

# ADVENTURE

# A WEAK PLEASURE

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## Overview

This is a short scenario for 4-6 characters of approximately 3rd or 4th rank, set in the western lands of the fief of Baron Aldred in the kingdom of Albion.

The adventure can be used in one of two ways. It was originally written for convention play, to demonstrate the *Dragon Warriors* game to people who hadn't played it before. If used this way, should be playable to conclusion in 2-4 hours, depending on the gamesmaster's pace and the players' familiarity with the basics of roleplaying. A selection of pre-generated characters are provided at the end of the text.

Alternatively, you should be able to slot 'A Weak Pleasure' into any other existing campaign, including published ones like *Sleeping Gods*. It can be transplanted to any location in *Ellesland* or the northern part of the world without too much difficulty

## Introduction

*It is nearing dusk in late autumn and you are travelling through the western lands of Baron Aldred. You have arrived at the village of Ashmore, a moderately sized village and reasonably prosperous. Inquiries have told you that it is the manor of Sir Talard, a relatively young knight currently off on crusade. His Lady Bess has*

*been running the manor in his absence and the general consensus is that she has been doing an excellent job in managing local affairs.*

*Ashmore has nothing approaching an inn, but you have been told that the local miller, who lives just outside the village will give travellers space in his loft for a few pennies a night and following directions, you have turned off the main road to head down the track to the watermill.*

*It is a wide track through thinning trees. Helfax Wood is not far away, but the land around the village has been well cleared. There is enough cover though, that you do not see the knight riding slowly in your direction until he is quite close. His horse shies slightly and he calms it, before raising his right hand to signal his peaceful intention.*

*Both rider and horse show signs of hard living. Both look healthy enough, and their gear and tack are of decent quality and well maintained, though they have seen better days. The Knight is clad in plate, with a sword hanging from his side, and his tabard bears the crusader cross quartered with a green star on a golden field.*

*"Good day to you. You have the look of fellow travellers," he calls out. "May I ask your names?"*

The knight will act in a friendly and jovial way towards the adventurers, as long as they are friendly towards him. He will tell them, if asked, that he is

Sir Hasal, a knight recently returned from the crusades. His own, modest, lands are in Cornumbria but before he returns to his own country, he has been delivering messages for his fellow crusaders, not yet so lucky to have returned home. It is this that has brought him to Ashmore—he bears tidings for Lady Bess from her husband.

Hasal is not what he seems, although he will do nothing to arouse any suspicion. Any differences between his behaviour and what the PCs might expect can be explained away by the subtle differences between men of Albion and men of Cornumbria.

He is, in fact, a pazu, one of the strange demon-like creatures from the arid regions of the south. He formerly dwelt in an area that has been incorporated into the Principalities of the Crusade—the area in which Sir Talard has been fighting. During the fighting Sir Talard was responsible for the death of a local ruler's child and Hasal, in the way of his kind, has decided to take revenge for that act.

He travelled to Albion concealed in the hold of a ship returning from the Crusade, arriving in this area a couple of weeks ago. He discovered a small group of bandits that has recently settled in Helfax Wood, and used guile and brute force to become their leader. They believe that he is human, like themselves, but dispossessed and having no love for the feudal system or the forces of law and order.

With the aid of some coin, he has just returned from persuading Kenris the local miller to provide him with the information he needs to put his plan into action. He is about to call on Lady Bess to start the first part of his scheme.

If Hasal is forced into combat at this stage (there is no reason he should be, but you can never predict some players), he will reveal his true form and defend himself, but only to the extent he must in order to escape. He does not wish to die until his mission is accomplished.

### HASAL

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| ATTACK 16, Claws (d8,5)                         | Armour Factor 1    |
| DEFENCE 10                                      | Movement 10m (15m) |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE 9                               | flying—30m         |
|   | EVASION 5          |
| Health Points 17                                | STEALTH 14         |
| Rank Equivalent: 5th                            | PERCEPTION 10      |
| <i>(Str 12, Ref 11, Int 15, Psy 12, Lks 10)</i> |                    |

Hasal's plan is quite simple. He will claim friendship with Sir Talard, and rely on Lady Bess offering him the hospitality of the manor for the night. He

knows enough about Sir Talard to be convincing, and has planned his story carefully. During the night he will abduct Sir Talard's son and heir, the nine-year-old Willis, then take him to a prepared lair in nearby Helfax Wood, and await Sir Talard's arrival. He knows something nobody else involved knows: that Sir Talard is only a few days away. When Sir Talard arrives, Hasal expects the knight to track him to his hiding place and there he will slaughter Willis in front of his own father. He wants Talard dead, but only after seeing his posterity destroyed.

He will not tarry long with the party, as he wishes to reach the manor before nightfall.

At the mill, the characters will encounter Kenris the miller. He is a freeman in early middle age, with a pronounced limp, and seems fairly prosperous for a person in such a small village—which indeed, he is. He has never been adverse to accepting a little extra from the villagers who bring their grain to him, in exchange for allowing them to keep a little extra of what they would normally have to yield to their lord. Sir Talard and Lady Bess are not unaware of this, but tolerate this petty corruption for two reasons. The first is that Kenris is a very competent miller, and they'd rather have the service of a slightly corrupt, very competent miller, than a totally honest man who was less effective in his role. The second is that Kenris, in his younger day, was a man-at-arms for the manor and came by his injuries defending the village against an attack by orcs. They feel a certain amount of obligation to him because of this.

