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FOR Lisa,
FOR my FIRST REAL break . . .

Credits

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AREN TOR

The world changes, and once great towers of vast civilizations become the outposts of younger ones. Such is the legacy of Aren Tor, a watchpost atop a great pinnacle of rock a thousand years ago, all but forgotten to the world in these times, its stair lost amidst trees and drifts of snow. Yet during an adventure, one may stumble upon it, and be led to its heights, where greater adventure awaits . . .

PREPARING TO PLAY: When you are all gathered to play, and every one of the Players is prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

The river ahead is sundered by a small island, a great pinnacle of rock rising into the sky. It may be that the sharp top of this tor is what cut the clouds and is spilling all this snow down upon you now. Down the riverbank from where you are, old columns rise out of the shallows, the markers of old roads or ferry docks that led to the tor and whatever secrets it kept.

Sitting by your campfire, the snow silently assaulting you all around, building up thicker and thicker around your companions, it dawns on you what the island is. Aren Tor, it must be, the old 'Seat of Seeing' in this realm, its top the highest watchpost in all the land, able to silently and in all secrecy spot the approach of armies hundreds of miles away so their liege and Lord was never caught off his guard, by war or weather. The great tor is now really indistinguishable from the hills on either side of the river, covered in tall trees laden with snow.

With the onset of night, your gaze is drawn inevitably ever and again away up to the hidden heights of the Aren Tor, your thoughts held by the unseen eyes above, indeed wondering who, or what, may be looking down upon you. As the snow continues to fall, the colourless grey waters of the river begin slowing down, indeed freezing, and thus offering a daring invitation to seek both shelter and secrets upon Aren Tor, and perhaps even treasure.

Rumors: Little is known or remembered about this place, for it has indeed been forgotten by all but the wise and the daring. Still, the party may share tales and deduce one of the following legends of this ancient site. Each Ranger amongst them will increase their total value to determine dice by +2.

Rumors

Value	Rumor about Aren Tor
11	The Seat of Seeing atop the tor was the craft of a Magician, and while he is now gone from the world, his sight is alive as ever to all who sit in the throne (true)
8	The tor fell to the shadow of Dread, a Dragon of the Borderlands, one so terrible that merely seeing him makes one feel so hopeless it slays the soul (partially true)
3	The tor fell to Orc raiders that still roam these lands and hate mankind (true)

CLIMBING THE TOR: The tor awaits all who would ascend it and learn its secrets. In doing this, use the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

1) Crossing the river

The river is half frozen. Logs are imprisoned in the ice but in other places the current flows too swift to be caught by the spell of Winter.

Crossing the broken ice requires a Challenging Dexterity Check, penalized by -1 for every 10 (as opposed to the normal 20) Encumbrance one has on them. Those who fail will either break through thin ice or simply fall in an already open hole. It is 180' from the narrowest point of land to the tor.

2) Trail head

The shoreline of the tor is strangely silent. The churning and cracking of the river, waging its war against the Winter, seems miles away. Here, twin statues of Priests flank the beginning of a stone stair hewn out of the cliffside.

A successful search of this area will find old Orc weapons scattered about, all rusted and useless.

AREN TOR

3) Battlement

Several steep flights of stone stairs ascend the cliff, zigzagging up into the maze of fir trees. The steps are cracked and split by their ancient roots, and the boughs above lean warily beneath the snow, just as old statues that stand at the turns and tiers lean slightly with the burden of time, like headstones rather than the guardians they must once have been. Finally, after a long and arduous climb, you come to a battlement, its crenellations crumbling and covered in snow, but must have once commanded a broad view of the river below, now obscured by the trees.

A successful search of this battlement will see a skull with half rotten frozen flesh clinging to it hanging in a tree 20' outside the crenellations, 40' above the hillside at that point. A 'monster lore' Skill Check can identify this as a trophy of Orc-kind, set during the Summer months, judging from its half decayed state.

If the party lingers here for any considerable length of time, the 28 Orcs that are not far behind them will catch them here! During a battle here, all implausible Critical Hits or Misses will result in the victim being knocked off the cliff to his death!

4) Broken stair

The tiers of stairs continue almost straight up, and the trees alongside them, keeping you bound in a realm with very limited sight. And now, the stairs end. For the next flight once bridged a gap as it ascended a good fifty feet, but the central portion of the steps has broken off, leaving ten feet or more of empty space.

The gap is indeed 10' across but also 8' high, requiring a Challenging Dexterity Check to jump. There is no other stair to ascend the tor. Climbing the cliff directly will require one to ascend 50' to find the stair again. Those who fall from any point will plunge 10-40' until they hit roots, and then can make a Challenging Strength Check to catch something or fall again in like manner, until they either stop themselves or go the full 220' to the very bottom of the tor and splash into the river.

5) The shadow of Dread

The stairs become ever steeper the higher you ascend the tor. Yet still do the trees cling to the cliff, concealing just how far up you are. Then you come to a rather wide, snowed-covered ledge cut into the cliffside. Several large, Dragon-like tracks are filling in beneath the falling snow, tracks no more than a day old.

