

The Beast of Radlebb Woods

Agathokles

August 23, 2011

A Classic D&D adventure for 3-5 characters of levels 3-5.

This adventure pits a party of Karamaikan adventurers against the Beast of Radlebb Woods, the monstrous boar created by Jesper Andersen¹. It is more of a framework with a set of extended encounters (a Skill Challenge, in D&D 4e parlance) than a full module, and is designed to provide reasons for a party of adventurers to set on several different adventures.

The adventure is designed to be used with the *Rules Cyclopedia* version of the Classic D&D game.

Background

The Beast of Radlebb Woods appears as a large, powerful, demonic boar. It is actually a Traladaran warrior of the Vampire Wars, afflicted with boar lycanthropy and cursed to remain in animal form at all times.

The warrior, Bogdan Vargos, was one the great heroes of the Vampire Wars, as well as a leading noble in the Halag region. His efforts led to the defeat of his nemesis, the Black Count of the Moor. But the vampire Count had a last trick up his sleeve – when he fled his castle in Gorenenov, he planted false evidence of his own involvement in the worship of the Dark Triad, including the location of a temple where a vessel holding his lifeforce could be found in the form of a goblet fashioned out of a human skull. From the material, it appeared that crushing the vessel was the only way to permanently kill the Count. Bogan, with several allies, stormed the temple of the Dark Triad in the Radlebb Woods, reached its sanctum,

and cleaved the goblet with his sword. However, the goblet did not hold the Count's soul or lifefore – it was a relic of Orcus, protected by powerful magics. As Bogdan struck the Skull Goblet, his body changed into that of a great boar, and his mind was clouded by a blood rage, leading him to attack his former companions, slaying all of them, except for a single one, Anton Strolojca, who was standing guard near a portcullis, and managed to drop it down and flee the temple. Anton never spoke of the matter much, as he had saved his own life at the expense of those of his friends, but committed the tale to his journal, which is still hidden somewhere in Strolojca manor.

Word of the failed assault on the Temple of the Dark Triad, however, did reach Marilenev and Halag. Shortly after these events, the Beast of Radlebb Woods appeared, slaying many traveller on the path from Marilenev to Halag, and creating its legend. Many great warriors of the time attempted to hunt the boar, including Duke Uidar the Quick, who wielded the Sword of Halav, but to no avail. After a few years, however, the priests of Orcus managed to increase their control of the Beast, and reduced the attacks to avoid retaliation, using the Beast to protect the Temple from further assaults.

In time, the Beast of Radlebb spread its curse to seven of its victims, creating a force of wereboars and common boars that could be controlled by the priests of Orcus, who sometimes command these boars and wereboars to attack their enemies, as well as to patrol the area around their Temple.

The priests still have in their possession the Skull Goblet, as well as Bogdan's magic sword, Boarslayer. The Skull Goblet can be used to control the Beast, and also to release it from its curse.

¹<http://pandius.com/radlebbb.html>

Involving the party

The PCs may learn of the Beast of Radlebb Woods in several different ways – either by witnessing an attack by unnaturally aggressive boars, or by being told of the Beast by others. This section details a few scenarios that can be used to lead the PCs to the adventure.

The Caravan While travelling along the Westron Road to Luln, the PCs come upon a merchant caravan that has been assaulted by the Beast. The merchant caravan was composed of four horse-drawn wagons and a dozen pack mules, with four merchants, seven drivers and seven guards, carrying a load of provisions to Radlebb Keep. Two of the wagons have been overturned right in the middle of the Westron Road. The bodies of one driver and two of the guards are crushed under the wagons. The other wagon has a broken wheel, and several tears in the covering fabric. The last wagon tried to escape, only to crash against a large oak tree a few dozen yards from the other three. Its driver died in the crash. Four mules and six horses can be found dead or dying along the road, while the other animals have been scattered in the forest. Of the cavaraneers, most are dead, disembowled or trampled by some large, aggressive animal. Some bodies are mangled beyond recognition, and a few have been devoured in part. One of the merchants, who was sleeping in one of the overturned vehicles at the time of the attack, barely survived the assault, having been rendered unconscious when the Beast of Radlebb charged the wagon. Unfortunately, the merchant, one Lucius Helianus, is not able to provide any detail. The only other survivor is one of the guards, who took a blow from a charging boar and was tossed in a bough to the side of the road. This man, a Hattian veteran named Wolfgang Heinze, is dying and the PCs have only one turn to provide healing (with a successful Healing skill check, a clerical spell or a potion) before he dies. If the PCs save Wolfgang, he can tell them that the caravan was attacked by a group of large boars, led by one that was larger and fiercer, with red, demonic eyes. Wolfgang saw the Beast charge one of the wagons, breaking its flank and then overturning it with its tusks. One mo-

ment later, one of the other boars charged him, its tusks breaking through the shield and sending him flying. Only his good suit of chain mail saved him, but he has suffered a broken arm, some internal damage and the consequences of being tossed against the bough where he is found lying. If the PCs have no means of healing, he will just regain consciousness for a few moments, speaking incoherently of “terrible beasts”, and then die. PCs with appropriate skills (Tracking, Hunting, etc.) can easily find the tracks of several very large boars, and tusk wounds on several of the victims.

Random encounter? While involved in a different adventure where they are facing cultists of Orcus, the PCs are attacked by boars that seem unusually aggressive. The encounter is otherwise a typical forest random encounter, but the PCs may later discover, when they defeat the cultists, cryptic notes referring to the Beast of Radlebb.

A good sport While the PCs are rubbing elbows with the south-western nobles, the conversation veers towards the topic of hunting. A visiting Thyatian minor noble (perhaps the Captain of Radlebb Keep, or the Lord Forester), leads the conversation with a number of anecdotes about Kerendan deer and boar hunting, boasting about his own skill. One of the Traladarans – perhaps Iajo Moubotka or one of the Strolojca – replies, half in jest, that the Thyatian boasts so much that he might as well have killed the Beast of Radlebb Woods. An argument follows among the nobles, as the Thyatian scoffs at the Traladaran superstition. At this point, either the Traladarans try to persuade the PCs to take up the challenge and show the Thyatian that the Beast exists and can be hunted or the Thyatian himself challenges them to do it (if the PCs have taken the side of the Traladarans), or a patron of the PCs accepts the challenge (if the PCs have a patron or a close friend NPC).

Prophecy If the PCs seek the help of the Darine or just consult a Darine card-reader, they may receive a prophecy that involves the Beast of Radlebb. This

may serve to introduce the Beast, or to reveal new details on its history, or to direct the PCs to fight it.

To use this scenario, it is better to have the PCs encounter a small Darine troupe (a single wagon), either on the road or just outside a village. A male Darine will hawk his wife's divination talents, perhaps offering a discount on the first reading.

The Ravenloft Tarokka deck can be used to perform the divination, if available. If one of the other hooks has been already used, then the PCs will probably ask a reading focused on the Beast itself. In this case, it is better to use a 10 card reading, to give more complex results. Otherwise, the readings will probably be focused on each PC, so 5 card readings would be in order to limit the length of the encounter.