Kenris, however, feels hard done by. He has kept his corruption to petty levels because he is shrewd enough to know what he can get away with, but he bears no loyalty to anybody but himself. He is by no means a wicked man, but he is a mercenary with few qualms about doing whatever he can to enrich himself to the extent of what he can get away with and to make his life little more comfortable.

He saw no harm in accepting a few gold coins from Sir Hasal in exchange for what information he could give him about the layout and defences, limited as they are, of the local manor house. He will be nervous when the characters arrive so soon after that transaction, but his mercenary nature will reassert itself and he will be more than willing to let them rent out his loft for his normal fee of five copper pennies per person per night.

Kenris fights as a first-rank knight. He carries his dagger, but has padded leather armour and a short sword secured in a secret enclosure under his

bed, along with his ill-gotten money, and will arm himself if he ever feels that danger is nearby.

**KENRIS**

ATTACK 13, Dagger (d4, 3) or Shortsword (d8,3)  
 Armour Factor 1  
 DEFENCE 6 Movement 10m (15—limp)  
 MAGICAL DEFENCE 3 EVASION 3  
 Health Points 10 STEALTH 13  
 Rank Equivalent: 1st PERCEPTION 5  
 (*Str 11, Ref 8, Int 13, Psy 10, Lks 9*)

## The Abduction

Shortly before dawn, somebody hammers on the door of the mill, waking the characters and Kenris. Outside are three men-at-arms from the local manor house. The senior of the three, Nevill, will ask the player-characters to come to the manor house immediately. His manner is polite but insistent. He has orders to bring the characters to the manor house, but is aware that his small force is not well equipped to handle a group of adventurers. He will use force if left with no choice, but he knows that the likely outcome would be his own death and that of his companions. He would prefer if the characters left their weapons and armour behind, but if they look like they are willing to come he will not insist on this.

**MAN-AT-ARMS**

ATTACK 11, Shortsword (d8,3) and Crossbow (d10,4)  
 DEFENCE 10 Armour Factor 2  
 MAGICAL DEFENCE 3 Movement 10m (20m)  
 Health Points 9, 7, 6 EVASION 3  
 Rank Equivalent: 1st STEALTH 12  
 (*Reflexes 10*) PERCEPTION 14

The characters have been summoned by Lady Bess because the disappearance of Sir Hasal and Willis has been discovered along with the body of the nurse, who tended to Sal, the three-year-old daughter of Talard and Bess. Sal was unharmed.

Initial inquiries have revealed to Lady Bess that the characters were seen talking to Sir Hasal the previous evening. She is aware of the possibility that they are his cohorts in an abduction attempt, but Bess is a lady of strong character and high intelligence. Ashmore is not a large village, and most of those who would make effective men-at-arms went with her husband on crusade in that role. A group

of adventurers would have little need to engage in subterfuge if they wanted to cause the manor harm.

Sir Hasal seemed somewhat suspicious to her, and his stories were not entirely convincing, but she was so eager for news of her husband, that she put her worst suspicions behind her, and invited him to stay the night. Now that her son is missing, she hopes these recently arrived adventurers will be able to help her.

She is no fool, though. Her two remaining men-at-arms (HP 7, 6) will be concealed nearby when she meets with the characters, their crossbows trained upon the PCs at all time, and they will fire at the first sign of trouble. Characters looking for signs of anything hidden should note that their concealment imparts a +5 STEALTH bonus to these men, until they attract attention to themselves.

Lady Bess is about thirty, and is an impressive lady. She is obviously very concerned at what has happened but she remains calm and in controlled. She hopes that the characters will search for her son. If pressed, she is willing to offer a reward of up to 100 florins for her son's recovery alive—she intends to pay such a reward regardless of whether it is mentioned at this stage, but she will only mention it if she feels she has to. She would prefer for her son's chances of recovery to lie in the hands of honourable men rather than mere mercenaries.

The characters are likely to return to the mill at this point, perhaps after making a search of the area—efforts to track are confounded by the fact that the pazuzu initially fled from the scene with the boy—to pick up any equipment and because it may occur to them that the only real reason Sir Hasal had for being where they met him was wanting to see Kenris.

As they approach the mill, the party will hear a cry. The mill door has been broken open. Inside they can see Kenris fighting for his life against two men dressed in worn, piecemeal armour. He is wearing his own armour at this stage (he heard the attackers muttering outside the mill and had time to put it on) and is fighting with his dagger. He has already been wounded once.

**TWO BANDITS**

ATTACK 12, Sword (d8,4) Armour Factor 2  
 DEFENCE 5 Movement 10m (20m)  
 MAGICAL DEFENCE 3 EVASION 3  
 Health Points 8, 7 STEALTH 12  
 Rank Equivalent: 1st PERCEPTION 4  
 (*Reflexes 10*)

If the characters intervene, they should have relatively little trouble dealing with the bandits, although they are a significant threat to Kenris alone. If he is saved (or survives and is sufficiently encouraged to cooperate), Kenris will reveal that he gave Sir Hasal information about the layout of the manor and the likely strength of the guard force (virtually nonexistent at night) and security (the door is locked and barred by a key which Lady Bess usually keeps with her) in exchange for five golden coins—not crowns, though he will refer to them as such.