Dread, the Dragon of the Borderlands nearby, is coming! His shadow will fall upon the party the next Round, calling for Fear Checks as he attacks! This fire-drake has no treasure on the tor—its lair is 24 miles away through the wild, which can be tracked with a Searching Check, looking up at the broken and burned treetops marking its path.

6) The Seat of Seeing

The stair ends at last upon the very top of the Aren Tor. Here, a crumbling ruin like a shrine serves now only as the chaotic foundation of a large throne carved of some stone that gleams as if it were Midsummer. The weathered statues of Ancient Gryffons can be seen in many places about the area. One of them has its head cut off, which lies half buried in the snow before it. The view from here is breathtaking, beholding sight of the lands fifty miles around, or more! One could easily imagine seeing as Gryffons did, or Dragons still do, or even seeing what the very Heavens see. Yet, for all the glory of the realm, there is a deep melancholy feeling to this place, a loneliness you cannot help but feel the guards must have felt, so long ago.

The Orcs that are following the party will at this point swarm the party, all 28 of them (unless they were destroyed in Encounter 3).

If anyone sits in the throne, he will behold a vision, that of a random Encounter from whatever Adventure lies ahead, of a numerical count equal to his Nobility Points in this realm.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: For destroying the Orcs here each Character will gain great honor, that of 1 Nobility Point in this land.

BLOOD FEUDS

For years the borderlands have been a place of strife and slavery. It is a barren wasteland, where the scant trees grow only from the blood spilled in countless battles. The lone symbol of order is the outpost of Caldwell Keep, where a small garrison of Men shelter, hone their fighting skills, heal their wounds, and ever yearn for an end to their duty so that they may go home to their families . . .

PREPARING TO PLAY: When you are all gathered to play, and every one of the Players is prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

It has been a long and weary road. Days have passed since you have seen a single sign, standing stone or other marker of civilization. Now the early morning light conjures up an entire keep, crowning a lonely hill beside a gloomy lake, an outpost on this hostile frontier.

The mists part reluctantly before you and close forbidding behind you as you make your way up the zigzagging road to the keep's portcullis gate. Passing inside the courtyard, you see several smoldering firepits and shoddy tents, where wounded men gather and walk aimlessly about as if already dead, taking what comfort they can before returning to the war-torn wastelands outside their crumbling walls.

There is no inn or hall, though the keep has heard news of your coming by way of the ravens that perch upon the battlements, and you find accommodation in one of the larger tents. Tomorrow, a guarded caravan will be heading back to civilization, the last chance to return, lest you remain here and fight against the raiders.

Rumors: At the keep many rumors abound concerning the raiders. Using the normal rules for rolling rumors, the party may learn 2 of the following stories. Every fighter Classed Character or one learned in monster lore will gain an additional rumor roll. If any roll duplicates what the party has already heard, it should be re-rolled.

Rumors

Value	Rumor about the raiders
7	Some of these raiders can speak, though only in their own crude Tongue (true)
6	The only thing stronger than the bloodlust of these raiders is a fear of magic (true)
4	Most of the raiders are Kobolds and Orcs, and they hate each other as much as they hate Men (true)
1	A Witch controls the Orcs with powerful magic, reaping human sacrifices (false)

THE SAVAGE FRONTIER: Every half day spent in the wilderness, roll D4 to determine what Encounter the party has. If an Encounter is duplicated, do not re-read it's narrative. However, in all of these Encounters, if the monsters see any signs that the party has slain their rivals (Kobolds or Orcs), such as someone wielding an Orc's sword or wearing a Kobold's helm, they will wait, allowing the party a Parleying Check. If they are 'indifferent' or 'helpful', they will leave the party alone and immediately seek their rivals, believing them to be weakened and thus vulnerable.

1) Kobold patrol

Following a wide, shallow riverbed, you suddenly come upon a group of small, dark-skinned humanoids. They clench their sharp teeth and growl, hands on their sword-hilts. They wait, muscles tense and eyes wide with bloodlust.

This is a group of 3-18 Kobolds. They all wield shortswords. If the party flees, these little monsters will be content to catch and butcher the two slowest Characters—if the party does not specifically state that they are keeping together, they will be assumed to move at their maximum Movement Rate and thus separate.

2) Kobold camp

The air is heavy with the rancid smell of filthy men and rotten meat. In the distance, you see a small patch of trees. Smoke rises from the withered treetops, as if from several campfires.

BLOOD FEUDS

In the trees camp 16 Kobolds. Cowardly and few in number, they will attack any intruders on sight, but suffer a cumulative -1 penalty to Morale Checks for every 3 that are felled. Apart from the weapons they wield and the armour they wear, all of their other treasure is buried under a cursed tree stump. Anyone who touches it will bleed, suffering 1-3 Health worth of wounds each Round, and it requires a Challenging Strength Check to move the stump enough to get at the Kobolds' cache. The stump will bleed black oil if struck.

