

The Children of Synzhen

Foreword

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This role-playing module, based on the occult phenomenon of Spontaneous Human Combustion, was originally suggested and discussed in an AD&D® resource development mailing list. (See the credits below.) The scenario was further developed and the result is what appears in this document. I attempted to keep as many of the original ideas as possible, while adapting the module to the Broken Kingdoms setting published by Hero Games Inc. All stats for the significant characters, creatures, spells, and magic items are listed in the appendices for the 2nd Edition AD&D®, 3rd Edition GURPS® and 4th Edition HERO® game systems.

This scenario begins as an investigative adventure but can soon turn into bloody mayhem, depending on the actions of the heroes. The party will need 3-5 relatively inexperienced adventurers who can speak the local language. Several of these heroes will need to have training in the fighting skills, as the situation will undoubtedly turn deadly.

Bob Hall, shaezyra@yahoo.com, 1/18/2000

Credits

Thanks to the following good people for their essential help with this scenario:

*Curtis Luk
Glomertam Ganagliforonoriel
Sebastian Van Mathius*

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Background

Unholy Experiments

Synzhen, the Lord of Illusion, is one of the seven immortal Doomed wizards who serve the dread Titan. His fortress is located in a northern spur of the Rydion mountain range, midway between the kingdom of Allemaine and the evil land of Doomhault. In this dark hold the wizard has spent centuries performing many unholy experiments. His unrelenting goal is to seek a means to break the impasse created by the Last Bastion of the Allemaini, a mighty wall constructed across the 100 mile gap to the south of the same mountain range where he dwells.

Among his earlier experiments was the creation of a mutant race of Inach (Goblins) who could adopt any illusionary form and thereby infiltrate the enemy lands. To successfully penetrate the Broken Kingdoms, he first had to breed his changelings for the traits of patience, adaptability, guile, and human stature. This proved a difficult task, however, as the Inach were the very antithesis of his requirements. So Synzhen carefully chose the craftiest, least vicious, and most independent members from the many Inach clans. These he selectively bred in his warrens, ruthlessly culling any unsuitable offspring.

Many of his earlier magical attempts at producing these “Children of Synzhen” proved unsuccessful. For one thing, dogs reacted violently against their inhuman smell, making them useless against an enemy who would be quick to exploit this weakness. For another, the mimicking abilities the wizard sought to gift his creations remained absent. So these failures were abandoned and cast out into the wilds.

Synzhen eventually made three breeds of Inach changelings, each using a different means of changing their form, before he finally produced what he considered his masterpiece – the Doppelganger. These doppelgangers both fear and worship Synzhen as a god, a behavior that makes their true loyalty decidedly suspect to the Titan and his other Doomed. In addition, they proved less than reliable as spies and assassins.

Only a handful of loyal doppelgangers now remain to serve Synzhen, the others having successfully merged into the more comfortable societies of the Broken Kingdoms. Synzhen considers these turncoat changelings to be the worse form of traitor and he takes special glee in having them captured and tortured to death. Thus they remain carefully concealed among the human realms, even as they still worship their creator.

Growing weary of his exhaustive and less than effective changeling experiments, Synzhen chose to pursue a suggestion of his favorite and most trusted artificer, Darken Rast. The Rydion mountain range contains a host of deadly Trolls, but these fell beasts are turned to stone when exposed to direct sunlight. This flaw severely limited the operating range of these creatures against the Allemaini. Synzhen sought a means of transporting a horde of these Trolls deep into the heart of the Broken Kingdoms, there to unleash the beasts against unprotected towns.

For this purpose Synzhen and Rast crafted a magical vessel to carry the Trolls, which he named the Bottle of Rast in his honor. The vessel would serve as a portal to a dimensional space where an entire army could be stationed. To keep this army alive while the vessel is being carried to its destination, it would greatly slow the metabolism of those inside. This time slowing effect would both reduce the need for food for his army and deal with their impatience for action. He also created a magical “shower” within the dimensional space where his Doppelganger auxiliaries could be temporarily shielded against ESP detection, further enhancing their effectiveness. As a safeguard against a rival stealing the vessel, he created a control ring to act as a key.

Creating this magical vessel required much time, energy, and research on the part of Synzhen, and its like is unlikely to be created again. Indeed, the very nature of this vessel was contrary to his intrinsic magical powers so he experienced great difficulty in its construction. As a result the bottle is incapable of generating the magical energy it needs to operate and so the power must be supplied by an external source, such as a powerful wizard. It has other unfortunate flaws and tends to act in an unexpected and erratic manner when supplied with too much magical energy.

At the end of his work, Synzhen had created a magical artifact of considerable power and potential. His artificer Rast, however, seeing the potential usefulness of this item in conquering the Broken Kingdoms, plotted to steal it. With the bottle he believed his status would be enormously enhanced by the Titan, and he could even become a general of the Darkseeker’s conquering hordes. His share of the booty would be enormous.

By virtue of the trust that Synzhen had placed in him, Rast succeeded in stealing both the bottle and the controlling ring, and almost made a clean escape. Synzhen, however, sent his dire forces in pursuit of Rast. The traitor was forced to flee westward across the bleak deserts of the northern marches.

Somewhere during this pursuit the bottle and the ring were lost. No remains of Rast were ever found, despite the relentless searches of Synzhen and his unholy creations. Indeed, the wretch had drowned in a frigid river and his corpse had been washed out to sea. The wrath of Synzhen was boundless and he sacked and destroyed many remote settlements in search of the villain. But it was all for naught.