He doesn't know where the bandits came from—though he has heard stories that a group of bandits has recently arrived in Helfax Wood. He has no idea that their attack on him is connected with recent events.

If the bandits are captured alive and questioned, they will initially resist but will quickly crumble. They were sent here to kill the miller: their leader—they don't know his name and only refer to him as 'the Knight'—had told them knew about the kidnap plot and was going to lead the lord of the manor and his forces to them unless he was paid fifty crowns. This is completely untrue, but is the story Hasal has told them to convince them that the Kenris had to die.

If the characters search the mill, it is reasonably easy to find Kenris's hiding place under his bed—it is merely a cavity under loose floorboards. Inside they will find (besides his shortsword) 127 copper pennies, 80 silver florins and 10 golden coins. Five of these are not crowns from Albion or any other local land, but are of similar size. The inscription on them is written in Jezant, and any character able to read that language or with experience the GM feels is relevant will recognise them as coming from Zhenir.

If Kenris is handed over to Lady Bess, he can expect execution and he knows it. He is likely to be willing to cooperate in exchange for his life but the fact is that he really doesn't have any information of value. As a freeman, any capital case against him would properly have to be made before Baron Aldred (technically, of course, he is entitled to a trial by the King's Court, but this is unlikely to occur given current political conditions) and it is likely to be decided that it is in everybody's interests for some lesser penalty (confiscation of his mill and all other property) to be imposed by the Manor Court—as long as Willis can be recovered alive. If the boy dies, then when Sir Talard returns, he is likely to dispense

summary justice regardless of the niceties of the law, and few would comment adversely on it.

The characters now know the bandits seem to be involved and, more importantly, they have left a trail that can be followed (PERCEPTION check) into Helfax Wood. Because they skirted the village coming in, their trail is not through heavily travelled areas. A SECOND PERCEPTION check will be needed to continue tracking once the trail enters the wood, but assuming the adventurers are able to make these checks, their path of travel from now on is reasonably straightforward to follow.

## HELFAK WOOD

The paths through the wood are narrow, but distinct. The surrounding woods are exceptionally thick with low branches, brambles and undergrowth, and very difficult to travel through more than a very short distance. The characters can force their way through if they insist (at a rate of travel about one quarter of normal, with the normal chance of a random encounter in a forest), but there is a reasonable possibility they will become lost as it is very hard to be sure you are travelling in a straight line.

Encounters are keyed to the 'Portion of Helfax Wood' map on page 5.

### 1. The Old Man of the Forest

*Even though it is a sunny morning, the thickness of the forest makes the light dim. Though you walk along a narrow track, the canopy of the trees on either side of you covers the sky above you, and everything has a tinge of autumn colours: yellow, red, brown, and green, a dappled effect as you pass along the trail. You are surprised at the thickness of the leaves so near to the start of winter, but plenty must have fallen because the ground beneath you is slippery with dead and matted leaf matter.*

*It is something of a relief when you enter the western edge of a clearing nearly ten metres across which allows the sunlight to shine through. There is less debris on the ground here. The trail you have been walking along ends here, but you can see two others, leading from the clearing, one going roughly northeast, the other roughly southeast, further into the forest.*

Hiding in a tree on the edge of the clearing is Rad-edon, an elderly mystic who makes his home in the

forest. He has recently been driven into the tree by the hunting-dogs of the bandits who inhabit this part of the wood, and used his Pass Unseen spell (now expired) to avoid their immediate detection. He has remained in hiding, waiting until he thinks it is safe to come down. He is excellent at staying still, giving him a +3 to his STEALTH. Make PERCEPTION checks to see if they notice him.

