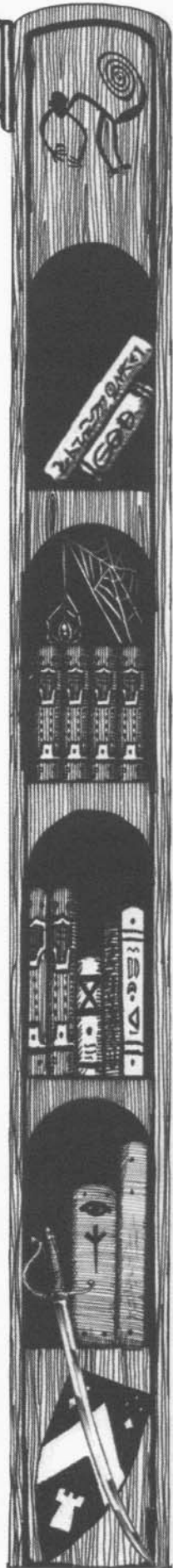
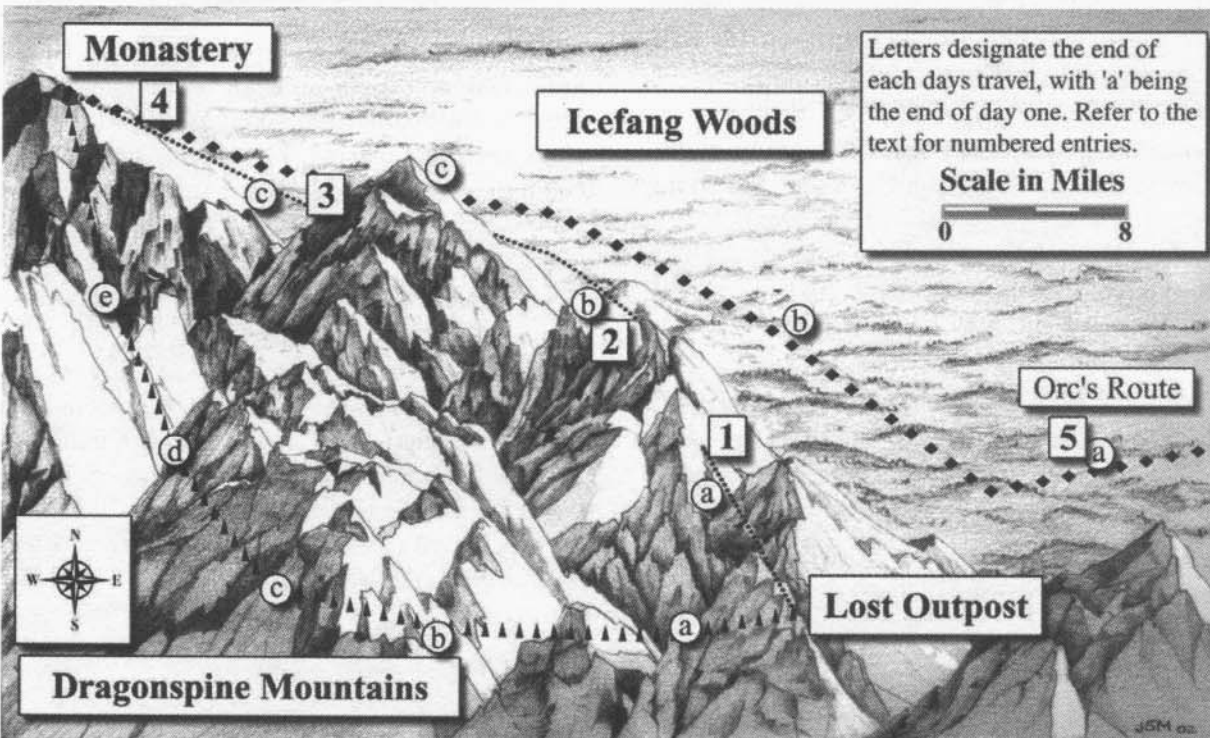
This is the exit from the dwarf tunnel, just a short ways above the tree line. Though it is difficult to tell on the map, this cave is on the opposite side of the mountain, almost directly across from the entrance at 1.

3. The Dragon's Lair

This is the lair of Ssikariasstiskr'it, a young adult green dragon who makes his home in a rocky cave in the midst of the forest. Like all green dragons, he is fiercely territorial, but he is also more cunning and subtle than many greens. He has been stalking the orcs discreetly for some time, but has not interfered with their progress yet (save to snatch up a few of their beasts of burden when he did not feel like hunting). As soon as the PCs exit the goblin warrens, the dragon will immediately begin trailing them as well. Ssikariasstiskr'it's actions are discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

4. Dryad Grove

A grove of dryads dwells in a copse of massive oak trees here, protected against the dragon by powerful illusions. If the PCs discover the grove, they will be greeted and welcomed in a friendly fashion—but Ssikariasstiskr'it may very well end up finding the dryads if the PCs inadvertently lead him to them.



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5. Bugbear Village

This location is the home village of a tribe of bugbears that dwell in the forest. Their presence is tolerated by the dragon, who uses them for slave labor when the need strikes him. Because the village is directly in the path of the orcs' march, the orcs plan to use it as a re-supply point (namely by taking all the bugbears' food at sword point). It is doubtful the PCs will end up visiting this village, but they may encounter its denizens elsewhere.

Bugbears: CR 2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +2 leather, +1 small shield); Melee morningstar +4 (1d8+2); Ranged javelin +3 (1d6+2); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +6*, Spot +3; Alertness. *Bugbears receive a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks.

Equipment: Morningstar, leather armor, small wooden shield, 150 gp

To the Warrens

As the map makes painfully obvious, the PCs have very little choice in the matter: They risk the goblin-infested tunnel, or they lose the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*. Thus, with Nelianath as their guide, they set off toward the goblin warrens. (see appendix for a full description of Nelianath.)

Nelianath, Female Elf Wiz4: CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (Elf); HD 4d4; hp 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+4 mithril chain shirt, +3 Dex); Melee longsword +2 (1d8/crit 19–20); Ranged +5 longbow (1d8/crit x3); SQ elven traits; AL NG; SV Fort +1 Ref +4 Will +5; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +10, Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Speak Celestial, Speak Common, Speak Draconic, Speak Elven, Speak Goblin; Spellcraft +10; Scribe Scroll, Combat Casting, Expertise.

Equipment: Longsword, longbow, Mithril chain shirt, spell component pouch, spell book.

Traveling Day 1 (EL 3)

Once Valaderion has explained the PCs' route to them, he bids them farewell and good luck, and tells them that their guide, Nelianath, is waiting for them at the north edge of the camp. She is waiting with provisions for several days, as well as lanterns, rope, and other equipment useful for traversing the mountains and the caves beneath them. The full list of this gear is listed in Nel's statistics, though she is more than happy to let big, strong PCs carry the heftier gear.

The sun is just climbing over the eastern peaks as you meet up with your guide, a sprightly young (or rather, young-looking, for the age of elves is difficult to tell) elven wizardess named Nelianath. As you approach, she greets you with a courteous bow, and speaks.

"Good morning, friends. I hope you have slept well, for I doubt that any of us will get much sleep on the road ahead. We must be off swiftly—we must be through the warrens to the forest on the north side before sunset tomorrow if we are to remain ahead of the orcs. I have secured the supplies we may need, so if you are prepared, we shall begin our journey."

And with that, the PCs set off on their march. Once again, GMs whose players enjoy in-character interaction are encouraged to take this opportunity to allow such role-playing. If GMs and players are comfortable with it, a budding romance between a PC and Nelianath will add depth and pathos to later adventures in the series. Just *how* it will add depth and pathos we aren't saying, but trust us, it will.

Regardless of whether the PCs are interested in role-playing or not, the first day passes without incident, unless the GM desires a random monster encounter. After making approximately 6 miles of progress (assuming the PCs do not attempt to force-march), Nel politely suggests they make camp for the evening. At midnight, read the following aloud to whoever is on watch.



Goblin Warrens

As you sit tending the campfire, you suddenly become aware that you are not alone. There is something moving beyond the firelight, and judging from the way it makes the hair on the back of your neck rise, you gather that it is not friendly.

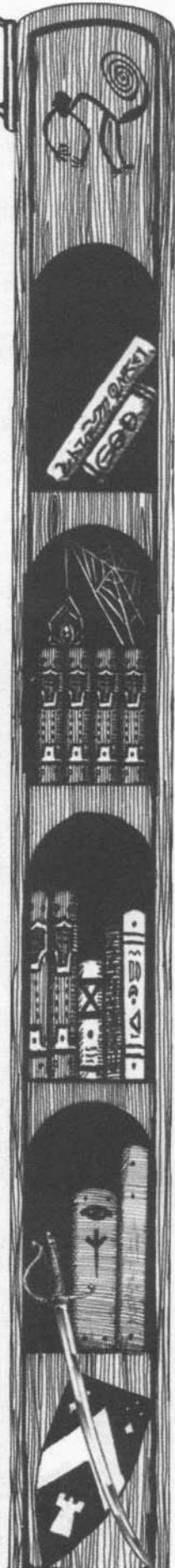
At this point, have the PC make a Spot check (DC 18). If he succeeds, read aloud the following:

After a moment of searching, you pick out a half-dozen low-slung, four legged shapes circling just outside the radius of the fire's light, with glittering golden eyes that catch the light occasionally. Wolves. And they are watching you.

If the PCs are so foolish as to not set watch, kill them. They'll learn very quickly. Or, if you aren't that mean, have them all roll Listen checks (DC 24) to hear the wolves and awaken. Even if there is a watch, you may wish to allow sleeping PCs to make such a check. After all, there's no sense in letting the sentry have all the fun.

Wolves (6): CR 1; Medium-size Animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Melee bite +3 (1d6+1); SA trip; SQ scent; AL N; 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*; Alertness. *Wolves receive a +4 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore skills when tracking by scent.



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SA—Trip (Ex): 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.

These wolves, like the bats the PCs sighted at the beginning of *The Lost Outpost*, are under the control of Calibourne the Pale, who has sent them to discover why Gruslagg never reported back after reinforcing the outpost. They had already sighted the elven army and were traveling back to the Pale Knight's castle when they spotted the PCs' campfire. Fortunately for the PCs, the wolves do not automatically connect them with the elven company, thinking they are merely random travelers. They *do*, however, recognize Nelianath as Calibourne's betrothed, for whom the vampire has been searching for decades. It is for this reason that the wolves immediately bolt off into the darkness when spotted by the PCs. For GM's who crave some action, have a group of the wolves attack, while a pair skulk off to inform Calibourne.

This encounter unsettles Nel considerably, for reasons she tells the PCs that she cannot explain. Indeed, other than the fact that wolves do not normally dwell this high in the mountains (which can be revealed by a Knowledge (nature) check, (DC 10)), there seems to be nothing more to it than a pack of hungry or curious wolves. Unnerving, perhaps, but nothing sinister. After comforting the wizardess, the party should try to get a few more hours rest before setting off again on the morrow.

Traveling, Day 2 (EL 6–7)

The second day of overland travel is a short one: Only about two miles must be covered before the PCs reach the mouth of a yawning cave, which leads into the goblin tunnels. Read the following:

The sun is not high overhead when you finally lay eyes upon your objective. The massive, yawning fissure bears little resemblance to the tiny cracks you squeezed through under the guidance of Kurd the ogre. This opening is a massive, vertical gash in the mountainside, fully twenty feet wide and fifty feet high, as if an angry god had hewn the rock with a tremendous blade.

"We must be cautious," Nelianath tells you. "The Old Dwarf Road is patrolled regularly by bands of goblins. They often make use of this tunnel when their hordes come out of the mountains to raid." With the sun low on your right flank, you cannot see into the shadowy mouth of the fissure, but at this point you have no real choice but to go on—every second you waste puts you farther behind the orc horde.

Fortunately for the PCs, the ground leading to the cave is broken and rocky, with many dips and outcroppings to hide behind. While this slows movement rates to $\frac{1}{4}$ normal, it also provides a +2 bonus to Hide checks. Once any characters are within 100 feet of the cavern entrance, they may roll a Spot check (remember the -10 penalty for range) against DC 7 to notice the four bugbears standing guard at the mouth of the cave. All are armed with light crossbows and morningstars, and are distracted (-4 to Spot checks) by the dice game they are playing. If the PCs seem inclined to be foolish and charge, Nelianath suggests that they try a more stealthy approach. A good strategy might be to have rogues creep up on them to sneak attack while ranged combatants quickly pick off any survivors. If any characters have access to magical *silence* spells, they would be quite useful here.

If you feel that the PCs were not suitably swift or silent in slaying the guards, a goblin war band consisting of 8 goblin infantrymen armed with shortspears and throwing axes and 2 goblin cavalry (mounted on worgs and armed with light lances) arrive 1d6 rounds later to reinforce and investigate. If the PCs make their kill cleanly, the goblins do not arrive, but the PCs will likely encounter them, and others like them, again as they go deeper into the caves.

Bugbears (4): CR 2; Medium Humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +2 leather, +1 small shield); Melee morningstar +4 (1d8+2); Ranged javelin +3 (1d6+2); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +6*, Spot +3; Alertness. *Bugbears receive a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks.



Goblin Warrens

Equipment: Morningstar, leather armor, small wooden shield, 150 gp

Goblins (8): CR ¼; Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Melee shortspear +1 (1d8-1/crit x3); Ranged throwing axe +3 (1d6-1); SQ darkvision 60ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4*, Spot +3; Alertness. * Goblins gain a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks. Goblins gain a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks.

Equipment: 45 cp

Goblin Cavalry Leaders (2), Male Goblin Ftr1: CR 1; Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 1d10; hp 10; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 small shield); Melee +3 light lance (1d6+1/crit x3), or shortsword +3 (1d6+1/crit 19-20); Ranged shortbow +3 (1d6/crit x3); SQ darkvision 60ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +4*, Ride +6*, Spot +1; Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack. * Goblins gain a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks. Goblin cavalry (mounted on worgs) gain a +6 bonus to Ride checks and the Mounted Combat feat (neither of these benefits is included in the statistics block).

Equipment: Light lance, studded leather, small wooden shield, 50 gp

Worgs (2): CR 2; Medium-size Magical Beast; HD 4d10+8; hp 30; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Melee bite +7 (1d6+4); SA trip; SQ scent; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +2; Alertness. * A worg receives a +1 racial bonus to Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks, and a +2 racial bonus to Hide checks. A worg has a +4 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent.

SA—Trip (Ex): A worg 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 worg.

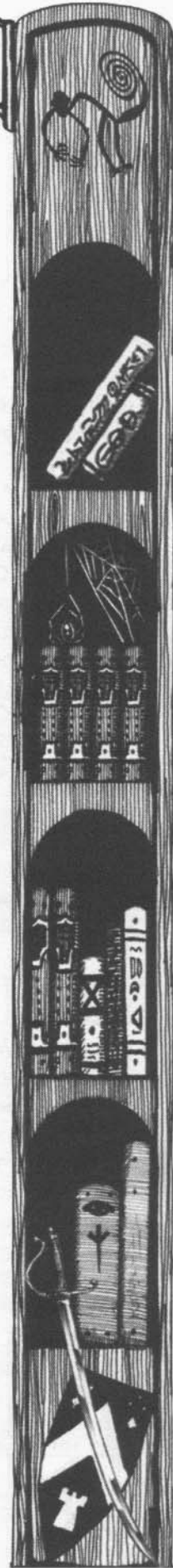
On the Road (EL 7)

Once the PCs have dispatched their foes at the entrance, the exciting part of the journey begins. Nelianath suggests that they hide the bodies if none of the PCs think of it; then torches are struck (unless everyone in the party has Darkvision) and the party enters the Old Dwarf Road. Read the following to the players:

The light of your torches seems a pitiful thing in the vast, inky blackness of the caves. Beyond the circle of light, visibility drops off instantly to nothing, almost as if there is some force out there ensuring that the darkness is not disturbed. The only small mercy is that the ground is smooth and flat, a welcome change from the mountains you have been hiking over. According to your guide, this particular tunnel was carved from the mountain by dwarven magic and craftsmanship ages ago. It is actually a 12-mile stretch of an ancient trade road, bored arrow-straight through one of the mountains. With the decline of trade through the region, the road fell into disrepair, but this particular tunnel, though infested with goblins, remains sound. It will take the better part of the day to walk it, but it will shave several days off of your travel time.

As this particular cavern is merely a straight, featureless tunnel, no map is provided for it; however, GMs may wish to know that it maintains a consistent width of 30 feet for its entire twelve-mile length. Its floor is mostly smooth, but there are enough cracks, puddles, and other hazards that anyone attempting to make a double move or faster must make a Reflex save (DC 13) to avoid tripping and falling prone. This applies to PCs and goblins on foot, but not the worgs many of them ride.

If the goblin war band did not ambush the PCs at the entrance to the cavern, they encounter that band approximately two hours into their eight-hour march. GMs of groups who enjoy “hack and slash” gaming should feel free to spice up the march with random monsters—after all, most creatures prefer a straight, level trek to climbing up and down mountains. Regardless of their other encounters, however, the



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PCs will encounter another goblin patrol halfway through the march.

The second band of goblins in the dwarf tunnel is a group of no less than 6 goblin cavalry, armed with shortspears and mounted on worgs. They are led by a third-level cleric named Blugyi, who rides a massive, 7 hit die worg and wields a *wand of stone shape*. Unbeknownst to the PCs, the goblins have hollowed out a massive maze of tunnels, full of locked doors, traps, and monsters, immediately below the dwarf-road. Blugyi hangs well back from the actual fight, directing his underlings to hem the PCs in and maneuver them into as tight a group as possible. He then activates his wand, opening up a pit beneath the PCs' feet, dropping them down a chute and into the maze of the goblin king. PCs may make a Reflex save (DC 25) to avoid being dumped into the pit, however, since the majority of them will likely plummet, any who manage to avoid such a fate would do well to follow their comrades of their own volition.

Blugyi, Male Goblin Clr3: CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 3d8; hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 small shield); Melee morningstar +2 (1d8-1); SA rebuke undead; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Knowledge (religion) +2, Hide +5, Spellcraft +2; Alertness.

Equipment: Morningstar, studded leather armor, small wooden shield, *wand of stone shape*.

Spells Prepared: 0-level—*Detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, read magic*; 1st level—*Bane, change self, command, cause fear*; 2nd—*Bull's strength, invisibility*. (Domains: Evil, Trickery)

Goblin Cavalry (6): CR ¼; Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 small shield); Melee shortsword +1 (1d6/crit 19–20); SQ darkvision 60ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Ride +6, Spot +3; Mounted Combat. * Goblins gain a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks. Goblins gain a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks. Goblin cavalry (mounted on worgs) gain a +6 bonus to Ride checks and the Mounted Combat feat (neither of these benefits is included in the statistics block).

Equipment: Shortsword, studded leather, small wooden shield, 45 cp

Worgs (6): CR 2; Medium-size Magical Beast; HD 4d10+8; hp 30; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Melee bite +7 (1d6+4); SA trip; SQ scent; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Worg: CR 3; Large Magical Beast; HD 7d10+14; hp 50; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Melee bite +10 (1d8+5); SA trip; SQ scent; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +2; Alertness. * A worg receives a +1 racial bonus to Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks, and a +2 racial bonus to Hide checks. A worg has a +4 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent.

Nelianath

Nelianath, the PCs' guide, is not dropped into the pit. She is either outside the radius of the hole opened up by the *stone shape* spell, passes her saving throw, or in some other way avoids following the PCs down. She has a role to play in a later adventure in the series, when Calibourne the Pale, who intends to make her into his undead bride, kidnaps her. If the PCs are around when she is nabbed, there will likely be a battle, and the PCs may even be able to stop her abductors, which would eliminate that entire plot element.

If the PCs are badly undermanned, or in desperate need of a wizard, Nel may end up in the maze with them, but the GM must then find another time and place to grab her.

Very Important Note: As the title indicates, *Race to the Yellow Lotus* is a race, and time is very much of the essence. GMs should keep careful count of how much time the PCs spend in the maze (noting things like movement rate, spell casting times, length of battles, and so forth), and note the orc army's progress along their route accordingly.

