

DRAGON WARRIORS SLEEPING GODS

This file contains the first adventure from the book *Sleeping Gods*, a complete campaign for the *Dragon Warriors* RPG by Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson. The complete book contains another six adventures, plus maps, new introductory material, and great art by Jon Hodgson, Scott Purdy, Scott Neil and Andy Law.

For more information on *Sleeping Gods* or the *Dragon Warriors* game, visit the Magnum Opus Press website at <http://www.magnumopuspress.com>

By Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson

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CHAPTER 2

THE KING UNDER THE FOREST

Introduction

'THE KING UNDER The Forest' is a simple underworld scenario, designed to introduce beginners to the game. It's intended for first-rank characters, and can be used solely with Knights and/or Barbarians if desired, thus enabling new players to rapidly get into the game without spending too long on character generation, swotting up on the rules or learning the details of magic and spells.

Overview of the adventure

The characters find themselves in a small village called Axbridge. While they are delayed here the local priest, Bretwald, enlists their company in an adventure. He claims to know the location of the tomb of Vallandar, once king of this land. The characters must venture into Fenring Forest to reach the tomb where Vallandar and his treasures lie.

GM: Sections of this scenario which may be paraphrased or read out to the players are given in italics. The remaining material, which includes all monster scores and explanatory details, is for your eyes only.

Two alternate introductions are provided here. The first, 'Setting the Scene', is a way to begin the adventure and introduce the setting if you're using it as the start of the campaign. The second, 'After Dawn', can be used if your group has played the scenario 'The Darkness Before Dawn' and are escorting Maxim Le Cloche to Baron Aldred's castle.

I. SETTING THE SCENE

Read this aloud to the players:

You have all recently arrived in the village of Axbridge. Some of you travelled here from the north, through Helfax Wood; some of you came through the Coronach Marshes, along the mysterious raised dyke called Dobby's Walk.

You are strangers here, and you have spent the past few days getting the lie of the land. The villagers tell you that their lord is Baron Aldred, whose castle is many days' ride away. Axbridge is the most westerly village of his fief; travellers pass through fairly regularly, so the villagers are better informed than most. They know that the fiefs of surly Baron Grisaille and Montombre, nicknamed 'the Elfin Earl', lie to the south. They are ruthless lords, said to be no friends of Aldred.

Harvest-time is close, and the villagers are working long hours in the fields. Most of your information comes from Odo, a crippled old man who whiles away the day on a seat under the apple tree on the village green. He claims to have adventured a little in his younger days, and seems pleased to let you stay at his house in return for a florin or two every few days.

GM: Odo has in fact never adventured in his life. The player-characters may suspect this, but Odo does not mind. He just enjoys spinning yarns. The longer they stay at his house, the more fanciful his stories will become. If they relate any of their own adventures to Odo, they will eventually hear them recycled as episodes from his youth!

You have not helped to bring in the harvest, but that doesn't stop you joining in the festivities when, a few days later, the last corn is cut. Cider is drunk and a service performed by the village priest, Bretwald. After the service, as the autumn evening turns to night, the villagers dance merrily in the churchyard.

Bretwald joins you. "Many of these rites are pagan, of course," he says with a wry smile, "but it does no good to tell them that." He rubs his back. "Bringing home the harvest has been hard work for us all. I have a cask of cog wine inside—come, join me for a drink."

Now move on to section III.

III. AFTER DAWN

If you are starting from the end of 'The Darkness Before Dawn' then read this to your players:

The journey from Maiden's Vale to Axbridge, the first stop on the road to Baron Aldred's castle, is not a long one. The storms have cleared away, the sun is out, and the heat of late summer builds as the day goes on. By mid-afternoon you have reached the outlying fields of Axbridge, where the last stands of crops wait to be dry enough to be harvested, and sheaves of cut wheat dot the stubbled ground like diminutive wicker-men, defying evil spirits to approach the village.

Suddenly Maxim Le Cloche, who has entered the bushes beside the road to answer a call of nature, gives a cry: "I am attacked!" You rush over to find him bent double, clutching his buttocks, his breeches around his ankles.

GM: Le Cloche has been bitten on the bottom by an adder, a small poisonous snake native to Ellesland. It has slithered away, but any character who hunts through the grass and rolls under their Perception on d20 will catch a glimpse of its black-and-yellow scales. Anyone examining the bite will be able to tell (roll under Intelligence on d20) that the puncture-marks are small and close together, and will surmise the likely culprit.

Adders are not especially venomous but the characters are too low-level to have any spells to cure the poison. Axbridge is still a mile away, and since Le Cloche can't (or at any rate won't) walk they must carry him. By the time they reach the outskirts of the village Le Cloche is unable to stand and is vomiting, his pulse racing, his skin sallow and moist.

The villagers help you to carry Le Cloche to the meeting-hall—there is no inn in the village—where they cluster round as he is dumped unceremoniously onto a long table. He is delirious and the tops of his legs are swelling up. The local healer, Widow Bealing, is brought at a run: she takes one look at the victim, expertly cuts the bite-mark to let it bleed, and begins mixing a poultice of charcoal and herbs to draw the poison out. "Adder sting. Your friend will be fine by moonrise," she says, "but he'll be in no state to travel for a week, maybe two."

As the villagers disperse back to their work, a man in robes approaches and introduces himself as Bretwald, the priest of Axbridge. He commiserates over Le Cloche's injury, and suggests that you talk to Odo, a crippled man who lives in the village, about a place to stay for the next few nights. "As for the days, you could help everyone bring in the harvest," he says thoughtfully, "or if such peasant work is beneath you, I may be able to occupy your time more fruitfully. Come and see me this evening, once you're settled, and we will talk over some wine."

GM: Odo (see above) is happy to let the characters stay for five florins a week. By nightfall Le Cloche's delirium has passed and he is sleeping; by morning he will be awake but in much pain. Odo is happy to house him too, an involuntary audience for the old man's tales.