Forsaken Tribe

Abandoned by their master and lacking any goal other than to survive, the Children of Synzhen came to call themselves the Forsaken. They wandered the wilds between Northron and North Umbria for many years, eking out a meager existence in the harsh, icy northern lands.

The Shamen of the northern tribes believed these wandering Forsaken to be spirits, for they would appear during their vision quests and take the forms of animals or relatives and try to speak to them. The Shamen would commune to speak with these "spirits", bringing them gifts and a measure of acceptance and security.

The Forsaken tribe was without purpose, without goals and, the *Powers That Be* eventually realized, without a God. They must be rescued from their oblivion of faithlessness. So it happened that one of their number had a vision of a God whose face was ever changing. One moment he seemed to be a fair youth, the next a withered crone. Yet through all of these alterations to his form, the god's expression of irony remained untouched. The god spoke, giving a revelation of the purity of chaos, and the holiness of deception. Thus the Faith of Tiahr was born.

Aukuita, a particularly resourceful and charismatic doppelganger, had escaped Synzhen's dark shadow many years ago. After living among the people of the Broken Kingdoms, she began to discover the true meaning of faith. She realized that the worship of the Doomed wizard had been the worse form of blasphemy. With her newfound calling Aukuita now realized she must find those who would help lead her people out of their dark bondage.

Once their powers were revealed, the Changelings were feared in the Broken Kingdoms, as elsewhere. So the people there would be of little help to Aukuita. She also couldn't turn to the rulers of Doomhault, so she must seek her allies elsewhere. Raised among Synzhen's warrens, Aukuita had heard tales of the changelings who had somehow failed Synzhen and been cast out. She decided to find and help these lost souls, so that they in turn might aid her in her quest. Seemingly a personal choice, Aukuita later came to realize that she had received a calling from Tiahr.

After many months of searching, Aukuita finally found her fellow changelings in the barren northern lands. At first she was little trusted by the primitive Forsaken. Yet in time her fellowship and charismatic nature won them over. She lived with the Forsaken for many years, instructing them in the ways of civilization and giving them many gifts of knowledge. In turn she was brought to the Faith of Tiahr, and she came to worship this god with the fervor of the converted.

The Forsaken tribe consists of metamorphs, shapeshifters, and shadow shapers, each able to take the form of humans by different means. In addition, the three types of changelings also have their own useful talents. However, none are as successful as the doppelgangers at mimicking humans. Thus they would not blend readily into human society, despite Aukuita's teachings.

Aukuita had never forgotten her mission to free her people from bondage to Synzhen. When she finally became the tribal priestess, she decided it was time for the tribe to fulfill their destiny. Aukuita is a highly effective, personable leader who overcame the differences within the tribe and motivated them to work for a common cause. Within a few months she had completely won them over to the task of winning free the remaining Children in Synzhen's warrens.

Her poor tribe was hopelessly inadequate to the task of confronting Synzhen. What they could do, however, was mimic other humans. Used judiciously, this ability could be exploited to influence the policies of the enemies of Doomhault. With such allies, Aukuita and her tribe might well bring down Synzhen and free her kinsmen.

When Aukuita learned that the Bottle of Rath had fallen into the hands of a northern coastal tribe, she acted immediately to seize the device. One of the properties of the Bottle of Rath is that it can create a surface layer of illusionary thought so that a changeling can not be detected via ESP. This would allow the Children of Synzhen to operate within human society with less chance of detection. This is a very desirable situation from their point of view. It would also allow the tribe to infiltrate the Broken Kingdoms and begin to influence the policies of their rulers.

The Children quickly rounded up the northern tribe who discovered the bottle. Aukuita was able to recover the Bottle of Rath's controlling ring from the old shaman. However, for some reason the religious leader adamantly refused to hand over the bottle. This forced Aukuita's hand and she had to take drastic measures. The summary execution of several members of the coastal tribe sent the old man into fatal shock, and he took

the secret of its hidden location with him. Despite the best efforts of the changelings, they were unable to locate the valuable device.

Several months later three Northron strangers showed up on the coast...