As you stand ready for battle with the goblin cavalry, you see the shaman in the back draw forth a long, carved length of bone, which he points in your direction as he utters a word of command. Suddenly, the floor you stand upon heaves violently, becoming viscous and opening up beneath your feet. You fall a few feet, then strike a smooth, sharply sloped stone floor, and begin to slide downward in the blackness. Your lights are extinguished by the sudden, violent movement, leaving you to tumble in total darkness.





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SA—Trip (Ex): A worg 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 worg.

The Maze of King Nilbog XXIII

Through means now forgotten, King Nilbog XXIII managed to entice four minotaurs into living in his maze: 2 solitary males and a mated pair. How these minotaurs are used is up to the GM: He can randomly place them at the beginning of this part of the adventure and track their movement secretly, he can roll randomly at regular intervals to see if the PCs and the minotaurs find each other, or he can determine that the PCs will or will not fight them. Even if the GM decides, for whatever reason, not to pit the PCs against the minotaurs, he can use them to build tension in other ways: echoes carry the sounds of snuffling back to the PCs, broken bits of shed horns are discovered, etc. As mentioned in the map key, however, the PCs should not get the minotaurs' treasure for free. If they find a treasure room, they should have to kill its minotaur owner. Naturally, the reverse is not automatically true.

Minotaurs (4): CR 4; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 6d8+12; hp 39; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +5 natural); Melee huge greataxe +9/+4 (2d8+4, crit x3), gore +4 (1d8+2); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.; SA charge 4d6+6; SQ scent, natural cunning; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +5, Jump +8, Listen +8, Search +6, Spot +8; Great Fortitude, Power Attack. *Minotaurs receive a +4 racial bonus to Search, Spot, and Listen checks.

Equipment: Huge greataxe.

SA—Charge (Ex): A minotaur typically begins a battle by charging at an opponent, lowering its head to bring its mighty horns into play. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the beast to make a single gore attack that deals 4d6+6 points of damage.

SQ—Natural Cunning (Ex): Although minotaurs are not especially intelligent, they possess innate cunning and logical ability. This makes them

immune to maze spells, prevents them from ever becoming lost, and enables them to track enemies. Further, they are never caught flat-footed.

Doors

There are quite a few doors in the Goblin King's maze, and not all are described in the key. If the PCs come across a door that is not described, roll on the tables below.

Into The Maze

Once all PCs have been sent hurtling down the chute, either by failing their Reflex save, being pushed in by goblins, or diving in after their friends, read the following aloud to them.

After an indeterminate amount of time, you spill out into a stone corridor. After taking a moment to re-orient yourselves and re-light your torches and lanterns, you find yourselves in a stone corridor, ten feet wide and twenty feet long. At the far end of the hall is a stout wooden door, which looks as if it were installed just days ago. By the flickering light of your torches, you can make out the following verse carved into the door:

"Black is the seed,
White is the field.
The hand which sows
From a bird is freed."

The map of the maze includes many points of interest, which are described in detail below.

1. Entrance

The entrance to the maze via the chute trap from the Old Dwarf Road. Should the PCs decide to try to climb back up, the DC is 25, and they will find that the stone floor has re-shaped itself, leaving no more hole.

Table 1-1: Doors

| d% Roll | Defenses on Door |
|---------|-----------------------|
| 01-20 | Unlocked, not trapped |
| 21-50 | Locked, not trapped |
| 51-80 | Unlocked, trapped |
| 81-00 | Locked, trapped |

Table 1-2: Locks

| d% Roll | Lock Quality |
|---------|---------------------|
| 01-35 | Very Simple (DC 20) |
| 36-80 | Average (DC 25) |
| 95-00 | Good (DC 30) |

Table 1-3: Traps

| d% Roll | Trap |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 01-10 | Poison Needle Trap |
| 11-20 | Spear Trap |
| 21-30 | Falling Block Trap |
| 31-40 | Portcullis Trap |
| 41-50 | Flame Jet Trap |
| 51-60 | Electrified Floor Trap |
| 61-70 | Globe of Cold Trap |
| 71-80 | Acid Floor Trap |
| 81-00 | Roll on Table 4-7 in DMG |

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2. "Riddle" Door

The door with the inscribed riddle mentioned in the monologue. PCs with any dungeon crawling experience will likely assume this is a riddle door and that the answer to the riddle (which, for GMs who don't want to puzzle it out for themselves, is "writing") must be guessed before the door will open. They are mistaken.

In this case, the door is merely a door, and the riddle is merely a "pretty picture" that the goblin-king, who is quite illiterate, thought looked nice on the door to his maze. GMs should feel free to take sadistic glee if the PCs assume too much about the door's nature and begin shouting random answers in the hopes of getting the door to open itself. GMs may also wish to make Listen checks for the minotaurs that inhabit the maze if the PCs get too enthusiastic in their shouts for answers—the PCs may find an unpleasant surprise waiting for them when they finally do get the door open.

This initial door into the maze is intended to be quite easy to open. It is not trapped, and it is only locked with a very simple (DC 20) lock. Other doors in the maze will not be so simple.

3. Tavern Door

Another door with writing on it. This one is unlocked and untrapped, and bears the phrase "Bloody Bugbear Inn and Tavern: Finest Wench in the Land!" Needless to say, there is no tavern behind the door, nor any wenches, finest in the land or otherwise. The king saw this on a sign in the town of Fanghorn View during a raid—and liked *very* much what he found inside the building with the sign.

4. Pit Trap (EL 4)

An 80-foot deep pit trap once resided here, but it was sprung by a goblin who foolishly decided he needed to see the king *right now*, and couldn't wait for someone to guide him past the traps. His skeleton still lies at the bottom of the pit. The pit itself is 10 feet wide by 10 feet across. Assuming a character with a speed of 30 feet makes a running jump, the Jump check DC is 15. If the PC fails by 3 or less, he may make a Dexterity check (DC 20) to try to catch the far edge of the pit.

- **Pit Trap (80 ft. Deep):** CR 4; no attack roll needed (8d6); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC20)

5. Massacre

Here, a band of goblins met a grisly, and rather recent, end. Seven corpses lie scattered about this area of the maze, and the stench of decay fills the air. A brief inspection of the bodies shows that four were hacked to pieces as if by a great axe, one's head seems to have been simply torn from its body, and two more were pierced through the gut by a huge spear. Closer inspection reveals no weapons in evidence, but the goblins were carrying a variety of crude tools. They appear to have been stonemasons.

6. Falling Block Trap (EL 5)

Another trap is set up here, this one a large block that drops from the ceiling to crush any unfortunates that stumble under it. GMs may wish to be aware that the majority of traps are along routes that do not lead out of the maze—after all, the goblins must traverse this route regularly, and it would be quite inconvenient to have to dodge dozens of traps every time. Clever PCs may figure this out on their own and use the traps as a guide, but do not give them any hints unless they get *very* lost.

- **Falling Block Trap:** CR 5; +15 melee (6d6); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25). Note: Can strike all PCs in two specified adjacent squares.

7. Spiked Pit Trap (EL 5)

A nasty pit trap with the added touch of uncomfortable spikes at the bottom. Another example of a goblin version of a "wrong way" sign.

- **Spiked Pit trap (80 ft. deep):** CR 5; no attack roll necessary (8d6), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+5 damage per successful hit); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20)

8. Potential Cave-in (EL 5)

A charred, blackened hole three feet deep fills this 10 foot by 10 foot section of corridor. It is easily navigated, but it seems to indicate a powerful explosion occurred here. The char marks cover the walls and ceiling as well, and in fact the roof here is weakened and in danger of collapse—something to bear in mind if the PCs encounter any of the maze's denizens here. Every round combat takes place within ten feet of the marked square (in either direction), there is a cumulative 2% chance the ceiling collapses. This cave-in has a bury zone 30 feet long





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(north to south) and 10 feet wide, and a slide zone of an additional ten feet on each end.

9. The Nest (EL 7)

This small complex of dead-ends is home to a cluster of 3 carrion crawlers who feed on goblin messengers foolish enough to deviate from the proper route, which they are given if they have legitimate business with the King. As each carrion crawler is a CR 4 creature, PCs are advised to try to take them on one at a time.

Carrion Crawlers (3): CR 4; Large Aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural); Melee 8 tentacles +3 (paralysis), bite -2 (1d4+1); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA paralysis; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 15, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness.

SA—Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a carrion crawler's tentacle attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 13) or be paralyzed for 2d6 minutes.

10. Skeleton

A goblin's skeleton lies here, its skull crushed in by some sort of massive, blunt object. It seems to have been lying here for a very long time, and a Search check (DC 10) will reveal that some pieces have been carried away.

11. Trapped Door (EL 2)

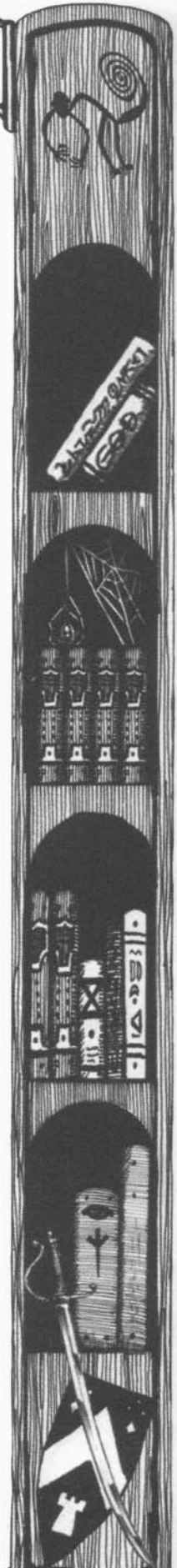
This door also has writing on it, which reads "While tasty, this dish is inexpensive" in Elvish. The gods alone know where *that* came from. It is locked with an Average lock (DC 25 to pick), and is trapped with a poison needle trap.

- **Poison Needle Trap:** CR 2; +8 ranged (1 plus greenblood oil); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20).

12. Trapped Door (EL 3)

12—This door bears no baffling insignia, but its Average (DC 25) lock is connected to a powerfully built scything blade trap.

- **Scything Blade Trap:** CR 3; +11 melee (1d12/crit x3); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20).



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13. Trapped Wall (EL 5)

For the first time, the PCs encounter a magical trap here. The 10 foot section of wall which juts out into the corridor contains a magical lightning trap.

- **Lightning Blast Trap:** CR 5; 5-ft. wide, 50-ft.-long blast (5d6); Reflex save (DC 13) for half; Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 25).

14. Treasure Cache (EL 4)

This small, 10 foot by 10 foot room is the treasure cache for one of the 4 minotaurs who roams the maze. There is a small chest in the middle of the room, locked with a Very Simple (DC 20) lock, containing a tiger's eye (worth 13 gp), a silver pearl (worth 100 gp), a lapis lazuli (worth 10 gp), and a blue star sapphire (worth 1,300 gp). Hidden under a false bottom (Search DC 15 to locate) is a masterwork sling and 4 thunderstones. If the PCs stumble across this, the GM should definitely make sure the PCs encounter one of the solitary minotaurs.

15. Trapped Door (EL 5)

This door reads "Danger: Explosive Runes!" in Draconic. King Nilbog had the misfortune of reading a scroll of *explosive runes*, and remembered what the writing looked like that nearly killed him. Of course, there are no explosive runes on this door, but there is a rather nasty fireball trap on it.

- **Fireball Trap:** CR 5; 20-foot radius burst (5d6); Ref save (DC 13) for half; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (23).

16. Treasure Chamber (EL 4)

This is the treasure chamber of one of the other minotaurs that dwell in the maze. Inside this room are 26,000 silver pieces in a heap on the floor. All are tarnished and ugly, but still valuable. Buried at the bottom of the heap is a scroll case, and inside the scroll case is an arcane scroll with the spells *identify*, *minor image*, and *protection from arrows*.

17. Jail (EL 4)

This 15-foot by 10-foot room is a jail cell. Its sole occupant is a human sorcerer named Krazatz, who was captured by the goblins years ago using the same methods used on the PCs. They forced him to make several magical traps throughout the maze before he went utterly insane, and then left him to starve. He has survived by cooking stray rats with his *ray of fire* spell (as *ray of frost*, but deals fire

damage). He may display any reaction toward the PCs from adulation to violence to skipping about in a circle singing nursery rhymes. A *restoration* spell (or several *lesser restoration* spells) will restore the Wisdom points his traumatic ordeal has cost him, at which point he will try to help the PCs escape. Krazatz built the magical traps in this maze, and also made the goblin king several magical trinkets before the forced labor drove him to madness. If the PCs can restore his sanity, he will guide them directly to the exit that leads to King Nilbog's lair. He will not contribute to any battle the PCs encounter unless it becomes apparent that the PCs (and thus, himself) are in grave danger of being slain. He also warns the PCs about Nilbog's "bodyguard," a goblin-sized flesh golem that Krazatz himself constructed. If PCs are unable to aid Krazatz with magic, it may be a greater kindness to simply kill the poor mage.

Krazatz, Male Human Sor5: CR 5; HD 5d4+5; hp 16; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Melee unarmed strike +2 (1d3 subdual); Ranged +3; SQ summon familiar; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 5 (was 14), Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Concentration +9, Craft (trap making) +6, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Spellcraft, +10; Spell Focus (evocation), Skill Focus (Bluff), Craft Wondrous Item.

Spells Known: (cast 6/4/2) 0-level—*Ray of fire*, *detect poison*, *light*, *disrupt undead*, *detect magic*, *read magic*; 1st level—*Mage armor*, *shield*, *true strike*, *shocking grasp*; 2nd level—*Melf's acid arrow*, *web*.*

* Though Krazatz does not know many of the spells used to make the maze's magical traps, he had a sizable collection of scrolls when he was captured that the goblins drag out for him to create traps with.

18. Sleeping Area

This small room is the sleeping area for the four minotaurs that roam the maze. Four large, crude bedrolls of bearskin lie on the floor, each in a separate corner, and the rancid remains of several days' (or weeks') food litter the middle of the room. There is no treasure here—the minotaurs do not trust each other enough to store their treasure together.



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19. Treasure Hoard (EL 6)

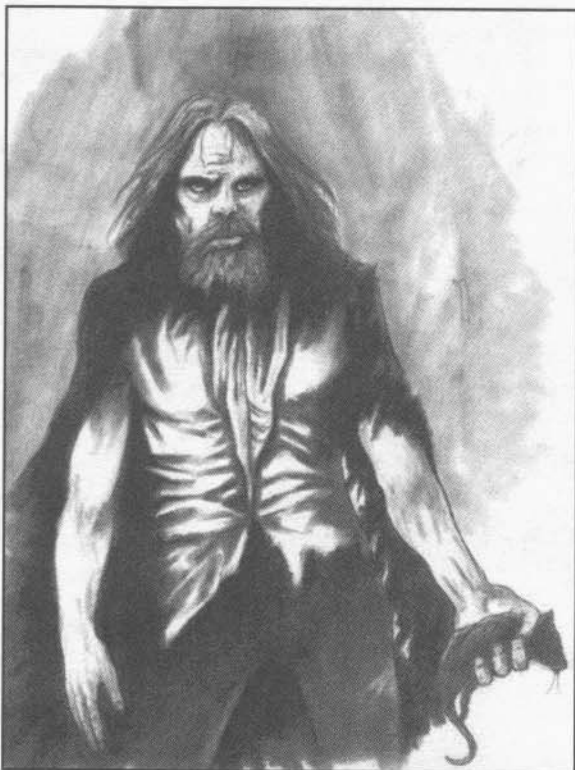
This room contains the treasure of the final 2 minotaurs: a mated pair. Scattered about in sacks and a few unlocked chests are 1,000 gp and a *potion of restoration*. As with the other two treasure rooms, if the PCs find and loot this one, they should have to face the mated pair of minotaurs.

20. Gargoyle (EL 4)

20—This entire area is home to a gargoyle, which the goblins lured into the maze and trapped. Because it knows that the minotaurs outnumber it, it stays out of their way for the most part. Besides the gargoyle, the northernmost room in this dead-end complex (the room with the number 20 actually in it) houses the beast's treasure—a meager 100 gp.

Gargoyle: CR 4; Medium Magical Beast (earth); HD 4d10+16; hp 38; Init +2; Spd 45 ft., fly 75 ft. (average); AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural); Melee 2 claws +6 (1d4), bite +4 (1d6), gore +4 (1d6); SQ; DR 15/+1, freeze; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite, gore). *Gargoyles receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks when concealed against a background of worked stone.



Equipment: 100 gp.

SQ—Freeze (Ex): A gargoyle can hold itself so still it appears to be a statue. An observer must succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to notice the gargoyle is really alive.

21. Barred Door

As a change of pace, this door is not locked; it is only barred, requiring a Strength check (DC 23) to smash down. The writing on this door is an excerpt from a rather saucy love letter that was carried by an unfortunate adventurer. The specific details of the text are best left to the GM's imagination.

22. Rat Pack (EL 2)

This room appears to be a breeding ground for rats. Hundreds of them swarm all over the floor, chittering and squeaking endlessly in the dark. If the PCs intrude, they will be attacked. Since the GM likely does not wish to roll attacks for three hundred rats, he may wish to treat the vermin as a *summon swarm* spell cast by an 8th-level druid, assigning it an overall CR of 2. The PCs must then deal the swarm 16 points of fire or other area effect damage to discourage the swarm from attacking (though they cannot disperse within their confines).

23. Pit Trap (EL 5)

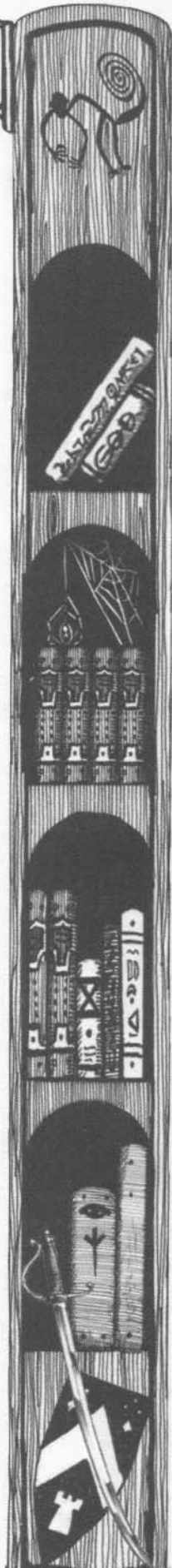
A 100 foot deep pit trap (CR 5; no attack roll necessary (10d6); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20) fills this entire 10-foot by 10-foot square, discouraging intruders from continuing this path. As with the pit trap at 4, assuming a running jump from a PC with a 30 ft. base speed, the Jump DC to jump over it is 15.