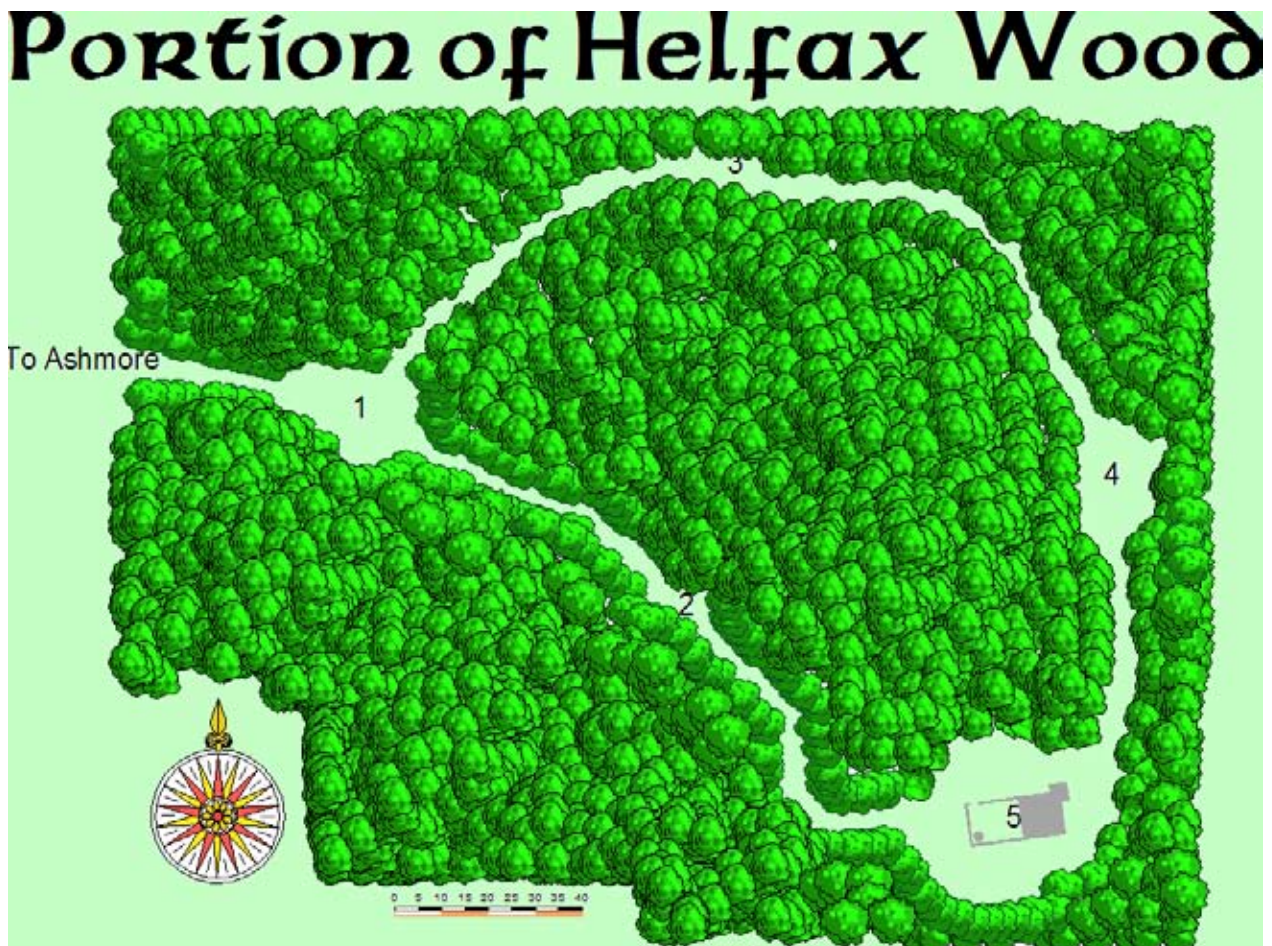
**RADEDON (5TH RANK MYSTIC)**

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| ATTACK 14, +1 Shortsword (d8 +1, 4) and Crossbow (d10, 4) |                    |
| DEFENCE 8   | Armour Factor 2    |
| MAGICAL ATTACK 19   | Movement 10m (20m) |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE 9   | EVASION 4          |
| Health Points 9   | STEALTH 15         |
| Rank Equivalent: 5th                                      | PERCEPTION 9       |
| <i>(Str 12, Ref 11, Int 15, Psy 12, Lks 10)</i>           |                    |

If the party does not see him, Radedon will call out to them quietly just before they are about to leave the clearing. By now he will have his crossbow ready to defend himself if need be, but he would prefer to avoid a confrontation.

Radedon has roamed Helfax Wood for many years, trapping rabbits and other small creatures and gathering berries and similar. He is something of a hermit. When he is not on one of his excursions, which may last between a day and a month depending on the season, he normally lives in an old watchtower in the forest. However, when he returned to this tower around dawn today, he found it had been occupied by a group of ruffians who seemed to be led by a knight.

If asked to describe the knight, he will describe Sir Halas. He barely had time to escape with his life when the bandits saw him, so he had no chance to see if there was any boy with him. If he discovers the characters' mission, he is quite eager to help them—the defeat of the bandits would allow him to reoccupy his winter home. He is able to tell the characters that both the southeastern and north-eastern paths will take them to the tower, but there is a new pit trap along the south-eastern route (he almost fell into it while fleeing the bandits), and also that the bandits would have a commanding view of



anybody approaching along that path.

If they take the longer north-eastern route, however, they will probably have a safer journey, and they will also eventually reach a large fallen oak tree, whose roots hide an escape tunnel that will take them into the cellar and cess-pit of the tower. He can't be certain the bandits haven't found this tunnel, but he considers it unlikely. It would allow the characters a safer way into the tower.

If the characters fight and kill Radedon, they can, of course, acquire his equipment, but they will miss out on this information.

### 2. A Pit of Wits

*Once again the path you are following enters a clearing, smaller than the last one but still large enough to let the daylight in again. After only five metres or so the path you have been following continues on the other side of the clearing.*

This clearing contains a covered pit trap of cunning design, the one that Radedon may have mentioned. The bandits constructed it a few days ago under the supervision of Hasal, and it has been well disguised by a layer of the leaf litter that covers the forest floor. An assassin's Inner Sense will give them the standard chance of sensing this trap. Otherwise, the trap may be considered to have a **STEALTH** of 12. If the characters notice the trap or say for some other reason that they are skirting the edges of the clearing, they will have little difficulty in avoiding it.

The slipperiness of the leaf litter means that even though the pit will only open under the first character in line, unless the characters have been careful to ensure they are separated in line, the second and third characters will also slip and slide into the pit. The second character should get a Reflex save with a difficulty factor of 13, the third a Reflex save with a difficulty factor of 10.

The pit is only a metre deep but is filled with a highly flammable mineral oil that Hasal looted from the ship on which he came to Albion). The bottom of the pit is lined with stones, above which is suspended a metal lattice with three attached alchemical devices, similar to an assassin's flash pellets. The action of falling into the pit will depress the lattice, crushing the pellets, and causing a sparking reaction which will ignite the oil.