Town of Alskava

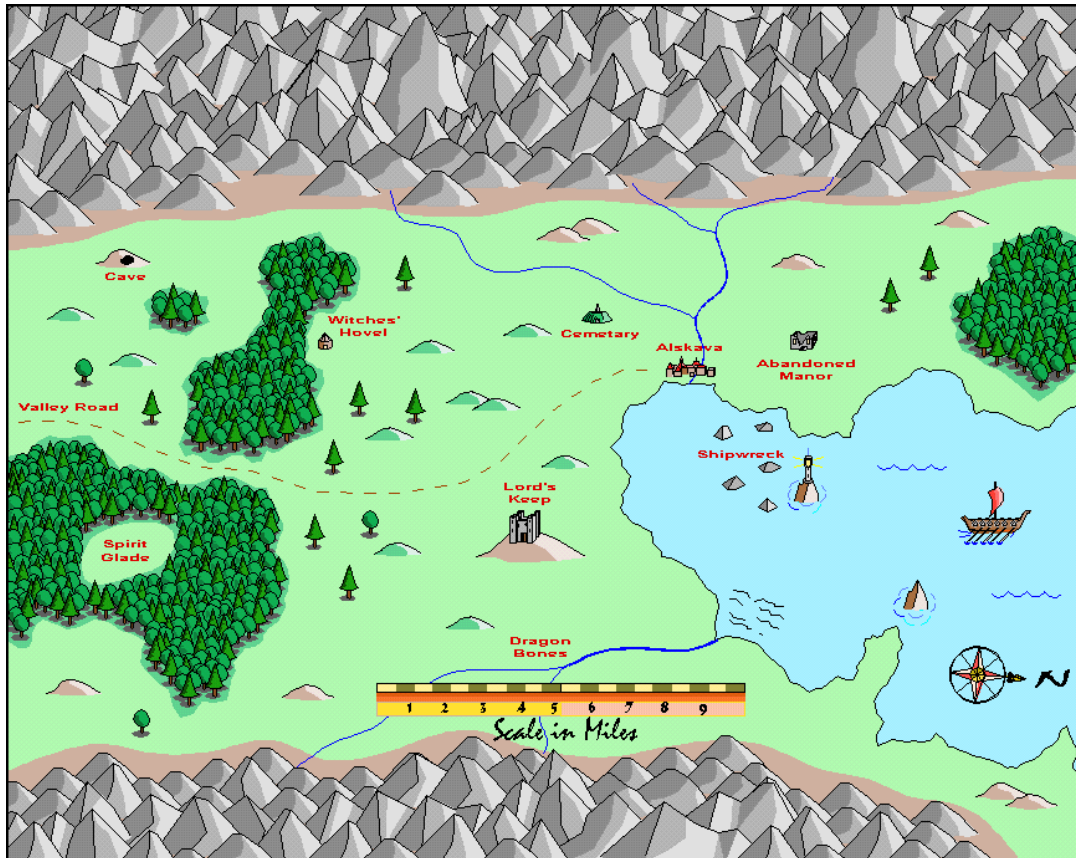


Figure 1. GM's map of the town of Alskava and vicinity.

Description

Alskava is a small coastal town of about 1,200 people located at the eastern extreme of the frigid arctic land of Northron. The settlement is huddled around a rocky harbor at the base of a long glacial valley. The setting is magnificent, with a range of rugged mountains ascending to snow-capped peaks behind Alskava. Parts of the valley are forested with dense stands of hardy firs, but most of the ground is covered with grassy meadows where herds of wild Caribou graze. The only means to leave the town are by sea, or by a dirt road that winds up the valley to the south.

Most of the town is built from pine planks that are held together by iron nails, and covered with steep roofs of slate. Nearly every building has one or more stone fire pits to provide warmth during the cold, dark winter. The windows are heavily shuttered to help keep out the cold draft coming in from the sea. The streets are little more than narrow, twisting dirt roads, which turn into a muddy morass during the spring rains. Fortunately the ground is usually frozen solid during the winter months or bone dry in the summer, so this doesn't pose much of a problem. Stone footpaths have been built along the busiest streets, as have several corduroy roads down near the dock.

The harbor is shallow and rocky, and an unskilled navigator will run the risk of wrecking his ship on the rocks or getting beached. There is a hook-shaped stone pier, which forms a bay to shelter the many sturdy fishing boats. Along the shoreline are the wood structures that serve as shipyards for the fishing and long boats. There are no long boats currently anchored in the harbor, and the towns raiding ships have been away for almost a year.

Several ice-fed streams run down the mountains and combine to form a brook that runs through the center of town. This brook is small enough to wade across, but the water is bitterly cold. Instead the town folk use the old stone bridge built many centuries ago. This brook supplies much of the fresh water for the town, except in the winter when it dries up from the cold. During the long, dark winter any water is instead obtained from melted ice and snow.

Few travelers make it this far to the northeast, so there are no inns available in town. However the two alehouses have a common room where visitors can stay for a small fee. Most of the town folk earn their keep on the open sea, but there are a few artisans in residence. Some decent armaments, supplies, and equipment can be obtained for a reasonable price.

The primary economy of Alskava is based upon spear and hook fishing, herding sheep, weaving wool, and raiding the Broken Kingdoms to the south. There is the typical mix of merchants and tradesmen you might find in a town. Commerce is based on coins taken during the raids to the south, so the currency of Allemaine, Calabria, and other lands are often seen passing through the hands of the local merchants.

The weather in the valley is normally fairly damp, with rain or drizzle during much of the year and some severe snowstorms in the long, dark winter. Thick fog often creeps in during the spring and fall months, making ship navigation difficult. The summer lasts for only a couple of months, but the sunlit days are unusually long.

Due to its remote location, the town has fortuitously received little attention from Ymim, another of the Titan's Doomed wizards. Nevertheless one of his agents has been to this town and managed to recruit away some of the young warriors. Despite this the town has a long, proud tradition of independence from outside rulers and few of the residents will readily support the Darkseeker's plans.

Town History

Several centuries ago, a group of independent Northrons attempted to escape the influence of the Dark Titan by settling in this remote glacial valley. Because of its location near a rich fishing bank, the village prospered and gradually grew into a small town. Its location at the eastern extreme of Northron also brought in some welcome trade with lands beyond the Ahrivine continent, despite the hazard posed by Alskava's rocky harbor. The town developed a weaving industry using the coarse wool from the shaggy native sheep that dwelled in the meadows.

For many years the northern town was a peaceful place where the people lived hard but healthy lives. Any restless residents found their adventure by manning the Lord's longships in raids of the Broken Kingdoms far to the south. The town was little touched by the events in the rest of Northron or the world.

Almost exactly forty years ago, however, the valley was invaded by a small but fanatical band of wizards and priests from a foreign land. These invaders called themselves the Landover Pyric Brotherhood. Their order believed that the coming of the gods to the world was at hand and anything unclean had to be purged through flame. They were led by a terrible man known as Ichul Grandor, along with his ally and mount the red-hued dragon Ingiatharasus. The dragon was also named the Ash Wyrn by the order.