3) Orc patrol

Running across the field is a group of beast-men clad in armour and carrying crude weapons. They spot your party and turn towards you, but slow, and soon stop altogether, about ten yards away. Anxious for battle, they grip their weapons while muttering amongst themselves.

This is a group of 3-12 Orcs. If anyone can understand the Territh Tongue, he will discern that these Orcs are trying to decide if the party is friends or foes of Kobolds. However, regardless of what the party says or does, these Orcs do not intend to let them live.

4) Orc camp

Coming to the crest of a hill, you look down into a shallow valley of tortured and twisted trees. There upon a dry lake bed of chalky mud there is a large camp. The campfires of large beast-men poison the air with the foul reek of butchered animals and even their own kind.

In the camp are 28 Orcs! If the party enters this valley, they must make a concerted effort to remain unnoticed, or else the Orcs will indeed see them and attack at once. These Orcs wield a variety of weapons, setting their Base Damage at a total of 7 but with a Damage Variable of D10. All their treasure is kept in a large chest set upon a cart, hauled by human slaves, and as none are currently alive, the Orcs will fight to capture rather than kill, pulling their final blow against anyone to leave him with exactly 1 Health—a perfect slave.

ENDING THE CONFLICT: The endless blood feuds of the borderlands may be ended with a few different scenarios, each detailed below.

5) Assault on Caldwell Keep

If the party fought both Kobolds and Orcs before returning to the keep, both tribes will follow them, assaulting the keep at nightfall.

Just after nightfall, the watchmen cry out in alarm! Hurrying to the battlements, you see the surrounding black hills aglow with hundreds of torches, carried by hordes of Orcs! Their war-chants and drumbeat makes your blood curdle.

All the Orcs of the borderlands are attacking! Caldwell Keep is garrisoned by a mere 30 men! But rather than do Mass Combat, simply have the success of the defense stand or fall by the victory of the party—they will fight 40 Orcs, and if they prevail, the other defenders will have won (while losing 1-30 of themselves)! During this battle, all the Kobolds of these lands seize the opportunity to attack, arriving when the party is down to 15 Orcs to personally do battle with, adding 10 Kobolds to fight while the others join the melee elsewhere.

6) Demonstration of power

If the party openly uses powerful magic (15 Spell Points or greater), make one Morale Check for all of that tribe. If they flee, they will all leave these lands and never return! However, if this roll is successful, this particular race of beast-men will go into a frenzy and attack their blood-enemies (the other tribe), eventually destroying all but one group of monsters, which will in fearless fury and madness seek out the party and fight to the bitter end! Roll the D20 and the D30. If the D20 is higher, that is the number of Kobolds that return for the final fight. If the D30 is higher, that is the number of Orcs that return for the final fight.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: If both the Kobolds and Orcs are destroyed, the party will each gain +1 to their Legend Scores and 1 Nobility Point for their valor.

CHILLINGHAM CASTLE

There are many ruined castles throughout the lands, forgotten and abandoned, but few indeed are left to shadows when they are still intact and unbroken by siege, but such is the terrifying truth of this one, a castle vacated because it is haunted . . .

PREPARING TO PLAY: When you are all gathered to play, and every one of the Players is prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

The road of adventure has led you to the dismal moors between two Kingdoms. Here many roads vanish into the misty downs and dark forests, but you have trusted to the right signs and taken the right road, and as night approaches you find the warm windows of an inn beckoning to you.

The patrons in the common-room are friendly enough, but rather quiet and kept to themselves. They seem to lean over their ale as if concerned someone might hear them breathing. The barkeep says they have been telling tales again, tales of a nearby castle whose very name curdles milk and makes the dogs cower in the corner.

You need not be told. You've heard it before in lands afar. Chillingham Castle. It has an evil name for a hundred miles around, no matter who speaks of it. It is an old keep used largely as a torturer's castle. Royal decree has often stated it is simply abandoned because peace reigns in the land, but the villagers who live under its shadow know better—it is haunted, and it is evil. Locals whisper fearfully how it is not even of this land or this world any longer, but moves through time and space—when the mists are thick, it may be found by unwary travelers if it wishes to be, or it may not be there at all.

What is not spoken of beyond the borders of this village is the treasure it keeps. The locals, a few drinks later, speak to you of a hoard taken from Orc slavers. Kept at the castle to back the King's treasury, it was in these times of peace forgotten, whether in truth or by design, but still forgotten, except in legend . . .

Rumors: In town, or perhaps earlier in their lives, the party can amass a total of 3 rumors from the following chart. Re-roll duplicate results.