Characters in the pit will take 1d8 damage per round from burning. A Reflexes save with a diffi-

culty factor of 12 is needed to exit the pit. Characters will continue to burn at a lesser rate (1d4 per round) once they leave the pit until they are extinguished. This can be done by dousing the character (a full waterskin will be sufficient) or by them rolling along the ground, or by any other reasonable means. The smoke from the blazing oil will also alert the bandits in the tower to the approach of the characters.

### 3. Into the Web

The brand-new web the characters are about to stumble into has a **STEALTH** of 15. An assassin's Inner Sense may also alert them to its presence. If they don't notice it, read the following. Modify it if it is noticed.

*As you continue along the path, the first in line is suddenly caught in a large number of sticky strands. A spider web.*

Two giant spiders will immediately attack the characters from either side of the path.

#### GIANT SPIDER

**ATTACK** 15, Bite (d6, 3)  
**DEFENCE** 2  
**MAGICAL DEFENCE** 4  
Health Points 10, 8  
Rank Equivalent: 2nd  
(Reflexes 12)

Armour Factor 1  
Movement 15m (20m)  
**EVASION** 4  
**STEALTH** 19  
**PERCEPTION** 11

Only the first character in line needs to worry about being trapped in the web, unless they are walking two abreast.

Each round a character is trapped in the web lowers his **ATTACK** by 2 and his **DEFENCE** by 1 until he can no longer move or defend himself at all. Those trapped in the web may concentrate on trying to free themselves, though in this case, they can take no action to attack or defend themselves (**DEFENCE** of 0 to the spiders attacks). The chance of a victim freeing himself is 30% in the first rounds, 20% in the second round, and 10% every round thereafter. The victim can add 15% to this chance if they have a firebrand or edged weapon to assist them. **ATTACK** and **DEFENCE** scores revert to normal once they escape the web.

The bite of the giant spider contains a Strong poison. Anybody bitten must roll under their Strength on 3d6 or be paralysed in 2d6 rounds. Death will follow within 10 minutes.

#### 4. The Back Door

*You have entered a large clearing from the north. An ancient oak tree fell here some time ago and dominates the clearing. A narrow path heads southwest from this clearing.*

In the roots of the tree can be found the escape tunnel from the tower that Radedon told the party about. It is quite easy to find if they know it is there, but is virtually impossible to discover unless the roots are searched carefully. It surfaces after fifteen metres in room 6 of the tower (see below).

#### 5. The Tower

*The tower that rises above this large clearing is of stone, built in a style that suggests it is at least a hundred years old, and probably more. It is three storeys high, giving the roof a view across the treetops of the woods, and was probably a watch-tower at a time when the rulers of this area feared invading armies. It looks well built though it has seen better days.*

Precisely what happens at this point (if the characters reach this point, rather than bypassing a direct approach to the tower) depends on what has happened up until now. If the pit trap at location 2 was set off, the bandits will be ready for the characters, and will have occupied defensive positions behind the low wall or within the tower itself, ready to fire their bows at any approaching characters. Bandits who are shielded by the wall gain +4 to their defence from missile attacks, those firing from behind the arrow loops of the tower, gain +10. A frontal assault on the tower is likely to be costly. It will also involve the other occupants of the tower (see locations 8 and 9 for details).

If they have not been alerted, 1d6 of the 6 bandits resident here will be outside the tower, along with their two trained dogs. The others will be inside the tower on its ground floor. The party may be able to take the bandits by surprise, **STEALTH** and **PERCEPTION** rolls permitting.

##### SIX BANDITS

|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| ATTACK 12, Claws (d8, 4)       | Armour Factor 2    |
| DEFENCE 5                      | Movement 10m (20m) |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE 3              | EVASION 3          |
| Health Points 9, 8, 7, 7, 7, 6 | STEALTH 12         |
| Rank Equivalent: 1st           | PERCEPTION 4       |

*(Reflexes 10)*

##### DOGS

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| ATTACK 15, Fangs (d4, 4) | Armour Factor 0        |
| DEFENCE 3                | Movement 12m (25m)     |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE 1        | EVASION 3              |
| Health Points 8, 9       | STEALTH 14             |
| Rank Equivalent: 1st     | PERCEPTION 11 (normal) |

#### Inside the Tower

Encounters in this section may be modified because of previous events. The following encounters assume the party will enter the foundations of the tower via the secret entrance revealed to them by Radedon. These encounters are keyed to the 'Plan of the Watchtower' on page 8.

#### 6. The Foundation

*You crawl out of the tunnel and find yourself in a dark, square, stone-walled chamber with a dirt floor. The ceiling is barely above your heads as you stand. Metal rungs climb one of the walls to lead to a trapdoor in the ceiling. There is a musty smell here.*

The characters are in the foundation of the tower, beneath the ground. This area serves as a cesspit for the tower's garderobes, the shaft of which can be seen in one corner—too small for a man to climb up and down (though not for a small boy). The ladder leads to the ground floor of the tower, and if the characters are careful and lucky, they may well be able to emerge into that area unseen.