The Pyric Brotherhood had at their command a company of barbaric mercenaries who captured the town, slaughtered the guard, and suppressed any resistance with brutal force. The barbarians had their way with the women, beat the old folk, and impressed all fighting age men into their army. To terrify the new recruits into obedience, the brotherhood burned one out of every ten men at the stake. This campaign of terror left a deep scar on the town that lingers until this day.

Soon the brotherhood, with their warriors and the frightened town militiamen, moved down the road to continue their campaign of conquest. They left behind a small garrison of barbarians who were occasionally visited by Ichul and the Ash Wyrn to check that order was being maintained.

One of the town folk who was left behind was a drunken old soldier known as Reginald Platenblat. This grizzly man painted himself as something of a knight when he told his greatly exaggerated war stories at the town taverns, but in fact he was a coward. Fortunately, when pressed by the remaining town folk, he mustered enough courage from the bottom of a cask of ale to face the Ash Wyrn with nothing but his trusty war-horse, a lance, and a great sword.

The old man attacked the wyrm outside of town when it was devouring a Caribou. The horse was slain during the charge but Reginald made a miraculous strike through the jaw with his lance and temporarily left the dragon dazed. While the wyrm was flopping around on the ground, Reginald, though badly burned down one side, was able to cleave off its head. The skeletal body of the dragon still lies in the same field to this day.

When word of this victory reached the town folk, they rose up and slaughtered the barbarian garrison. Ichul was captured by the mob and later that night put to the torch. While he stood burning at the stake, however, he swore that he would return one day to wreak vengeance upon the town. The town folk were too ecstatic with their victory to give this curse much credence at the time.

Reginald was a hero to the town folk, and he was much feted in the celebration that followed. The people forgot what a souse and a coward he actually was, and songs were sung all night of his heroic deeds. Unfortunately for Reginald, his burn wound was deep and he died later that night, blissfully unaware of how badly damaged he was.

Ever since that day, the anniversary of the victory is celebrated with Ichul Grandor day, when the body of the cultist is burned in effigy on a big bonfire.

Selected Residents

Sadie Elsik

One of the few truly destitute residents of Alskava, this thin, scruffy woman is known to the town folk simply as "Crazy Sadie". Suffering from dementia praecox, she lives on the street as a beggar and constantly mutters to herself while crouched against the wall. All her worldly possessions, consisting of some smelly clothing, are stored in an old sack she keeps constantly by her side. She tries to kick anybody who looks like they're about to take her "stuff".

Nobody knows where Sadie holes up each night, but somehow she manages to find shelter. She also has survived many harsh winters in the town, despite refusing all efforts to help her.

Crazy Sadie is "cursed" with *True Sight*, an ability to see through illusions as if they don't exist. Thus she is able to recognize the shape shifters for what they are, but in her dementia she believes them to be demons and fiends who are attempting to take over the world. She remembers, or believes she does in any event, a prophecy that tells of the coming of the end of the world. The demons that walk amongst us are one of the signs.

Of course, this is utterly false. It may have been a tale she bumped into, although her mind has blown it out of proportion and filled in the gaps. Nobody in the town believes a word she says, regardless of the currently unfolding events. The only clue the heroes might pick up is that she cringes whenever certain people pass her by.

Ingvar Gundersson

A short man with ordinary features but a distinctive gait, Ingvar has a sharp mind and quick wits. He is friendly to the curious but dislikes rude or noisy people. Ingvar cares little for money, as long as he has enough keep to maintain his almost spartan lifestyle and pay for cultural artifacts he finds of interest. His wife died childless over a decade ago, and he has met nobody since who sparks his desire. Instead he has dedicated himself to his cultural research. Ingvar has scholarly contacts in several cities to the south and often corresponds with them. (At least prior to the current troubles.)

Jens Olso

This powerful, middle-aged man was once a veteran warrior in Mezina to the south. He eventually grew tired of the bloodshed and moved north to find a new life. After several years as a journeyman Jens is now the town armorer, a trade that unfortunately draws little business here. His work is of good quality, however, and his prices are relatively low. To supplement his income he adventures with his friends Ingvar and Mylda, occasionally finding something of value he can sell to the visiting merchants. He also serves as a leader in the town militia.

Jens has long brown hair, steely eyes, a well-toned physique, and talks with a rasp due to an old throat injury. He has a low boiling point and sometimes gets into alehouse brawls. But he is not a man to hold grudges for long. Several of the older town women have their eyes on Jens, and he has had occasional dalliance. The fact that he is so well known and admired in the town has kept him safe from the changelings, at least for the moment.

Mylda Ondheim

Mylda is an athletic woman with golden curly hair and a heart-shaped face. Somewhat plain in appearance, her smile can nevertheless light up a room. Although she had learned the tailoring trade to a satisfactory level, she found the settled life stifling. Instead she left her home city and spent her youth traveling and adventuring around the world. Mylda is now married to a prominent member of the town council, Yrik Ondheim, which has kept her safe from the changelings. Her husband does not very understand her constant restlessness, however, and the two frequently argue over her adventures with Ingvar and Jens. The couple is still childless, much to the disappointment of Yrik.

Erik Olfson

The current Lord's Deputy, Erik is a sturdy, reliable veteran. He has on many successful raids to the Broken Kingdoms with his lord. The battles have taken their toll, however, and he is now content to stay at Alskava and take command of the garrison. Despite his age, Erik is still a powerful man, although now he carries around a fair amount of bulk. Erik has a thick, dark moustache and long, blond hair tied back in a tail.

He is gruff in manner and has little use for the fine manners of more civilized cultures. He also is not a man to suffer fools gladly. Erik he has the utmost loyalty and respect of his men and they would follow him to their deaths.