- **Pit Trap (100 ft. Deep):** CR 5; no attack roll necessary (10d6); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

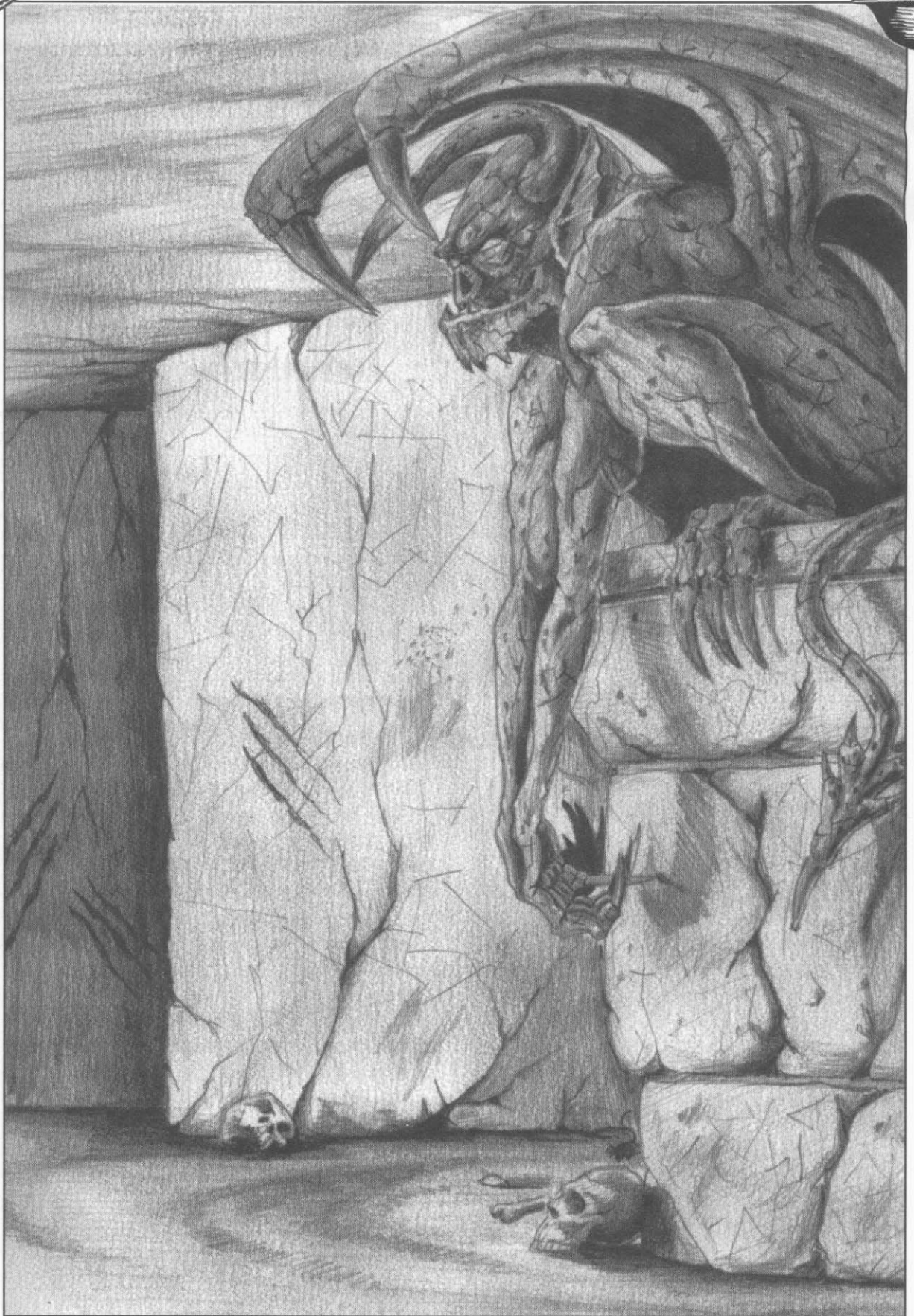
24. Deadly Puddle (EL 4)

An innocuous-looking puddle in this small dead-end corridor is actually a gray ooze, just waiting for nice, tasty meals to wander in. PCs can recognize the ooze for what it is with a Spot check (DC 15), though the four goblin skeletons littering the area might also tip off the PCs.

Gray Ooze: CR 4; Medium-size Ooze; HD 3d10+10; hp 26; Init -5; Spd 10 ft.; AC 5 (-5 Dex); Melee slam +3 (1d6+1 and 1d6 acid); SA improved grab, acid, corrosion, constrict 1d6+1 and 1d6 acid;



Race to the Yellow Lotus





Goblin Warrens

SQ blindsight, cold and fire immunity, ooze, camouflage; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref -4, Will -4; Str 12, Dex 1, Con 11, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SA—Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the gray ooze must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

SA—Acid (Ex): A gray ooze secretes a digestive acid that quickly dissolves organic material and metal. Any melee hit deals acid damage. The ooze's acidic touch deals 40 points of damage per round to wood or metal objects. Armor or clothing dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 19). The acid cannot harm stone. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a gray ooze also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 19).

SA—Constrict (Ex): A gray ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor suffer a -4 penalty to Reflex saves against the acid.

SQ—Blindsight (Ex): An ooze's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.

SQ—Ooze: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. Not subject to critical hits.

SQ—Camouflage (Ex): It takes a successful Spot check (DC 15) to recognize a motionless gray ooze for what it really is.

25. Dwarven Door

This door is not locked, nor is it trapped. It has an odd picture that looks vaguely like a dwarf warrior with an axe. Like the other carved doors, this one has no special significance, it is merely an image the goblin king enjoyed.

26. The Exit

The exit (finally) to the maze. This leads into the throne room of king Nilbog XXIII. It is locked with a Good lock (DC 30), and trapped with a rather nasty poison gas trap (CR 8; no attack roll necessary (Insanity mist: Fort DC 15; 1d4 Wis, 2d6 Wis secondary damage); Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 25).

Mad King Nilbog XXIII (EL 5)

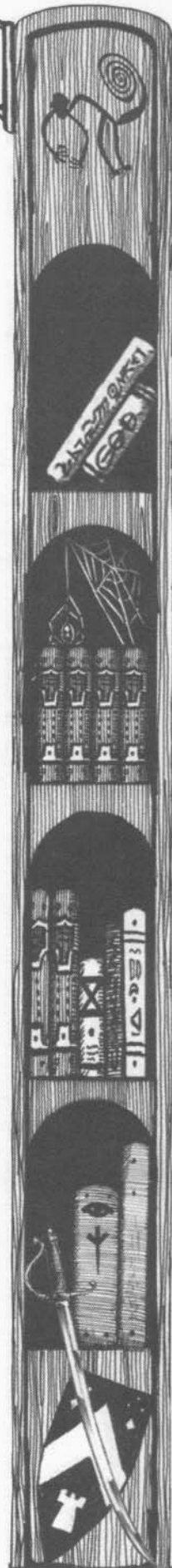
Assuming the PCs are not reduced to babbling mania by the poison gas trap, they may enter the goblin king's throne room. The important features of this room are marked on the map, and detailed below:

Read the following aloud to the players when they enter the room.

This massive, high-vaulted chamber seems far too opulent for goblin construction. The floor is smooth and even, and the walls and ceiling are carved with elegant designs. Four statues of menacing goblin warriors line each of the walls; the size of hill giants, they seem almost to glare down at you as you enter. Heaped about the feet of these statues, glittering in the light of the bonfires that light the room, are massive piles of treasure. Gold and silver coins, gems, and finely crafted items that practically reek of enchantment lay in piles that would put a dragon to shame.

As you continue surveying the vast riches before you, you realize you are not alone. A massive, golden throne sits directly opposite the hallway through which you entered, and on it sits a solitary goblin dressed as richly as the room. Elegant furs hang over his gleaming chain mail, and a naked longsword rests across his knees. As he notices you for the first time, he rises from his throne, clutching the sword in two hands, and charges you madly, shrieking a war cry.

This impressive-looking figure is King Nilbog XXIII, leader of the goblin bands of the Dragonspine Mountains. By sending his tribe on periodic raids, he has accumulated vast (for a goblin, at any rate) riches, which he has piled here in his throne room. Unfortunately for greedy-minded PCs, most of what they see here is fake—the result of a *silent image* spell cast by Krazatz the sorcerer before he went totally mad. The illusion will dissolve when King Nilbog is slain—which will likely be soon, as he has the statistics of a standard goblin and is cur-



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rently charging a band of 4th- or 5th-level PCs with a long sword.

King Nilbog XXIII, Male Goblin: CR ¼; Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Melee +1 (1d8, crit 19–20/x2 longsword); SQ dark-vision 60ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4*, Spot +3; Alertness. * Goblins gain a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks. Goblins gain a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks.

Equipment: Longsword, studded leather. See room description for treasure.

As should be obvious, King Nilbog is quite insane, and quite paranoid. Only the rest of his tribe's fear for him keeps them from finding a new leader and moving on, because King Nilbog never emerges into the warrens above—even he does not know the layout of the traps in his own maze. He leaves his throne room only through the secret entrance concealed on the rear wall, and then only to kill a few rabbits for food. Like most goblin kings, he allows no other goblins to remain in his throne room for more time than it takes to deliver or receive a mes-

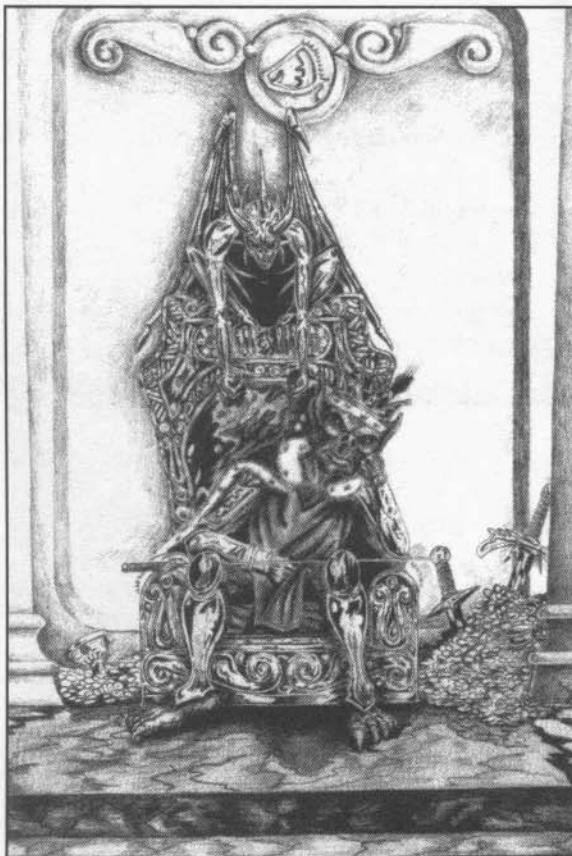
sage; “choosing retainers is choosing the knife at your throat,” as the goblin proverb goes. Even King Nilbog's own shaman refuses to enter the maze unless the flesh golem (which the king uses as a messenger) itself comes to demand his presence.

Once King Nilbog is slain, read the following aloud to the players:

The Goblin King is slain, having put up a valiant fight, if not a hard one. As his small, shattered body collapses to the ground, the air around you seems to ripple and swirl. When the effect fades, the room is revealed for what it truly is: a dank, filthy cave, littered with refuse and worthless baubles. Most of the “coins” are nothing more than chips of wood placed to give substance to the illusion. The finely crafted weapons and items are revealed as rusted, rotten junk with no value at all. The walls are rough, crudely hewn stone, and the statues of goblin warriors are revealed as grisly goblin corpses propped up on sticks. As the Goblin King's lifeblood leaks out onto the floor of the cavern, one of the corpses twitches, then begins to move. With a hoarse roar, it steps down from its pedestal, jerks free of the stick holding it up and turns its blank, glazed eyes upon you.

King Nilbog's Flesh Golem: CR 5; Small Construct; HD 4d10; hp 24; Init -1; Spd 20 ft. (can't run); AC 16 (+1 size, -1 Dex, +6 natural); Melee 2 slams +8 (2d6+3); SA berserk, SQ construct, magic immunity, DR 15/+1; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 9, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1.

SA—Berserk (Ex): When a flesh golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and goes berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. The golem's creator, if within 60 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to the golem, which requires a successful Charisma check (DC 19). It takes 1 minute of rest by the golem to reset the golem's berserk chance to 0%.





Goblin Warrens

SQ—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. Golems do not need to breathe and are immune to most forms of energy.

SQ—Magic Immunity (Ex): Golems completely resist most magical and supernatural effects, except where otherwise noted below.

SQ—Magic Immunity (Ex): Flesh golems are immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. Fire- and cold-based effects slow them (as the spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw. An electricity effect breaks any slow effect on the golem and cures 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage it would otherwise deal. For example, a flesh golem hit by a lightning bolt cast by a 5th-level wizard gains back 6 hit points if the damage total is 18. The golem rolls no saving throw against electricity effects.

This flesh golem was the last creation of Krazatz the sorcerer before his imprisonment drove him utterly mad. It has standing orders to destroy whoever attacks King Nilbog.

Once the golem is dealt with (whether slain or halted by Krazatz), PCs will doubtless wish to loot the treasures to be found within the Goblin King's lair. Though most of the gold and treasure the PCs saw upon first entering was illusory, an hour's searching through piles of worthless junk reveals the following: 9,000 cp (tribute collected from the king's goblinoid subjects), a black pearl worth 500 gp, a bloodstone worth 50 gp, an amethyst worth 100 gp (all looted from travelers in the mountains), and two magic items: a *ring of swimming* and a suit of dwarf-sized *+1 glamered banded mail*, both of which were taken from a slain dwarven emissary whom the goblins caught and killed on the Old Dwarf Road.

The First Shard

Also half-buried in the piles of "treasure" is a piece of what looks like a sword blade. The shard is about a foot long and triangular, as if this section of the sword had been shattered along a diagonal line. Its age is difficult to determine, but it is remarkably free of rust, and the edge is still sharp. A Spot check (DC 25) reveals that there are faint carvings on the blade, nearly invisible runes of power. A *detect magic* spell will reveal faint traces of Transmutation

magic, and illuminates the runes so as to be visible. Finally, a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 30) will identify the shard as part of the legendary sword *Dandural*, but only if the runes are noticed. If there is a paladin in the party, take him or her aside and read the following aloud:

At first glance, this shard seems no different from any of the other junk that made up the goblin king's treasure—after all, it is merely a piece of a broken sword blade. Your first impulse is to brush it aside as more refuse, but something stays your hand. A faint tingling on the back of your neck seems to rise as your hand approaches the blade, and you seem drawn toward it by some mysterious force. You cannot say why for certain, but you are convinced that your deity wants you to take this seemingly useless item.

If the party has no paladin and seems inclined to leave the blade shard behind, GMs may wish to choose another party member (preferably of a religious bent) at random to read the above boxed text to, but this is certainly not necessary. If the PCs still seem inclined to leave the blade as a piece of useless junk, by all means let them. There is no reason they cannot return here (assuming they can find the entrance) to retrieve the blade later, once they realize the significance of the relic.

Catching on Fire

Characters at risk of catching fire are allowed a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to avoid this fate. If a character's clothes or hair catch fire, he takes 1d6 points of damage immediately. In each subsequent round, the burning character must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means he takes another 1d6 points of damage that round. Success means that the fire has gone out. (That is, once he succeeds at his saving throw, he's no longer on fire.) A character on fire may automatically extinguish the flames by jumping into enough water to douse himself. If no body of water is at hand, rolling on the ground or smothering the fire with cloaks or the like permits the character another save with a +4 bonus. Those unlucky enough to have their clothes or equipment catch fire must make Reflex saving throws (DC 15) for each item. Flammable items that fail sustain the same amount of damage as the character.



Race to the Yellow Lotus



Map Key

1. The Throne

This throne is where King Nilbog XXIII sits. Because of the illusion placed over the room, it appears to be a massive, golden throne, but is actually an old three-legged stool.

2. Statue

This illusory statue, like all of the statues, is actually a goblin corpse which remains standing thanks to a wooden pole shoved up the back of its tunic. Unlike the other corpses, however, this one is a goblin-sized flesh golem, which has orders to attack and slay any creatures who attack the Goblin King.

3. Bonfires

These two large bonfires are real, and might prove useful in combat. Remember that, while flesh golems are immune to spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, normal fire affects them just fine.

4. Treasure Piles

These piles of "treasure" are actually mostly worthless junk. Attempting to wade through them reduces a character's speed to $\frac{1}{4}$, but a character taking cover behind them benefit from one-half cover.

T. Trap (EL 5)

Each square marked T shows the location of an 80-foot spiked pit.

- **Spiked Pit trap (80 ft. deep):** CR 5; no attack roll necessary (8d6), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+5 damage per successful hit); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20)

S. Secret Door

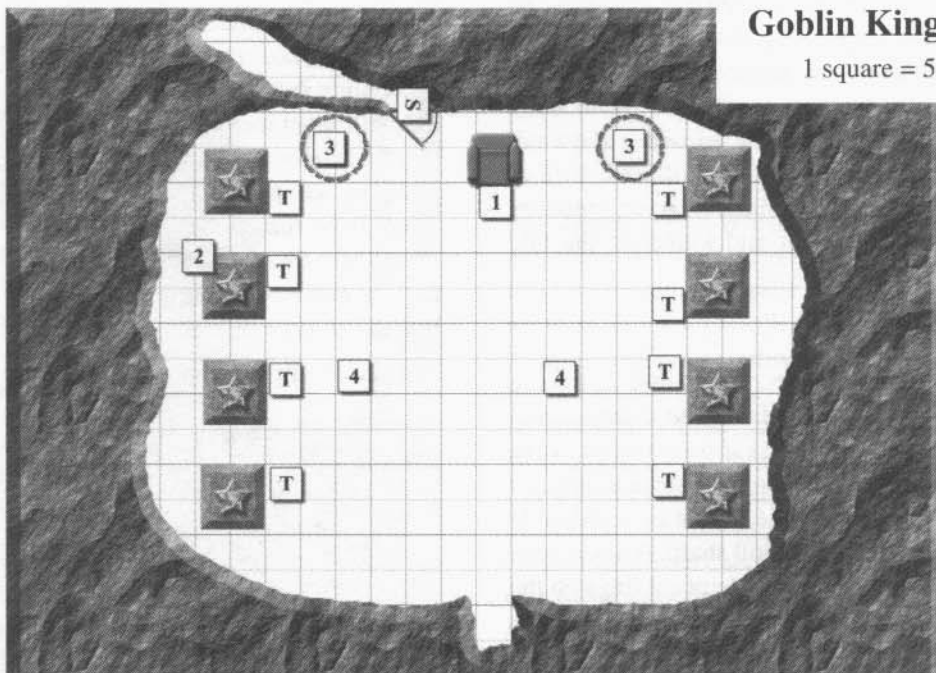
This door is carefully masked to look like the wall of the cavern. It requires a Search check (DC 25) to locate. Remember that elves can roll a Search check merely by passing within 5 feet of the door. The door is neither locked nor trapped—this was to be King Nilbog's escape route should he need to egress rapidly, and he wanted nothing to slow him down.

Back on the Trail

Once the PCs have completed their looting, they will doubtless wish to leave this maze as swiftly as possible. The secret door that leads out of the throne room is marked on the map, and PCs should be able to find it without too much difficulty. The tunnel on the other side of the door is approximately a mile and a half long, sloping downward, and will eventually deposit PCs on the northwest face of the Shadowstar Peak, just a few hundred feet above the tree line.

Goblin King's Lair

1 square = 5 feet.





The Race is On

The PCs have successfully navigated the goblin king's lair, but their quest is far from done. They still have to make their way to the Yellow Lotus Monastery ahead of the orcish horde, retrieve the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*, and bring it to safety. How exactly this will play out depends greatly upon how long the PCs took to make their way through the goblin warrens. The map depicted in Chapter I, showing the orcs' and PCs' routes, assumes that the PCs will spend approximately eight hours in the maze, navigating it, searching for traps, fighting monsters, and possibly resting once to heal and replenish spells. Some parties might, through blind luck or ingenuity, find a way to proceed more swiftly through the maze and thus come out several hours ahead of the orcs, while other groups might dawdle, exploring the entire maze and resting frequently to prepare spells, and quite possibly might fail in their mission entirely. Unless PCs spent a truly absurd amount of time in the maze, however, it should be possible to regain lost time and, if not actually beat the orcs to the monastery, then at least arrive at close to the same time.

Finding the Trail

Naturally, the first thing the PCs must do is find the orc horde and establish a plan based on the orcs' location. Read the following aloud to the players as they emerge from the tunnel:

After the absolute blackness of the tunnel, the sunlight seems dazzlingly bright as you emerge at last into open air. The tunnel's mouth opens just a few hundred feet above the tree line on the northwest slope of the Shadowstar. Despite having been delayed by the Goblin King's maze and the loss of your guide, you have successfully made your way through the Dragonspine Mountains. But now is no time for celebration, for as you look out across the green tree-tops of Icefang Wood, you can see the obvious signs of an army on the move—the orcs are here.

Where exactly the orcs are is not mentioned in the monologue because, once again, their location will vary depending upon the time the PCs take to navigate the maze.

The Orc Horde

The orc shaman Gruslagg commands a much larger force than that which besieged the elven outpost the PCs controlled. Fortunately for them, only a small part of the army marched on the outpost. Unfortunately for the PCs, they must now contend with the remainder of that force. The horde on the move toward the Yellow Lotus Monastery consists of 75 1st-level warriors, 20 2nd-level rangers (serving as archers and trackers), four 3rd-level barbarians, and an ettin called Korgrash who is nominally in charge, though that is more to boost the morale of the troops than due to the giant's tactical ability. Gruslagg's second-in-command (the actual commander) was slain by bugbears when the orcs raided the bugbear village in the Icefang Wood. Fortunately, this is a simple mission, and with a little bit of guidance from his four barbarian sergeants, Korgrash is competent enough to direct the troops.