#### 7. The Ground Floor

*This room is serving as a small barracks. Bunks can be seen along the walls. A garderobe is in one corner of the room, a fireplace on one wall, with a spiral staircase going up in another corner.*

1d6 of the tower's 6 resident bandits will normally be found in this area. During the day there is a 75% chance that any individual bandit in this room will be asleep (−9 to their **PERCEPTION** if the characters are trying to sneak in).

The door to this room can be barred with a massive oak beam. Once this is done, the door requires a Strength of 18 to be applied to it for anybody to have any chance of breaking it down—a Strength none of the bandits outside the tower come close to having. With enough time, they will be able to build rams so they could eventually force their way in, but

sensible characters will plan to be gone well before that happens.

Combat statistics for the bandits are at location 5 on the previous page.

## 8. The First Floor

*This room is part storeroom and part bedchamber. A bed with a chest at its foot can be seen in one corner, the staircase continues upwards.*

Unless the characters managed to travel through the ground floor undetected, the occupant of this room will be alerted to their presence and will be ready for them.

He is Thragnar, a reaver originally from the Pagan Mountains, and the former leader of the band of outlaws. He has a strong and passionate dislike for the feudal order and knights in particular, and used to run his bandit band with a grip of iron. When Sir Halas appeared on the scene a week ago and challenged him for leadership, the hill-man immediately took him on in single combat—and lost ignominiously. He now pretends to be a loyal lieutenant for the new leader, while secretly plotting a coup.

If the entire tower has not been alerted to the character's presence, and if combat with him doesn't start immediately, Thragnar will hold up his off-hand for a parlay. Speaking quietly, he will offer the characters a deal: if he helps them to kill Hasal, he will command the remaining bandits to leave the adventurers alone as they descend the tower.

Thragnar is many things, but a man of his word isn't one of them. He fears that if the party is allowed to return to Ashmore and summon a larger force to deal with his outlaw band—there is a reward of 25 crowns for his arrest. Once Hasal is out of the way, he will look for any opportunity to split up the PCs and eliminate them in ones and twos. The search for Willis (see section 9 below) will provide an ideal opportunity for this.

### THRAGNAR (4TH RANK BARBARIAN)

ATTACK 19, +1 Battleaxe (d8 +2, 7) and Crossbow (d10, 4)

DEFENCE 10

MAGICAL DEFENCE 6

Health Points 17

Rank Equivalent: 4th

(Str 16, Ref 11, Int 9, Psy 10, Lks 11)

Armour Factor 4

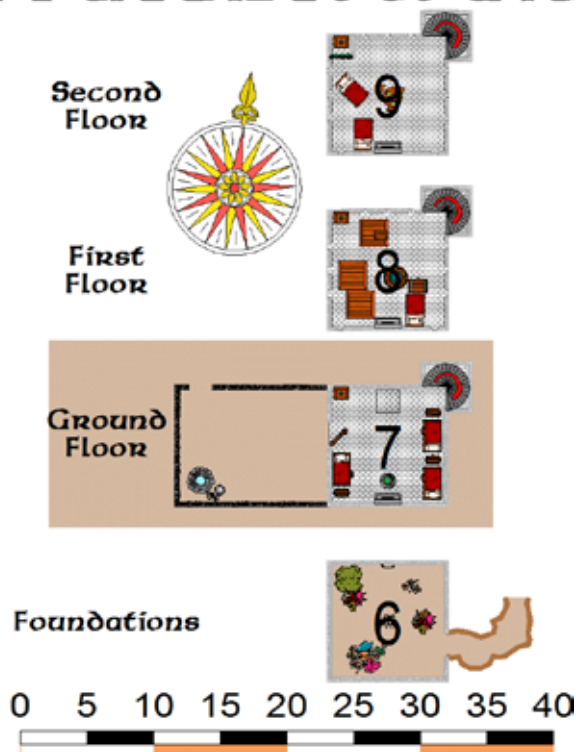
Movement 10m (15m)

EVASION 5

STEALTH 14

PERCEPTION 8

# Plan of the Watchtower



In addition to his gear (including his enchanted battleaxe), Thragnar possesses 11 gold crowns, 26 silver florins and 16 copper pennies, along with a gold ingot worth 100 florins, all stored in a chest at the foot of his bed.

## 9. The Second Floor

*Sir Hasal stands ready at the doorway as you climb the staircase up to this room. He shakes his head. "You're not the ones I wanted to see. This matter has nothing to do with you. It is the father I require. A life for a life, the scriptures say, but your lives are not the ones that will balance the scales."*

*As you watch, his form changes. Gone is the armour, his body becomes taller and thinner. His face takes on something of the aspect of a lion with a grey mane, his skin reddens slightly. His hands become claws and black wings unfurl behind his back.*



**HASAL**

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| ATTACK 16, Claws (d8,5) | Armour Factor 1    |
| DEFENCE 10              | Movement 10m (15m) |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE 9       | flying—30m         |
|                         | EVASION 5          |
| Health Points 17        | STEALTH 14         |
| Rank Equivalent: 5th    | PERCEPTION 10      |

(Str 12, Ref 11, Int 15, Psy 12, Lks 10)

The characters must fight Hasal: he will not negotiate with them, or explain himself, his presence or his plan. When they have defeated him, they will probably expect to find Willis. But it's not quite that easy.

At the moment it becomes clear that the tower has been infiltrated, Hasal pushes Willis into the garderobe chamber. He doesn't want the boy killed at this point, although, if he believes he is about to die, he will try to get to him to kill him—and make the same discovery that the characters will: that the boy has gone.