In the evening the local farmers open a barrel of cider, an early celebration of the late harvest, and the characters are invited to join in the festivities. As the night becomes chilly, remind them of Bretwald's invitation.

III. THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

In Bretwald's house you can still hear the sounds of revelry outside, but muffled now. The last rays of sunlight are fading and he brings a lamp and places it on the table. He unfurls a parchment—it seems to be a map, and there is something written below it in a script you do not recognize.

"Have you heard of Vallandar?" asks Bretwald. "Rex quondam rexque futurus. He is said to have been king of this land long ago. His reign was just and pious, great warriors bowed to be his vassals. But his evil half-brother Morgrin hated him for his goodness, betrayed him to his enemies, wrought a war in which Vallandar's

kingdom was laid waste. The legends say that Vallandar met Morgrin in the final battle and struck him down with a single blow, but Morgrin had laid a spell upon his sword and it dealt the king a grievous wound as it fell from the traitor's dead hand.

"Mathor, the king's wizard, found his dying lord on the battlefield and took him in his arms, carrying him to a secret crypt that he had built. There he placed Vallandar, with his twelve bravest knights and all the treasures of his kingdom, to await the day when he was needed again to drive injustice from these shores.

"A pretty story, to be sure. I believe there was indeed a powerful warlord called Vallandar—or Valdyne, or Klavayn; accounts differ. This document was given to me by a monk years ago; he could not read the language. I was a friar in Cornumbria in my youth, and I learned a little of this script there. It tells where Vallandar is buried"—he stabs his finger down on the parchment—"in Fenring Forest, three days hence!"

GM: The player-characters might reasonably ask why, if he has had this map for several years, Bretwald has not made an expedition before now. In fact he has, and he will freely tell them about it—

"About a year ago I found a suitable band of adventurers—at least, I thought they were suitable. Agnar Wolf-eye and his men turned out to be the most bloodthirsty cutthroats one could hope not to meet? We entered Fenring Forest, and while we were searching for the exact location of the tomb, one of Agnar's ruffians spied an Elf nearby. The damned fool shot it with his crossbow.

"That was the start of our troubles. The next day two of the men took sick, poisoned by bad water from a spring. A man we sent out scouting failed to return. At dawn we awoke to find his severed head set on a pole by the camp fire!

"Most of the men were for turning back then, but Agnar was a mad dog and I—for my sins, I was too proud and greedy to abandon the search. We went deeper into the forest, keeping our scouts closer now. At last one of them called out to us—'Here! I've found it! Here!' We rushed through the trees, and came into the clearing where the colossal stone portal of the tomb stands. But the man who had called out was lashed upside-down to a frame, and Elves stood all around with bows.

"Agnar bellowed crazily and charged them, swinging his axe. A tall faerie lord strode forward, spoke a word. Agnar fell dead in his tracks. Then the Elf-lord came to me, and I held my cross in trembling hands. I looked right into his pale cold eyes. He said, 'You are not

one of them. You did not desire this madness, and we shall spare you our retribution. Go now; take my cloak and the wolves shall let you pass.' Sure enough, he gave me the cloak from his shoulders. I could see a circle of red-eyed wolves about the clearing now. Agnar's men were pleading with me to help them, but I could do nothing. I went to the edge of the clearing, and though the wolves snarled they parted to let me go. I walked at first, then began to run. Behind me, the men began to scream. As God is my witness, they deserved their fate—but I covered my ears as I ran.

"It was bitter to know I had found the tomb and lost it. Then a wily thought came to me. I snagged the Elf-lord's cloak on a briar and began to unravel it as I went. When I reached the forest's edge I had used up all the thread. I went quickly to Saxton and lay in a fever there three days. When I went back, I could not find the thread, though I had marked the tree where I had wound the end of it. Abbot Adrian, whom I later consulted in a circumspect manner, was of the opinion that a fine faerie thread might only show in strong moon-light, for the Elves make garments to keep themselves hidden. I believe him to be a considerable authority in such matters. The first full moon of Michaelmas falls three days from now, so if you wish to join me we shall depart on the morrow."

GM: What Bretwald has told the characters is substantially true. Before setting out, they may wish to make some definite deal as to how the treasure will be shared. Bretwald, for a man who has had years to scheme, has thought very little about this. His own vision is of a treasure so vast that the only limit will be how much each can carry. He also feels that each character should give him one tenth of what they receive from the adventure, because he is the instigator of the entire plan.

Some devious player-characters would attempt to steal poor Bretwald's map. Such thievery would not pay off—it is written in Lughwyd, a language they are unlikely to be able to speak or read, or even recognise.

IV. GETTING THERE

GM: The village of Saxton, which lies very close to where Bretwald hopes to pick up the thread, is three days from Axbridge on foot. You are recommended to give the characters no dangerous encounters en route.

Novice GMs can find an example of how this journey might be handled on pages 9-10 of the *Dragon Warriors Bestiary*. The party should reach Fenring Forest after nightfall. The thread is easily found, tied to a marked tree a mile or so west of the Forest River. It is visible as a glimmering line, like spider silk, shining in the moonlight.

Following the thread, it will take them all night to reach the clearing where Vallandar's tomb is to be found. You could roll to see if they have an encounter during the night; the chance of this is 35% (i.e. a roll of 01-35 on d100). Any encounter at this stage should preferably be with non-fantastic creatures, and relatively light. A small pack of Wolves (say, one per character; see p. 253 of the rulebook or p. 28 of the *Bestiary*) would do fine:

WOLVES

Health Points (use only as many Wolves as there are characters in the party):

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| First Wolf: 5 HP | Fifth Wolf: 7 HP |
| Second Wolf: 5 HP | Sixth Wolf: 8 HP |
| Third Wolf: 6 HP | Seventh Wolf: 9 HP |
| Fourth Wolf: 6 HP | Eighth Wolf: 10 HP |
| Reflexes of this pack: 14 | |

V. THE UNDERWORLD

It is dawn as you enter the clearing Bretwald has told you about. In the side of a grassy bank, entwined with the roots of an old tree, stands a massive door of stone. Tall letters are carved across the face of it. Bretwald picks moss from them with a knife before murmuring, "Here lies Vallandar, who was and will again be King."