Note: If the PCs are so foolish as to attempt a direct assault against the army (EL 14), it is virtual suicide.

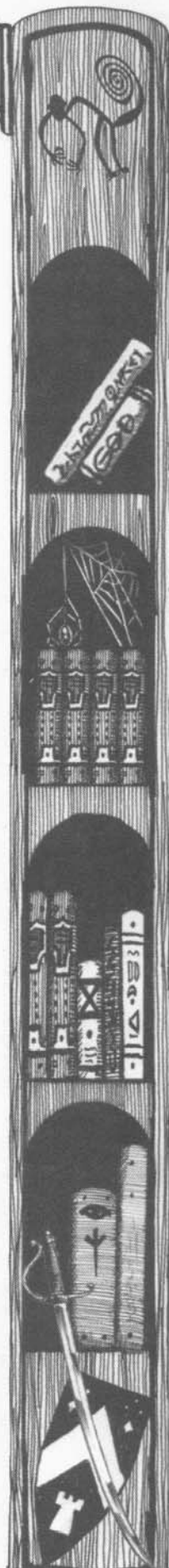
Orc Infantry (75): CR ½; Medium-size Humanoid (orc); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 hide, +2 large wooden shield); Melee scimitar +3 (1d6+2/crit 18–20); Ranged light crossbow +1 (1d8/crit x3); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Equipment: Scimitar, light crossbow, case of 20 crossbow bolts, hide armor, large wooden shield.

SQ—Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Orc Archers, Rgr2 (20): CR 2; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 2d10; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather); Melee shortsword +2 (1d6+2/crit 19–20), shortsword +2 (1d6+1/crit



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19–20); Ranged shortbow +5 (1d6/crit x3); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, favored enemy (humans +1); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +1, Ride+9, Spot +1, Wilderness Lore +5; Alertness, Ambidexterity, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Equipment: Two shortswords, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, studded leather armor.

SQ—Favored Enemy: Due to his extensive study of humans and training in the proper techniques for combating them, the ranger gains a +1 bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks when using these skills against them. Likewise, he gets the same bonus to weapon damage rolls against humans. A ranger also gets the damage bonus with ranged weapons, but only against humans within 30 feet (the ranger cannot strike with deadly accuracy beyond that range).

Orc Sergeant, Brb3 (4): CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid (orc); HD 3d12; hp 21; Init +2; Spd 30

ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 scale mail); Melee shortspear +6 (1d8+3/crit x3); Ranged composite shortbow +5 (1d6/crit x3); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, uncanny dodge, rage 1/day, fast movement; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Intimidate +6, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +1, Ride+9, Spot +1; Alertness, Power Attack.

Equipment: Shortspear, composite shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, scale mail.

SQ—Barbarian Rage: 1/d for 5 rounds. Barbarian temporarily gains +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but suffers a -2 penalty to AC.

SQ—Uncanny Dodge: The barbarian retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Korghash: CR 5; Large Giant (Ettin); HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +7 natural, +3 hide); Melee 2 greatclubs +12/+7 each (1d10+6); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.; SA superior





The Race is On

two-weapon fighting; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +10, Search +0, Spot +10; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Equipment: 2 greatclubs, hide armor, 700 gp, 50 gp bloodstone; 100 gp amethyst.

SA—Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex): An ettin fights with a club or spear in each hand. Because each of its two heads controls an arm, the ettin does not suffer an attack or damage penalty for attacking with two weapons.

Marching Orders

The orcs are under strict orders from Gruslagg to make the best possible time to the monastery. The forest slows their progress somewhat, but an advance guard armed with axes clears as much of the forest ahead as possible. This increases the army's speed, but it also makes their trail ridiculously simple to find if the PCs come out behind them. Korgrash the ettin marches at the forefront, along with 20 of his soldiers who are helping to clear as many obstacles from the path as they can. About 500 yards behind them, the main body of the force (consisting of the remaining 55 infantry, the 4 sergeants, and ten of the archers) marches in three columns of 23, each headed by one of the sergeants. The fourth sergeant marches ahead of the rest, calling cadence for the march, which leaves one column a man short. Five hundred yards behind the main body, the remaining ten archers act as a rear-guard, moving about to guard the flanks and watch for pursuers. The orcs are marching the standard 8 hours per day, but if the PCs manage to slow them down enough, Korgrash will force-march them up to 10 hours per day. Gruslagg left specific orders that none of the soldiers be abandoned unless unfit for battle, because he knew the monastery would be a hard-won prize.

Dealing With the Orcs

There are two possible scenarios for this stage of the adventure—the PCs can be ahead of the orcs, trying to slow them and reach the monastery first, or they can be behind the orcs, playing a dangerous and exhausting game of catch-up. The fol-

lowing sections present rules and suggestions for each of those scenarios.

Ahead of the Game

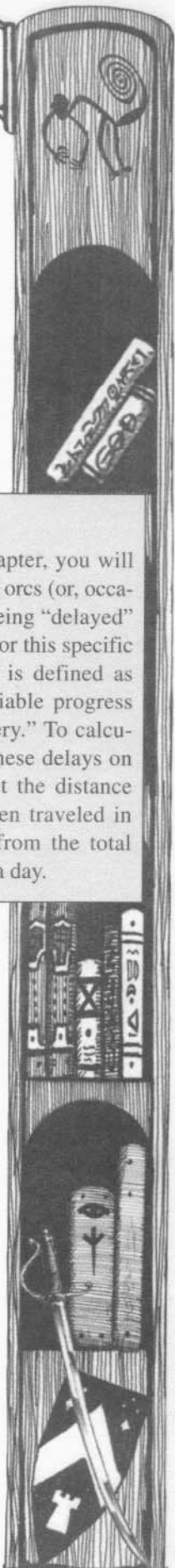
If the PCs budget their time in the goblin maze efficiently, they may emerge into Icefang Wood ahead of the orcs' projected course. If, somehow, they are several hours or more ahead of the orcs, they may elect not to bother with delaying tactics and simply press on toward the Yellow Lotus Monastery. In this case, you should feel free to skip ahead to the Encounters in the Icefang section to spice up the journey. It is far more likely, however, that the PCs will emerge only an hour or two ahead of the orcs, in which case delaying the humanoids is the order of the day, so that the PCs can reach the monastery with enough time to find the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*, convince the monks to part with it, and depart before the orcs arrive. The PCs' delaying tactics can take many forms, including illusion spells to misdirect the orcs, traps which they must circumvent or go around, or even hit-and-run attacks (even the most foolhardy PCs should realize that 99 orcs and an ettin are too powerful to take on head-on). Several sample tactics are presented below—GMs may wish to allow an Intelligence or Knowledge (tactics) check (DC 15) for characters to come up with one or more of these ideas if the PCs seem stuck.

Magical Effects

Various spells, such as *fog cloud*, *darkness*, or especially *hallucinatory terrain* (if any of the PCs are high enough level to cast it) can delay the orcs considerably by slowing them down or confusing them. Darkness creating spells, assuming they can be cast enough times to cover at least 50% of the orc army, will throw them into confusion for 3d8 minutes, after which they will move at ¼ speed until the spell's duration wears off. Fog spells, such as *obscuring mist* and *fog cloud*, will reduce the orcs' speed by only ½, but the presence of fog will not arouse the orcs' suspicions the way magical darkness attacks likely will. Other spells, such as *plant growth*, will slow the orcs a great deal (down to a

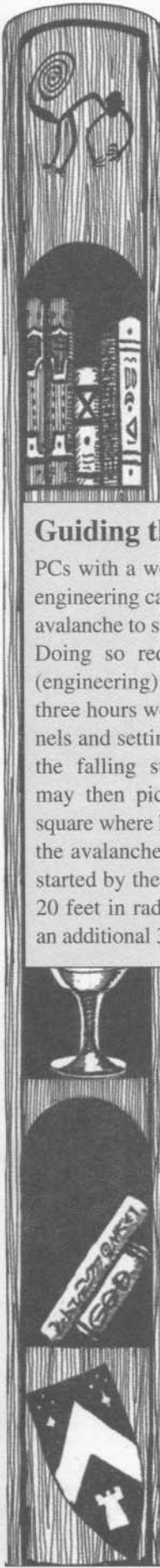
Delayed

Throughout this chapter, you will see references to the orcs (or, occasionally, the PCs) being "delayed" by various events. For this specific purpose, "delayed" is defined as "making no appreciable progress toward the Monastery." To calculate the impact of these delays on travel time, subtract the distance that would have been traveled in the delayed hours from the total distance traveled in a day.





Race to the Yellow Lotus



speed of 5 ft. with *plant growth*), and spells such as *entangle* will sow confusion as well as slowing the orcs. GMs are encouraged to allow PCs to make creative use of their spells within reason. Allowing a *faerie fire* spell to mimic the sun and make the orcs think they have gotten turned around, for example, is probably beyond the limits of that spell.

Mundane Effects

For parties of a more practical bent, or those without spell casting characters, the best way to delay the orcs may well be to create traps or deadfalls in their paths. Of course, a band of 4–6 PCs cannot hope to create traps that will catch 100 creatures

with any sort of speed, they can create enough problems that the orcs will have to stop to extract their compatriots from the PCs' snares. The following are, of course, only possibilities and guidelines—if the PCs can come up with something else that seems reasonable, by all means let them.

Deadfall: Because the PCs know from Valaderion's map the route that Korgrash's forces are taking, they can attempt to block off the path by chopping down trees. For simplicity's sake, divide the trees in the forest into

three categories: Thick trees (with a hardness of 5 and 240 hp), medium trees (hardness 5, 120 hp), and thin trees (hardness 5, 60 hp). It takes 2 thick trees, 4 medium trees, or 6 thin trees to block off the trail sufficiently. Assume that there are enough trees of all three categories near the orcs' trail. A deadfall will delay the orcs by two hours as they attempt to move through the thick forest on either side of the trail and/or clear the trees from their path. How long it takes the PCs will vary, but remember that 10 rounds of hacking (and most PCs should be using a full-round action so as to automatically hit the trees) equates to a minute. GMs should feel free to rule that certain weapons, such as arrows, maces, or scythes, cannot be used to chop trees. Particularly nice GMs might allow axe-wielders to use the coup de grace rules, even though, as "objects," the trees are normally immune to critical hits.

Rockslide: The PCs emerge from the goblin king's lair in the mountains above the forest. Before they climb down into the forest—or later, if they climb back into the rocky regions—they may decide to try to block off the orcs' path with an avalanche. To do so, they must first find a suitably unstable collection of boulders (a Wilderness Lore check, DC 20, is adequate to locate such an area). They must then dislodge 1d4 boulders in rapid succession (no more than one round between them) in order to start the avalanche. Dislodging these boulders requires a Strength check (DC 25). PCs may help each other with these checks, using the standard rules for cooperation, and if they can fashion a lever of some sort, the character making the check receives a +2 synergy bonus. If the PCs wish to direct the avalanche to a certain point, or predict where and when it will land, a Knowledge (Engineering) check (DC 20) must be made. Locating and starting the avalanche will take the PCs two hours, plus another three hours if they try to prepare the avalanche so that it strikes a certain point. An avalanche will delay the orcs for 1d6 hours (1d6+3 if the PCs take the extra time to channel the rockslide), depending upon how much of the avalanche actually hits the path. If the PCs manage to bring the avalanche down on the orcs themselves (which requires the aforementioned Knowledge [Engineering] check), all orcs within 20 feet of the center of the avalanche take 8d6 points of damage (Reflex save for ½ damage) and are considered pinned. Orcs more than twenty feet, but less than fifty feet from the center take 3d6 damage, with a Reflex save (DC 15) for none, and are only pinned if they fail their saves. Pinned characters take 1d6 points of subdual damage a round until dug out. If a pinned character falls unconscious, he must make a Constitution check (DC 15), or the subdual damage becomes 1d6 normal damage per round. Bringing down the mountain on the orcs will throw them into confusion, stopping their progress for one hour per four orcs that end up pinned by the rockslide.

Hit and Run Attacks: Obviously a less-than-subtle means of slowing and distracting the orcs, utilizing hit and run guerilla tactics will certainly have an effect on the orcs' progress, but at a dangerous cost—the orcs will definitely be aware that there are enemies in the forest, and will likely send out search parties to hunt down and slay the PCs if the attacks become severe enough. Use the guideline that for every 5 orcs the PCs slay in an attack, the



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orcs will be delayed for one hour as they send out search parties to find the attackers. If any of the sergeants are among the slain, add one hour to that time. Wise PCs will use this time to get the proverbial hell out of Dodge and make tracks toward the monastery.

These are merely a few possible ways that the PCs might slow their orcish foes. GMs should feel free to allow players to make use of any creative and reasonable plans that they might come up with. Simply estimate how long the PCs' actions will take, and how long the corresponding results will delay the orcs. Naturally, PCs should not be told how long their actions will delay the orcs, either for their original ideas or for the ideas listed here—that's what makes it suspenseful, after all.

Behind the Game

Of course, if the PCs come out of the warrens behind the orcs, things are considerably more difficult. Unless the PCs have access to lots and lots of *haste* or *expeditious retreat* spells, the only way they will be able to overtake the orcs is by force-marching for several extra hours a day so that they cover more ground. Once they make it ahead of the orcs, they can either continue force-marching to widen the gap, or they can attempt to use some of the delaying tactics discussed above. There is one other danger of being behind the orcs, however—the orcish rear-guard. Unless the PCs either stay well clear of the orcs' trail or take steps to move unseen, they will be noticed, and fired upon by the archers marching to the rear of the column. 1d4 rounds after the PCs are sighted, the news of their presence will have reached the head of the column, and the remainder of the orcs will begin to close in on the PCs. Clever PCs might be able to use this to their advantage by letting themselves be seen, only to slip away into the trees and skirt the orc army to get ahead of them.

Encounters in the Wood

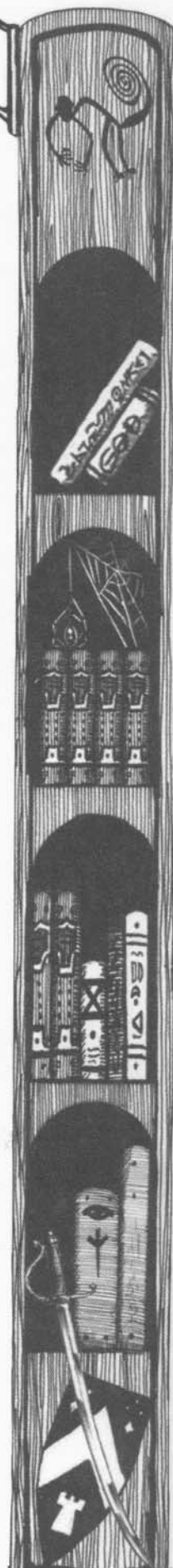
Naturally, if all the PCs had to do was keep ahead of the orcs to get to the monastery, this section would be far too easy (not to mention dull). The orcs and the PCs are not alone in the Icefang

Wood, and many of the wood's inhabitants do not take kindly to intruders.

Aside from the random wandering monster (refer to DMG), there are a few notable encounters that deserve distinct mention.

The Dragon (EL 8)

Unbeknownst to the PCs, and indeed to nearly everyone in the region, the Icefang Wood is home to a young adult green dragon named Ssikariasstiskr'it. (see appendix for a full description) This dragon makes his home in a massive cave just above the tree line at the location marked as 3 on the map of Icefang Wood. Ssikariasstiskr'it is quite fond of wandering through "his" forest for days at a time, and he could encounter the PCs at any point from the instant they emerge from King Nilbog's lair to when they start climbing the mountain to the Yellow Lotus Monastery itself (basically, at any time you feel it is appropriate). Fortunately for the party, Ssikariasstiskr'it is not the type to immediately pounce on the PCs; rather, he will stalk them for quite some time for his own amusement. Once Ssikariasstiskr'it has spotted and begun stalking the PCs, allow them to make a Listen check (DC 15). If they succeed, read the following aloud.



Race to the Yellow Lotus



As you make your way through the forest, all seems quiet and peaceful to you—until you realize just *how* quiet and peaceful. No bird sings, no squirrel chatters, and even the insects seem unusually quiet. The longer this silence goes on, the more unnerving it becomes, until you are quite certain that you are not alone in the woods—and whatever is sharing the forest with you is not happy to see you.

After letting the tension build for a few moments, next allow the PCs to make a Spot check (DC equal to the dragon's Hide check). If any of them pass, read them the following.

As the tension mounts, all of your senses go on the alert, searching the area for any sign of a possible foe. Suddenly, your eye catches a sudden movement to the east. You aren't quite quick enough to see exactly what it is, but you get the vague impression of something long and serpentine slipping through the trees.

What the PCs have just spotted is, in fact, Ssikariasstiskr'it's tail. Unless the PCs actively go searching for him, however, he will continue to simply follow them at a safe distance, remaining concealed until he decides to show himself. GMs should know that K'tulrassass, Ssikariasstiskr'it's mother (of whom the younger dragon is still afraid of enough to obey her), has ordered her offspring to let Calibourne's orcs pass through his forest. Technically, he also has orders to kill anyone else traveling along the orcs' path, but he has petulantly decided to defy his mother in this instance—after all, patrolling the forest for any minor interlopers is such a nuisance.

GMs should feel free to get creative in terrifying their players at this point—describe the occasional sounds of movement in the trees, an acrid, acidic stench when the wind shifts, the continued lack of sound, anything to set the PCs on edge. Finally, at a dramatically appropriate moment, read the following aloud to the PCs:





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The frequent, rustling sounds of movement you have heard following you for several hours ceases suddenly, only to be replaced by a sudden burst of noise and motion. From the east, a great shadow rises up out of the forest, seeming to block out the sun as it climbs into the air. The pungent stink of acid fills your nose, and a sudden terror overtakes you, weakening your knees. The rushing sound of great wings beating the air echoes through the forest, and an instant later the downdraft strikes, kicking up dirt and stinging pebbles as a great, reptilian beast alights on the path before you. Its body stretches nearly twelve feet long, with an equal length of tail, and massive, leathery wings. Its scales glisten a deep olive green as it regards you with eyes like shining emeralds. "So," it rumbles in a basso profundo voice, "You have trespassed in my wood, little ones. I suppose you have come to find the terrible dragon, have you? Well, here he is." The dragon's eyes narrow as it gives you a challenging glare.

Wise PCs will be quick to assure the dragon that they have not come to kill it, nor to take its hoard. This portion of the encounter is largely up to you and the players to role-play out, but keep the following points in mind:

- Ssikariasstiskr'it will be difficult to convince that the PCs are being truthful with him, even if they tell him the truth.
- Like all dragons, this one is very greedy, and he will be more likely to spare the PCs' lives if they offer him gold, gems, or other valuables. If the PCs do not offer, he will "politely suggest" that they leave their treasure with him.
- Ssikariasstiskr'it is also quite susceptible to flattery; PCs who praise his fearsomeness and obvious power over the Icefang Wood will be less likely to be eaten.
- K'tulrassass, the dragon who intends to use the *Flower That Does Not Bloom* to become a lich, still receives information from Ssikariasstiskr'it about the goings-on in Icefang Wood. If the PCs tell him too much about where they are going, that information will find its way to K'tulrassass, who will in turn relay it to Calibourne the Pale, who will then know who the PCs are.

Hopefully, the PCs will be able to resolve this encounter without being killed and eaten—if they seem inclined to fight, you may wish to break the rules of character knowledge vs. player knowledge and tell the PCs that this is *not* a combat encounter (and will not be, until they are significantly higher level). If, even after this, they still insist upon attacking Ssikariasstiskr'it, then you are well within your rights to kill the party—after all, adventuring is a very Darwinian process, and their next characters will be a little smarter.