Willis is much smaller than an adult, and he is a brave and game young boy. He seizes his chance to escape by climbing down the garderobe shaft. Once he reaches the foundations of the tower, he will find the tunnel and travel down it into the forest.

He has hunted in the woods with his father, and is confident that if he travels far enough he will find something he recognises, to guide him back to Ashmore. He will not be making any particular effort to hide his tracks, and characters who realise where he's gone should be able to find him before he gets himself into too much trouble.

If they don't find him, he will make it home in a couple of days, but the characters will find it somewhat more difficult to claim any reward or credit for his rescue. Willis is quite prepared to spin an elaborate story about his own heroic escape if he thinks he can get away with it.

If the characters kill Hasal, they will, of course, want to take his treasures. These can be found in a chest under his bed. It consists of 90 silver florins, 13 golden coins (minted in Zhenir, but equivalent in size and weight to a crown), an amethyst worth 30 florins, and two small emerald earrings worth 70 florins each, a suit of worn plate armour, a scroll of Disease, and a Vial of Smoke.

If you are not running the adventure as a one-off event, you may instead choose to have a wounded Hasal unfurl his wings and fly upwards, bursting through the rotten timbers of the tower roof, and fly off over the forest, shouting in an unknown lan-

guage. A GM can never have enough potential villains lurking in the background: perhaps the pazuzu will return to Ashmore to finish his vengeance at a future time, or maybe he will refocus his attention towards the PCs and the many dubious acts that they have doubtless committed in the past.

## Conclusion

Assuming the characters are successful in returning Willis to his home (or in convincing his mother that they rescued him, instead of him rescuing himself), they will have her gratitude. Lady Bess will pay them a reward of 100 florins, and they will always be welcome guests at the Manor of Ashmore.

If they fail, when Sir Talard arrives home a day later, he will immediately set out to rescue his son. Although a strong warrior himself, he will not have a great deal of support from his small force of men-at-arms and will not have the advantage of Radedon's information. It is highly likely he will fail in his attempt to rescue his son, and Hasal will have his revenge in killing both the lord of the manor and his heir. Baron Aldred will eventually send help to deal with the problems caused by the bandits in the forest and install another knight in the manor, but until that happens, the people of Ashmore will not have an easy time.

Sir Talard is the only person who can explain Hasal's presence in Ashmore, and what the creature was doing here.

*"Leonine, with wings, you say? I have heard others speak of a pazuzu, a creature from the deserts, that may demand vengeance for deeds it regards as immoral or disrespectful. How it came this far north, I know not. As for why it wished to kill my son, I cannot say. I have been fighting a just war for the True Lord in the south, and if a pazuzu has a god then I'm sure it sees our sacred quest as something evil and depraved."*

There is a deeper reason, however. If pressed on the subject, or as he sinks into his cups later that night—or perhaps if the player-characters return to Ashmore in the future, after he has had time to mull things over, he will reveal the true reason. He won't volunteer it, the player-characters will have to ask.

*"We were besieging the city of Pardandum, a great citadel with high walls carved from red rock. Six weeks we were there. It was high summer, the crops were not yet*

ready for harvest, we were running low on supplies and water, and the city would not yield. Its master, the Sheik had no hope of relief, his stores had to be even emptier than ours, but he would not yield.

"I was commanding a skirmish party when our tunnellers brought down a section of the outer wall. We essayed the breach and took whatever hostages we could before we were driven back. Among them was a young boy, scarce a year older than Willis, and it was clear from the deference with which the other prisoners treated him that he was someone of importance. I had one of them flogged and he revealed the truth: the lad was Ras-Abdullah, the son of the Sheik.

I told our commander Sir Cuthbert of this fact, and he sent a proclamation to be shouted to the walls: if the city was not surrendered by the next dawn, the boy would be killed. We—that is, I—I mean—

"I shall not make a long story of it. We stood before the gate as dawn came. The Sheik stood atop a tower

but he gave no message, nor made a movement. He only watched. We waited five long minutes but no signal came. Then Sir Cuthbert gave the order, I cut the boy's throat, and he bled out his short life on that dusty road. No answer came from the silent observers.

"I make no excuse for it. These things happen in war. To back down and let the boy live would not be seen as mercy, it would be taken for weakness, and besides he was an infidel. The Sheik could have prevented his son's death, and the death of all his subjects, for two days later we stormed the the breached walls at dusk, captured the city and killed every man, woman and child in the place. Perhaps some barbarous demon took it upon himself to visit a fitting revenge upon my own family, well then, by the Lord's grace we have brought it low and won again. I have no reason for further concern.

"And yet I see the boy's eyes before me still..."

He turns to gaze into the firelight, takes a draught from his cup, and will not speak of the matter further.

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### *A WEAK PLEASURE*

*An adventure for the Dragon Warriors RPG*

*Design and maps: Shaun Hately and Mark Turner  
Layout, editing, additional text: James Wallis*

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# DRAGON WARRIORS CHARACTER SHEET

NAME **Archimodus**      PROFESSION **Sorcerer**      RANK **4th**

STRENGTH **9**  
 REFLEXES **13**  
 INTELLIGENCE **14**  
 PSYCHIC TALENT **9**  
 LOOKS **15**

ATTACK **12**

DEFENCE **7**

EVASION **4**

STEALTH **14**

PERCEPTION **6**

WEAPONS

**Dagger (d4, 3)**  
  
 (He prefers not to use physical weapons, seeing them as inferior to magic in almost all ways.)