GM: It will take several hours to excavate the portal, and the characters should now be very tired. They should take several hours' sleep before going down into the underworld. If they do not, each character takes a temporary 1-point penalty to ATTACK, DEFENCE and EVASION, and halves his Reflexes. It is not advisable to go adventuring when one is worn out!

When they are fully rested, Bretwald will produce a pickaxe and three shovels and set them to work on the portal. With four of them working, it will not take long to get the portal open. If anyone complains, Bretwald comments that it is no harder than working in the fields!

Bretwald is not an adventurer, and he will not fight at any point unless it is to save his life. His

stats are those of any normal human (ATTACK 11, DEFENCE 5, etc). He wears hardened leather armour and carries a shield. He has a flail at his belt and also a knife, though he will not use the latter in combat. His most useful function will be to carry a lantern.

Remember that, except where otherwise stated, the underworld is not illuminated. The characters can see only as far as their lantern-beams.

From this point, sections of the text are numbered. This refers to the numbering on the underworld map. The characters will not necessarily visit the rooms in this numbered order, of course. The first time they visit each location you can read out the description in italics. If they later come back for another look, you will have to alter the description to take account of what they did the first time. (E.g., if they burned the tapestry you would omit it from your description when they came back that way.)

1. Entrance corridor

Finally you pull the huge doors open, to reveal steps leading down into the darkness. You light your lanterns and descend. You find yourselves at the eastern end of a long gothic-arched corridor four metres wide. A faded tapestry hangs along the wall to your left. It depicts a host of warriors locked in gory battle.

GM: The tapestry is magical, but this magic will not show itself until they have advanced further along the corridor (see section 3, below).

2. The map room

GM: Note that the tunnel leading to this room is concealed by the tapestry. The characters will only find it if they say they are looking behind the tapestry (or if they tear it down).

You enter on octagonal room about five metres across. The floor is extraordinary—it seems to be made of smooth polished quartz, and below it you can see a curious design of greens and blues overlaid with a scattering of glowing red symbols. Against the south wall is a heavy oak chest.

GM: The 'design' is actually an accurate map of the entire country, created for Vallandar by his court sorcerer, Mathor. Never having seen such a map, the characters would have little chance of recognizing what it is.

The chest is not locked. However, the moment a character opens it a jet of green vapour issues from the hasp. The character in question must roll under his Reflexes score on d20. If he makes this roll he manages not to breathe any of the vapour in, but if he fails then he will be afflicted with acute paranoia. You should take him to one side and tell him that his comrades are closing in on him with swords drawn! If the player refuses to rise to the bait, his character will shake off the feeling of paranoia and see that the others are not really attacking him at all. If he believes what you have told him, he will fight his own friends for six Combat Rounds before the vapour's effect wears off.

Within the chest are two hundred silver coins and an empty leather bag secured with a cord of twined red hair.

3. Tapestry magic

You are approaching the end of the corridor. Double doors lie ahead—of black wood bound with verdigris-stained copper. There is a smaller door in the north wall, and a passage leading off to the south.

GM: If they did not previously cut down or destroy the tapestry, strange things begin to happen:

Before you reach the doors, a metal portcullis drops down to block your way. A harsh clang makes you turn—another portcullis has fallen across the foot of the stairway. The tapestry flutters, though there is no breeze. Even as you watch, five of the warriors become solid and step into the corridor behind you. They wear strange sculpted armour, still in the faded hue of the tapestry, and their faces are the colour of old cloth. But their wide-bladed shortswords appear all too real.

GM: These are Tapestry Warriors, created beings used by sorcerers as wards (see p. 66 of the *Bestiary*).

TAPESTRY WARRIORS

Rank equivalent: 2nd

ATTACK 14, Shortswords (d8, 3) Armour Factor 4

DEFENCE 5 EVASION 4

MAGICAL DEFENCE 5 Reflexes: all 12

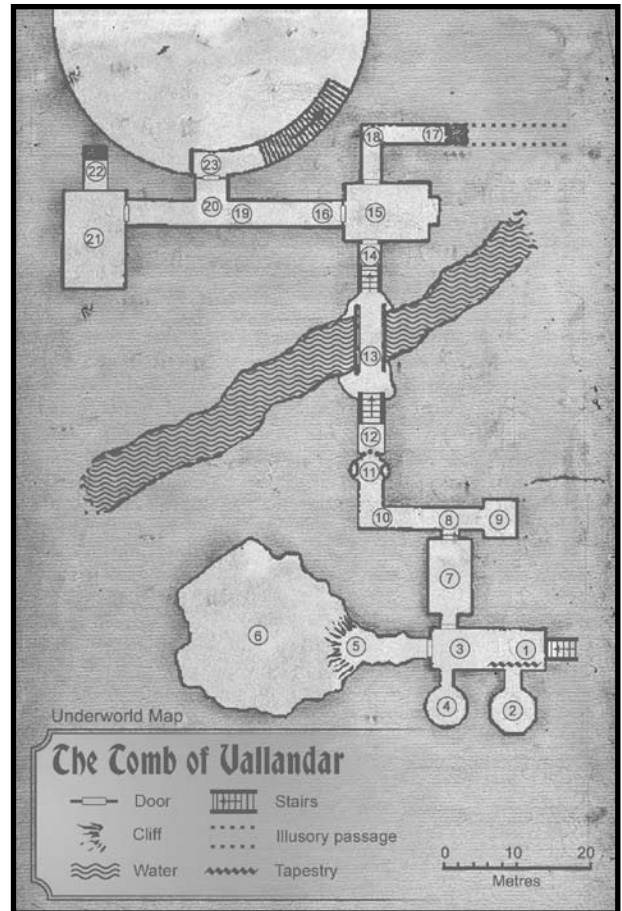
Movement: 10m

Health Points:

First Warrior: 9 HP Fourth Warrior: 10 HP

Second Warrior: 10 HP Fifth Warrior: 10 HP

Third Warrior: 11 HP



The Tapestry Warriors fight soundlessly. If slain, they disappear and return to their places in the tapestry, where they will be seen to have any wounds the characters inflicted on them. If the tapestry is set alight or ripped down, the Warriors will instantly disappear with a ghostly howl.