The contents of the reading are mostly up to the DM, to weave past and future adventures into it, as well as hints to the PC backgrounds, quests, and interests. However, interpretations for several of the greater deck cards are provided in Table 1.

Act I: The Quest

Before heading into the Radlebb Woods and trying to slay the Beast, the PCs will need to obtain more information about the monster. It must be clear to them that they are going to face a dangerous opponent, not to be underestimated. Friendly and knowledgeable NPCs, such as the mentors of Magic-User characters or elder members of the Churches can warn the PCs about the dangers of hunting a legendary Beast, of which little is known. They will be directed to Specularum, where they can find some of the few libraries in the Grand Duchy, as well as sages, mages and priests. This first Act is therefore devoted to providing the DM with encounters and information for the research part of the hunt, set in Specularum.

On the other hand, very careful PCs may even want to visit other, more established sources of lore, such as the libraries of the Collegium Arcanum in Thyatis, or the cathedral of the Church of Halav in Selenica, or visit some sage or magician NPC they already know. In this case, the DM will need to decide what knowledge can be gathered from such sources. The infor-

mation that can be obtained in Specularum can be used as the limit for other sources as well, as few foreigners have any interest in Traladaran legends.

Scene 1: Investigation

The PCs may, at various times in the course of their quest, seek information regarding the Beast of Radlebb, or the means to slay it. Therefore, this scene, while presented as a single investigation, can take place several times, as the PC alternate between seeking information and other activities. The scene takes place in Specularum, and specifically in the libraries of the Magicians' Guild, the Church of Traladara and the Church of Karameikos. The PCs may look for information elsewhere, and it is up to the DM to determine the difficulty of these tasks – as a guideline, no source in Specularum can provide more information than what is found in the three libraries listed, and the search can be more difficult.

Information on the *Beast of Radlebb Woods* is only available at the Church of Traladara (the Thyatians consider it a Traladaran superstition, and do not describe it in their books). Finding it requires a Heroic skill check in History, Profession (Librarian), or related skills, and takes an entire day for a single person (half a day if all PCs cooperate). All information is from times before the Thyatian invasion, and is preserved in old annals, which are both archaic in their writing, and terribly boring to read. However, it can be confirmed (with a successful skill check) that the Beast of Radlebb Woods, or a very similar boar-like being known under the same name, has been active for the last two centuries. No reference can be found to it before the Vampire Wars. A *complete success* reveals also that the Duke of Halag, Uidar the Quick, once attempted to hunt the Beast using the mythical Sword of Halav, and that the Beast is said to have a number of sons – different sources claim these sons to be seven or nine. A *complete failure* means that the PCs accidentally misplace the books containing the information. They can retry, but the next attempt will take 1d6 additional days.

The PCs may also search the libraries for information on hunting, though this topic is more easily addressed by speaking with members of the

Table 1: Sample Tarokka readings

Card	Interpretation	Notes
Horseman	“A man on a horse, or one who is both horse and man?”	as ally, referring to centaurs and/or Loshad the Chevall; this reading works better if the card is reversed, since it is generally a symbol of death
	“A deadly quest is yours – many will die in its wake”	future (may forecast deaths during the hunt, or the impending invasion of the Dymrak Dread
Mists	“A great power hides the means to hunt this Beast”	A reference to the involvement of an Immortal (Orcus)
Broken One	“A broken one, the nature of your enemy, how it was broken, is the key to victory”	a hint to the nature of the Beast, in the past, enemy or ally positions
Artifact	“You will need an artifact of great magic to end this threat”	as ally, a hint to the Eyes of Traldar (also in the past, if the PCs have found one in previous adventures)
	“The key to your enemy is held in a powerful item”	as enemy or past, a reference to the Skull Goblet
Darklord	“A dark one is moving, and in its wake the land shall suffer”	future or enemy, hints to Orcus taking a renewed interest in Traladara
Dungeon	“Your enemy is imprisoned – spiritually, but perhaps also physically”	as enemy, a reference to the cursed man locked in the Boar form
Marionette	“The enemy you seek is but a puppet of a greater evil”	past, enemy or future, refers to the Beast being controlled by Orcus
Ghost	“A ghost of ancient wars returns to the battlefield”	as future or enemy, can refer to Koriszegy or the return of Queen Elendorath (Ilyana Penhaligon); as the past, it refers to the role of the Beast of Radlebb in the Vampire Wars
Beast	“The Beast is your enemy – a powerful force for evil”	enemy or future, obvious reference to the Beast itself

Hunters' Guild. However, the library of the Church of Karameikos has several books on chivalrous hunting, complete with long and detailed glossaries. These are easily located (a Moderate skill check), and can provide an overview of boar hunting techniques, but the same information is known to any character with the Hunting and Etiquette skills. The library of the Church of Traladara is less expansive on the topic, but a Heroic check allows to find books related to the cult of Zirchev and its connection with several types of hunting, including boar hunting.

Once the PCs have uncovered the connection between the Temple of the Dark Triad and the Beast of Radlebb, they may come back looking for more information on the Temple itself. A Heroic check in any of the three libraries reveals that a temple to the Dark Triad is reported to have existed during the Vampire Wars. It was stormed by a group of Traladaran warriors and priests led by Bogdan Vargos, and supposedly destroyed. The temple never resurfaced in historical accounts, and it is not known to exist at the present time. A *complete success* reveals that the expedition was not successful – the temple was razed, but somehow only one of those who had entered the lower levels, Anton Strolojca, returned alive. Bogdan Vargos himself and four others were reported dead. There is not enough information to precisely locate the temple. A *marginal failure* only reveals that the a temple is supposed to have been destroyed in the Radlebb Woods during the Vampire Wars.

The *Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams* and the *Eyes of Traldar* are also only described in Traladaran texts found in the library of the Church of Traladara. However, the required check is of Legendary difficulty, and takes 1d6+2 days (1d4 if the entire party is involved). With a success, the PCs can discover the connection between the two, and the existence of either if they are looking for the other. Moreover, they will discover that the Eyes of Traldar are ancient artifacts, dating back to the time before Halav and that their powers are focused on divination. They will also understand the extent of the basic powers of the Eyes (as described in the “Eye of Traldar” and “Rahasia” modules) A *complete success* also yields enough information to conduct a ritual using one of the Eyes as a

focus that is equivalent to the Magic-User spell *Lore*, as described in Scene 2. A *complete failure* means the book describing the abovementioned ritual is stolen by a member of the Cult of Halav while the PCs are searching the library, and cannot be found with further attempts.

The *Witches of Dymrak* are subject to much superstition, which bleeds into the written reports found at both the Church of Traladara and the Magicians' Guild. The difficulty is Heroic for the first library, and Legendary for the second. However, a success at the Church of Traladara gives the number of Witches and two names (Esmeralda and Griselda). It also relates their alleged knowledge of the fey and their man-eating habits. A success at the Magicians' Guild adds that Griselda is known to live on the northern edge of the Dymrak Forest, and to be served at times by the Firemane centaurs. It takes 1d4 days (1d2 for the entire party) to unearth this information.