HEALTH POINTS **10**

CURRENT SCORE

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ARMOUR FACTOR **1**

ARMOUR TYPE **Gambeson**

SHIELD? **YES/NO**

SKILLS/MAGIC

**Spells up to level 4.**

**Calligraphy (can create scrolls)**

MAGICAL ATTACK **18**

MAGICAL DEFENCE **8**

MAGIC POINTS **15**

CURRENT SCORE

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OTHER EQUIPMENT

**Cloak; good boots; backpack; lantern; handkerchief; honey throat lozenges; wax tablet and iron stylus for making notes; flask of Ferromanian brandy.**

EXPERIENCE POINTS **—**

REGULAR OUTGOINGS

**Arcimodus sends his earnings to his mother, at home across the sea in Ferromaine.**

AMULETS, POTIONS

**Potion of Healing;  
 Potion of Occult Acuity**

CASH

**(in belt pouch)  
 2 crowns,  
 10 florins,  
 3 pennies**

# DRAGON WARRIORS CHARACTER SHEET

NAME **Sir Deuteron**      PROFESSION **Knight**      RANK **3rd**

STRENGTH **15**  
 REFLEXES **13**  
 INTELLIGENCE **13**  
 PSYCHIC TALENT **6**  
 LOOKS **9**

ATTACK **16**  
 DEFENCE **10**

EVASION **5**

STEALTH **13**  
 PERCEPTION **6**

WEAPONS

**+1 Sword (d8 +1, 4)**

Sir Deuteron believes that missile weapons are only used by cowards and assassins who fear a proper fight.

HEALTH POINTS **13**  
 CURRENT SCORE

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ARMOUR FACTOR **4**  
 ARMOUR TYPE **Chain mail**  
 SHIELD? YES/NO

SKILLS/MAGIC

None at this level, though he often boasts of his many talents.

MAGICAL ATTACK **—**  
 MAGICAL DEFENCE **5**

MAGIC POINTS **—**  
 CURRENT SCORE

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OTHER EQUIPMENT

Cloak; worn boots; backpack; horse (called 'Horse'); gold signet ring; 3-4 apples ("Have an apple. Good for the blood, y'know.")

EXPERIENCE POINTS **—**

REGULAR OUTGOINGS

The exiled son of a noble family, he is homeless and his biggest expense is his horse.

AMULETS. POTIONS

Potion of Healing

CASH (in belt pouch)

18 crowns,  
 5 florins,  
 14 pennies

# DRAGON WARRIORS CHARACTER SHEET

NAME **Grut**      PROFESSION **Barbarian**      RANK **3rd**

STRENGTH **17**  
 REFLEXES **7**  
 INTELLIGENCE **10**  
 PSYCHIC TALENT **6**  
 LOOKS **16**

ATTACK **18**

DEFENCE **7**

EVASION **4**

STEALTH **14**

PERCEPTION **6**

WEAPONS

**Two-handed axe (d8, 6)**

HEALTH POINTS **16**

CURRENT SCORE

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ARMOUR FACTOR **4**

ARMOUR TYPE **Chain**

SHIELD? **YES/NO**

SKILLS/MAGIC

**Track**

**Berserk (in any round Grut can add +1 to Attack by subtracting 3 from Defence)**

**Ride warhorse**

MAGICAL ATTACK **—**

MAGICAL DEFENCE **4**

MAGIC POINTS **—**

CURRENT SCORE

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OTHER EQUIPMENT

**Cloak; stolen boots; belt made from the hide of the first wolf he ever killed; small silver cruxifix (Grut is very devout).**

EXPERIENCE POINTS **—**

REGULAR OUTGOINGS

**Beer. Sometimes some wine. Occasionally whisky and food. But mostly beer.**

AMULETS, POTIONS

**Grut does not trust things that come in flasks unless they smell of wine or whisky.**

CASH

**11 pennies (sticky)**

# DRAGON WARRIORS CHARACTER SHEET

NAME **Beatrixe**      PROFESSION **Mystic**      RANK **4th**

STRENGTH **10**  
 REFLEXES **10**  
 INTELLIGENCE **14**  
 PSYCHIC TALENT **16**  
 LOOKS **9**

ATTACK **13**  
 DEFENCE **7**

EVASION **3**

STEALTH **14**  
 PERCEPTION **9**

WEAPONS  
**Staff (d6, 3)**

HEALTH POINTS **12**  
 CURRENT SCORE  

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ARMOUR FACTOR **2**  
 ARMOUR TYPE **Hard leather**  
 SHIELD? **YES/NO**

SKILLS/MAGIC  
**Spells up to level 4.**  
**Premonition 43%**  
**ESP 17%**  
**Spell mastery: All-Seeing Eye**

MAGICAL ATTACK **19**  
 MAGICAL DEFENCE **9**

MAGIC POINTS   
 CURRENT SCORE  

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OTHER EQUIPMENT  
**Cloak; wooden cruxifix**

EXPERIENCE POINTS **—**

REGULAR OUTGOINGS  
**Lamanda is part of a holy order and eschews all unneeded items, depending on the charity of others.**

AMULETS, POTIONS  
**None**

CASH  
**None**