Rumors

Value	Rumor about the castle
13	If the cursed heir of the castle could be given last rites and so allowed to rest in peace, he would only seize the throats of his saviors. Beware! (false)
9	A young boy was buried alive inside the castle, and this brought a curse upon the walls (partially true)
6	The road to the castle is called 'Devil's Lane', for there isn't a tree along it that didn't hang at least one prisoner, and the ones who fled were shot down by arrows and now they haunt those woods (true)
4	Priests have often been asked to bless the grounds, but all turned away, feeling the evil of the castle overwhelm them (true)
2	There is a secret tower above the library where the treasure is hidden (false)
1	It is said "Be gone from Chillingham by night, or else you will face horror beyond all Mortal ken (true)

A CASTLE OF TERROR: Once the party seeks the castle, it will prove easy enough to find, across a misty moor not but a few miles from town. But if sought by day, the party will find only the mist upon the moors, the castle able to be found only during the night. However, other than that, it will prove to be a rather basic castle layout which most adventurers will understand easily enough, so there is no real chance of getting lost inside. Still, most of its rooms are empty. As the party explores it, they will find only a steady rise in their heartbeat until they come to the next true horror. Indeed, tell the tale of their exploration through these chambers by using the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

1) Devil's Lane

The road to the castle weaves through dark trees, obscuring the grim face of its parapet for now. A thin mist obscures the ground.

CHILLINGHAM CASTLE

Prisoners used to be hung from these trees or allowed to 'flee' while archers hid along the road and shot them down. Now, the Ghosts of 4 such prisoners lie in wait amongst the trees, ready with a Critical ambush upon the living. If the party has heard rumor of this or simply suspects an ambush, it is only Challenging to avoid it.

2) Banquet hall

The door creaks open to reveal the greathall. The ceiling is obscured by thick spiderwebs, reaching down all the way to the high-backed chairs lined up around a longtable. Full dinnerware is set on it, but caked in dust, and rings of blue fire float above the goblets like cold halos.

A 'Supernatural lore' Skill Check can realize that the halos are only the 'fingerprints' of Ghosts, and that the spirits are not present.

Each Round spent here, there is a cumulative chance in 6 that despair overwhelms a randomly determined Character, 'Blighting' him.

3) Ballroom

Beyond the greathall you enter a grand ballroom. A huge pipe organ dominates one wall, and you do not doubt that its haunting music once kept its guests oblivious to the screams of torture that may have escaped the dungeons. Yet the organ has fallen silent, and there are no longer guests to grace the floor... actually, there is! Even as you watch, the pale ghost of a Lady materializes before you.

This Wight was in life named 'Mary', and she will Parley with the living guests. If someone asks to dance with her, this Parley can be remade or, if not yet attempted, gain a +2 bonus. Though she is evil, Lady Mary will hesitate to attack the party if she is not threatened. If she proves to be 'friendly' she will inform the party that she was buried alive beneath this very ballroom. Breaking open the floor requires a feat of 'breaking doors', but one of 20 Damage instead of 15. Below is a pit holding her skeleton and her treasure, free for the taking, or so they think—she set this up as a Critical ambush.

4) Library

After finding many empty chambers, you enter a library where there is much to beguile you; The walls are covered in many places with tapestries, the books appear ransacked, one table is piled up with a dozen human skulls, and the dust swirls about the floor as if kicked up by unseen feet.

Behind one of the tapestries is a passage that has been bricked shut. To open it requires a feat of 'breaking doors', but one of 20 Damage instead of 15. Inside is a niche containing the skeleton of a young boy. Note if it is given last rites.

5) Master bedchamber

You explore many empty chambers, expecting to meet death waiting around each corner or behind each door. Death waits patiently. Perhaps she is here, in the master bedchamber... there is a ring of blue fire surrounding the bed...

If the boy's bones in Encounter 3 were given last rites, its blue Ghost will appear to anyone that steps inside the ring, and inform them as it fades to seek the castle's secret behind the fireplace. Yet there is no fireplace. If one makes a true fire here, it will reveal the outline of an otherwise unfindable secret door, leading to Encounter 6.

6) Torture chamber

The stone wall opens to reveal a secret treasure room, hidden in the walls of the castle.

The hoard totals 12 treasures of Value 'D'. It is also trapped—unless disarmed, when anything is taken, the stone door will slide shut and close the room forever. One can try a Challenging Dexterity Check to get out in time.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: Those who can claim ownership of any of the castle's treasure will gain +1 to their Legend Score.

THE MISTY MOUNTAIN

Far away, at the edge of civilization, where the world ends and nightmares begin, rise mountains of impassable evil, walls between this world and the next, wherein may be darkness from Ages gone by or an Age yet to be. The greatest such mountains may hold the secrets for any journey, its treasure, its villain, or even one's undoing. That is if one is brave or foolish enough to seek such a place...

PREPARING TO PLAY: When you are all gathered to play, and every one of the Players is prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

You thought it was legend. Indeed, until now, a hope for its falsehood and your journey a fool's errand burned in your heart, growing with each mile until now the inferno within wishes it was indeed only a legend. Yet there it is. You have come far and through many adventures to see it, and now you do not like the look of it at all.

The mountain. Grondorin. Throne of Iron. It has many names, but the locals simply refer to it as the Misty Mountain. A precise name, if one not too imaginative, for the slopes of this lonely stone pinnacle are ever shrouded in mist rising from the lake within its shadow. There dwells a small village of Men amidst this otherwise empty desolation, their longhouses and fishing ships as sacred as their sheep and cattle, as no trees grow in this barren land any more.