Finally, the PCs may be interested in one of several magical beasts. The Magicians' Guild is the best place where to look for such creatures. Thyatian textbooks on the subject are available, and the PCs can look up any creature with a skill check of the appropriate rank (Difficult for monsters in the Basic Set, Heroic for monsters in the Expert set, etc.), needing only 1d6 hours for each search. The library of the Church of Traladara also has bestiaries, but these are full with superstition. However, it does have information on magical beings such as the Chevall (Heroic skill check) and the Coltpixy (Difficult), which are almost impossible to find in conventional textbooks. The library of the Church of Karameikos has several copies of a text on Griffons, which can be located with a Difficult skill check.

Scene 2: Divinations

Besides the mundane means described above, there are several mystical ways to obtain the information necessary to organize an effective expedition against the Beast of Radlebb Woods. One option is for PC spellcaster to employ divination spells. However, it is likely that the PCs, given their low level, do not have access to powerful divinations. So, they can either consult with more experienced spellcasters, or to

supplement their own abilities with those of powerful magic items – in particular, the Eyes of Traldar.

There are three types of spellcasters the PCs may want to consult with. The *Guild Magicians* and the *Clergy*, the *Witches of Dymrak*, and the *Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams*.

Magic-Users and Clerics powerful enough to cast *Lore* or *Commune* spells are very rare, and even then, no Karameikan Magic-User currently knows the *Lore* spell. In the Church of Traladara, only Patriarch Nikelnevitch is experienced enough to cast *Commune*, while in the Church of Karameikos there are several powerful priests (Jowett, the Halarans, Oderbry and Kelvin, at least). However, it would take a lot of political clout to persuade one of them to help the PCs. In general, it is safe to assume that any request in this direction will be met with a wall of bureaucracy – this is especially true for Patriarch Jowett. Moreover, Oderbry and Kelvin have no time for Traladaran superstitions, and the Halarans are in distant Threshold. However, should the PCs be very determined, they can manage to overcome the bureaucracy (by means of skill checks in Bureaucracy or Etiquette, or related professional skill, of Heroic difficulty, or Legendary in the case of Patriarch Jowett), but they will still need to make a strong case – the contacted Patriarch will require proof that the Beast exists before disturbing his patron Immortal. To this end, it is necessary to bring at least the corpse of one of the seven Wereboar descendants of the Beast of Radlebb.

The *Witches of Dymrak* are said to hoard the lore of Traladara. PCs with few connections in Karameikan society, and some contacts in the wilderness, may find it easier to consult with the Witches. A meeting with Griselda can be arranged through the Firemane centaurs. This requires a bribe (base request at 500 royals) and careful diplomacy: an Heroic skill check in Etiquette, or Charisma ability check, allows to reduce the bribe by 25% (a *complete success* reduces the bribe by 50%), but a *marginal failure* offends the centaurs, who must be appeased with additional gifts (a magic item of some kind will be required). A *complete failure* means the centaurs will not arrange the meeting, and may become aggressive unless appeased with the bribe.

Once the meeting is arranged, Griselda will tell all the basic information on the Beast of Radlebb, and if the PCs are especially persuasive may even arrange a deal with the Firemane centaurs to help in the hunt. Griselda also recommends using Hellhounds to hunt the Beast, and may provide hints to quests needed to secure the help of some infernal canines. However, this is where her usefulness ends – she will try to get the PCs killed by providing false information on the Beast’s vulnerabilities. She will tell the PCs that bronze weapons are needed, and that the Beast is repelled by wolfsbane, like most lycanthropes. The Witch will also require a payment – in services, if possible, or in magic items otherwise. The service required is left for other adventures, but will be requested in advance, and will be one that is superficially acceptable, but has consequences that will damage Karameikos and/or the PCs – for example, Griselda might ask the PCs to clear the lair of a goblin tribe, without telling them that the tribe shaman is a follower of Wogar who is using his magic to contain an old undead monstrosity in the tunnels beneath the goblin lair. If the PCs offer magic items in return for the information, Griselda will accept one permanent item, a wand, or three potions or scrolls.

The *Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams* will prove impossible to reach. He has left the lake to search for the stolen Eye of Traldar, which is currently in the possession of Bargle. He will not be back before the end of this adventure. However, the PCs may have to convince the Pixies of the island that they are not marauders or thieves – the Pixies are very protective of the Seer, and feel responsible for “holding the fort” while he is away. They will approach the PCs using their Invisibility to Mortals power, and will pretend to be powerful spirit guardians, scolding the characters for trespassing into their sacred island, and in general making their best to force the party to leave.

To cast a *Lore* spell on their own, the PCs need to have at least one of the Eyes of Traldar.² Even with this powerful item, casting high level spells requires a degree of concentration and focus that low-level spellcasters simply lack. To overcome this limitation, a spellcaster needs to employ psychoactive drugs to

²The adventure assumes the PCs have the Black Opal Eye.

highten his awareness and help focusing on the spell for the long time needed (1d100 days for the *Lore* spell). The drug, a variant preparation of black lotus dust, needs to be researched – a task requiring successful checks in Alchemy or Science (Chemistry), Arcane Magic or Alternate Magics and Herbalism or Toxicology. Failed checks can be offset by consulting a Sage (at standard rates). Finally, the materials must be provided, for a cost of 100 royals per day (black lotus from Averoigne and spider venom from Thotia or Herath are part of the recipe). Thieves PCs may try to cut this cost, with a Heroic Knowledge of Specularum Underground (or similar skills) check, or by dealing directly with a smuggler, if they know one. There is also a significant risk of addiction – the spellcaster must, at the end of the divination, pass a Saving Throw against Poison or become addicted. Addicted PCs act at -2 on all tasks, unless they have their daily fix.

However, the results of a *Lore* spell are much better than what can be obtained by other means. In particular, the chemical and weapon material vulnerabilities of the Beast of Radlebb are revealed, as are the number of its sons (seven) and the location of its lair in the souther Radlebb Woods.

Scene 3: The Hunters' Guild

When hunting is involved, the Hunters' Guild is the most obvious source of information. The Guild concerns itself with mundane hunting, but experienced Rangers and Masters do have some knowledge of monster hunting as well.

Specifically, the small collection of texts kept in the Hunters' Guild main lodge includes an account of Duke Uidar's hunt of the Beast of Radlebb. From the account one can infer that Uidar had obtained the help of elf hunters, and hoped to use the Sword of Halav, a relic now lost, to hunt the Beast. Apparently, he managed to corner the Beast and wound it, but received a serious wound in the process, and many of his hunters were slain, forcing him to retreat. Shortly after that event, the Duke disappeared, and with him the Sword of Halav.

More general information about boar hunting (including great boars and similar monsters) can be ob-

tained. The hunters will explain to the PCs use of scent hounds for finding a boar, and then of fighting hounds to bring it at bay. The hunting party should be mounted, and spears and bows are the suggested weapons. The party should be large enough to drive the boar towards the intended battlefield.