Harrod Platenblat

The current mayor of the town is the grandson of the legendary Reginald, but his distant offspring a pathetic excuse for a man. People overlook his weakness, however, because of their reverence for the memory of Reginald's heroism in saving the town. Erik and his men, however, hold Harrod in utmost disdain.

In the attic of Harrod's home is a chest containing a dire book that once belonged to the Pyric Brotherhood. In it is expressed the doctrine of the brotherhood, including the prophecy of the coming of the gods to the earth and the need to purify the unclean through fire. The prophecy contains many other mysterious references, however, and it is not clear how soon it all will come true. The tome also contains several dark rituals that would be dangerous for the uninitiated to view.



Recent Events

Interesting Times

For many years the town of Alskava had been a peaceful place. Its remote location sheltered the people from invasion. Indeed, the wrecking of a merchant vessel on the rocks outside the harbor was about the most exciting thing the town folk had experienced in several decades. The salvage was close to the haul of a good raiding expedition by the lord and his warriors.

About two months ago, however, the town received a visit by a troupe of wandering minstrels. Such a visit to this northern outpost had not happened within recorded memory, and was cause for much excitement. They were welcomed, the more so as refusing anyone hospitality on such a bitterly cold night would have been unthinkable to the small town.

By the following day, however, the band of players had mysteriously disappeared the next morning without giving the performance they had promised. This mystery set the town abuzz with rumors, but their disappearance was never solved. Many worried that they were spies sent to scout out the town for another invasion.

A few weeks later the town's sled and hunting dogs gradually began to show up dead. These animals were much beloved by the residents as they were highly loyal and served a vital role all year round. An investigation by the lord's deputy, however, failed to turn up any reasons for their deaths. This tragedy was soon forgotten during the horrible events that followed.

During the past few weeks, a terrifying black magic has gripped the town of Alskava. Every day or two a local resident suddenly begins to experience hot flashes and their cheeks and skin turns red. The victim then spontaneously bursts into flames, while screaming and writhing on the ground in pain. The intense fire soon consumes the body and leaves behind only ashes and the foul stench of scorched flesh. There seems to be little rhyme or reason to these incinerations, save that none of the prominent town leaders have been so inflicted and the victims are always outdoors.

The residents are understandably fearful, and a number of families have packed up their belongings and tried to leave. Those who leave by the valley road often return with terrifying tales of gray-hued ghosts with burning eyes, wandering through the forests. Several locals have also wanted to burn the old witch who lives near the edge of the forest, but an investigation by the town priest has temporarily cleared her of any wrong doing. Even wilder rumors are spreading through the town and the people are close to panic. Most of the more sensible town people are staying indoors now, coming out only when they have an urgent task.

The lord of Alskava has been away raiding the land of Allemaine to the south, taking with him a good portion of the able-bodied warriors in the town. His deputy is in charge of the town, but with a reduced contingent of men-at-arms. Most of the remaining warriors are busy patrolling the road out of town and attempting dealing with the ghosts. As a result morale is low among the men. With no progress in solving this problem, the deputy advised the town guild elders to hire outside help. This is where the heroes enter the picture.

What Really Happened

Being the only sage in the town, Ingvar is knowledgeable in many subject areas, including history, map making, astrology, herbalism, and shamanism. His particular field of expertise, however, is the culture and myths of the primitive north coast clans. He has made many journeys along the coast to visit the old clans and to trade goods for copies of their tales.

About a year ago Ingvar came into possession of an old scroll consisting of many slender lengths of whalebone strung together with hide to form a mat. A Northron sea captain, who said he had obtained it from an abandoned village in the ice lands to the far north, sold the scroll to him for a pittance. He said there had been no sign of the villagers and it appeared as if they had just left their huts one day and never returned.

Each of the bone pieces is inscribed with many traditional pictograms and it took Ingvar several months to translate the entire scroll. Most of the pictogram strings were tribal stories of little interest, but nevertheless he methodically transcribed them into his journals. The last tale on the scroll caught his interest, however. It told the story of a magical vessel discovered by the tribal shaman.

On the day of foraging the tribe discovered a huge sea beast that had beached itself along the sandy coast. Blessing their good fortune and thanking the great sea spirit for this gift, the tribe began butchering the dying beast on the spot. The old shaman soon discovered the reason why the beast had sacrificed itself. Lying inside its stomach was an intact vessel of a strange and very finely wrought design. The tribe had never seen anything like it and they worried that it was possessed by an evil spirit.

The old shaman sensed the vessel was possessed and decided to take a vision quest in the wilderness to discover why it had sought out the tribe. In the woods a bear spirit visited him and together they traveled into the dreamland of the vessel. There they beheld wondrous sights of shimmering light curtains, rainbow clouds, and waterless rain. For the first time in his life he felt the call of his ancestral spirits. When he emerged from the dream land, the joyous old shaman discovered that his joints were more subtle, and he felt the appetites of his youth for the first time in years.

After the bear spirit had left, the shaman took the vessel to the sacred cave home where his ancestors were buried. He prayed many times but the ancestral spirits never came to visit him. Yet a silent voice told the old shaman that he should leave the vessel in the old burial ground and leave.

The old scroll ended at this point, leaving a mystery to be solved. Ingvar resolved to clear up his unsettled matters and travel to the site of the abandoned village. Ingvar sent his apprentice away to a nearby town for further training while he was away. He then persuaded two experienced traveling friends, Jens Olso and Mylda Ondheim, to accompany him on this journey. He was able to hire the same sea captain to carry them up the coast.