Ssikariastiskr'it: CR 10; Large Green Dragon (Air); HD 17d12+68; hp 178; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 40 ft.; AC 25 (-1 size, +16 natural); Melee bite +22 melee (2d6+6), 2 claws +17 (1d8+6), 2 wings +17 (1d6+3), tail slap +17 (1d8+9); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (10d6, DC 22, acid), spell-like abilities; SQ frightful presence (DC 20), DR 5/+1, dragon immunities, acid immunity, water breathing, blindsight 150 ft., darkvision 500 ft., SR 19; Al LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +12; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

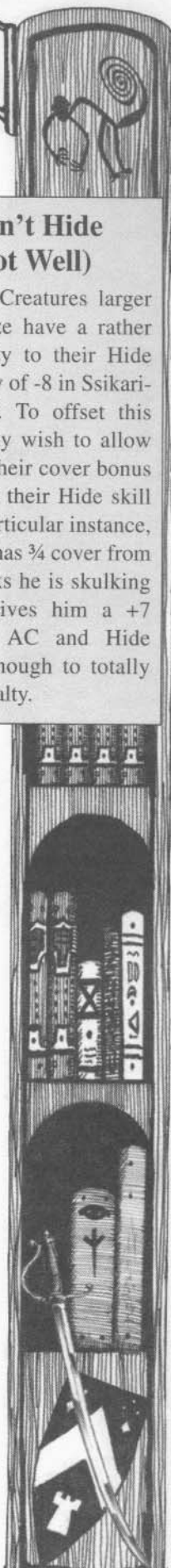
Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +19, Knowledge (local) +19, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Listen +19, Search +19, Spot +19, Spellcraft +19; Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Wingover, Flyby Attack.

The Dryad Grove (EL 4)

Near the base of Mount Denjang, which the Yellow Lotus Monastery sits at the top of, there sits a grove of four mighty oak trees arranged in a square formation. If the PCs stop to investigate, read the following aloud to them:

Big Guys Don't Hide (At Least, Not Well)

Optional Rule: Creatures larger than Medium size have a rather hefty size penalty to their Hide checks—a penalty of -8 in Ssikariasstiskr'it's case. To offset this penalty, GMs may wish to allow creatures to add their cover bonus to AC (if any) to their Hide skill checks. In this particular instance, Ssikariasstiskr'it has $\frac{3}{4}$ cover from the trees and rocks he is skulking behind, which gives him a +7 cover bonus to AC and Hide checks, almost enough to totally offset his size penalty.



Race to the Yellow Lotus



Magic seems to permeate this small grove. As you near a group of oaks, you begin to feel a strange peacefulness fill your heart, and you notice that the trees and plants in the area seem unusually well tended and healthy. An unseen breeze rustles the branches of the four oaks, and to your ears, the sound seems to carry soft, feminine giggles along with it.

The four dryads who dwell in these trees will remain hidden within their oaks unless the PCs attempt to communicate with them. If any human, elf, or half-elf male in the party has a 16 or higher Charisma, the dryads respond automatically by materializing out of their trees and greeting (not to mention flirting incessantly with) the PC. If there are no PCs present that fit this description, a Diplomacy check (DC 17) will lure the dryads out of their trees to converse. Regardless of how the PCs get the dryads to appear, read them the following when they do so.

The tree branches rustle yet again, and the sound of feminine laughter is clearer and more definite, slowly fading from a half-imagined hint into clear, full-voiced laughter as a figure seems to melt out of each oak. The four women appear nearly identical: All are tall, graceful, and stunningly beautiful, with russet-red hair and deeply tanned and lightly freckled skin. Their features are delicately chiseled, like those of elves and fey creatures. The only feature that differs between them is the color of their eyes: One has bright amethyst eyes, another has piercing green ones, the third has eyes as blue as the sky, and the fourth one's eyes are clear amber. As they emerge into the grove, they dance about one another for some time, until it is quite impossible to tell which dryad came from which tree. All of them giggle and murmur amongst themselves, regarding you curiously. Finally, the blue-eyed one speaks.

"Visitors we have not had for many long years," she says, a playful smile flitting across her lips. "But if you could spare the time to play a game with us, we may perhaps offer aid and respite to weary travelers."

If the PCs decline the dryads' offer, they will put a bit and try to cajole the PCs into playing their game, but they will let the PCs go. If the PCs agree, however, continue reading aloud:

The dryads—for that is plainly what these fickle creatures are—clap their hands in delight at your acquiescence. The blue-eyed one, who seems to be the leader of this grove, beams happily and speaks again.

"Then we shall play a riddle game," she decides with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes. "If you can guess all of our names, then you will have won, and we shall offer you what aid we might. And now, to begin the game, I shall tell you that Acorn lives in the southernmost tree."

"My name is not Meadowoak," the amethyst-eyed dryad chimes in.

"The dryad in the easternmost tree has blue eyes," the amber-eyed one says.

"My name is Silverbark!" the green-eyed dryad says excitedly, only to be chided by her sisters for making the game too easy.

"Summerleaf does not have blue eyes, but the dryad in the tree opposite her does," the amethyst-eyed dryad informs you.

"And I live in the westernmost tree," the amber-eyed one says.

The blue-eyed dryad smiles. "And now, good travelers—name us if you can."

For GMs who don't wish to puzzle this one out, the answers are as follows: Acorn has amethyst eyes and lives in the south tree, Meadowoak has blue eyes and lives in the west tree, Silverbark has green eyes and lives in the north tree, and Summerleaf has amber eyes and lives in the west tree.

If the PCs manage to puzzle out the riddle, the dryads applaud their intelligence (much more flirting abounds at this point), and offer them each a draught of the spring water that feeds the grove. This water serves as a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, and also has the effect of healing any subdual damage caused by fatigue (such as that from force-marching), and also removes the effects of



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being winded or fatigued. The water's effects are due to the proximity of the dryad grove, and fade away within 1d4 hours of being taken from the grove. Once the PCs are refreshed, the dryads offer them what aid and information they might have. If the PCs mention the orcs that are marching on the monastery, the dryads either tell them how long ago the army marched by (if the PCs are behind the orcs), or they tell the PCs that, while they cannot actually fight the orcs, they will try to speak to the plants in the area and convince them to hinder the orcs, slowing their speed by ½. In either case, they also tell the PCs that the orcs are under the control of a much more powerful, and dangerous, force, though they do not know what it might be. They only know that, whatever it is, it is using powerful mental domination to control the orcs. Beyond these things, they know little of relevance to the PCs' quest—after all, they are effectively trapped within a few hundred yards of their grove at all times. In any case, time is of the essence, and if the dryads sense that the PCs plan on asking a great number of questions, they will remind the PCs of this fact.

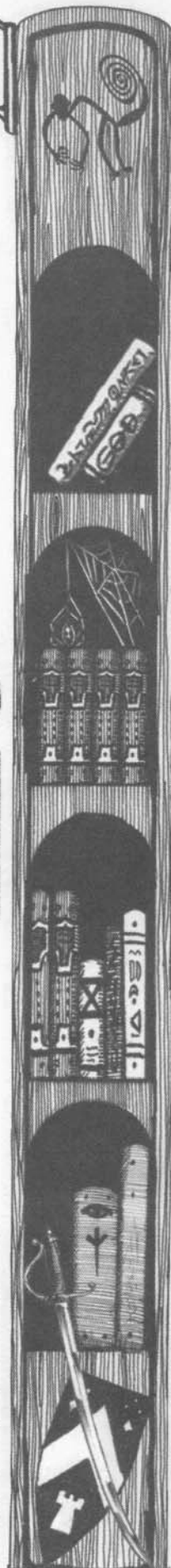
Dryads (4): CR 1; Medium-size Fey; HD 2d6; hp 7; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC: 12 (+2 Dex); Melee dagger +1 (1d4/crit 18–19); SA spell-like abilities; SQ symbiosis; AL CG; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +9, Craft (any one) or Knowledge (any one) +6, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Common, Elven, Sylvan), Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +7; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative.

SA—Spell-Like Abilities: Dryads can communicate with plants at will (as *Speak with Plants*). They can also, at will, step inside any tree and use *Dimension Door* as cast by a 7th-level sorcerer to

reach their own oak tree. A dryad can use *charm person* three times per day, as cast by a 4th-level sorcerer; targets must succeed at a Will save (DC 15) or be charmed for 4 hours.

SQ—Symbiosis (Su): Each dryad is mystically bound to a single, enormous oak tree and must never stray more than 300 yards from it: Any who do become ill and die within 4d6 hours. A dryad's oak does not radiate magic.



The Monastery



At long last, the end of the PCs' quest is near. Only a day's climb from the dryad grove, they arrive at the Yellow Lotus Monastery, ready to claim the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*.

Monks of the Order of the Yellow Lotus

The Yellow Lotus monks are a special order of monks, dedicated primarily to protecting and studying the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*, though there are smaller, splinter groups scattered across the world that guard other mystical artifacts. At the GM's discretion, PC monks may belong to this order. Yellow Lotus monks must be Lawful Good or Lawful Neutral in alignment, but they may multi-class freely as wizards or sorcerers (choose one or the other at character creation).

GMs may wish to add in a few random encounters on the climb up, but take care, as a rather large band of orcs is, in all likelihood, right on the PCs' tail. Of course, if the PCs are ridiculously far ahead of the orcs, feel free to pummel them with mountain-dwelling creatures as they climb. Regardless of how they get to the top, though, read the following aloud to them when they reach the top:

At last, you set your eyes upon the Monastery of the Yellow Lotus, the location of the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*. The monastery itself is a collection of four simple, slope-roofed buildings, which gleam from the bright whitewashing on the exterior walls. The slate roofs are a dull, dark red, and the buildings are entirely plain and undecorated. Indeed, the entire compound seems simple and austere, from the narrow, winding footpaths to the large reflecting pond at the center of the compound. As you approach, two young men in saffron robes break off their hand-to-hand combat drills and jog up to greet you.

"Wang lao," one of the shaven-headed men says. "Chai-gong ni ngo?"

That is when you realize there might be a problem

That's right, GMs—the monks here don't speak Common. They all speak an ancient language called Jaolong, which has all but vanished from modern usage. Unless the PCs have a *tongues* spell handy, or are very good at charades, they will have a difficult time indeed conversing with the monks.

Regardless of how they go about it, if the PCs get their message across to the monks, they are immediately led to the chamber of Master Ki Lo-Ni, the Grandmaster of the Yellow Lotus Order. (For a full description of Master Ki, refer to the appendix.) If the PCs have magic that makes them intelligible to the monks, the two initiates inform them that many of the higher-ranking monks have taken ill recently, and that many have died (they have, in fact, been drained of both blood and levels by Calibourne the Pale and his vampire spawn in anticipation of the orcish attack on the monastery). Master Ki has hung on the longest, but it is clear that he has nearly reached the end of his strength, and he too will soon pass on. Read the following aloud to the PCs once they reach Master Ki's chambers.

This room reflects the simplicity of the monastery outside perfectly. Bare wooden floors and paper walls are unadorned by rugs or decorations, and the only furniture in the room is a small cot, a rack of scrolls along the far wall, and a tiny, short-legged table with a cushion next to it. Lying in the cot is an old man with a head as bald as all of the monks you have seen here, but where the others are robust and healthy, this man—Master Ki Lo-Ni, is pale and drawn, with sunken cheeks and trembling hands. Though his eyes still seem bright and alert, the man is clearly nearing the end of his life. One of the initiates who brought you here walks humbly to the bed and speaks to the old man in a quiet voice. After receiving some instruction, the young man takes a scroll from the wall rack and reads words of magic from it. When the casting is complete, he nods to Master Ki, who smiles wanly.

"Now, young one, we shall see if your magic is strong enough," he says in thickly accented, but understandable Common.

With the *tongues* scroll read, the PCs can inform Master Ki of the situation (assuming there is time before the orcs reach the monastery—you *have* been keeping track, right?) Once he is convinced of the PCs' truthfulness, he agrees to let them take the



The Monastery

Flower That Does Not Bloom, on the promise that it not be harmed or destroyed. The monks, he tells them, still have much to learn by studying its nature. If the PCs ask what exactly it does, Master Ki informs them that it is a powerful item that, when used in conjunction with other dark rituals, can be used to allow *any* creature to undergo the transformation into a lich. He also tells them of the monks' belief that it might also, with the rituals changed slightly, be able to restore an undead creature (not just a lich) to life. He can also tell them of any of the information about the monastery and the mountains around it described in the introduction's Geography section. He will not speak forever, though—either he reminds the PCs that they must take the *Flower That Does Not Bloom* and depart swiftly, because the monks are not strong enough to stave off the orcish assault, or one of the initiates steps in and insists that the PCs allow the master to get the rest he needs.

Master Ki Lo-Ni, Male Human Mnk12/Wiz8: CR 2 (20); Medium-size Humanoid; HD 8d4+12d8-80 (+40); hp 3 (123); Init +5; Spd 70 ft.; AC 20 (+5 Dex, +2 class, +3 Wis); Melee unarmed strike +18/+13/+8 (1d12+2, unarmed strike), or flurry of blows +16/+16/+11/+6 (1d12+2); SA stun-

ning attack, ki strike; SQ deflect arrows, improved evasion, still mind, slow fall, purity of body, wholeness of body, leap of the clouds, diamond body, abundant step, summon familiar; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +15, Will +17; Str 15, Dex 20, Con 3 (14), Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 13.

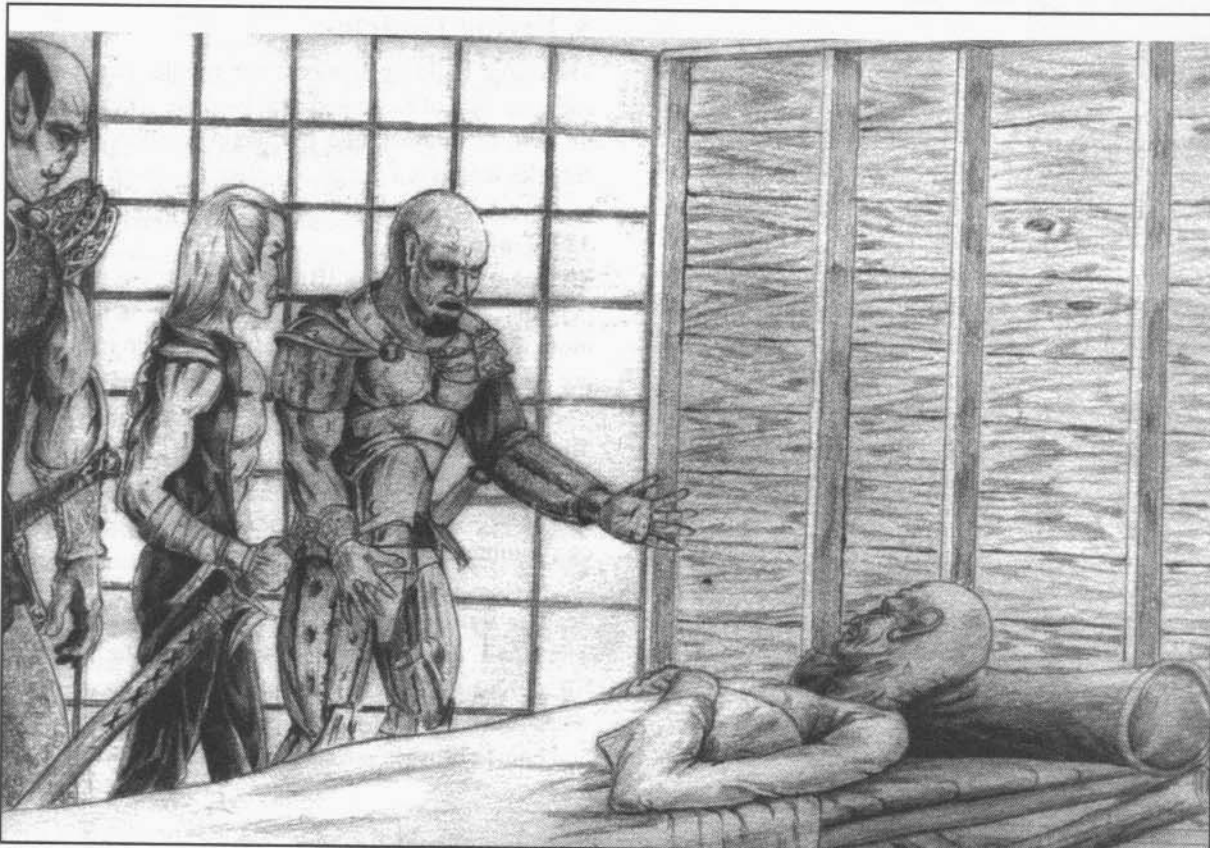
Skills and Feats: Balance +20, Climb +17, Concentration +19, Escape Artist +20, Jump +17, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Scry +14, Spellcraft +14, Swim +17, Tumble +20; Improved Unarmed Strike, Deflect Arrows, Improved Trip, Weapon Finesse (Unarmed Strike), Expertise, Improved Disarm, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Leadership, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Silent Spell, Scribe Scroll.

Fight or Flight

Once the PCs have a good idea of how the monastery is laid out and who can be found there, it's time to move on to the climax. The orcs are drawing near, and the PCs

First Word, Second Syllable, Sounds Like...

Without magical translating abilities, PCs will find it difficult to converse with the monks at the monastery. One option the players may consider is to play charades or pantomimes to get their message across. The best way to resolve this is with a Perform check (DC 25). PCs who are especially vigorous in the demonstration of their characters' pantomimes, or who have the Perform (acting) or (pantomime) skills should receive a special +2 circumstance bonus to their checks.



Race to the Yellow Lotus



must decide whether to take the artifact and flee, or whether to stay and help the monks defend their home from the approaching horde.

If the PCs choose to flee, then skip to the section entitled "Returning Home". Once the Monastery is destroyed, good clerics and paladins will find they have lost access to spells. If the PCs choose to stay and help the Monks, allow them some time to become familiar with the monastery's layout and resources. After all, they must plan a battle.

The Layout

Obviously, if there is going to be a battle in the monastery, the GM and PCs must know what is where. Use the following key and the map of the monastery to plan for battle.

Paper Walls

While the monastery's exterior walls are made of plastered wood (hardness 5, 40 hp), the interior walls are no more than delicate paper screens (hardness 0, 2 hp). Besides their frailty, these paper walls are mostly translucent, and a Spot check (DC 15) will allow a PC to locate a creature standing on the opposite side of the wall. If the creature has moved more than five feet in the last round, the DC drops to 10. A creature on the other side of a paper screen has no cover, but has nine-tenths concealment.

1. Granary and Storehouse

This building houses the monastery's food and other mundane supplies, such as clothing, weapons for training, and so on.

2. The Temple

This building is where the monks go to meditate and pray in their quest for enlightenment.

2a. Temple Foyer

This area is the main entrance to the temple, and is empty except for a single large statue of a kneeling monk.



2b. Sanctuary

This area houses the monastery's altar and various holy relics. *The Flower That Does Not Bloom* rests upon the largest altar on the south wall. When the PCs enter this room for the first time, read the following aloud to them.

This temple is definitely one of the plainest you have ever been in. It is simple to the point of being acetic, with no decorations save for a few religious statues and an altar. It is the altar that draws your attention, though, for resting upon it, in an ornate chest that looks to be made out of pure crystal, rests a large, golden sculpture of a lotus flower's bud. Lit by the candles that surround it, it reflects a warm, burnished glow—and yet it conveys a vague, undefined sense of menace. This is surely *the Flower That Does Not Bloom*.

2c. Master Ki's Chamber

This large, totally empty room is reserved for Master Ki's use, whether for private meditation, practice, or instruction.

3. Living Quarters

This large building is where the monks sleep, eat, and take care of basic personal hygiene. There is little here of interest, and the large numbers of tiny cubicles makes it a dangerous place to have a battle.

3a. Monks' Cells

These tiny, 10 foot by 10 foot cells are the monks' personal sleeping quarters. Each contains nothing more than a tiny cot and a small, low table for writing upon.

3b. Master Ki's Cell

This cell is where the PCs are taken to meet Master Ki Lo-Ni when they first arrive, assuming that they can communicate with the monks.

3c. The Bath

This room houses a simple tub, which the monks fill with water from the reflecting pond at location 5 when they need to bathe. Plain, unscented soaps and course brushes are stacked against the walls.