The Guild can also offer expert help to the PCs, in the form of hunters and a huntmaster.

The DM may want to condition the access this knowledge and resources to the PCs to a service performed by the PCs on behalf of the Guild, or one of the Masters. In this case, it is recommended to run Ville Lähde's "Stuffed Heads and Lethal Weddings" adventure.

Act II: The Assembly

From their investigation, the PCs should have understood the need for weapons, horses, hounds and retainers able to deal with a powerful monster such as the Beast of Radlebb Woods.

The three Scenes of this Act deal with the recruitment of horsemen and footmen, the procurement of horse and hounds, and finally the choice of weapons and equipment.

The success of this part of the adventure will affect the chances the PCs will have in the last Act, by influencing the Hunt score of the hunting party. The Hunt score is based on the skill of the Huntmaster, which can be a PC, if one of them has the Hunting or Profession (Hunter) skill, or a retainer. The base Hunt score is the level of the Huntmaster, modified by his or her total ability bonus (a retainer Huntmaster can be hired at the Hunters' Guild for 100 gp; he is a level 4 Thief with the Hunting skill, and a base Hunt score of 6).

Each of the six abovementioned items provides a modifier to the Hunt score as well.

The Hunt score is used as a skill value to determine the effectiveness of the hunting party as a whole in conducting the hunt (see Act III).

Scene 4: The Hunting Party

The hunting party requires both horsemen to pursue the Beast and footmen to scout the area and locate the prey.

Expert personnel is not that easy to come by. For horsemen, the PCs may gather the support of the Traladaran nobles of the southwestern coast. This requires some negotiations – Difficult skill checks on Etiquette or similar skill, or Charisma ability checks may be necessary, or Moderate checks if the PCs have status and connections in the area. However, while they have some knowledge of the Southern Radlebb Woods, the Traladaran nobles are not professional warriors or hunters.

PCs with connections at court or among the Specularum nobility may be able to enlist the help of Karameikan squires – Thyatian nobles and prospective members of the Order of the Griffon or the Order of the Three Suns. These are professional warriors, and have also experience in boar and deer hunting – legacy of the Kerendan horse games.

Elven PCs may want to ask help from the Callarii Elves of the northern Radlebb Woods. These Elves are good horsemen and have a good knowledge of the area. However, they are not experienced in the techniques used for monster hunting.

Finally, the Firemane Centaurs (or other Centaur tribes of the Moor) can be hired as mercenaries. A contact, either through the Loshad or another Chevall, or through the witch Griselda, is needed. The Centaurs can be hired at the cost of medium cavalry, but they don't trust humans, and require half of the payment in advance. Centaurs are excellent hunters, and have high maneuverability compared to human horsemen.

Footmen are easier to procure. The Hunters' Guild can provide assistance through its members. They are trained hunters – good professionals, but with little or no experience in monster hunting. The cost is double the fee of standard mercenary archers.

More experienced professionals can be hired, at four times the cost of standard archers. Lupin rangers can be contacted in Mchetos, Kerendas or any other major town in Thyatis. Their keen sense of scent, training and experience with monster hunting (and,

Table 2: Horsemen and Footmen bonuses

Unit	Hunt bonus	Morale
Traladaran Nobles	+1	8
Karameikan Squires	+2	9
Callarii Elves	+1	10
Firemane Centaurs	+3	8
Guild Hunters	+1	8
Lupin Mercenaries	+3	8
Bloodbears	+2	9
Nightseeker Goblins	+2	7

even though the PCs may not be aware of it, their racial bonuses against lycanthropes) make them the perfect footmen for the hunt.

Finally, it is possible to hire local goblinoid tribes. The Bloodbears, a Bugbear tribe, have good hunting skills, as well as an excellent knowledge of the area, while the Nighthunter goblins are specialists in tracking and wardog handling.

Each type of retainer provides a bonus to the Hunt score, as shown in Table 2. There are, however, problems in having different groups coexist – especially goblinoids and Traladarans, but also Traladarans and Thyatians. Table 3 shows the compatibility penalties for the various groups.

Scene 5: Hound & Horse

In addition to hunters, horses and hounds are needed for the hunt. Common animals are unsuited for the hunt – such animals impose a -3 penalty to the Hunt score (per type). Table 4 provides the Hunt score bonuses for several types of horses and hounds the PCs may obtain.

Fey animals can be obtained (as a loan) from the Sidhe of the Radlebb Woods (or from King Oberon in the Dreamlands). The price for such help should be rather high, and should consist in some service. The DM should choose an adventure featuring the Wee Folk as the task. Depending on the difficulty of the task, the PCs might receive only one type of animal, or perhaps even a full Wild Hunt (for a total Hunt score of 25, but it cannot be combined with other elements).

Table 3: Hunting party compatibility

	N	S	E	C	H	M	B	G
Traladaran Nobles	-	-1	0	0	0	-1	-2	-3
Karameikan Squires	-1	-	0	-1	0	0	-2	-2
Callarii Elves	0	0	-	0	0	0	-2	-2
Firemane Centaurs	0	-1	0	-	-1	-1	0	0
Guild Hunters	0	0	0	-1	-	-2	-2	-1
Lupin Mercenaries	-1	0	0	-1	-2	-	0	0
Bloodbears	-2	-2	-2	0	-2	0	-	0
Nightseeker Goblins	-3	-2	-2	0	-1	0	0	-

The Witches of Dymrak can direct the PCs towards Hellhounds. Hellhounds can be obtained from two sources: Fire Giants and Fiends. Fire Giants are not especially common in the Known World – the party would have to travel to the Plain of Fire in Sind to find Fire Giants, with few guarantees of convincing them to lend Hellhounds. Fiends, on the other hand, might be easily convinced to help, in return for a few souls – those of the PCs, of course. Alphaks, especially, can be persuaded to help in eliminating a powerful minion of Orcus. The Witches of Dymrak will try to persuade the PCs that without Hellhounds, they would have no chance of successfully hunting the Beast of Radlebb. Of course, they would say so only to increase the chances of the PCs dying at the hands of Fire Giants or other dangers.

Blink Dogs are very rare and cannot be obtained unless the PCs have some earlier contact. Moreover, these intelligent canines would require some sort of payment (which is up to the DM).

Nightseeker Wardogs come automatically with Nightseeker Goblin mercenaries, just as Callarii horses are brought along by the Elven horsemen.

Kerendan medium warhorses are the best choice among horses that can be found on the open market. They cost thrice as much as standard medium warhorses, though, or twice if bought in Kerendas.

Finally, if the PCs are able to befriend Loshad or another Chevall and persuade him of the need to rid the Radlebb Woods of the Beast, they might obtain horses from the Chevall’s own herd (including the Chevall himself).