Finally arriving at the village a month later, the three discovered the same scene as had been reported by the captain. Despite their best efforts, the three were unable to discover what had happened to the old tribe, as the trail had grown too cold. The village was deserted and there was no sign of any bodies. Using the old bone scroll, however, Ingvar was able to infer the path to the old burial cave. The friends discovered the vessel, in actuality a mysterious magical bottle of unusual design.

As the captain had sailed off earlier as agreed, the friends headed back across the country with an unsolved mystery. (Although in retrospect it was obvious that the tribe had been forcibly led off by the changeling people. It is unclear to Ingvar though why the changelings did not discover the bottle. Maybe the shaman had managed to mask the knowledge from the doppelganger leader before he died.)

The three soon discovered that a large tribe of humans and their beasts was hunting them. They had to repeatedly fend off attacks and were pursued to the edge of exhaustion. Fortunately they came to a trade town where they were able to take a ship back to their home. As the friends sailed off, the tribe came running up to the docks. Both men and beasts stood eerily silent, watching as the ship sailed away.

Unexpected Guests

Overhead a great bird soared high in the sky, following the ship through the frigid islands. This bird was one of the changelings, and he followed Ingvar's ship all the way to the town of Alskava. Upon reaching his hometown, Ingvar sent a note asking for his apprentice to return. He then began to investigate the powers and purpose of the bottle.

Meanwhile the Children of Synzhen had now learned the exact location of the bottle, and they began their long track through the wilderness. It took the tribe several months for them to make their way across the cold land to the town of Alskava. As they were well adapted to this harsh lifestyle, however, the journey posed little difficulty. Finally they reached the road leading down into the valley and moved in under the cover of darkness.

In order to enter the town without attracting undue suspicion, Aukuita decided to take a handful of the changelings and pose as a troupe of wandering minstrels. Some of the changeling tribe had learned tribal songs from the northern tribes during their wanderings and were able to produce a pleasing melody. This would let the false minstrels stay in town long enough to find a safe base of operation. The remainder of the tribe was to hide in the woods to the south.

Aukuita quickly learned about the long abandoned manor to the north of the town. The tribe gathered their belongings and moved in that stormy night. After clearing away considerable amounts of dirt and rubble, the tribe found an extensive cellar that would safely hide them from the town. The following dusk a handpicked group of the changelings entered the town and tried to break into Ingvar's home in order to steal the bottle.

Ingvar was making some headway with the vessel when the group of minstrels arrived in the town. The hasty attempt by the changelings to seize the bottle on the following day failed thanks to Ingvar's wizardry. Most of the attackers escaped without harm, but two of the weaker members were captured. Ingvar used his ESP spell to discover that they were actually members of a tribe of changelings, which he took for doppelgangers. Fearful of more attacks, he made some hasty research through his books and notes on the nature of doppelgangers, then gathered up his possessions and fled.

Many years ago Ingvar had discovered an enchanted glade in the woods to the south of the town. This glade was able to magically cloak itself from humans and he was only able to find it thanks to a fortuitous use of his detect magic spell. Upon meeting the old spirit who guarded the glade, the sage had agreed to keep its location secret from the town people. Now this hidden field seemed like the best place to hide the vessel from the changelings.

With no place in town safe from the doppelgangers, Ingvar needed to find a hidden shelter in the valley so he could figure out a way to ruin the changelings' plans. His hasty research into the nature of doppelgangers had led him to believe that they were vulnerable to saltwater. Whether this was true he didn't know, but there was a wrecked ship out in the harbor where he might hide safely for a few weeks, albeit uncomfortably.

The ship is not visible from the town, but can be seen from the shoreline a little distance to the north. When the tide is out a person can easily walk out to the shipwreck across the tidal flats. Ingvar gathered up his possessions and some provisions, then moved into the canting structure. As the trail to the ship led in the same direction as the abandoned manor where the changeling's hid, Ingvar didn't realize how much risk he was in.

Secret Invasion

The changelings now had a new problem. The wizard and the bottle were both missing with no sign of either. They set guards to watch the harbor and the valley road for several days, but nothing showed up. Aukuita decided that locating the bottle would require a more concerted approach, so they decided to infiltrate the town and begin gaining information.

There were two flaws with this plan, however. The first was that the town contained many well-trained dogs. These intelligent animals would almost certainly spoil any type of disguise that the changelings adopted. The second problem was that the Children of Synzhen had little familiarity with the Northron culture, although they could speak the language with a slight accent.

To begin the infiltration, Aukuita began looking for a suitable town resident that she could replace. She needed a person with few friends or close relatives who might be able to see through her disguise, but somebody with a position of authority in the town. She soon located the perfect victim in the form of the head of the weaving guild - the elder spinster Thilma Liesk. A group of the changelings stole into town to kidnap this woman, and Aukuita promptly took her place. Nobody in Alskava ever noticed the exchange, and she was soon gaining much valuable information about the town.

Aukuita learned that a witch lived near the woods to the south of town. This witch had a dubious reputation in Alskava, but was respected by many as a herbalist. A number of the town folk often went to her for balms, folk remedies, and charms. After hearing some of the rumors, Aukuita suspected that the witch might be just the person to help the changelings. Indeed, after a brief but candid meeting, Aukuita struck a bargain with the witch. In exchange for her help in dealing with the dogs and other matters, the changelings would supply her with some of the captives from the town.

The witch began brewing a deadly toxin made from certain fungi and selected seaweeds. This odorless and tasteless poison was to be sprinkled on a piece of raw Caribou meat and then fed to each of the dogs. The toxin proved to be highly effective and within a week all of the dogs in the town had been slain.