Yet though they live in fear, the villagers welcome you as warmly as they would their kin. Fine rooms and rumors alike are found at the Copper Kettle Inn. The sign above the door is nothing less, the first sign of many you see how the villagers hang countless pots and containers to gather what little rain falls in these parts. Yet at the inn they none-the-less serve up a plentiful bounty, mostly of fish. "The yearly caravan came but a week past, bringing food from all faraway lands." says the scullery maid. "We trade Dragon scales for goods, as they fall plentifully from the mountain's lord, a Fire-Drake of legend."

Rumors: The locals are indifferent to the mountain and its legends. Indeed, nearly everyone in town has a different belief as to what rules the mountain and what can be found up there. The party can gather enough tales to constitute 2 rolls on the following chart (re-rolling any duplicate results).

Rumors

Value	Rumor about the mountain
15	Of old did a Dwarf Kingdom thrive on the mountain, its treasure attracting all the evil that has ever dwelled therein (true)
11	The Dragon of old was placated every full moon by the song of Maidens (true)
8	The Dragon hears all who approach its lair across the desolation (partially true)
4	In older days, the village elders chose by lottery the yearly sacrifice of a Maiden to placate the monster of the mountain (true)
3	The Dragon is an illusion, a dream (false)
1	The scales fell from beasts of yore, now long vanished from the earth (false)

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN: Once the party reaches the mountain's slopes, they will face a rugged 12-mile journey zigzagging their way up until they find any cave or lair. This endlessly winding exploration will penalize their Wilderness Movement Rate by -10 miles a day. Run both of the following Encounters, the first at the beginning, and the others every 1-6 miles thereafter.

1) The desolation

The mountain rises like an iron stalagmite to pierce the clouds, yet never do they bleed, the Heavens as dead as the withered lands below. Here no rain or snow ever falls, here the only song is of carrion-bird calls, here no longer a river flows, and nothing green ever grows. The mists cloak the land like the spirit of the world waiting for its body to die. It is a lonely, cold and quiet climb up the mountainside.

If anyone sings for any reason, his voice will resound far and wide, almost magically and with a choir of Angels. If anyone sings while they travel, they will benefit from it later on.

THE MISTY MOUNTAIN

2) Dry pool

Your way up the mountainside has been mostly along dried riverbeds and rivulets, with rest stops in dry pools which once fed waterfalls. The next one you find, however, is already a campground, but for the ghosts of beasts, if such things exist. For the dry, cracked ground of this ancient pool is littered with the bones of many strange beasts, charred black like the surrounding rocks.

Many strange beasts were drinking when the Dragon first came, and annihilated them. If any of the remains are disturbed, a random Character will chance to pick up the skull of what looks like a horned horse which will at once glow with fiery light within, trailing smoke from its eye sockets rather than its nostrils! If spoken to, it will give a cryptic comment that confirms or denies the truth in the rumor of the highest value the party heard. This skull is also worth 155 gold to the people of the village (who can trade it next year).

3) Gathering mist

Climbing ever higher on the increasingly steep mountainside, the last few hours have seen the mists growing thicker as well. Soon you can see naught but the rugged cliff you climb upon. The rest of the world is obscured by the mountain's rancid breath.

In order to go on, each Character must make a Challenging Courage Check. Those who fail this Check will not voluntarily proceed further on the mountainside. However, once each day a frightened Character may re-attempt this Check. One may also be encouraged by another Character (who indeed has already made his Courage Check) by way of singing or making a Simple Charisma Check. This Check, however, may only be made once by each brave Character for each fearful Character.

CHAMBERS OF FIRE: Towards the very top of the mountain is a great cavern, of old the throne room for a new Dwarven Kingdom. Once the party reaches it, run the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

4) Loose ledge

In many places the mountainside has been broken by fire and strength beyond Mortal ken. Now the path leads along an unstable ledge, threatening to crumble beneath your every step.

If the party spaces themselves out to a good 100' apart, there is no danger. Otherwise, there is a chance in 8 for every 50 Encumbrance one totals (between body and carried Burden) that the ledge breaks, sending him plummeting to his doom.

5) Great entrance

The trail leads past several old posts, charred all but to cinders. Here of old were sacrifices bound to placate the beast they would name 'Lord'.

A search of this area might find the wedding ring of a Lady. Empowered by her restless spirit, it will become a 'ring of protection' if present at the time the Dragon of Encounter 6 is slain.

6) The Dragon's lair

The mountain path at last ends before a massive cave. Inside, the air is filled with the foul reek of an evil older than the world. The ground both inside and out is littered with the singed bones and blood-stained, broken weapons of many who dared enter, floating in the shallow quagmire of a primordial filth that is the Dragon's bile.

The tunnel runs 200' to the Dragon itself, and it will use its breath for a Challenging ambush on those approaching. However, if the party sand back in Encounter 1, the Dragon shall be sleeping, and if awoken with the party already past its tunnel, it will Parley if a woman is present.