Many more unusual mounts are possible, but take

Table 4: Hound and Horse bonuses

Unit	Hunt bonus
Nightseeker Wardogs	+1
Coin Sith	+2
Hellhounds	+3
Blink Dog	+3
Callarii horses	+1
Kerendan warhorses	+1
Coltpixies	+2
Chevall herd	+2

into account that flying mounts are unlikely to be of use in the dense forest of the Radlebb, and other mounts such as Unicorns or Feliquines may be too difficult to obtain, or simply would require long journeys. If the PCs decide to obtain such mounts, the DM should insert an appropriate adventure, which could take place on the Savage Coast if Feliquine or Caniquine mounts are desired, or somewhere in the Known World for Unicorns. Caniquines, Feliquines, Dire Wolves, Winter Wolves and similar monstrous mounts provide a +4 bonus. The presence of even a single Unicorn in the hunting party gives a +1 bonus to the Hunt score.

Scene 6: Arms & Equipment

If the PCs have been able to discover the lycantropic nature of the Beast of Radlebb Woods, they will seek appropriate equipment. Table 5 lists the Hunt score bonus and the effect on character scale of each weapon type or chemical allergen.

Table 5: Arms and Equipment bonuses

Item	Hunt bonus	Effects
Magic weapons	bonus+1	Normal damage
Elven wood spears	+2	Normal damage
Silver weapons	+1	1/2 damage
Wood spears	0	-1 to Hit
Normal weapons	-2	No effect
Camphor oil	+2	On piercing weapons, ST vs Poison or 2d4 damage
Holy Symbol of Orcus	+2	

Act III: The Hunt

In the last part of the adventure, the PCs have finally built their hunting party, and can plan and execute the hunt. The hunt itself is divided in three stages. First, the hunting party, acting as a unit, will have to find and chase the Beast of Radlebb, trying to drive off or kill some of its seven spawn. Second, the PCs will have to face the Beast, hopefully tired by the long chase, and capture or kill it. Finally, the PCs will have the opportunity of understanding the nature of the curse, and perhaps end it.

Scene 7: Moving and Chase

If the hunt takes place during the new moon phase, the Hunt check is a Difficult one; during the full moon phase, it is of Legendary difficulty. Otherwise, it is a Heroic check (-4 score penalty).

The hunt lasts three days. During the first day, the hunting party forces the Beast and its spawn to move from their hideout. Two tactics can be employed – a stealthy approach, followed by an ambush, or a straight charge as soon as the Beast is located. Elves or Bugbears can provide a +2 Hunt bonus if Stealth is used, while the Karamaikan Squires, if mounted on Kerendan warhorses or better, provide a +2 bonus if Charge is used.

On the last two days, the hunting party gives chase, trying to wear down the boars. Three tactics can be employed:

Ambushing requires that parties of hunters are hidden in prearranged locations, and the boars driven there by the horsemen; Elves or Bugbears provide a +2 bonus with this tactic.

Harrying requires skirmishing attacks on the boars; Lupins or Goblins provide a +2 bonus with this tactic.

Chasing leaves most of the effort in charge of the horsemen, relying on superior endurance and coordination; the Centaurs provide a +2 bonus with this tactic.

After each day, a Hunt check is rolled to determine the outcome of the hunt. Table 6 provides the outcomes as a function of the success level of the Hunt check.

A *Victory* for the hunting party means the seven spawns are killed, and the Boar is at bay. Move immediately to Scene 6, The Baying.

A *Defeat* for the hunting party means the hunters are routed. Many are killed or severely injured, and the Beast chases the last of them out of the Radlebb Woods. The hunting party dissolves, and the PCs will have to wait for the next hunting season to collect a new party. The DM can raise the difficulty of all involved checks and the costs of the mercenaries to reflect the negative repercussions of the defeat.

Other results include losses for the hunting party (as a percentage of the dogs and hunters), losses for the Beast (as a number of wereboars killed), and bonuses or penalties to the Hunt score for the next check.

If the Hunters are ever reduced to 50% or less, the DM must check their Morale. On a failed check, the hunters desert or retire from the hunt, which fails. Also, if dogs are reduced to 20% or less, the hunt fails. Once more, the PCs will need to raise a second party, but hunters of the same type as those enrolled in the first attempt will suffer a -1 penalty to morale if they had to check Morale and failed.

If the Boars are reduced to 3 or less, they must check their Morale (11). On a failed check, the remaining boars scatter, and the hunting party moves immediately to Scene 6.

If, at the end of the third and last day, none of these conditions is fulfilled, the Boar is still considered at bay, and the hunting party moves to Scene 6.

Scene 8: The Baying

The Beast suffers a penalty equal to the number of days needed to bring it at bay to Hit Rolls, Damage, and HP per Hit Die. Moreover, if the outcome was a Victory, its HP are further halved. If the Beast still has some spawn on its side at the end of the hunt, the penalty is reduced by 1 per 3 remaining spawn (round up).

The PCs must face the Beast personally – it is assumed that the rest of the hunting party is busy closing the escape routes and baying any remaining spawn.

The PCs can draw the map of the clearing where the baying takes place, as they planned the hunt to bring the Beast to a specific place. The PCs can use elements such as a river, a ford, trees, and hillocks to draw any environment. If they mentioned in advance specific plans for such items, they can also add traps or other artificial items.

Scene 9: The Man Within

The PCs have captured or gravely wounded the Beast of Radlebb. In this weakened state, the hold of the curse is lessened. If the PCs have chosen to hunt during the new moon phase, it is weak enough to allow the Beast to speak, revealing its curse, and asking the PCs to end it by allowing it to drink from the Skull Goblet – which needs to be recovered from the hidden Temple of the Dark Triad.

Otherwise, the Beast can be killed by drowning, or by massive damage (i.e., burning it on a pyre or burying it under an avalanche).

If the curse is lifted, the Beast will return to human form. It will not live long, as its unnaturally extended lifespan is not anymore sustained by the curse, but it will live enough to fill the PCs in on any

missing details of its history, and perhaps reveal a bit of lost knowledge to lead them on new adventures – he might reveal them the map to some treasure from the Vampire Wars era, or the location of a lost city.

Act IV: Temple of the Dark Triad

This Act has a more traditional dungeon crawl structure, since it follows the PCs as they infiltrate the Temple of the Dark Triad to recover the goblet and Bogdan's sword.

General Features

The temple itself is an underground complex, as shown by the map ³ in Figure 1. The map scale is at 5' squares.

The complex is partially hidden under a barrow, which allows the main worship area to have much higher ceilings (10') than the rest of the temple, which is rather claustrophobic (only about 8' tall). The main corridors have low vaulted roofs, so tall humans can only move comfortably by keeping to the middle of the corridor.

The main corridors are patrolled by a single unit of 4 skeletons, moving from the crossing to the doors of the Hall of Orcus (area 13), then to the kitchen (area 5), to the storage room (area 4) and finally to the entrance. The skeletons repeat the routine continuously, and attack any living that does not display a holy symbol of Orcus. They are programmed to move close to the walls, so as to leave free passage for the priests. This, and their silence, give the PCs a -1 penalty to surprise. The skeletons take 2 turns to visit each branch of the corridor, so the entire routine takes 8 turns.

Skeletons (4) AC 6 (Scale mail), HD 1, HP 4 each, #At 1, D 1d6 (mace), MV 60', Save F1, ML 12, AI N.