Now the training of the changelings began. Almost every evening Aukuita returned to the abandoned manor to tell the Children of Synzhen what she had learned of the town. She began to instruct them in the manners and customs of the town, including their songs, history, daily lives, greetings, religious beliefs, slang expressions, and so forth. It required nearly a month before the first changelings were sufficiently prepared for their mission.

One by one the changelings began kidnapping the town people and taking their place. They chose each victim carefully, trying to pick people of little importance and few friends or relatives. The mated pairs among the changelings took the place of childless married couples. (This way the two can live and work together without controversy, and wouldn't need to worry about revealing themselves to a suspicious spouse.)

Of the kidnap victims, the least significant were handed over to the witch as agreed. The changelings preferred not to learn the fate of these individuals. The remainder were held in the lower cellar of the abandoned manor house. These could be interrogated to find out if they knew anything about the magical vessel or to reveal important tidbits of information that would help the changelings maintain their disguise. They would also serve as hostages in case the changelings were discovered.

As the changelings could not automatically recognize each other on sight, they chose an innocuous but distinctive hand gesture so they can identify each other. They are able to recognize each other if they take a little time to concentrate. But if they're just passing each other on the street they can easily mistake one another for a common town person. Once one of them recognizes the other, he or she flashes the gesture.

Thus the plan to infiltrate the town began successfully, though no clue was yet found as to the location of the magical vessel. Then, one by one, the changelings began to be incinerated.

Fighting Back

Normally a peaceful and scholarly man, Ingvar is very disturbed by the events that he has initiated. His ESP spell has gradually allowed him to determine certain aspects of the changeling's plans, and he now knows that they hold several town people hostage in a secret location. He is very concerned about the safety of these kidnap victims, especially if the town people should find out about the invasion of these creatures.

He would be willing to bargain for their lives with the bottle, but believes that their goals are ultimately evil. Instead he has resorted to hit-and-run tactics to gradually wear down their numbers. For this purpose he uses a unique spell which he discovered almost two decades ago – Sanguine Fury. This spell allows him to safely slay a changeling that he finds by means of his ESP spell. (Fortunately the changelings are all descended from Inach, so they are vulnerable to this spell.) He plans each ambush carefully, finding a safe location from which to cast his spell, then making an undetected getaway by casting a spell of invisible.

Ingvar has remained in hiding on board the famous shipwreck, only coming out to get supplies and to hunt for the changelings. The constant killing has sickened him and left him a changed man. His whole appearance has been altered, as he shaved his beard and cut his hair so as not to be recognized by the town folk or changelings. He is more haggard now and his eyes are filled with silent pain.

He has encountered the doppelganger leader only one time, but her powers allowed her to escape before he could slay her. This is fortunate for the changelings, for without their leader their plans to join human society would come to naught. The old spinster Thilma Liesk had never met or visited the sage in the past, so Ingvar has no idea that the doppelganger is imitating her. She has now organized the changelings into teams so that Ingvar has a more difficult time trying to perform his ambushes. Nevertheless his potent spell remains devastatingly effective.

Ingvar has left a vague warning for Jens and Mylda about a threat to the town, and not to talk to anybody about the recent mission, but told them not to do anything out of the ordinary. (The warning was deliberately left vague so that if a doppelganger learned of it from his friends they would not be perceived as a direct threat and need to be eliminated.) When the moment is ripe, he will send them word and the final attack will begin. Ingvar does not know about the occupants of the abandoned manor yet, or he would have attacked the ruins with his two friends. Releasing the hostages would unravel the whole plot of the changelings and they would most likely be forced to flee.

With the decimation of their kin, the morale of the changelings is sinking steadily lower and they are growing more desperate. There is talk of kidnappings elders, revenge killings, and even burning down the town. Some changelings are even considering giving up the quest and returning to their wandering life style. At least then they were not living in constant fear as they do in this town.

Aukuita saw a need for a change in plans, and she hit upon the suggestion of the Lord's Deputy to hire outside help. This would help boost the spirits of the changelings and may even produce results. To keep tabs on their progress, and to prevent them from discovering the changeling incursion, one of the changelings would join the investigators.

She knew that a town sheep shearer, though now lame, had once been regarded as a fine warrior. The best metamorph warrior among the guards at the abandoned manor would take his place, then show up to volunteer for this duty. As his “sister” had been incinerated a week ago, this will provide ample motivation if anybody questions the choice.

At the start of the scenario, there are 57 changelings remaining within the town and a further 24 out in the abandoned manor. Of these, 20 are Shadow Shapers, 33 are Metamorphs, and 27 are Changelings. The number of changelings within town will drop by 3-4 each week as long as Ingvar remains active. Because their shape shifting powers are not particularly effective, most of Shadow Shapers are on guard duty at the abandoned manor or out scouting the valley.

Investigation

Hired Help

The adventure begins for the heroes in the late spring when the glacial valley is beginning to blossom with life. The first merchant ship of the season has successfully negotiated the rocky harbor, delivering the heroes to the small town of Alskava. (Alternately the heroes could have traveled here overland for some reason, or they are native to the town.)

Presumably the heroes go looking for temporary accommodations within town and discover the common room of the alehouses. The bar primarily serves ale, although they have a few bottles of other beverages that were captured during raids to the south. The two rows of tables are long and sturdy with benches on each side. The room is dimly illuminated by small, shuttered windows and heated by fire pits at each end. There is a kitchen, larder, and storage room in the back. The barkeep and his serving girl live nearby in the town.

As they enter the alehouse, conversation ceases and the locals follow them with their eyes. The barkeep whispers something into the ear of a young man at the bar, and then the lad goes running out (nodding slightly as he passes the heroes.) The barkeep asks the heroes what they’ll have to drink and then clears a table for them near a fire pit.