Due to the fame of this Dragon, it must have no less than 10 treasures.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: All those who help to fell the Dragon of the Misty Mountain will become revered in these lands, gaining +2 to each of their Legend Scores.

THE VILLAGE OF WOE

Not every time the party passes through a town or village are they to find comfort at the inn. For in some towns, there is no comfort and no rest, for the wicked or the virtuous . . .

PREPARING TO PLAY: When you are all gathered to play, and every one of the Players is prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

The ever winding road of adventure has led you through a dark and foreboding woodland, and at last the trees part for the weather-beaten gates of a small town. The thatched gate creaks open and falls without sound into the soggy grass. Beyond it, the muddy lane runs through the center of an empty town. You only ramshackle houses and empty shoppes of a village long abandoned. It is a dark and lonely place, and no without the feel of an unseen evil stalking you from the shadows. There is without doubt a menace here no living eyes can detect.

The lonely hoot of an owl returns your mind to the reality that this is a town in this world, not one lost in the eternal light. The owl's call continues as you move through this silent village, watching every shadow, every window opening into darkness.

Finally you come to the center of town, the Church, and finally you see people . . . they leave the Church and wander away into the gathering gloom of night, yet they disappear long before it seems they should by shadow alone. More come, emerging seemingly from nowhere as they enter the glow of the Church's stained-glass windows, yet they too seem a deception, for no light of an earthly lantern could reveal someone so suddenly from even the darkest pits of Hell.

Rumors: There are no rumors to be heard. Indeed, there is quite literally nobody in town to talk to. Only at the Church can people be found, and there the Priest will dismiss any talk of curses as lunacy lest the villagers become aware of their plight.

The curse: The entire town is under a curse. Only the Priest is not yet affected—the Characters are. When he can speak to them alone (such as giving them communion before the congregation when the party first arrives) he will whisper to them that the curse affects everything and everyone, save for the hallowed ground of the Church itself. That is why he is not affected—he has not yet left the Church since the curse began, while the party has walked into its dark embrace simply by coming this far. The people are unaware they are cursed, and he is maintaining a masquerade while trying to find any possible way to end its evil. For the curse causes one's soul to disappear by dawn, collected by the devil who worked this black art, a devil which he believes is somewhere in town . . .

THE HAUNTED VILLAGE: There are very few clues in town as to the truth of the curse. Let the party search where they will. If they seek a place that is named by an Encounter, run it. If they go anywhere or do anything else, they risk vanishing themselves: A Simple Courage Check is required. If he fails, the next one is Challenging, then at the last Critical. If he fails that, he disappears just as the villagers did.

1) The owl

Following the hoot of the owl, you find it after a short time. Yellow eyes glare out at you from the shadows of a large tree, its massive roots all slithering through the brick foundation of a small shoppe. The owl stops hooting at your approach, and inches forward on its branch. Under the pale light of the moon, it appears wholly black.

Should anyone speak to the owl, it will speak back. But what it will say depends on one making his Charisma Check. For anyone with Black spells, it is Simple. For anyone with spells of any other kind, it is Challenging. For all others it is Critical. If successful, the owl will say "The evil who came from the depths of the night bears the face of the one it killed first. You will know him when you meet her. She will ask you to slay him". If failed, the owl will say instead "The twisted one awaits your soul come the rising of the impotent sun . . ."

THE VILLAGE OF WOE

2) The well

The buildings stand close to the well, wherefrom flows a smell of evil so strong the grass as died within ten yards all around.

The well is 30' deep and dry. However, it is also empty—the evil has already escaped from it. Indeed, whoever is farthest from the well when the party comes here (but still in the immediate area) must make a Critical Intuition Check to avoid the ambush of this creature—a hairy arm busts through the rotten wall of the building the Character stands next to and throttles him for its initial attack, the arm of a Ghoul. When destroyed, this Undead will choke on its gurgling, black, chunky blood, and as it vomits up its dark innards, one can by way of a Simple Intuition Check discern what it was saying; “The heart of the curse can be found only by the one who walks blind in the silver light...”

3) The smithy

The old blacksmith's shoppe is perhaps the most dilapidated, ransacked and ruined of all in town. The ceiling is caved-in, the place looted, and the fireplace choked with coal.

A closer look at the coal (also found by way of a Searching Check) will find that it is not coal at all, but chunks of silver covered with the black ruin that is melted human remains. Lighting a fire in the hearth will invoke the face of the old blacksmith, its Ghost now speaking to the party: “They were coming. I knew. The others went to fight by means of faith and prayer. I busied myself forging a silver sword. Now it is broken. They locked me in my own forge and burned away my life. They used the wood of the Lost Forest to the north. It is there the skulls of trespassers are used to fuel the fires of the curse's dark heart...”

THE LOST FOREST: Just north of the village by a few miles, the road comes to the edge of a forest. Once the party dares enter it, they cannot avoid the following Encounters. Play them one and all and in the order they are presented, beginning with the entrance itself...