The Monastery

3d. Mess Hall

This room houses a long, low table with enough cushions around it for all of the monks to eat together. A simple stove for preparing rice and other basic foods sits against the west wall.

4. Main Hall

This building contains the practice rooms where the monks practice both their martial and mystical skills, as well as the monastery's library and the sleeping quarters for Initiates who have not yet proven themselves.

4a. Hall of Challenge

This large, open room, which is used to resolve disputes between monks as well as to test members of the order who wish to advance in rank, has a thick, padded mat on the floor to cushion blows. Around the walls are a variety of simple, martial and exotic weapons, including daggers, quarterstaves, nunchaku, kamas, and sianghams. Any weapon on the monk's class proficiency list can be found here with a round of searching.

4b. Practice Rooms

These rooms are essentially smaller versions of the Hall of Challenge. Instead of weapons, however, these have a variety of training dummies with pressure points marked, wooden boards for breaking, and various targets designed for use with spells.

4c. Initiates' Sleeping Chambers

This room is even more austere than the monks' quarters. Nothing more than two rows of bunks for initiates into the order (initiates are characters who are either 1st level wizards, 1st level monks, or apprentice-level characters in both classes) occupies this room.

4d. Scriptorium

This room houses the monastery's library, both magical and mundane. In addition to a variety of books about the history of this region (one mentions Kotath, Calibourne's vampiric sire, but does not disclose his fate or that of Calibourne), PCs might also find 3d6 random, minor scrolls, some of which the monks might sell—at cost (meaning they charge only the cost to create, not the market price), since the monks shun material wealth.

5. The Reflecting Pond

This large, deep pond is home to quite a few fish; mainly carp and goldfish. The monks come here to meditate upon the stillness of the water when they are troubled.

Available Forces

As Master Ki told the PCs, the monks have recently been assaulted by a strange sickness—very curious when one considers that high-level monks are immune to disease. This sickness comes from the attacks of Calibourne the Pale's vampire spawn, which have been draining the blood of the strongest monks in secret to soften up the monastery's defenses for the orcs. To cover the telltale puncture wounds of vampire fangs, these cunning undead are forcing *potions of cure light wounds* down their victims' throats to heal the bite wounds. That piece of background information aside, however, the following are the stat blocks of the monks who are still healthy enough to be able to fight:

Initiates (12), Male Human Mnk0/Wiz0: CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +5, Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 monk ac bonus); Melee unarmed +2 (1d6+2); SA improved unarmed strike, stunning attack; SQ evasion, summon familiar, scribe scroll; AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 8.

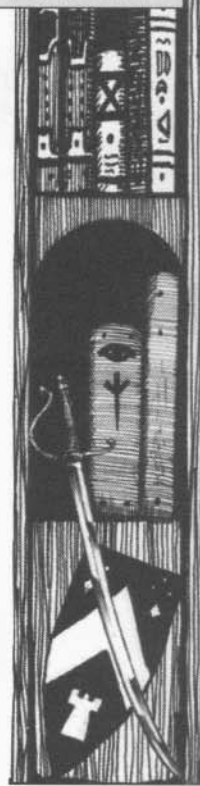
Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Listen +2, Spot +2; Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Initiative.

Spells Prepared: (2) 0th-*dancing lights*, *read magic*.

Novices (3), Male Human Mnk2/Wiz1: CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d4+2d8+3; hp 18; Init +5, Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 monk ac bonus); Melee unarmed +3 (1d6+2); SA unarmed strike, stunning attack; SQ evasion, deflect arrows, summon familiar, scribe scroll; AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Hiding In the Bushes

Optional Rule: If the GM uses the optional hiding/cover rule presented in the last chapter, he may wish to do something similar for characters with concealment: Add ½ the cover bonus to AC the creature would get if it had equivalent cover. For example, if Murl the fighter hiding in a bush has three-quarters concealment, he may add +3 to his Hide checks (three-quarters cover normally gives a +7 AC bonus, half of 7 is 3.5, rounded down to 3). Naturally, this is unnecessary for a character with total concealment.



Race to the Yellow Lotus



Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Listen +3, Spot +2; Unarmed Strike, Improved Initiative, Blind Fight.

Spells Prepared: (3/2) 0th-*dancing lights*, *read magic*, *ray of frost*. 1st-*grease*, *mage armor*.

Tutors (2), Male Human Mnk4/Wiz2: CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 2d4+4d8+6; hp 30; Init +5, Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 monk ac bonus); Melee unarmed +6 (1d8+2); SA unarmed strike, stunning attack; SQ evasion, deflect arrows, still mind, slow fall (20 ft.), summon familiar, scribe scroll; AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Listen +4, Spot +4; Unarmed Strike, Improved Initiative, Blind Fight, Leadership.

Spells Prepared: (4/3) 0th-*dancing lights*, *read magic*, *daze* (x2). 1st-*summon monster I*, *true strike*, *sleep*.

SA—Unarmed Strike: A monk fighting unarmed gains the benefits of the Improved Unarmed Strike feat and thus does not provoke attacks of opportunity from armed opponents that she attacks.

SA—Flurry of Blows: The monk may make one extra attack in a round at her highest base attack, but this attack and each other attack made that round suffer a -2 penalty apiece. This penalty applies for 1 round, so it affects attacks of opportunity the monk might make before her next action. The monk must use the full attack action to strike with a flurry of blows. A monk may also use the flurry of blows if armed with a special monk weapon (kama, nunchaku, or siangham). If armed with one such weapon, the monk makes the extra attack either with that weapon or unarmed. If armed with two such weapons, she uses one for the regular attack (or attacks) and the other for the extra attack. In any case, her damage bonus on the attack with her off hand is not reduced.

SA—Stunning Attack: The monk can use this ability once per round, but no more than once per level per day. The monk must declare she is using a stun attack before making the attack roll (thus, a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). A foe struck by the monk is forced to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + one-half the monk's level + Wisdom modifier). In addition to receiving normal damage, if the saving throw fails, the opponent is stunned

for 1 round. The stunning attack is a supernatural ability.

SQ—Evasion: If a monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, the monk instead takes no damage. Evasion can only be used if the monk is wearing light armor or no armor. It is an extraordinary ability.

SQ—Deflect Arrows: At 2nd level, a monk gains the Deflect Arrows feat, even if she doesn't have the prerequisite Dexterity score.

SQ—Fast Movement: At 3rd level and higher, a monk moves faster than normal. A monk in armor (even light armor) or carrying a medium or heavy load loses this extra speed. A dwarf or a Small monk moves more slowly than a Medium-size monk.

SQ—Still Mind: At 3rd level, a monk gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against spells and effects from the Enchantment school.

SQ—Slow Fall: At 4th level, the monk takes damage as if a fall were 20 feet shorter than it actually is. At 18th level, the monk can use a nearby wall to slow her descent and fall any distance without harm.

The remainder of the monastery's inhabitants are either dead from vampire attacks or are bedridden from the loss of blood. Should it come down to a battle, approximately one half of the monks (divided equally between the initiates and more experienced monks) will go to guard *the Flower That Does Not Bloom*, while the other half will protect Master Ki's chamber.

Defensive Tactics

If the PCs are good-aligned or otherwise possessing of heroic qualities, they will almost certainly want to stay and help the monks fight off the orcs before leaving with the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*. There is almost certainly not enough time or manpower for the PCs or the monks to establish a perimeter defense to keep the orcs out, so the battle will have to be fought within the monastery compound itself. This, of course, does not mean that the PCs have to be stupid and simply wait for the orcs to march into the monastery like colonial soldiers—there are ample tactics the PCs can use to defend the monastery. A few are outlined below for the GM to suggest if the PCs seem totally lost. Of course, the PCs *should* come up with a plan themselves.

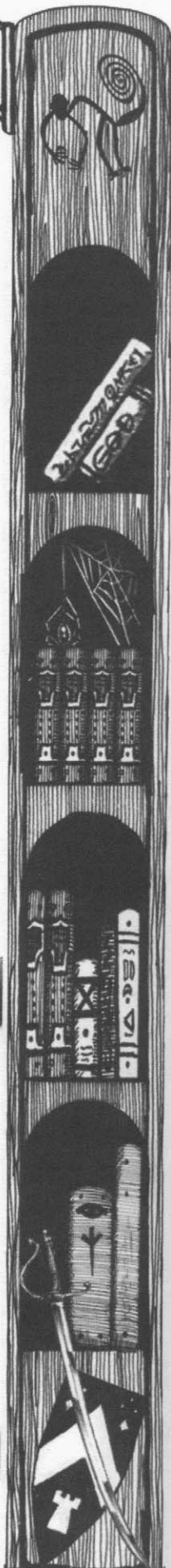
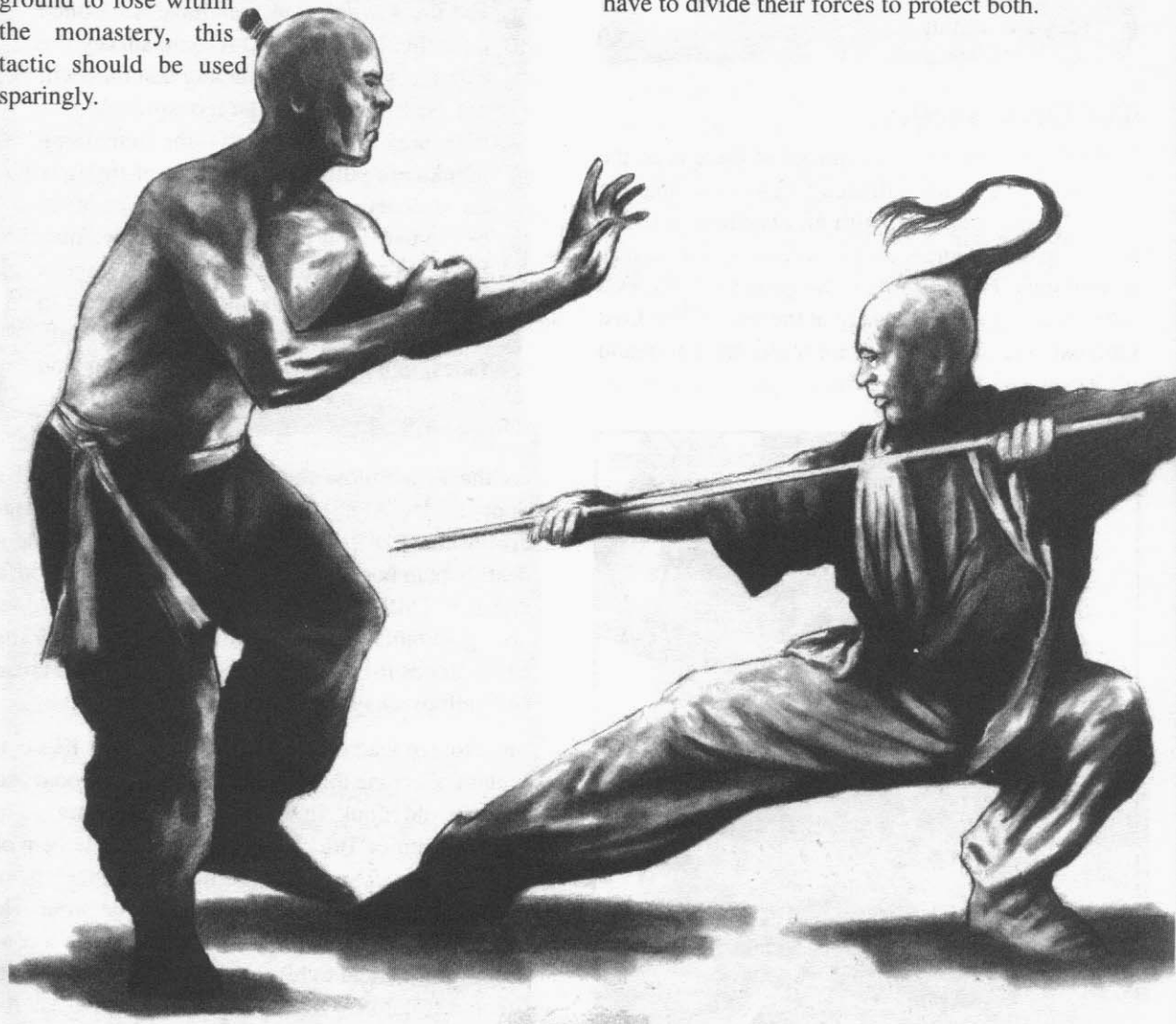
The Monastery

Sniping: The monastery's granary building is two stories high—if one or more PCs can climb up on top of it, they have a clear line of sight down the path the orcs will be coming up out to the maximum range of a composite longbow. While only one or two archers will probably not be able to kill all of the orcs, or even a significant portion, they might be able to soften up Korgrash, the ettin leading the orcs, or one or two of his sergeants.

Attrition: Once snipers have softened up the orcs from afar, a related tactic can be used once the orcs have closed in to melee range. Corners, walls, and bushes, among other things, can grant a PC cover or concealment against the orcs. When a group of orcs approaches the PC's hiding place, the PCs can dash out, attack for a few rounds, then fall back to a new position. This tactic is excellent for characters with the Spring Attack feat, but since there is very little ground to lose within the monastery, this tactic should be used sparingly.

Confusion Tactics: While the orcs under Calibourne's command have been acting in an unusually organized manner, orcs are still chaotic creatures at heart, and this band is no exception. With Gruslagg's leadership gone, the PCs can probably use illusion spells (i.e. The Grail-Shaped Beacon) and rapid hit-and-fade attacks to confuse the orcs, scattering them into smaller groups and making them easier to deal with individually.

Hide the Flower That Does Not Bloom: This should be the first order of business for any party that plans to stay and fight. The orcs are coming in from the east, which means the temple where the *Flower That Does Not Bloom* is housed will be the first building they come to (since the granary's door is on the western wall). Particularly sharp PCs might realize that it would be wise to take the artifact to Master Ki's cell, so that the monks do not have to divide their forces to protect both.



Endgame



The Attack (EL 8)

Once the PCs have made their arrangements (or once the orcs arrive—don't forget to keep track of where they are!) and settled in to wait for the orcs, read the following aloud:

The first thing you hear is the distant *boom! boom! boom!* of drums being pounded in a cadence. The sound starts off like the low rumble of far off thunder, then steadily grows louder until, at last, the sharpest-eyed among you can make out a distant mass of figures moving toward the monastery, lead by a single, gargantuan figure with a massive weapon in each hand.

They are coming.

The Orcs' Tactics

If Gruslagg were still in command of these orcs, the PCs would be in for a difficult fight—the shaman was a master tactician, with an excellent grasp of how to assault a large, defended compound such as a monastery. Fortunately for the good guys, the PCs rather handily slew Gruslagg at the end of *The Lost Outpost*, and now the orcs are under the command of Korgrash, the ettin. Thusly, their tactics are



absurdly simple: Smash their way into every building in the compound, look for *the Flower That Does Not Bloom* (each soldier has a detailed description of it), then, if the artifact is not there, set fire to the building. Once they find *the Flower That Does Not Bloom*, they will retreat as quickly as the word can be spread that it has been captured. Naturally, the PCs will wish to thwart this plan.

Wrap-Up

Once the battle is fought and the orcs are hopefully slain, read the following aloud to the PCs.

For the second time, you have triumphed over this band of orcs. As you survey the carnage, you have the feeling that they will not be troubling the Dragonspine Mountains any more. Already the remaining monks are putting out the last of the fires the orcs set and dragging the bodies off to be cremated—it is a rather morbidly amusing sight to see no less than eight initiates attempting to haul the ettin's corpse off to the pyre. As the rush of victory gradually fades, one of the Novices approaches you and motions for you to come with him.

As the PCs follow the Novice, have them roll a Spot check (DC 30) to notice the strange, silent figure swathed in pale white robes sitting astride a deathly pale horse watching the proceedings from a distance. This figure (who is, of course, Calibourne, taking advantage of his immunity to sunlight) sits and watches for a short time, then wheels his horse and gallops away.

The Novice leads the PCs back to Master Ki's cell (unless of course the orcs made it into this room and slew the old monk, in which case the PCs are led to the most senior Tutor). Master Ki, with the help of another *tongues* scroll, thanks the PCs for their help, telling them that their ancestors would be proud. He does not offer a reward per se, because such a concept is antithetical to his religion and his outlook on life, but if the PCs are mercenary enough to ask for one, he tells them to help themselves to any three



Endgame

scrolls of their choosing from the scriptorium. He also offers the PCs the opportunity to remain at the monastery for the evening and start out fresh in the morning. If the PCs agree, You may wish to give them a chance to roleplay their interactions with the monks, or, if that does not appeal to the players, simply skip ahead to the next morning—in either case, the PCs have successfully completed Race to the Yellow Lotus. The third adventure in this series, The Hunt of the Moon, will be waiting for them when they return to Ni' Shang.

Returning Home (EL 7)

Naturally, some PCs might be less heroic than others, or they might see safeguarding *the Flower That Does Not Bloom* as more important than protecting the monastery. If this is the case, or if they are so far ahead of the orcs that there is no chance of the orcs catching up to the PCs at the monastery, skip from the point when the PCs acquire the *Flower That Does Not Bloom* down to this section. Ending the adventure in this fashion substitutes an attack by two of Calibourne's vampire spawn, along with a pack of wolves, for the battle with the orc horde.

Read the following aloud to the PCs when they make camp for the first night after leaving the monastery with *the Flower That Does Not Bloom*.

After a day of hard marching away from the Yellow Lotus Monastery, you finally stop to make camp as the sun dips behind the mountains, tingeing the landscape red and orange. With *the Flower That Does Not Bloom* safely in your pack, and no sign of the orcs that trailed you through the forest, this mission seems almost too easy.

That is, until night falls completely.

The first thing you notice is the group of low-slung shapes circling your campfire. You easily recognize them as wolves—perhaps even the same pack that investigated your campsite the first night you camped in the mountains. But then you see a pair of cloaked, humanoid figures standing among the wolves, with glittering red eyes—and suddenly things don't seem so easy.

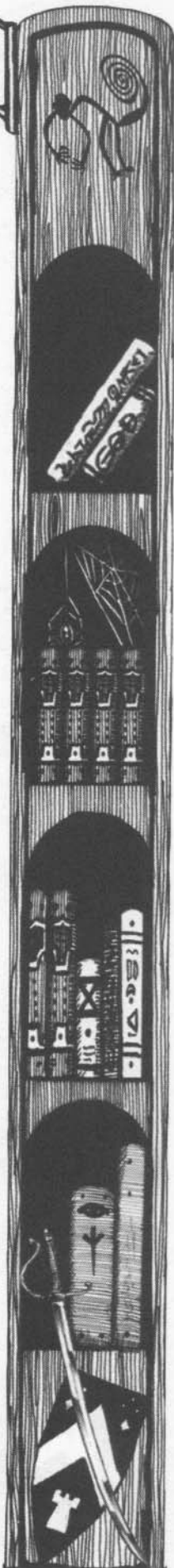
Wolves (5): CR 1; Medium-size Animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Melee bite +3 (1d6+1); SA trip; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +1*; Alertness (Wolves receive a +4 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore skills when tracking by scent)

SA—Trip (Ex): 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.

Vampire Spawn (2): CR 4; Medium Undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +3 leather); Melee slam +5 (1d6+4 and energy drain); SA charm, energy drain, blood drain; SQ undead, +2 turn resistance, DR 10/silver, cold and electricity resistance 10, gaseous form, spider climb, fast healing +2; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, ex 14, Con –, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Climb +8, Craft (poison making) +10, Hide +10, Jump +8, Listen +11, Move Silently +21, Search +8, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning



Race to the Yellow Lotus



Reflexes, Skill Focus (Craft [poison making]). (Vampire spawn receive a +4 racial bonus to Bluff, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.)

Look, Buddy, I'm Not Interested In Your "Pale Knight!"

If you have decided to run Race to the Yellow Lotus as a stand-alone adventure, or have decided to end this series at this point, no real modifications need to be made to the ending of this adventure, as the third Pale Knight adventure, Hunt of the Moon, begins as soon as the PCs return to Ni'Shang. If you don't want to run that adventure, simply have the PCs reach the city without incident and hand over the Flower That Does Not Bloom to Ethel the Sage.