Once the Warriors are disposed of, the characters will have no difficulty lifting either portcullis to be on their way.

4. A hovering wand

The passage brings you to a small circular chamber with no other exits. The wall is covered with markings that follow some unfathomable geometric principle. A wand hangs in the air in the middle of the chamber. It is rotating about its centre, at a rate of roughly one revolution a second. One end of the wand glows a dull red, the other sparkles with blue-white light. The central section is black and unreflective.

GM: There are two things to consider if anyone tries to seize the wand. First, which hand is he using?

Unless he says otherwise, he must be assumed to have used his sword hand. Second, where is he attempting to grasp the wand; is it the blue-white, the black or the red section? If he does not specify, roll randomly for this.

If the character wishes to grasp a specific section of the wand, refer to his Reflexes score. If he has Reflexes of 14 or more, he succeeds automatically. If his Reflexes score is 13 or below, he must roll less than this score on d20 to grip the wand by the section he specifies. Failure means that he has seized a randomly determined part of the wand.

The red end is burning hot and the blue-white end is icy cold. Holding the wand by either will sear the character's hand—he loses 1 Health Point and, if it is his sword hand, 1 point from ATTACK and DEFENCE for the rest of the adventure.

Once someone has grasped it firmly, the wand stops hovering. It is a *Wand of Fire and Ice*, and the safe area to hold it is the black central section. By mental command, the wielder can cause the red end to emit a blast of heat or the blue end to produce a wave of cold. The character who holds the wand will somehow know this (but his companions won't, unless he chooses to tell them; you should pass him this information on a note).

Both the heat- and cold-effects may be dodged, having a SPEED of 10 (see the rulebook, p. 71). The heat blast will inflict 5d6 HP damage on any creature which fails to evade it; a creature in armour may subtract its Armour Factor from this damage, however. The pulse of coldness inflicts only 4d6 HP damage, but armour (of whatever sort) will reduce the damage taken by only 2 points.

Each use of the wand expends a 'charge'. It has only three charges, so it can be used only three times; there is no obvious way to recharge it. You will have to keep track of how often the character uses it. Once the power of the wand becomes known, Bretwald (if he has not been killed by the Tapestry Warriors) will caution against using it rashly. As it turns out, this is wise counsel indeed—there are points later in the adventure where all may be lost if they no longer have this wand.

5. A steep climb

You walk along a roughly hewn passageway. Soon you see a wall of rock towering ahead of you. A glimmer of golden light filters down from above. Will you climb, or turn back?

GM: The climb has a difficulty factor of 13. This means that any character with Reflexes of at least 13 can make it without difficulty. Other characters must roll d20 and score under their Reflexes to make the climb safely. A character who fails this roll will fall at a randomly determined point in the climb. The distance to the top is 10m, so roll d10 for anyone who fails the roll to see how far he drops. A character who falls may if he wishes (and if he survives!) attempt the climb again.

If one person can get to the top and secure a rope, other characters make the climb at difficulty factor 6.

6. The wizard's cave

GM: You should relate the following only to those who actually make the climb. Any players whose characters remain at the bottom will have to go into another room.

At last you reach the top and haul yourselves up into a vast cavern. Stalactites sparkle in light which seems to come from all around. Your hearts skip a beat as you behold, curled atop an enormous mound of treasure, the long sinuous form of a huge red Dragon! Luckily for you, it is sleeping; wisps of blue smoke curl gently up from its black nostrils. Near it, contained within a red pentacle inscribed on the cavern floor, is a stout old oak tree whose branches reach up to the shadows beyond the magic light.

GM: At this point, take the player whose character has the highest Psychic Talent score to one side—this will almost certainly be one of the magic-using players, if there are such in your group. Tell him/her the following:

Just for a moment, as you reached the top, you fancied you saw a figure: a wild bearded man two metres in height, dressed in ragged furs, holding aloft an ebony staff. But then, when you look again, it is the oak tree you see standing there. It must have been a trick of the light....

GM: The oak is the dormant form of Mathor, Valandar's court sorcerer. He will not awaken until his liege does (see section 23, below). The pentacle prevents anyone or anything from touching the oak; the lines that define it are strongly magical and cannot be erased.

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The Dragon opens one lazy eye if the characters approach its treasure. A couple of paces more and a red tongue flickers between its sharp teeth. Then it speaks. (You should portray the Dragon as solemn, droll or jocular, according to the style you favour for your GamesMastering. Bilbo's conversation with Smaug in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* gives a fine account of how a Dragon might speak.)

The Dragon's name is Fengel. It is Mathor's servant, bound by his magic, but out of pride will maintain it is his friend. It will be very flattered if anyone remarks on the magnificence of its treasure. If any character mistakes this hoard for "the treasures of the kingdom", Fengel will correct him haughtily, announcing that those treasures are in the chamber of the dead king, unguarded, and anyone may take them.