³Map by Rob Lazzaretti from <http://www.wizards.com>; original file name *Dungeon4_76hs_150.jpg*

Roll	Outcome	Day 1	Day 2 and 3
1	Lucky strike!	Victory	Victory
Hunt-4 or less	Complete Success	-2 Boars +2 bonus	-3 Boars +2 bonus
Hunt or less	Marginal Success	-1 Boar -5% Dogs -5% Hunters	-2 Boars -10% Dog -10% Hunter
Hunt+4 or less	Marginal Failure	-10% Dogs -10% Hunters -1 penalty	-20% Dogs -20% Hunters -1 penalty -1 Boar
Hunt+5 or more	Complete Failure	-20% Dogs -20% Hunters -2 penalty	-40% Dogs -30% Hunters -2 penalty
20	Disaster!	Defeat	Defeat

Each round of combat gives a cumulative 15% chance of detection from the nearest areas. Alerted NPCs will assume the Temple to be under attack. They will try to help the skeletons and to alert the High Priest – if a group of NPCs is alerted, one of them will try to reach the High Priest, while the others will engage the PCs in combat.

The other corridors are not patrolled, but there is a 1 in 10 chance every turn that 1d3-1 priests of Orcus will pass on any given corridor. There are a total of 8 priests in the temple (plus the temple officers and the High Priest). The priests, if not surprised, will try to raise the alarm, then to activate the skeletons in area 4.

Priest of Orcus AC 7 (Leather armor, 5 vs demihumans), HD 2, HP 7, #At 1, D 1d6 (mace) or by spell, MV 60', Save C2, ML 8, AI C.

Each priest has a single memorized spell, either Inflict Light Wounds, Fear, or Darkness. If more than one priest is present in a given random encounter, they will have different spells.

Key to the Temple of Orcus

The entrance to the temple is on the side of a mound. The stone door is locked, but the lock is not especially

complex (+20% Open Locks roll).

Area 1: Entrance The stairs lead down from the temple entrance into a bare room. A Heroic Wisdom check allows the PCs to see a number of holes in the wall on both sides of the stair. This gives a 20% bonus to the Find Trap roll to detect pressure plates on the stairs which trigger the trap (a dwarf gets a +1 bonus on his detect roll). The trap can be deactivated by pushing a hidden pressure plate in the wall near the entrance, and reactivated with a similar plate in the corridor. Both plates can be detected as secret doors or traps, or with a Heroic Wisdom check, as the presence of the Beast of Radlebb has rendered such defenses less useful than in the past, and maintenance has grown careless.

If the trap is not detected, any PC descending the stair will trigger 1d3-1 spears. Each spear requires a ST vs Paralysis, and inflicts 1d6 HP of damage on a failed save. There is a total of 12 spears. After all spears are spent, the stairs are safe.

Area 2: Guard Room The room is furnished with a table and two chairs, positioned to keep the door in sight. The door itself is open. A guard detail of 2 priests and 4 skeletons is stationed in this room at any time.

Priests of Orcus (2) AC 7 (Leather armor, 5 vs demihumans), HD 2, HP 7, #At 1, D 1d6 (mace) or by spell, MV 60', Save C2, ML 9, Al C.

Memorized spells: Darkness; Fear.

Skeletons (4) AC 6 (Scale mail), HD 1, HP 4 each, #At 1, D 1d6 (mace), MV 60', Save F1, ML 12, Al N.

The priests cast their spells as the skeletons engage the PCs in melee. Then, they try to use the cover of darkness to escape. One of them will go directly to the High Priest, while the second will go to area 4 to activate the skeletons.

Area 3: Detention area The door to this room is reinforced and locked. The guards in area 2 have the keys. At the moment, there are no prisoners.

Area 4: Storage area This area contains a large food storage (iron rations for 30 people for 1 month, standard rations for 10 people for 1 week), plus sixteen skeletons neatly arranged in four rows. The skeletons are not programmed except for self defense, and will do nothing if not attacked. However, any attack on a single skeleton will trigger a reaction from all of them.

Skeletons (16) AC 6 (Scale mail), HD 1, HP 4 each, #At 1, D 1d6 (mace), MV 60', Save F1, ML 12, Al N.

At the end of the corridor leading to this area there is a rudimentary toilet (unmarked in the map) used by the priests stationed in area 7. A simple screen provides a minimum of privacy.

Area 5: Kitchen This is a spartan kitchen, suitable for preparing large meals, except that there is no apparent way to dispose of the smoke, and no wood or coal to cook. Actually, for secrecy reasons, no fire is allowed in the temple, except for cult reasons. The meals are cooked over a large slab of stone, enchanted to remain at a high temperature – since this required to contract a wizard, it was decided to cut on the costs by making the enchantment not controllable. Careless characters may easily get a burn by touching

the cooking stone (1d4 HP heat damage). In case the PCs think of taking the stone with them, it weights about 40 lbs.

Roll for random encounters, if there are priests alive.

Area 6: Refectory This is a spartan refectory, with two long and thin tables aligned in front of the door. Roll for random encounters, if there are priests alive.

Area 7: Dormitory This room is outfitted with several bunks. Each priest has a small chest for personal belongings. The chests are locked, and contain the following valuables: 2 holy symbols of Orcus, 20 royals, 100 cronas, 80 kopecs, 1 silver pendant representing a goat (worth 10 royals).

Roll for random encounters, if there are priests alive.

Area 8: Guard Room This room is manned by a single priest. If the PCs have been stealthy, the priest is sitting behind a desk and is busy with paperwork of some kind, and is automatically surprised.

Two skeletons are standing along the wall behind the desk. They attack as soon as the PCs attack them, or the priest commands them to attack.

Priest of Orcus AC 7 (Leather armor, 5 vs demihumans), HD 2, HP 7, #At 1, D 1d6 (mace) or by spell, MV 60', Save C2, ML 8, Al C.

Skeletons (4) AC 6 (Scale mail), HD 1, HP 4 each, #At 1, D 1d6 (mace), MV 60', Save F1, ML 12, Al N.

Area 9: Library The walls of this room have been covered in bookshelves, and two standalone bookshelves stand in a row, almost dividing the room in three separate spaces. Unless an alarm has been sounded, one of the temple officers, Alexey Morescu (C4, see the complete description in the NPCs section), is here. He is looking at some books behind one of the shelves, and cannot be seen. Both the PCs and Morescu are entitled to Difficult Wisdom

checks to detect each other (PC Thieves can also roll on Hear Noise). The room is so cramped that only one PC can attack Morescu from each side.

Area 10: Chambers of the Temple Officers

This large room is divided in two separate areas by a foldable screen. Each area contains a bed, a desk, and a chest.

In the area to the right of the door, the desk is covered in sheets of paper and parchments. A lamp has been left (unalighted) on the floor near the desk, and there is a chair with small cushions. The chest is locked (+10% to open locks) and protected by a poison needle trap (+10% to find and remove, ST vs poison or damage 2d6 HP). It contains 80 royals, 70 cronas, and a *potion of Healing*, plus a large number of personal effects, clothing for a tall, thin man, and writing materials (feathers, parchment rolls, ink) in a wood box.