4) Forest gate

The road ends at the edge of a forest far older than the one explored by the road. The trees are colourless, gnarled, and menacing. Running under their tangled roots is an old tunnel masoned with moss-covered bricks.

The tunnel emerges after only 40' on the other side of the treeline, though completely out of view of those on the normal road. Once there, one will find he cannot return without being attacked by a horde of 3-6 Ghosts, rising from **within** the trees.

5) Forest maze

The forest path quickly branches, the beginnings of a maze. The moon above seems to delight in mocking you, casting light on stones and pools to strengthen the shadows and deceptions of the woods. The moon's very crescent seems to be a spectral grin, relishing your fleeting time.

There is no way to solve this maze, save for closing one's eyes. Once one does this, he will be able to sense hidden things, including the otherwise unfindable Encounter 6. Solving this puzzle merits 400 Experience Points.

6) Forest throne

You stumble into a glen, where the moon's pale light gleams upon a throne of skulls surrounded by a shallow lake of mist... which seems to be flowing **into** the mouths and eyes of the skeletal heads. Sitting in the throne is a humanoid figure, skinless, and swathed in robes woven of cobwebs and dried tears of starlight.

Each skull is one of the figure's ancestors in the village, and they are drawing souls into them in order to enhance their lord's longevity. This is a Beholder, and when it is destroyed, the curse on the village will be lifted.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: Once the curse is lifted, the party will each gain +1 to Legend.

VALHELLEN CASTLE

As the intrepid adventurer rides from town to town, his road watched by shadows walking the ramparts of distant ruins, he often wonders what secrets yet lie hidden in those old castles and towers. The crumbling walls and ancient flagstones each have a tale to tell, and sometimes the silent trumpets of their mysteries invite the brave, the clever and the foolhardy to give their ancient walls and forgotten garrison one more challenge. Who will answer the call to adventure?

PREPARING TO PLAY: When you are all gathered to play, and every one of the Players is prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

Nestled deep in the dark, tangled woods outside of town is the ruined castle of the fabled Blood Duke of old. Legend has it that centuries ago Lord Valhellen went mad, sealed his castle and so turned it into a tomb, hunting down each and every one of his servants and soldiers until none but shadows walked the halls. The locals live in fear of the castle and the surrounding woods.

The first thing you hear upon entering the Golden Arrow Tavern is the innkeeper telling his young daughter “I want you staying away from those old willow trees. Only Ghosts walk those woods.” You mind your business and sit at a table by the fire, where you are promptly tended to with good, wholesome food and drink.

As the evening wears on, the innkeeper’s daughter, an awkward lass of only twelve years, goes out of her way to tend your table more often than any others, besides giving you the largest cut of the roast. At last, while taking the time to refill your rather large tankards, she whispers “I think there’s treasure up there . . .”

Rumors: At the Golden Arrow Inn many rumors abound concerning the old castle. Using the normal rules for rolling rumors, the party may learn 2 of the following stories. If the party makes an effort to befriend the innkeeper’s daughter, Heather, she

will speak freely of what others fear so much, increasing the value for what dice they use by 4 points. If any roll duplicates what the party has already heard, it should be re-rolled.

Rumors

Value	Rumor about Valhellen Castle
8	The Duke plundered his own castle and laid all it’s treasure atop the tallest tower, so that Heaven may see the true faith of all Mortal Men (true)
4	Those who enter the castle at night are said to pass unnoticed (partially true)
3	Within the castle are horrors no minstrel can water down enough with taletelling to leave listeners anything but drunk with the utmost fear (misleading)
1	The castle is haunted by vengeful Ghosts, the most terrible in all the land (false)

EXPLORING THE CASTLE: Once the party sets out to explore the castle, the following Encounters will tell the tale. Play these Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

1) Gatehouse

Just outside the village the forest grows thick. Passing through the golden canopy of weeping willow trees, the breeze seeming to sing in their branches, you strike the old road, which winds it’s way into depths of the forest. The road ends before a crumbling old castle surrounded by a dry moat. A wide drawbridge remains lowered. Beyond it is a raised portcullis. It is a lonely and quiet place. Too quiet, in fact—there are no birds or the sounds of any living things.

Entering the castle requires a Simple Courage Check. At night this is a Challenging Check. If someone walks across the bridge it will break, causing him 1-4 Damage. The 8’ deep moat has a steady slope on both sides and is easily traversed.

Just beyond the bridge, inside the gate, there is a pressure plate. Each passing Character stands a 5 in 6 chance of tripping it. If one sets it off, he and the person immediately in front of him will plunge 20’ into a foul dungeon that has no exits.

VALHELLEN CASTLE

2) Sir Carl

You enter into a room that appears to have once been a Nobleman's chambers. Thick cobwebs stretch from wall to wall, binding together an old canopy bed, a standing mirror, and the skeleton of a warrior standing in one corner. Large spiders inch along the heights of the webs.