Equipment: +1 silent moves leather armor

SA—Charm (Su): This is similar to the vampire's domination ability, but the save DC is 14, and the effect is similar to charm person as cast by a 5th-level sorcerer. A charmed subject allows the vampire spawn to drain his or her blood (see below).

SA—Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a vampire spawn's slam attack receive one negative level. The Fortitude save to remove the negative level has a DC of 14.

SA—Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire spawn can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain each round.

SQ—Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

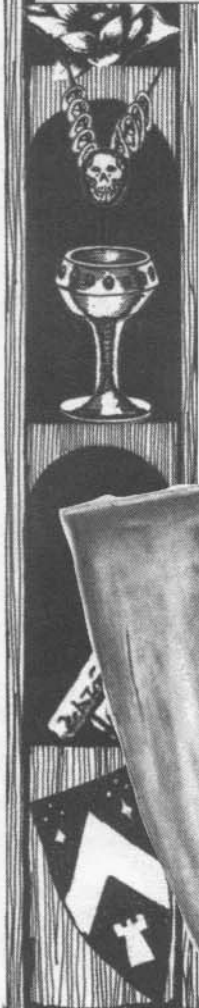
SQ—Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire spawn can assume gaseous form at will, as the spell cast by a 6th-level sorcerer, but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

SQ—Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire spawn can climb sheer surfaces as though with a spider climb spell.

SQ—Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire spawn heals 2 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, it automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. Once at rest in its coffin, it regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then resumes healing at the rate of 2 hit points per round.

If the PCs have no silver or enchanted weapons, the vampire spawn might be significantly harder to kill, but spell casters should be able to even that out. Remember that *cure* spells act as *cause wounds* spells on the undead, so good-aligned clerics can, in addition to turning undead, spontaneously cast these spells to deal positive energy damage directly to the vampire spawn.

Once the battle is won and the foes looted, the PCs may continue on to Ni'Shang to deliver the *Flower That Does Not Bloom* into the hands of the sage Valaderion told them of. GMs may wish to send more attackers after the PCs as they make the return trek to the city as Calibourne tries to recover the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*, but do not send any vampire spawn after the PCs beyond the first pair—it might give away the nature of their foe too soon. What the PCs do not know, however, is that returning to Ni'Shang will not bring the end of their quest, but will only draw them deeper into Calibourne's evil schemes, while at the same time driving them toward the inevitable confrontation with the vampiric blackguard.





Appendix

NPC's

Calibourne the Pale

Calibourne d'Molay was born ninety years ago in the city of Ni'Shang. From an early age, Calibourne was a righteous youth, consumed with the desire to do good. Thus it came as no surprise to his family and friends when Calibourne took the oath of a paladin on his 16th birthday. What was a surprise was the way that Calibourne quickly rose in prestige and power, becoming a renowned warrior against evil. When he was 19, he slew an ancient blue dragon that had taken up residence on the Blood Plateau and claimed from its horde the ancient sword *Dandural*, a *holy avenger* longsword, which grants its holder the benefit of the Extra Turning feat. Less than a year later, he bid farewell to his family and friends (including his betrothed, an elf-maid named Nelianath) for what would be the last time. A vampire named Kotath, who had constructed a foul, unholy castle in the mountains, had been assaulting Ni'Shang and the Northwood alike, and Calibourne had sworn to slay the monstrosity. The young knight rode out at dawn, never to return. When the vampire's attacks ceased, the peoples of Ni'Shang and the Northwood assumed Calibourne had been victorious, though tragically slain himself, and held great celebrations to honor him.

Unfortunately, Calibourne's true fate was far darker. He faced Kotath in the vampire's lair, but Kotath's sorcery proved too powerful for the young paladin. Calibourne was rooted to the floor by fell magic, forced to stand helpless as Kotath drank his blood and turned him into one of the undead. In that moment, Calibourne d'Molay died and was reborn as Calibourne the Pale, an unholy knight in the service of the darkest gods.

When Calibourne awoke as a vampire, he should have been under the command of Kotath, a slave to the master vampire who created him. But the dark gods (seeing his potential) looked with favor on Calibourne, and blessed the young vampire with numerous unholy gifts, the least of which was the severing of Kotath's control over him. Calibourne rose from the funeral bier his creator had placed him on and, in a rage, attacked the older vampire. He did not kill Kotath, however, but rather locked him deep in the castle's dungeon to feed on the

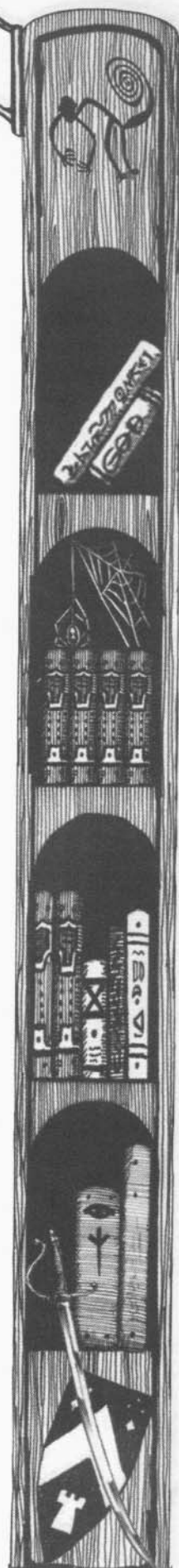
blood of rats, and eventually go mad from hunger. Calibourne then swore himself to the service of the dark gods, and swore to conquer and destroy all of the lands he had once protected. The dark gods sent an emissary to him to accept his allegiance and grant their blessings, including powerful new weapons and armor and special immunities. From that day onward, Calibourne has plotted and planned his every move, designing contingency plan upon contingency plan, in preparation for the day he can finally strike. That day is coming.

With the recent loss of the elven outpost his soldiers had taken, Calibourne now knows that he has a potentially dangerous foe in the form of the PCs, though he is not yet aware of their identities. He has already begun making plans as to how he can flush the PCs out and learn who they are, so that he can destroy them utterly or, better yet, bend them to his will and turn them into his servants.

Calibourne the Pale, Male Vampire Paladin 3/Blackguard10: CR 15; Medium-size Undead (Vampire); HD 13d12; hp 118; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 36 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, +12 *demon armor*, +5 *large steel shield*); Melee *Thrakûl* (+3 *unholy Longsword*) +24/19/+14 (1d8+7 (+2d6 vs. good, +2d6 vs. lawful) /crit 17–20), slam +20/+15/+10 (1d6+7 and energy drain); SA smite good 2/day, command undead 8/day sneak attack +3d6, charm, energy drain, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn; SQ *detect good*, poison use, dark blessing, *lay on hands*, aura of despair, fiendish servant, undead, +4 turn resistance, DR 15/*Dandural*, cold and electricity resistance 20, gaseous form, spider climb, alternate form, fast healing 5, special immunities, vampire weaknesses; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +12; Str 24, Dex 17, Con –, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Heal +13, Ride +18, Concentration +10, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spot +18, Listen +18, Bluff +13, Hide +11, Move Silently +11, Search +10, Sense Motive +11; Weapon Focus (longsword), Combat Reflexes, Alertness, Improved Critical (longsword), Power Attack, Cleave, Sunder, Improved Initiative, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes.

Equipment: *Demon armor*, *large steel shield* +3, *Thrakûl* (*unholy, chaotic longsword* +3, fiendish heavy warhorse).



Race to the Yellow Lotus



Spells Prepared: (3/3/3/1)^{1st}—*Cause fear, doom, magic weapon.* ^{2nd}—*Bull's strength, inflict moderate wounds, shatter.* ^{3rd}—*Contagion, inflict serious wounds, summon monster III.* ^{4th}—*Inflict critical wounds.*

Description: Calibourne stands 5 feet, 9 inches tall and weighs a muscular 180 pounds. His skin is deathly pale, contrasting sharply with his jet-black hair. His eyes, once proud, glacial blue, now burn an unholy red. He wears enchanted armor crafted to look like a fiend from the lower planes. His new sword, *Thrakûl*, is a cruelly serrated blade made of pale, almost white steel with a faint bluish tinge, like the flesh of a corpse. The only relic of his former life he carries is his shield, though the holy symbol on it has been scorched and rent as if by talons.

Vampire Special Attacks

A vampire retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains those listed below. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 vampire's HD + vampire's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained.

Children of the Night (Su): Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth a pack of 4d8 dire rats, a swarm of 10d10 bats, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a vampire's energy drain attack rises as a vampire spawn 1d4 days after burial. If the vampire instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or less, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under the command of the vampire that created it and remains enslaved until its master's death.

Domination (Su): A vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must take a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed at a Will save or fall instantly

under the vampire's influence as though by a dominate person spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a vampire's slam attack suffer 2 negative levels.

Vampire Special Qualities

A vampire retains all the special qualities of the base creature and those listed below, and also gains the undead type.

Alternate Form (Su): A vampire can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a polymorph self spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer, except that the vampire can assume only one of the forms listed here. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Damage Reduction (Su): A vampire's undead body is tough, giving the creature damage reduction 15/+1.

Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire heals 5 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points or lower, a vampire automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (It can travel up to nine miles in 2 hours.) Once at rest in its coffin, it rises to 1 hit point after 1 hour, then resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can assume gaseous form at will, as the spell cast by a 5th-level sorcerer, but can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Resistance (Ex): A vampire has cold and electricity resistance 20.

Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a spider climb spell.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A vampire has +4 turn resistance.

Undead: Undead are once-living creatures animated by spiritual or supernatural forces. Undead are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromantic effects, and they ignore mind-influencing effects. Undead are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. They have no Constitution scores and are therefore immune to any effect



Appendix

requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects). An undead spellcaster uses its Charisma modifier when making Concentration checks.

Vampire Weaknesses

Vampires cannot tolerate the strong odor of garlic and will not enter an area laced with it. Similarly, they recoil from a mirror or a strongly presented, holy symbol. These things don't harm the vampire—they merely keep it at bay. Vampires are also unable to cross running water, although they can be carried over it while resting in their coffins or aboard a ship. They are utterly unable to enter a home or other building unless invited in by someone with the authority to do so. They may freely enter public places, since these are by definition open to all.

Slaying a Vampire

Simply reducing a vampire's hit points to 0 or below incapacitates but doesn't destroy it. However, certain attacks can slay vampires.

Exposing any vampire to direct sunlight disorients it: It can take only partial actions and is destroyed utterly on the next round if it cannot escape. Similarly, immersing a vampire in running water robs it of one-third of its hit points each round until it is destroyed at the end of the third round.

Driving a wooden stake through a vampire's heart instantly slays the monster. However, it returns to life if the stake is removed, unless the body is destroyed. A popular tactic is to cut off the creature's head and fill its mouth with holy wafers (or their equivalent).

Special Immunities (Su): Calibourne the Pale is no ordinary vampire. The dark gods blessed him with a variety of special protections against the weaknesses of "lesser" vampires.

- Instead of the normal vampiric damage reduction of 15/+1, Calibourne has damage reduction 15/*Dandural*. Any weapon except *Dandural* must subtract 15 from its damage.
- Sunlight will not destroy him. Direct sunlight still disorients him, rendering him capable only of taking partial actions, and he will still try to flee immediately. He will not, however, be destroyed at the end of the second round spent in sunlight.
- Immersion in running water still reduces Calibourne's hit points by ? each round, but when

reduced to zero hp, he assumes *gaseous form* and flees to his coffin.

- Driving a wooden stake through his heart may "slay" Calibourne, but unlike most vampires, he may make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to avoid being instantly slain. Like all vampires, however, he returns to life if the stake is removed, unless his body can be destroyed (which can only be accomplished with *Dandural*.)

Blackguard Abilities

Aura of Despair: Beginning at 3rd level, the blackguard radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 feet of him to suffer a -2 morale penalty on all saving throws. Aura of despair is a supernatural ability.

Command Undead: When a blackguard reaches 3rd level, he gains the supernatural ability to command and rebuke undead. He commands undead as would a cleric of two levels lower.

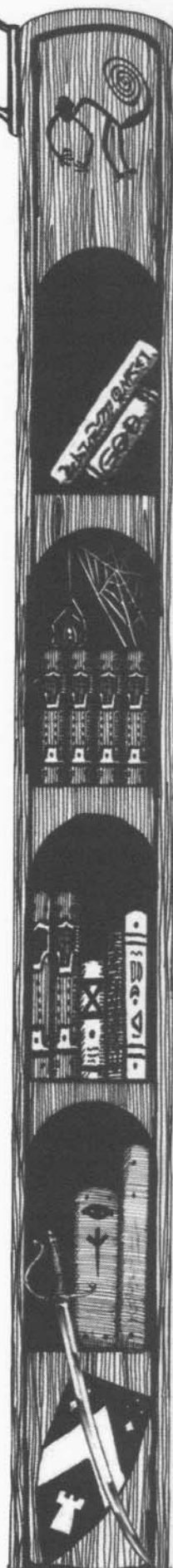
Dark Blessing: A blackguard applies his Charisma modifier (if positive) as a bonus to all saving throws.

Detect Good: At will, the blackguard can detect good as a spell-like ability. This ability duplicates the effects of the spell *detect good*.

Poison Use: Blackguards are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Spells: Beginning at 1st level, a blackguard gains the ability to cast a small number of divine spells. To cast a spell, the blackguard must have a Wisdom score of at least 10 + the spell's level, so a blackguard with a Wisdom of 10 or lower cannot cast these spells. Blackguard bonus spells are based on Wisdom, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + the blackguard's Wisdom modifier. When the blackguard gets 0 spells of a given level, such as 0 1st-level spells at 1st level, he gets only bonus spells. (A blackguard without a bonus spell for that level cannot yet cast a spell of that level.) The blackguard's spell list appears below. A blackguard has access to any spell on the list and can freely choose which to prepare, just like a cleric. A blackguard prepares and casts spells just as a cleric does (though the blackguard cannot spontaneously cast cure or inflict spells).

Smite Good: Once a day, a blackguard of 2nd level or higher may attempt to smite good with one nor-



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mal melee attack. He adds his Charisma modifier (if positive) to his attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage per class level. For example, a 9th-level blackguard armed with a longsword would deal 1d8+9 points of damage, plus any additional bonuses from high Strength or magical effects that normally apply. If the blackguard accidentally smites a creature that is not good, the smite has no effect but it is still used up for that day. Smite good is a supernatural ability.

Sneak Attack: If a blackguard can catch an opponent when she is unable to defend herself effectively from his attack, he can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Basically, any time the blackguard's target would be denied her Dexterity bonus to AC (whether she actually has a Dexterity bonus or not) or when the blackguard flanks the target, the blackguard's attack deals +1d6 points of damage at 4th level and an additional +1d6 points for every three levels thereafter (+2d6 at 7th level, +3d6 at 10th level, and so on). Should the blackguard score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Bloodmist

Bloodmist, Fiendish Heavy Warhorse: CR 3; Large Magical Beast; HD 8d10+12; hp 62; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural); Melee 2 hooves +13 (1d6+5), bite +5 (1d4 +2); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA smite good 1/day; SQ scent, darkvision 60 ft., cold, fire resistance 15, DR 5/+2, improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, share saving throws, speak with blackguard; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7.

Nelianath

Nelianath is an elf maid of 124 years of age. From her childhood, she has studied the arcane arts of the wizard, following in the footsteps of her mother and her grandmother. In fact, all of her maternal ancestors have been quite powerful wizards as far back as elven history goes. Her family, while not exactly of noble birth, is well-off, and owes much of its prestige to its wizardly daughters, who, despite their uncanny power, are treated as little better than property. Nelianath herself was fated to be married off to an elven princeling to improve her family's standing. But all of that changed seventy-one years

ago when she met a young human paladin named Calibourne d'Molay. The young knight had been sent as a courier to retrieve an important document from the elven government when he came across Nelianath, her guards slain and her spells exhausted, beset by marauding trolls. Without hesitation, the young knight snatched up *Dandural* and charged into battle, slaying the trolls. It was love at first sight between the human and the elf maid, and when the young knight asked her to accompany him when he returned to Ni'Shang, Nelianath forsook her family and agreed. The couple made plans to marry almost immediately, but their plans were delayed when Calibourne felt the call to ride forth and destroy the vampire Kotath. To Nelianath's sorrow, her beloved never returned.

After Calibourne's disappearance, Nelianath, knowing she could not return to her family, disguised herself as a man and joined the Elven Imperial Army, secretly hoping to meet her end in battle, as she supposed Calibourne had done. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, this plan backfired, as her innate magical savvy served her admirably. Valaderion, her senior officer, has of course uncovered the fact that Nelianath is a woman, but to his way of thinking, she is far too fine a soldier to lose over such a triviality. Because of her time with Calibourne, she knows the Dragonspine Mountains well, and thus is often employed as a guide or scout by Valaderion.

Nelianath, Female Elf Wiz4: CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (Elf); HD 4d4; hp 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+4 mithril chain shirt, +3 Dex); Melee longsword +2 (1d8/crit 19-20); Ranged +5 longbow (1d8/crit x3); SQ elven traits; AL NG; SV Fort +1 Ref +4 Will +5; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +10, Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Speak Celestial, Speak Common, Speak Draconic, Speak Elven, Speak Goblin; Spellcraft +10 Scribe Scroll, Combat Casting, Expertise.

Equipment: Longsword, longbow, Mithril chain shirt, spell component pouch, spell book.

Spells Prepared: (4/4/3) 0-level—*daze, detect magic, light, tread magic*; 1st level—*charm person, color spray, mage armor, magic missile, sleep*; 2nd level—*cat's grace, Melf's acid arrow, web*.



Appendix

Spell book: 0th level— all cantrips; 1st level—*change self, charm person, color spray, mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep*; 2nd level—*cat's grace, hypnotic pattern, Melf's acid arrow, web*.

Description: Nelianath stands just over five feet tall, and weighs ninety pounds. She is slender, but tougher than her frail appearance might indicate. She favors the loose, comfortable uniform of an elven soldier, and carries herself with obviously military bearing. She wears her honey-colored hair short, and her keen silver eyes constantly seem to be analyzing any given situation and coming up with tactical options for it. Her personality is brusque and efficient, but her heart still carries the pain of losing Calibourne. Even if he had somehow survived, old age would have claimed him long ago, she reasons. She has no idea the monster her betrothed has become.

Ssikariasstiskr'it

Ssikariasstiskr'it is a young adult green dragon who has taken up his lair in Icefang Wood. He is the offspring of K'tulrassass, the ancient and powerful green dragon who is allied with Calibourne the Pale. But while his mother prefers her lair high in the Dragonspine Mountains, Ssikariasstiskr'it favors the more traditional, for green dragons, Icefang Wood. His personality is distinctly feline—rather than immediately leap to the attack, as would most green dragons, Ssikariasstiskr'it prefers to stalk his prey for days on end, toying with them and tormenting them as they travel through his woods. Ssikariasstiskr'it is belligerent and territorial, like all green dragons, but clever or charismatic PCs can convince him to let them pass with a combination of bribery and flattery. Though he is a young dragon, his horde is quite sizable and well guarded: A single troll and several bugbears guard his lair while the dragon is away.

Very Important Note: As a young adult green dragon, Ssikariasstiskr'it is a CR 10 creature. Because *Race to the Yellow Lotus* is designed for PCs of 4th–5th levels, this dragon is *far* too powerful to defeat in straight combat, barring an exceptional run of luck with the dice (and even that is chancy). GMs should encourage their PCs to remember the old adage “He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day.” If you are dealing with an overly aggressive party, you might want to reduce Ssikariasstiskr'it to a juvenile.

Ssikariasstiskr'it: CR 10; Large Green Dragon (Air); HD 17d12+68; hp 178; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 40 ft.; AC 25 (-1 size, +16 natural); Melee bite +22 melee (2d6+6), 2 claws +17 (1d8+6), 2 wings +17 (1d6+3), tail slap +17 (1d8+9); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (10d6, DC 22, acid), spell-like abilities; SQ frightful presence (DC 20), DR 5/+1, dragon immunities, acid immunity, water breathing, blindsight 150 ft., darkvision 500 ft., SR 19; AI LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +12; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +19, Knowledge (local) +19, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Listen +19, Search +19, Spot +19, Spellcraft +19; Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Wingover, Flyby Attack.