This brings the conversation neatly around to the question of whether anyone may take any of this treasure. Fengel is loath to part with even the merest trinket, though he will finally consent to a riddling contest. For each riddle the characters get right they can take a gold coin (larger than their modern crown, and worth about forty-five florins). Once they fail to

answer a riddle, they must go away and leave Fengel to sleep. Typical riddles that Fengel will ask are:

I watched an army gathering supplies
Over miles of countryside,
No homestead did they pillage,
No blade of grass was broken. (Answer: a swarm of bees)

Across the seas
Up to the sky
All through the land
Unseen by eye (Answer: the wind)

As long as six men,
As strong as six men.
One man may carry it,
Six men cannot stand it up. (Answer: a rope)

It eats everything but is always famished
And when it drinks, it dies. (Answer: fire)

Fengel knows the history of each coin in his hoard, and will muse sadly at his bereavement each time the characters take one. If the characters try to snatch up a handful of treasure and run, Fengel will wait until they are at the lip of the cliff and then breathe a jet of flame (SPEED 16, strikes 2-12 characters;

anyone failing to dodge takes 2d6 +12 HP damage, less Armour Factor). If anyone survives that he will let them go. A 'handful' of Fengel's treasure will be worth 10d6 × 1d20 florins.

No game-information is provided here for Fengel. A glance at the information on dragons (p. 32 of the *Bestiary*) will show why: thinking of attacking him is like a group of mice planning to attack a tiger—one that can breathe fire and cast spells. If your players say that this is what they want to do then try to dissuade them from bringing the adventure to such a premature end. If they insist on going ahead then by all means play out the combat. It is likely to be short, and Fengel will keep up a sardonic narration as he dispatches them.

7. The north wind's hall

You swing back the heavy door of a long hall. At the north end, your lantern-light falls upon a podium of grey marble carved to resemble a bulbous-cheeked face blowing at you. A silver goblet rests on the podium. Beyond, another door leads deeper into the underworld.

GM: As the characters walk towards the podium a fierce gale springs up and shrieks along the hall, forcing them back. Even by dragging themselves along the wall, the strongest characters can get no further than half-way.

If they hold up the bag from the chest in room 2, the wind will be drawn within and disappear at once. The cord must then be tied to hold the wind inside. If the bag is opened at any later time in this adventure or a subsequent one, the wind will immediately return to this hall by the shortest possible route, bowling over any character in its path and blowing him along for 2–8 metres. This means that if the characters reopen the bag when they get back to Axbridge, for example, anyone standing north-east of the bag (i.e. directly between it and the location of this underworld) will be knocked down.

The silver goblet is worth 60 florins. Its real value to the characters, however, is likely to lie in its usefulness later in the adventure (see 11, below).

8. A choice of ways

You are in a 3m wide corridor running east and west. To the east, the corridor opens out into a room after only a few metres. To the west, you can just make out that the corridor turns to head north after some 15m.

9. The spider's web

You can see that a bronze helmet lies on a wooden table against the far wall of the room. As you step through the archway into the room, your ankles become entangled in a web of fine strong strands.

GM: The Giant Spider (HP 11; see p. 35 of the *Bestiary*) that lives in this room quickly descends on its web to attack its prey. Only the characters in the front row of the battle order will be caught in the web. The other characters cannot attack the Spider because their trapped colleagues are in the way.

If reduced to 3 HP or less, the Spider will scuttle back to its lair above the rafters. If the players defeat it and reach the helmet, give this description:

It is a strange ornate helmet, curiously free of corrosion. The oddest thing about it is that the visor consists of a large flat mirror!

If anyone puts it on:

From the inside, you find that you can see through the mirrored visor. However it is like peering through smoked glass, and you can see objects only as dark silhouettes.

Any character wearing the helmet takes a combat penalty of –1 from ATTACK and –2 from DEFENCE, to represent his impaired vision. The helmet might thus strike the characters as rather useless, but it may prove to be a valuable asset when they come up against the Gorgon (see section 19).

10. A trap

As you approach the bend in the corridor, a flagstone gives slightly under your feet. There is an ominous click. Suddenly a massive gleaming axe-blade swings out of the side wall—

GM: The axe swings across the corridor, so it could strike any or all of the characters at the front of the party. It has a SPEED of 13; match this against each character's EVASION—this is explained on p.71 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook.

Each character that it hits will absorb some momentum from the swing, so (from right to left across the front row) the first character is struck with an Armour Bypass Roll of d8 +2 and takes 8 HP damage if it gets past his armour; the second character (if it hits more than one) is struck with an Armour Bypass Roll of d8 +1 and takes 7 HP

damage; the third character is struck a normal axe blow—d8 for Armour Bypass and 6 HP if it gets past his armour.

After one swing, the axe resets itself in the wall. The characters will have to remember to avoid the loose flagstone when they come back this way, or they will trigger the trap again.

11. Barrier of light

The way on is blocked by a flickering barrier of violet light that shimmers in the air between two baroquely carved pillars on either side of the passage. Through the shimmering, you can just barely discern the outlines of the corridor as it continues north.

Just in front of this barrier, set back in alcoves to your left and right, are two fountains. In the western alcove, a chalky grey liquid issues from a snarling stone face and runs down into the ountain beneath. The eastern fountain is filled by a purple liquid that bubbles from a face sculpted in an expression of fear.

GM: The barrier is magical. A character who walks through it is subject to a MAGICAL ATTACK of 18, matched against his MAGICAL DEFENCE (see p.75 of the rulebook). If the attack works, the character will be afflicted with an unreasoning fear. For the rest of the adventure, his ATTACK score is decreased by 1 point and his DEFENCE score increases by 1. Also, any time the party encounter a monster, the character has a 25% chance of being so overwhelmed by his fear that he will merely cower with his hands over his head until the monster has been slain or driven off. (Encourage any player whose character is affected by this barrier to role-play as though he genuinely is frightened.) The effect wears off as soon as the character leaves this underworld.

The grey fluid in the western fountain has a curious effect on anyone who drinks it. The character's flesh will become stony and grey. For the rest of the adventure, until he leaves the underworld, he adds 2 points to his Armour Factor. However, he is slower in this stone-flesh form: his Reflexes and movement rate are halved.

The purple liquid in the eastern fountain has even stranger properties. As long as it remains within the alcove, it is a powerful acid that will dissolve anything except gold and silver. If a character tries to drink directly from the fountain he will be badly burned (1d4 HP damage; if he put his hands in he permanently loses 1 from ATTACK; if his face, he

loses 1d8 Looks). The characters can, however, use the silver goblet from the north wind's hall to scoop up some of the liquid. Once the liquid is removed from the fountain it loses its acidity, so characters can drink it from the goblet without injury. It has the effect of making a character immune to the effect of the magic barrier.