The skeleton in the corner was once the Duke's Champion, Sir Carl. If anything in the room is disturbed, the Skeleton will awaken, and attack with his rust-spotted longsword, all the while cursing the party, declaring his oath to slay all thieves, for it is they who drove the Duke to fear, to greed, and to madness.

3) Hall of agony

You stand at one end of a great hall. On either side, massive, square pillars rise between standing suits of armour. Your every breath echoes with disturbing resonance. You cannot shake the feeling that you are being watched. This great hall is the only way to the heart of the castle.

This hall is haunted. Anyone passing through will hear a storm of screams, indeed all the torture suffered in the last days of the Duke's madness. One must either sing, play music or conjure some other beautiful volume to drown out these cries of agony, lest passing through this hall suffer him 1-6 Damage (against which there is no protection). Discovering this merits 300 Experience Points.

4) Empty treasury

You have found your way to the castle's treasury, yet the chamber is empty, save for a three tall, stone urns standing against the far wall. Thick cobwebs stretch from floor to ceiling. The air is musty and difficult to breathe.

If anyone looks into the urns, a Bholia of black 'pudding' will overflow from the second one, a surprise attack that requires a Challenging Intuition Check to avoid. What little treasure can be found here is all that remains of past victims.

5) Booby-trapped secret door

A long, narrow corridor ends suddenly, with no doors or adjoining passages for the last sixty feet or so. All that is here you is a life-size portrait of the Duke himself. His long, golden hair and dark, deeply set eyes suggest either great beauty or hidden power.

If this area is searched (no roll necessary) the party will easily discover a secret door behind the portrait—but it is trapped (which a Searching Check must be made to find, though this trap cannot be disarmed), the heavy, stone door opening to a passage filled with poisonous gas, immediately inflicting Level 1 poison on everyone present. The gas will clear after 3-6 Rounds.

6) The tall tower

Beyond the secret door, a narrow stairwell spirals upwards, climbing what can only be a tower. A tall tower. The stairs never seem to end. But then at last they open onto a battlement high above the rest of the castle. Almost the entire floor is covered with a pile of treasure. The skeleton of a long-dead warrior lays half buried in the coins, sinking in the depths of avarice, watched over by loathsome gargoyles.

Of the six gargoyles perched on the battlement here, 4 of them are Oradon, which will come to life and fly about the tovertop, seeking to destroy anyone that tries to leave. These magical monstrosities will not be able to fly far, indeed never out of sword's reach, and will not pursue anyone who escapes down the stairs. The treasure here has become their own, the skeleton once that of the Duke Valhellen himself. A successful Searching Check will discover on the Duke's body a ring which gives it's wearer 2 Nobility Points.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: If they return with the Duke's treasure (or even his bones), the party will each gain +1 to their Legend Scores, and one day the offer of marriage to the innkeeper's daughter, Heather, who is destined to become (by that time) a Sorceress.

Fantasia Adventures

Adventures

- F1) Peakwood Caverns
- F2) A Bard's Tale
- F3) A Fool's Errand
- F4) The Glory of Garador
- F5) Legacy of the Wizard
 - F6) Doomspire
- F7) Curse of the Iron Sword
- F8) The King of Legends
 - F9) Holy Knight
- F10) Swords of Twilight
- F11) Lord of the Lost Lands
 - F12) Dragonspell
- F13) The Curse of Doomspire
- F14) The Treasure of Tannis
- F15) Champion of the Krystal
- F16) Destroyer of the Krystal
- F17) Legacy of the Krystal
 - F18) Heaven's Gladiator
- F19) Iron Mountain Caverns

Modules

- M1) Malkor's Maze
- M2) Castle Kragg
- M3) The Enchanted Valley
 - M4) Territh Nor
- M5) The Black Forest
- M6) Highgate Cemetery
- M7) Oracle's Tower
- M8) Grendelstine
- M9) The Haunted Keep
- M10) Devil's Mountain
- M11) The Swamp of Doom
 - M12) Lionsgate
- M13) The Endless Gauntlet
- M14) Temple of Eternity
- M15) The Lost Oasis

Modules

- M16) Castle Perilous
- M17) Gilderwood
- M18) The River Styx
- M19) The Silver Tower
- M20) The Mountain of Fire
- M21) The Amber Cathedral
- M22) Village of Shadows
- M23) Palace of the Lost Prince
- M24) The Manor House
- M25) The Forgotten Forest
- M26) The Road of Myst
- M27) Orinach Tor
- M28) Vallenheim
- M29) The Lost City
- M30) Zarclabeth

Quests

- Q1) Lord of the Dragonstone
- Q2) Dawn of the Desert Fates
- Q3) The Last King of Roland
- Q4) The Eye of the Arcmage
- Q5) The Five Kings of Cronan
- Q6) Twilight of the False Gods
- Q7) Lord of the Crystal Skull

Supplements

- S1) Wilderlands
- S2) Dungeoneering
- S3) Adventurers
- S4) Storytelling
 - S5) Legends
 - S6) Villains
- S7) Novelettes
- S8) Storyplaying
- S9) Fellowship