In the area in front of the door, a lamp and a dagger rest on the desk, which is otherwise empty. The chest has a large, but simple lock (+20% to open locks), but it is protected by an explosive trap (+10% to find and remove, ST vs dragon breath or damage 2d6 HP in a 5' radius). Inside the chest there are rough clothing for a rather large man, vestements for a priest of Demogorgon (Difficult Religion check to detect), 200 royals in coins of various denominations, and a *potion of Strength* (which is destroyed if the trap is triggered). There is also a round shield hung on the wall.

Area 11: Chambers of the High Priest Pyotr Brodjinski, the High Priest of Orcus, resides in this large room. A comfortable bed, masked by a screen, is located in one corner of the room. A desk, armoire, and two large armchairs complete the furniture. The wall on the right side of the entrance is covered in a complex fresco depicting the triumph of Orcus.

The High Priest has taken precautions against assassination attempts and other threats. He has, literally, some skeletons in the closet.

Skeletons (2) AC 9, HD 1, HP 4 each, #At 1, D 1d6 (mace), MV 60', Save F1, ML 12, AI N.

The two skeletons are well hidden behind a second screen propped up near the armoire. There is also a secret door behind the same screen, leading to an emergency exit. The exit is trapped so that the corridor can be collapsed over the pursuers once the fleeing priest has cleared the trapped area. A lever activates the trap.

There are several treasures in the room. Brodjinski's rich clothing is valuable (150 royals), if of questionable taste. He keeps 200 royals in a mix of different coins (both Karameikan and Thyatian) in a small locked box in the left drawer of his desk. The right drawer contains a journal, and several books, including copies of "Dark Cults in Thyatis" and "The Republic of Thyatis" are stacked on the desk.

The room is lighted by two massive, ornate bronze chandeliers (20 royals each). A strongbox with two potions of *cure light wounds* is hidden under the bed.

Area 12: Shrine of Leptar This room is empty, save for an altar and the statue of a brutish, simian humanoid resembling a cross between an hobgoblin and an orang-hutan. Old stains of blood mar the dark marble of the altar.

Leptar is not very popular in Western Karameikos, and his altar is seldom used, as there are no priests of Orcus in the temple.

Area 13: Hall of Orcus The ceiling of this large hall is supported by a number of powerful pillars of black stone. Niches were dug in the side walls, which are covered in mosaics representing various scenes from the life of Orcus and his theology. Each niche is occupied by a single skeleton, dressed in scale mail and wielding a spear. The skeletons and their armor are covered in long, black tabards, and wear blood red cloaks with hoods covering their heads. At the far end of the hall, there is a massive statue of Orcus, who is depicted squatting on a number of Traladaran warriors. An altar of black marble is located in front of the statue. The *Skull Goblet* rests atop the altar, and is almost full of blood. *Boarslayer*, the sword of Bogdan Vargos, is laid at the feet of the statue, beyond the altar.

The Skull Goblet is protected by a trap. Anyone

who grabs the Goblet is struck by a strong electrical charge, inflicting 1d6 HP. The charge is generated from the altar, and conveyed through metallic wires set in the center of the altar itself. It is possible to retrieve the Goblet by pushing it off the center of the altar with a wooden pole. The trap can also be deactivated with a Remove Traps roll at -10%.

Skeletons (13) AC 6, HD 1, HP 5 each, #At 1, D 1d6 (spear), MV 60', Save F1, ML 12, AI N.

Roll for random encounters, if there are priests alive. Any disturbance in the room (fighting or shouting) will attract the attention of the priest in area 13.

Area 14: Fane of Demogorgon This circular hall is dominated by the massive statue of Demogorgon. The walls are covered in darkly vivid frescoes representing scenes of carnage and violence. There is no altar, but there are blood stains on the floor around Demogorgon's statue.

A lone Priest of Demogorgon, Uklar Elflsayer, stands in the room. He has just performed a human sacrifice to Demogorgon, and the body of an unfortunate traveller lays at his feet.

Uklar will move to investigate any disturbance in area 13.

Dramatis Personae

The Beast of Radlebb Woods

Cursed Human Fighter 9/Wereboar 8
Str 18 Int 11 Wis 7 Dex 10 Con 14 Cha 9
AC 4, HP: 65
Move 150' (50')
Morale 9 (12 when berserk)
Saving Throws: Fighter 8
Attacks: 1 tusk, THAC0 12
Damage: 2d6

Special Attacks: Stamp of Doom 3/day (32' long and 16' wide cone, -2 to hit and 2/6 chance of falling down); Charge: double damage.

Special Defenses: Immune to normal weapons.

Weapon material vulnerability: wood spears (full damage), silver weapons (half damage).
Chemical vulnerability: camphor oil.

Special Abilities: Summon great boars and wereboars (1d10); Fast healing: 1d4+2 HP per day; Berserk: +2 to hit, fights to the death (on a failed Wisdom check).

General Skills (Wereboar): Fighting Instinct, Know Terrain, Intimidation, Endurance.

The Beast of Radlebb Woods is a great wereboar, his mind controlled by the magical forces that keep him confined to its animal form. Before being cursed, he was Bogdan Vargos, a member of one of the major noble families of Halag, and a war leader in the Vampire Wars era.

Other NPCs

Pyotr Brodjinski, High Priest of Orcus

Human Cleric 6
Str 11, Int 13, Wis 15, Dex 10, Con 12, Cha 13
AC 5 (chain mail; 4 vs one opponent, 3 vs demihumans), HD 6, HP 22, #At 1, D 2d4 (mace, Skilled) or by spell, Save C6, ML 11, AI C.

Memorized spells:

1. Inflict Light Wounds, Fear
2. Silence 15' radius, Hold Person
3. Cause Disease

Weapon Masteries: Mace (skilled), War hammer (Basic)

General Skills: Languages (Traladaran, Thyatian) 13, Reading/Writing (Thyatian script) 13, Religion (Dark Triad) 15, Knowledge of the Radlebb Woods 13, Monster Lore (Undead) 13, Oratory 13.



Figure 1: Map of the Temple of the Dark Triad
16

Equipment: Mace, chain mail, holy symbol of Orcus, signet ring, 14 royals, 32 cronas, 14 kopecs, *potion of Invisibility*.

Pyotr Brodjinski is a Traladaran cultist of Orcus. He is a short, thin man in his fifties, with close cropped, chestnut hair and beard. The High Priest's features and physique are rather ordinary, which he used to good effect while working under cover, and now offsets with opulent vestments. On the contrary, he is an experienced orator, and has a natural talent for persuasion.