Once a character has drunk the liquid of one of the fountains he can gain no benefit from the other. Each character will have to settle either for immunity to the flickering barrier or for becoming stone-flesh for a while.

These liquids only possess their magical properties in this underworld. Any removed from the underworld will become just stagnant water.

12. Underground river

Passing through the barrier of light, you continue north along the corridor. The sound of a surging underground river echoes from the darkness ahead.

Before long you come to a short flight of steps. At the bottom you see a stone quay beside the rushing black waters. A rickety plank bridge leads across to another quay on the far side. A figure of rose-coloured rock stands between the steps and the bridge. It looks like an uncompleted statue—the upper torso, arms and head are perfectly sculpted, but the lower body is a single lump of unworked stone. With a harsh grating noise it slowly flexes its massive sinews. Its long talons are knives of flint.

GM: Having no legs, the Living Statue cannot move from where it stands on the quay. The characters might try to rush past it, but it will get to strike at two of them as they do so (one with each claw). Characters who are trying to parry as they run past get only half their usual DEFENCE against the monster.

LIVING STATUE

Rank equivalent: 10th

ATTACK 22, Claw (d10 +2, 8)¹

DEFENCE 14

MAGICAL DEFENCE 12

Health Points 30

Armour Factor 7

Movement: 0

EVASION 0

Reflexes: 16

If they try to fight it out with the Living Statue they will probably soon find that most of their blows slide harmlessly off its granite hide. It is quite easily

¹ It is ambidextrous and strikes with both claws, at full ATTACK, every Combat Round.

vanquished, though, if they use the Wand of Fire and Ice. The expansion and contraction due to the use of heat and then cold in quick succession will shatter its stone body into rubble! (Note also that, having no legs, it cannot evade the Wand's blasts.)

If the characters defeat it and think to search amid the broken chunks, they will soon find an enchanted shortsword that had been left in a cavity under its base. A character fighting with this shortsword rolls d8 +1 for Armour Bypass rolls, adds 1 point to both ATTACK and DEFENCE, and inflicts 4 HP damage on an opponent with each successful hit. (Note also that there are some monsters—e.g. Spectres—that can only be harmed by enchanted weapons.)

13. A flimsy bridge

GM: The bridge is very fragile. If any character who has been transformed to stone-flesh (by the grey fluid at 11) steps upon it, he will go right through the planks and plunge into the river. This means death for the character concerned, for he will sink like a stone and drown.

The Wand of Fire and Ice is useful again here. A blast of its frigid cold will freeze a path across the river which even the heaviest of stone-fleshed characters can lumber across in safety.

14. Short passage

You climb a short stairway like the one on the south bank of the river. You are standing in front of a small black door. There is a strong feeling of peace and serenity here.

15. The chapel

You enter a low-ceilinged chamber hung with sombre drapes. A flickering sanctuary lamp burns on an altar stone in an alcove in the east wall. A large crucifix hangs above this. There are double doors in the west wall and another small door, like the one you have entered by, directly opposite you.

GM: A character afflicted by fear (having passed through the magical light at 11) may be cured of this by kneeling in prayer before the altar. There is no way of knowing this in advance, of course; you should not tell them unless someone announces that he is praying. The benefit applies only to one

who prays without thought of gain: a character who suddenly becomes pious when he sees the advantage will stay terrified!

16. Long passage

A narrow passage leads north for a short distance and then turns to the east. Looking along it, you see that the first ten metres or so are not illuminated, but from that point onwards bright red lamps hang from the ceiling. The passage extends as far east as you can see.

17. Nagging doubts?

You continue until you have almost reached the first of the lamps. There is something odd here—the lamps seem to dim slightly as you approach, and become redder.

GM: In fact the lamps have not changed at all—they merely seem dimmer in contrast with the light of the character's lanterns. The passage from this point on does not exist. It, and the red lamps that hang along it, are an illusion cast by Mathor the wizard. If the characters shutter their lanterns, they will see that the red lights shed no light at all westwards (i.e. before the illusion begins)—so a character could bring his face to within inches of the first illusory lamp and yet his companions would be unable to make him out in the darkness.

If the characters do not detect the illusion, and press onwards, the entire corridor from this point will disappear. (Illusions vanish when touched.) The character at the front of the party will suddenly find himself at the end of the passage—about to step into a yawning pit which was previously covered over by the illusion! The character must roll under his Reflexes on d20 to catch hold of the person behind before he falls into the pit. The pit is 10m deep, the fall will do d10 damage to anyone who experiences it (reduced by 2 if they are wearing any kind of armour—see p. 64 of the rulebook), and the climb out has a difficulty factor of 11.

18. Light ahead

Beyond the double doors lies a 3m-wide corridor which leads west. A little over 15m away from where you are standing, it is joined by another corridor leading north. The east-west corridor is gloomy, illuminated only by the murky light of your lanterns. But you can see bright light flooding from the northern branch.

19. A lady in waiting

You walk towards the T-junction. In the bright bar of light thrown across the corridor from the northern branch, you now notice a looming shadow. Someone is waiting just around the next corner. You pause and hold your breath as you study the outline of the shadow. Could it be a robed woman with an elaborate coiffure? A soft, evil hissing reaches your ears...

GM: Presumably few players will miss the hint that a Gorgon is waiting to ambush them. As they step close to the T-junction she will suddenly advance to block their path and stare the foremost character full in the face.

This particular Gorgon was once a renowned sorceress, Elaine, considered to have been partially responsible for the downfall of Vallandar's golden kingdom. She worked for Morgrin, tempting one of Vallandar's knights away from the King so his half-brother could deliver the lethal blow to Vallandar's unguarded flank. The gods have condemned her for her misuse of her beauty, and she now exists purely to spite anyone who might seek to aid Vallandar's cause. She has 10 Health Points.