Treasure: Double standard.

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): Ssikariasstiskr'it can breathe a 40 ft. cone of acid (10d6, Reflex save at DC 22 for half damage). Using a breath weapon is a standard action. Once the dragon breathes, it can't breathe again until 1d4 rounds later. A blast from a breath weapon always starts at the dragon's mouth and extends in a direction of the dragon's choice, with an area as noted below. If the breath weapon deals damage, creatures caught in the area can attempt Reflex saves to take half damage.

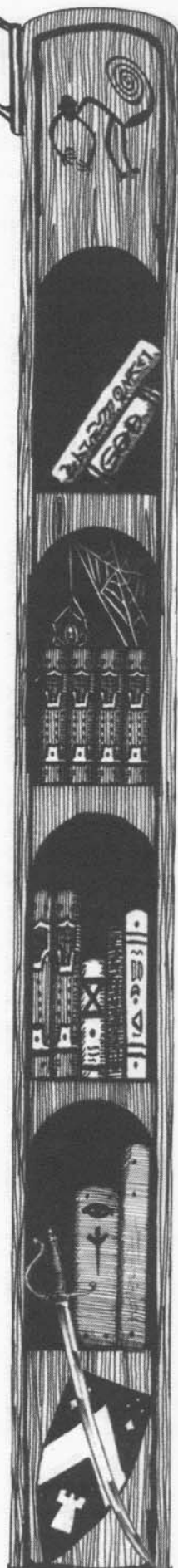
SA—Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day-suggestion and dominate person; 1/day-plant growth and command plants.

SQ—Frightful Presence (Ex): Ssikariasstiskr'it can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 150 ft. are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the dragon.

A potentially affected creature that succeeds at a Will save (DC 20) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds.

SQ—Immunities (Ex): Ssikariasstiskr'it is immune to acid, sleep and paralysis effects.

SQ—Spell Resistance (Ex): SR19. As dragons age, they become more resistant to spells and spell-like abilities, as listed in the variety descriptions.



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SQ—Blindsight (Ex): Ssikariastiskr'it can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) with a range of 150 ft.

SQ—Water Breathing (Ex): The dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Master Ki Lo-Ni

Master of the Yellow Lotus Order, Ki Lo-Ni is an old man who has dedicated his life to the Order of the Yellow Lotus, which is described above. Both a master of the martial arts and of the mystical, he has spent decades contemplating the mysteries of the *Flower That Does Not Bloom*, and he believes he may be close to finding the key to using its power for good, to return former undead to their living states.

Always a spry and healthy man, even in his old age, Master Ki (this is the proper way to address him, as Lo-Ni is his personal name) has recently been struck by a strange, wasting disease, as have many of the other higher-ranking monks at the monastery. It seems that he is losing a great deal of blood, though no one can uncover how or why. If the disease's progress is not halted soon, Master Ki may soon be lost, and all of his knowledge with him.

Master Ki Lo-Ni, Male Human Mnk12/Wiz8: CR 2 (20); Medium-size Humanoid; HD 8d4+12d8-80 (+40); hp 3 (123); Init +5; Spd 70 ft.; AC 20 (+5 Dex, +2 class, +3 Wis); Melee unarmed strike +18/+13/+8 (1d12+2, unarmed strike), or flurry of blows +16/+16/+11/+6 (1d12+2); SA stunning attack, *ki* strike; SQ deflect arrows, improved evasion, still mind, slow fall, purity of body, wholeness of body, leap of the clouds, diamond body, *abundant step*, summon familiar; AI LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +15, Will +17; Str 15, Dex 20, Con 3 (14), Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Balance +20, Climb +17, Concentration +19, Escape Artist +20, Jump +17, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Scry +14, Spellcraft +14, Swim +17, Tumble +20; Improved Unarmed Strike, Deflect Arrows, Improved Trip, Weapon Finesse (Unarmed Strike), Expertise, Improved Disarm, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Leadership, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Silent Spell, Scribe Scroll.

Equipment: Monk's outfit, assorted scrolls.

Spells Prepared: (4/5/4/4/2) 0th Level-*detect poison, dancing lights, open/close, read magic*. 1st Level-*protection from chaos, protection from evil, mage armor, comprehend languages, identify*. 2nd Level-*detect thoughts, see invisibility, invisibility, endurance*. 3rd Level-*dispel magic, nondetection, clairaudience, tongues*. 4th Level-*stoneskin, shout*. Master Ki has access to the Yellow Lotus Monastery's library, which contains nearly any spell he might wish to cast.

SA—Stunning Attack: Ki Lo-Ni can use this ability once per round, but no more than once per level per day. The monk must declare he is using a stun attack before making the attack roll (thus, a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). A foe struck by the monk is forced to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19). In addition to receiving normal damage, if the saving throw fails, the opponent is stunned for 1 round.

SA—*ki* strike: Ki Lo-Ni's unarmed attack is empowered with *ki*. The unarmed strike damage from such an attack can deal damage to a creature with damage reduction as if the blow were made with a weapon with a +1 enhancement bonus.

SQ—Improved Evasion: Ki Lo-Ni takes half damage on a failed Reflex save.

SQ—Still Mind: +2 bonus to saving throws against spells and effects from the Enchantment school.

SQ—Slow Fall: Ki Lo-Ni takes damage as if a fall were 20 feet shorter than it actually is.

SQ—Purity of Body: Ki Lo-Ni is immune to all diseases except for magical diseases.

SQ—Wholeness of Body: Ki Lo-Ni can cure his own wounds. He can cure up to twice his current level in hit points each day, and can spread this healing out among several uses.

SQ—Leap of the Clouds: Ki Lo-Ni's jumping distance (vertical or horizontal) is not limited according to his height.

SQ—Diamond Body: Ki Lo-Ni is immune to poison of all kinds.

SQ—Abundant Step: Ki Lo-Ni can slip magically between spaces, as per the spell *dimension door*, once per day. This is a spell-like ability, and the monk's effective casting level is one-half his actual.

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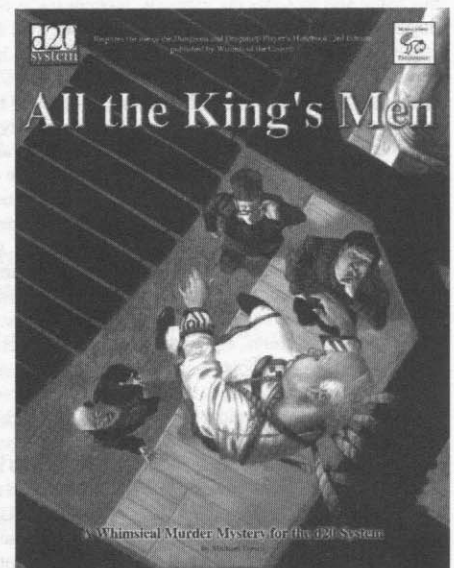
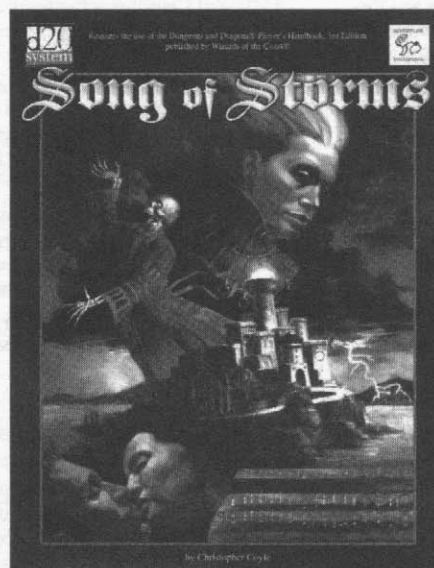
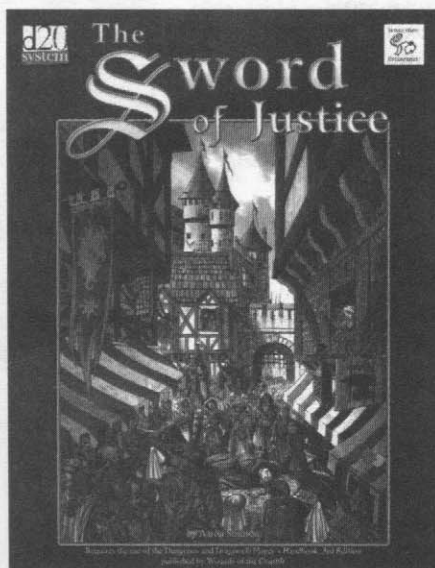
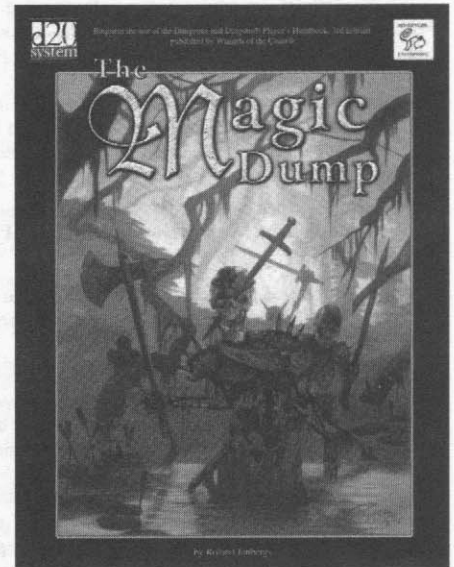
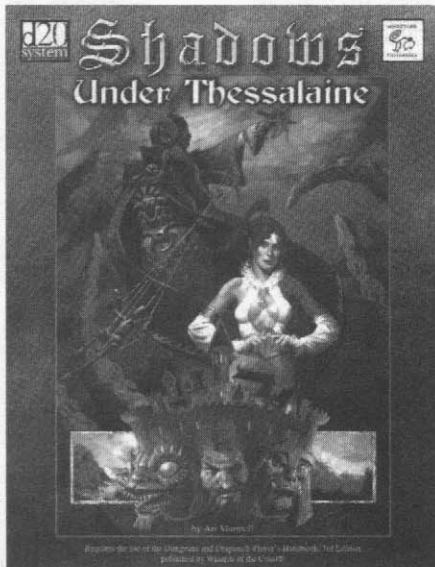
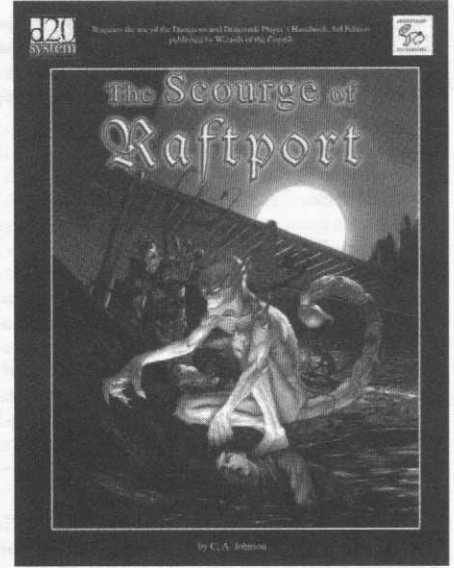
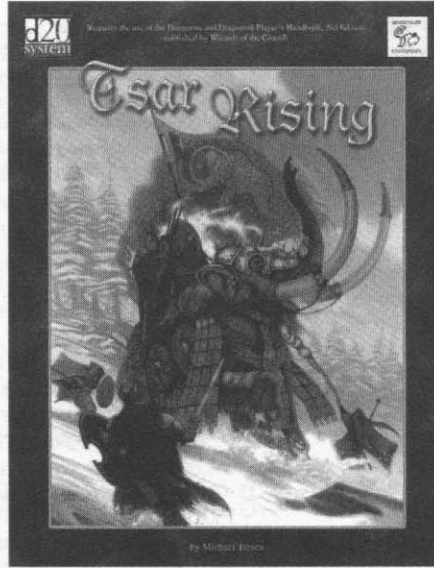
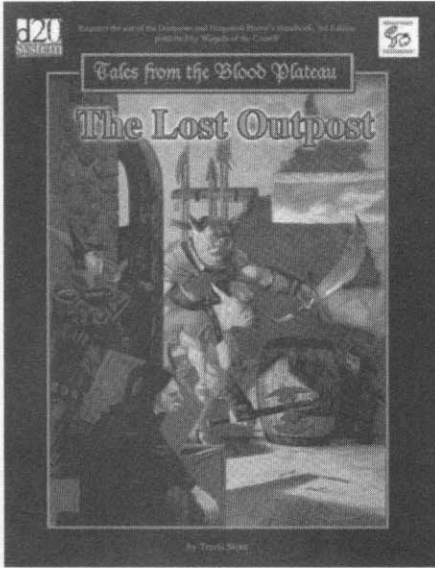
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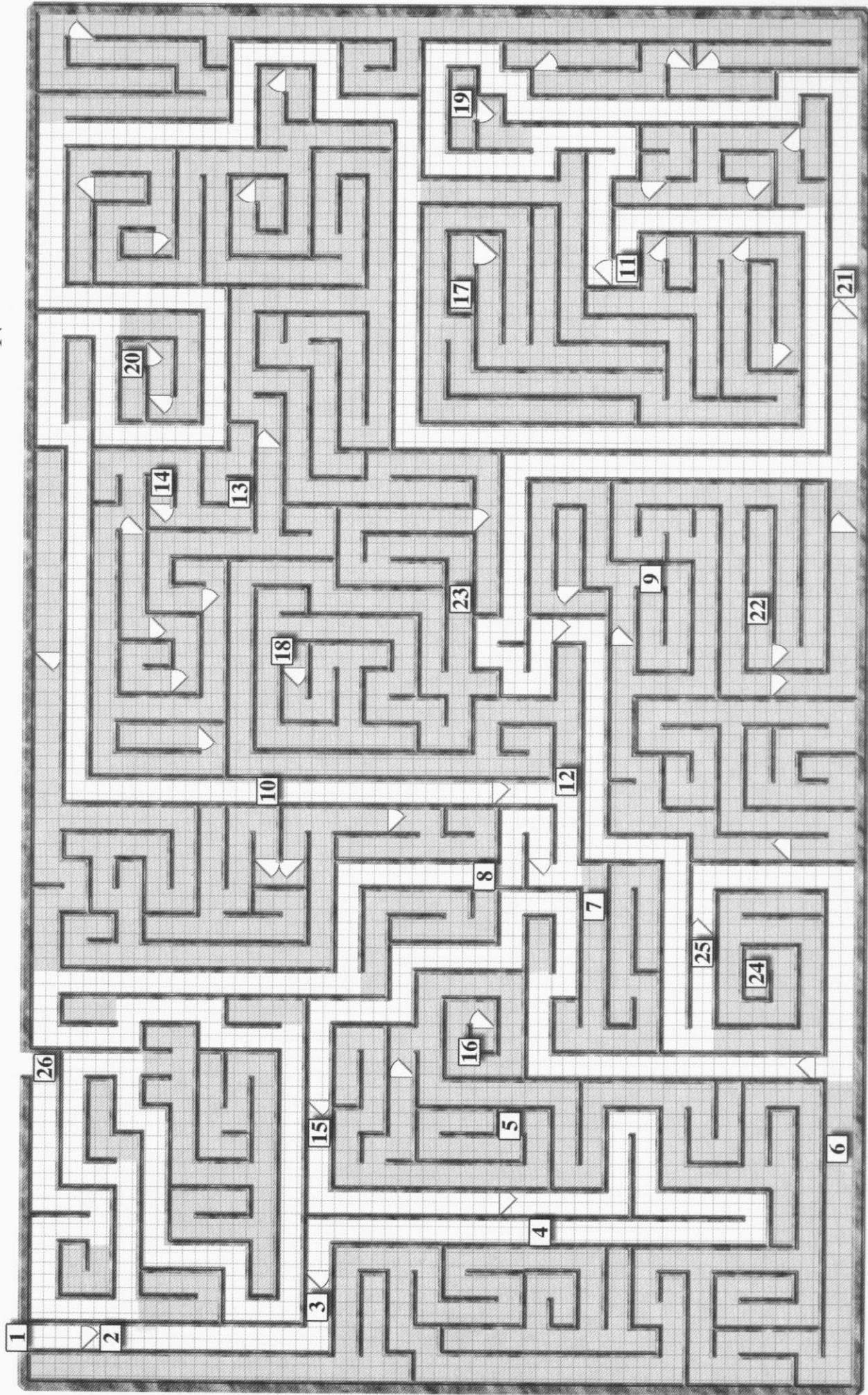
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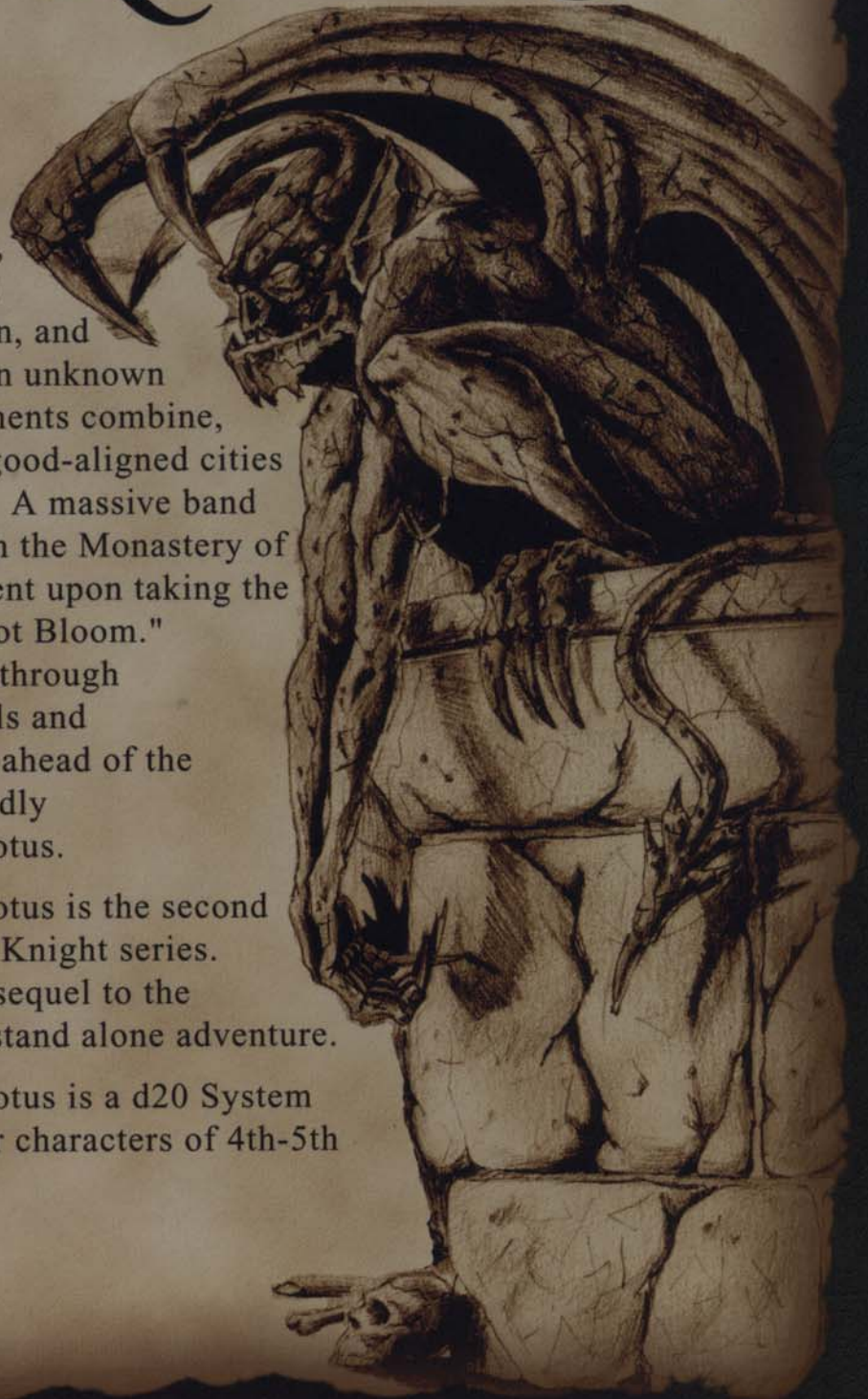
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