Brodjinski originally hails from the Duchy of Haglag, which was transformed into the Black Eagle Barony by Ludwig Von Hendricks. Like many other refugees, Brodjinski's family settled in Specularum, where he joined the early anti-Thyatian resistance movements at a very young age. After the defeat of the last rebels, Brodjinski turned to the Cult of the Dark Triad, becoming a priest of Orcus. He worked his way up in the hierarchy by furthering Orcus' agenda in Specularum. After collecting a large power base – mainly derived from contacts among the Traladaran guild members and mercantile class in Specularum, he took over the operation of the temple in Radlebb Woods in preparation for the Dymrak Dread war. He has been fretting for years for some action, so during his tenure the Beast has become more active – quite likely leading to the hunt and Pyotr's own downfall.

If he survives the assault on the temple of the Dark Triad, Pyotr will need to make up for his failure quickly, to avoid Orcus' wrath. He might therefore resurface soon, with even bolder plans.

Alexey Morescu, Priest of Orcus

Human Cleric 4

Str 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Dex 13, Con 9, Cha 11

AC 6 (5 vs one opponent, 4 vs demihumans), HD 4, HP 13, #At 1, D 2d4 (mace, Skilled) or by spell, Save C4, ML 9, Al C.

Memorized spells:

1. Protection from Evil, Fear

2. Hold Person

Weapon Masteries: Mace (skilled), War hammer (basic).

General Skills: Languages (Traladaran, Thyatian) 14, Reading/Writing (Thyatian script) 14, Religion (Dark Triad) 14, Monster Lore (Lycanthropes) 14, Monster Lore (Undead) 14.

Equipment: Mace, leather armor, holy symbol of Orcus, 10 royals, 20 cronas, 6 kopecs, *scroll of Cure Light Wounds*.

Morescu is a tall, pale, scholarly kind of man. He joined the Dark Triad cult out of interest for undeath – and choose the priesthood of Orcus for the same reason. His studies have consumed much of his health, but have not affected his quick reflexes.

He is mostly interested in self-preservation, and will surrender if no escape is possible and his spells are exhausted.

Uklar Elflayer, Priest of Demogorgon

Human (Half-Orc) Cleric 4

Str 13, Int 11, Wis 13, Dex 9, Con 12, Cha 9

AC 5, HD 4, HP 14, #At 1 at +1, D 1d6+3 (war hammer, Skilled) or by spell, Save C4, ML 10, Al C.

Memorized spells:

1. Fear, Darkness
2. Bless

Weapon Masteries: War hammer (skilled), Whip (basic).

General Skills: Languages (Traladaran, Thyatian, Cruth Orcish) 11, Reading/Writing (Thyatian script) 11, Religion (Dark Triad) 11, Intimidate 13, Survival (Forest) 11.

Equipment: War hammer, whip, dagger, chain mail, holy symbol of Demogorgon, 6 royals, 23 cronas, 11 kopecs, *scroll of Blight*.

Uklar is of half-human, half-orc stock, but his looks favor his orcish ancestry. He comes from an orcish tribe in the western Cruth that worships the Dark Triad, and is a priest of Demogorgon rather than a shaman.

He is no friend of the other priests, who all worship Orcus, but is tolerated for his extraordinary ability to control the undead – his commands can override even those of the High Priest (he is the equivalent of a C7 for the purposes of Controlling Undead). While thoroughly evil, he can be reasoned with, if the party parleys from a position of greater strength.

New Magic Items

Two new magic items are introduced in the adventure. These items are designed more to provide PCs with hooks for future adventures than to give them higher powered magic – in high magic campaigns, the DM will need to increase the power of the items to make them interesting for the characters.

Skull Goblet of Orcus

This goblet appears as a skull set upside down in a mount of gold, with fire opals set in the eyes. The base of the goblet is decorated with what appear to be, at a first sight, boar hunting scenes. At a more careful observation, the posture of the various characters depicted shows that the boar is actually a large swine, and that it is the swine who is hunting the men. The goblet radiates a strong aura of entropic (necromantic) magic.

During his mortal life, Orcus vanquished many powerful enemies, by force or treachery. He had this goblet built using the skull of one of these enemies, a Taymoran priest of Nyx. When he became an Immortal and challenged Nyx's patronage of the Undead, he enchanted the goblet to be a symbol of this challenge. The goblet allows the wielder to cast a *Animate Dead* spell once per week. To do so, the goblet

must be filled with blood, and the blood spilled on the corpses or skeletons to animate.

Orcus also protected the Skull Goblet from physical attacks. It has 20 HP and an armor class of 5 (a failed attack means the the Goblet resists all damage, not that it “dodges” the blow). Moreover, any attack on the goblet while in a temple of Orcus or other consecrated area attracts the attention of Orcus himself, who casts a powerful curse of some kind – usually transforming the offender into a lycanthrope. If attacked outside a temple, the goblet magic is sufficient to cast a standard *Curse* of weakness.

Adventure Hooks The goblet is an evil item, and the leaders of the Churches will certainly want to see it destroyed. Some PCs may also want to destroy the item, but not at the risk of being transformed in a mad lycanthrope – they do not know that such major curse would only strike them if they tried to destroy the goblet within the Temple of the Dark Triad! Discovering a way to safely dispose of the object may be an adventure in itself.

On the other hand, if Pyotr Brodjnski survives, he will try to recover the item. He may commission the Kingdom of Thieves or the Veiled Society to recover it, but failing that he may send monstrous followers of Orcus to attack the PCs and steal the item.

Boarslayer

The sword wielded by Bogdan Vargos was created by a Traladaran priest, Vassily of Selenica, in the days of the lycanthropic plague. It was passed down into the Vargos family for generations, until it was lost with Bogdan himself. The sword itself is of dwarven making (a Weaponsmith check of Moderate difficulty will tell as much), and is fit with an ivory hilt designed to look as a boar, with the blade protruding from the boar's open mouth, and oversized tusks forming the guard. The blade itself is made of a shiny, silvery alloy, and the lower third is covered in finely etched dwarven runes. The runes read, on one side, “Duric Gorinwarf, rockborn of Dengar, forged me for Basilios of Saronikos”, and, on the other “May Halav guide he who wields me”.

Boarslayer is a long sword +1, +2 vs Lycanthropes, and allows the user to cast Divine Aid⁴ once per week.

Adventure Hooks Boarslayer has a history, and is closely linked to the Vargos family. The Vargos have lost almost all power and influence after the creation of the Black Eagle Barony, and the sword would help them a lot in recovering prestige, if not power. However, the Vargos do not have the money needed to make a reasonable offer for the sword.

If the PCs keep the sword, this will lead many Vargos to oppose them – while the Vargos family has no power of itself, it is regarded as one of the main victims of Thyatian oppression, and few Traladarans will look favorably on characters that offend them. On the other hand, if the PCs donate the sword to its rightful owner, the head of the Vargos family, the family regains some prestige, and supports the characters – thus gaining them some friends in western Karameikos. This, however, can attract the attention of the Black Eagle Baron. Finally, giving the sword to the wrong Vargos can even lead to an intra-family feud, which will certainly please the Black Eagle Baron, but will not generate any support from the Traladarans.

⁴See Tomo della Magia di Mystara, volume II, <http://ddmystara.altervista.org/TomoVol2.pdf>