GORGONS

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| ATTACK 16, Sword (d8, 4 points); 1-3 Tresses (d4, 1 point and venom) | Armour Factor 0 |
| DEFENCE 10 | EVASION 4 |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE 9 | Reflexes: 8 |
| Health Points 1d6 +8 | Movement: 10m |

These creatures have the bodies of beautiful women but the face is that of a hideous crone and the head is a writhing mass of serpentine tresses. Gorgons fight with swords but rarely use shields or armour. In combat, the 'hair' can also attack: 1-3 tresses will strike at the Gorgon's opponent, each with its own ATTACK of 10. These snakey tresses are, of course, venomous and a character wounded by one must roll less than or equal to his Strength on 3d6 or die.

They also have a petrifying gaze with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 19; those who fail are turned to stone (see p. 123 of the rulebook.) If a Gorgon sees its own visage in a mirror, it is itself subject to the petrifying attack. In addition to these other abilities, all Gorgons are 5th-level Sorceresses (see the rulebook, p. 120).

If Bretwald is still with the players after the Gorgon is dealt with, he will turn to them in wonder, telling them the tale of Elaine—which he had assumed to be no more than myth. He is now more certain than ever of the unimaginable wealth that must be around the next corner in Vallandar's tomb.

If the leading character is wearing the bronze helmet from the spider's lair (room 9), the Gorgon will get a nasty surprise as she sees her gaze reflected back at her! On a roll of 2-10 on 2d10 she will turn herself to stone. If not, she will close her eyes and fight blind (i.e. at -4 ATTACK and -8 DEFENCE) rather than risk seeing her own face a second time.

20. At the junction

The northern branch of the corridor, where the Gorgon was lying in wait, extends only a few metres and then ends in stout oak doors bound with iron. The light comes from a glowing crystal globe hanging from the ceiling.

Shining your lanterns west, you discover that the transverse corridor also ends in double doors after another eight or ten metres.

21. A stout coffer

On the other side of the doors lies a dusty room with a mouldering reek in the air. Suddenly a host of grinning Skeletons hurl themselves forward from the shadowy corners of the room.

GM: This encounter is likely to be bothersome rather than fatal. There are seven Skeletons (HP: 4, 2, 2, 3, 4,3, 7; see the *Bestiary*, p. 83), all armed with swords (d8, 4 points). These Skeletons also have shields, so remember to check each time one is struck to see if the shield stops the blow.

If the characters defeat the Skeletons:

You now notice a huge wooden treasure-chest by the south wall. It is sealed with a gilded padlock bigger than a man's fist. Then you notice something gleaming in the lantern-light: a key, hanging from a chain around one of the Skeletons' necks.

GM: The key unlocks the chest, sure enough. Within they will find a quiver full of arrows, a gold robe-clasp, two stoppered stone jars, a parchment case, a large silver sceptre and an ivory crucifix.

The moment a character touches any of the items, a tremendous force will throw them all back

across the room and the chest will slam shut. No one is hurt, but the chest is now locked again and the key is nowhere to be found. The item that was touched is lying on the floor beside the chest. The chest is too big for them to budge, so this single item is all they will ever get out of it. In detail, the items are:

- Six magic arrows The character who uses one of these adds 1 to his ATTACK, Armour Bypass Roll and the damage inflicted if the arrow hits. In game terminology, each one is a (d6 +1, 5 points) weapon.
- Healing Potion A wounded character who drinks this regains 7 Health Points, up to the limit of his normal HP score.
- Elixir Vitae Poured between the lips of a corpse (who must not have been dead more than a month), this potion will restore him to life! The resurrected character permanently loses 1d3 Health Points and 1 point from each of his characteristics (Strength, Looks, etc.)
- A gold clasp Worth 120 florins.
- An ivory crucifix This is a reliquary containing the ashes of Saint Leon, an indefatigable opponent of evil. The character who wears it gets a bonus of +2 to

ATTACK when fighting Undead, and is unaffected by the *fright attack* of Ghosts and Spectres.

- A scroll in a case Only a 4th-rank Sorcerer could understand what is written on this scroll, though any Sorcerer could recite it and thus release the *Shadowbolt* spell it contains.
- A silver sceptre Worth 150 florins, and also useful as a mace for smiting Wights.

22. Short walk and long drop

This narrow passage goes north a short distance and ends in a pit. Looking down, you see only stygian darkness which the light of your lamps does nothing to dispel. Iron rungs set in the wall of the pit form a ladder of sorts.

GM: If any of the characters drops a coin down (remember that somebody has to deduct it from their cash reserves!) it takes six heartbeats to reach the bottom.

If any character tries climbing down, you should emphasize to him how eerie and dank the pit seems. He can see almost nothing, and his friends' voices



echo distantly from above. A character gripped by the magical fear-effect (see section 11) could not bring himself to climb down under any circumstances; you should not have to remind the player of this if he is roleplaying properly.

The climb is not at all dangerous, in fact. The bottom is vile and slimy, but if the character does not mind this and searches for a minute or two he will find a dagger. When this is taken up into the light it will be discovered to have five gems encrusted along the hilt. It is worth 400 florins.

23. The high King's hall

You find yourselves on a balcony overlooking a vast circular hall full of shadows. You cannot see the far wall or the soaring roof above. In the centre of the chamber, within a pillar of green light that streams down out of the darkness, waits a tall man on horseback. Both horse and rider wear great plates of decorated armour. Their heads are bowed as though in slumber, and on the man's brow you see a golden crown.

Around Vallandar, twelve mighty swords stand balanced upon their points in a perfect circle.

Off to your right, stone steps sweep down to the floor of the hall. At the foot of the steps, your lanterns pick out the shining surface of a massive gold casket.

Will you go down—?

GM: The Spectre of Morgrin, Vallandar's evil half-brother, lurks in this hall. As the characters descend, this is what they see:

Tatters of deepest shadow flit from the furthest recesses of the hall, clustering and coalescing on the steps in front of you. Two darkly glittering eyes fix upon you as a man-like form takes shape. The sense of abiding malevolence descends like a pall. The figure drifts up towards you. Its body and fluttering robes are murky and indistinct, but you see its white hands and hate-filled visage with a terrible clarity. It reaches back and seems to draw a spectral sword from the empty air.

GM: The characters have two Combat Rounds before Morgrin reaches them, and if any of them have magic arrows they would be wise to loose them off. Morgrin can only be harmed by enchanted weapons; even the Wand of Fire and Ice (if it isn't used up by now) will not hurt him.

Characters already suffering from magically induced fear are now subject to a 1d6 *fright attack*

SPECTRES

Spectres are the non-corporeal undead remnants of strong-willed persons whose lives were twisted by dark hateful passions. Their gliding, translucent forms are often mistaken for Ghosts, but in fact they are far more dangerous. If a Spectre surprises a party of adventurers (4 chances in 6 of this, as the monster is apt to drift straight out of a stone wall!), everyone in the party is subject to a Fright Attack (see the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook, p. 122), but with a Fright Attack strength of 1d6. The Spectre will then close with the party to combat them physically. Its dead white hands are potent with destructive energy. Since the Spectre is itself ethereal, however, it difficult to harm; non-magical weapons do not affect it, and neither do physical spells (like *Dragonbreath* or *Shadowbolt*).

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ATTACK 19, Touch (d12, 5) | Armour Factor 0 (immune to non-magical weapons) |
| DEFENCE 12 | Movement: 12m |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE 11 | EVASION 4 |
| Health Points 4d6 +4 | STEALTH 18 |
| Rank-equivalent: 8th | PERCEPTION 13 (dark sight) |

(roll 1d6, subtract the character's rank, and roll the result or less on 2d10 to kill him—see the rulebook, p. 122). Treat Morgrin as a standard Spectre (HP: 14; Reflexes: 17). Although he appears to be armed with a 'sword', this is in fact a part of his spectral form, and is treated exactly like the touch attack of any other Spectre.

The characters will be in single file on the steps, so this is a bad place to stand and fight. Apart from the magical shortsword (from the Living Statue at 12) and the magical arrows (from the coffer at 21), the only other weapons they could use to fight Morgrin are the swords that stand in a circle around the king. Of course, to get these swords they will have to reach the floor of the hall—possibly by climbing down on a rope while someone tries to keep Morgrin busy.

They do not have to battle Morgrin, of course. They could just flee. If Bretwald is still with them, they will have to drag him kicking and screaming.

He has sought this tomb for so many years that even Morgrin's Spectre will not drive him back now!

Any character who reaches the circle of swords can take one. Having taken one, he will not be able to move any of the others. There is no sign of any support keeping them miraculously balanced on their points—it is more of Mathor's wizardry. Having taken one of the swords, a character leaves behind him the shadow that he cast at the moment he touched the hilt. This shadow will remain unless the character replaces the sword in its position in the circle.

What does this portend? In fact it is a sign that a character who takes one of the swords becomes Vallandar's vassal. When the land has need of him and he arises from his slumber, Vallandar will call upon those who took and wielded these swords. Living or dead, they will come to be his knights. (Unless you favour an apocalyptic theme, this will probably not occur in the lifetime of your campaign.)

The swords are magical in that they inflict full damage on undead monsters such as Spectres. At first they confer no combat bonuses on the character who wields them, but they will gradually acquire enchantment whenever the character performs a truly selfless and honourable deed (in your view, not the player's!). In every adventure that the wielder behaves honourably, the sword gains a magical 'plus', until it is eventually +3, the maximum. (Magical sword rules are covered in full on p. 137 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook.)

Moreover, the character who possesses one of these swords will never lose it. Even if apparently gone forever—dropped into a volcano, eaten by a whale, etc.—it will mysteriously return to the character in the space of a few days.

Assuming that Morgrin is somehow disposed of, the characters will doubtless turn their avaricious attention to the gold casket they noticed earlier. This is what they find when they open it:

You lift the heavy lid of the casket, expecting to find wealth that transcends greed. Is this the unimaginable wealth of the realm spoken of in legend? Eagerly you peer inside—

You find a silver crown, a handful of grain, a simple ploughshare, a wooden cross and a leatherbound book.

GM: Bretwald, if he has survived the adventure, will understand. "The treasures of Vallandar's realm!" He groans. "The King, the Land, the People, the Faith and the Law..." He weeps.

If irredeemably mercenary, the characters could take the silver crown. It would fetch about 90 florins. The book of laws is quite a treasure. A gift could be made of it to a monastery, and the characters could expect much goodwill in return.

The gold casket itself is much too heavy to lift, and too solid for the characters to break up. They must be content with what they have already.

It hardly need be added that it is not possible to reach the king himself. Should any character try to do so, the column of blue light will fling him across the hall with a crackling energy blast which inflicts 1d4 HP damage.

VI.

AFTER THE ADVENTURE

You may want to have the party play through leaving the underworld and travelling back to Axbridge, or you may simply cover it in a couple of sentences. On their return, nothing has changed. Le Cloche, if they are escorting him, will be eager to get away from Odo's incessant stories, but not ready to travel for at least another week.

Bretwald, if he lived through it all, returns to his position as priest of Axbridge—a sadder, wiser and somewhat richer man.

Characters who survived should have reaped rich benefits. Award each character 7 experience points, in addition to any points awarded during the game for overcoming monsters. You and your players should now have a thorough grounding in the basic *Dragon Warriors* rules.

Lastly, none of the characters who took part in this adventure will ever be able to find the underworld again. This is part of Mathor's magic, that no man can enter Vallandar's tomb more than once. If not for the treasure they carried out with them, and the first battle-scars they now bear, the characters might think the whole adventure had been but a dream!