After a half-hour a grizzled, aging warrior named enters and approaches the heroes. He introduces himself as Erik Olfson, the Lord’s Deputy in this town. Despite his advancing years, Erik is still a commanding presence and all conversation stops whenever he enters the room. Before speaking he pauses to assess each of the heroes as if judging their ability. Nodding, he says in a gruff voice, “I have a worthy job for ye if you’re interested.”

If asked about the job, he’ll say that they’re to solve some “foul murders of a most unholy nature”. If pressed further, he’ll voice his own opinion that the town folk are being slain by demonic powers. He’ll give out no other information, other than to admit reward is almost enough to buy a longship. If there are further questions, he will indicate the elders will answer them.

Finally, standing with his massive arms folded, he’ll say, “Well? Are ye interested or no?” If they are interested, he will tell the heroes to come to the Great Hall one hour before dusk. Nodding briefly, he will walk briskly out the door and return to the keep.

The Great Hall is an oval-shaped building located in the center of the town. There is a main entrance of double doors at one end and a smaller entrance in the center. The light coming through the long opening in the center of the roof dimly lights the interior. The rafters peak in the middle of the building, supported by a long beam and two large wooden columns. Between the columns is a large fire pit used for the ceremonial meetings. Three rows of split-log benches wrap all the way around the room.

Waiting near the fire pit for the heroes are several town people, most in their later years and obviously prominent residents. Harrod Platenblat, the town mayor, greets them first. He then presents Yrik Ondheim, a store merchant; Thilma Liesk, the head of the weavers; Erik Olfson, the Lord’s Deputy; Hazel Ranvik, a shipwright; and Tier Lungdorf, a sheep shearer. Harrod then asks for the heroes to introduce themselves.

Once the heroes have done so, Thilma will push herself forward and describe the situation that has been occurring in the town. She will talk primarily about the repeated horrible incinerations and how the deaths have remained unsolved despite investigation by the elders and the Lord’s guard. If the heroes ask questions, they will be able to fill them in on details from the town history and the recent events. (Described earlier in the section titled “Interesting Times” and the chapter on Alskava.) A very sharp hero might notice some reluctance

on the part of Thilma to discuss the death of the dogs. She will act as if she thought the dogs had little relevance to the current situation.

Finally, the discussion of the reward will come up. Yrik, being the canniest trader of the lot, will lead the negotiations. (If mention of Erik's promise of a huge reward is brought up, Yrik will look briefly annoyed and glare at Erik for a moment.) The reward for successfully ending the murders will be paid for from the booty gained from the Lord's raids during the previous year. Many of the spoils have already been distributed, but a number of valuable items remain in storage for safekeeping. (Much of the remaining spoils are items that are of value down in the Broken Kingdoms, but for which the town has little use. These could include bundles of silk; bottle of mead; bundles of parchment; summer finery; equipment for a war-horse; and so forth.) Alternately, if this is unsatisfactory, they can have second pick from the Lord's raid when he returns in the fall.

Assuming the heroes come to some agreement on the terms, Thilma will introduce Tier as a man who has volunteered to aid the party as best he can. Though lame in one leg, Tier is lean and quick with a blade. He may prove of some service if the heroes locate the culprit who is causing the deaths. (Thilma does say "culprit", rather than "culprits" here. This was a slip of the tongue on her part. Tier, of course, is the metamorph guard who volunteered to pose as a town warrior to keep an eye on the activities of the investigators.)

If any of the heroes ask about wizards or magic users in town, then Erik will mention the witch and spit in disgust. Yrik, after a moment of scratching his chin in thought, will also mention Ingvar the Sage. (He knows of Ingvar because of the association with his wife Mylda. But he is reluctant to discuss the Sage for the same reason.)

At this point it is after dusk and the heroes will probably need to go to their lodgings for the night. The elders will wish the heroes well on their task, and Tier will make arrangements to meet them in the morning.

From here on Thilma Liesk will play friends to the PCs as they investigate things. If the PCs become suspicious of changelings being about, she'll actually go along with their suspicions. In that way, she hopes to win the trust of the heroes and can better gather information from them regarding their plans. Both the town folk and the changelings want the killings to stop. The changelings just don't want to be revealed in the process. Thus they plan to eliminate the wizard quickly when he is caught.

Listening for Rumors

Initially the heroes will have few clues to the murders. They are most likely to investigate the witch or the sage first. If they try talking to some of the town folk or listening in the alehouses over the next week or so, they may hear some of the following rumors:

- The incinerations are actually the result of Ichul's revenge. The leader of the Pyric Brotherhood is going to arise in a few days, along with his dragon mount, on the fortieth anniversary of the uprising. Many town folk are very nervous about this and there is serious talk of not holding the bonfire this year.

It is up to the DM, but there may actually be a nugget of fact in this otherwise false rumor, at least with regard to the connection with the Pyric Brotherhood. That is the incinerations are actually being indirectly caused by the actions of a minor god to purify the unclean as part of the long-term fulfillment of the prophecy.

- Several dead Sheep and Caribou have been found in the valley by herders. They appear to have been killed and partially consumed by a large beast. Some of them were found in the vicinity of the woods to the south. It's probably the fault of a demon summoned by the evil witch living near the woods.

These are the animals that the changelings have been killing in order to draw any attention away from their operations and on to the witch. To produce the large bite wounds, the changelings adopt the form of a large wolf. If the heroes investigate any of the bodies, they may find the big wolf tracks left by the changeling slayer.

- A pretty young woman is chatting in a low tone with an older barmaid in the alehouse. The young woman looks sad and she is being comforted. The closest character overhears, "...used to come over every day to see the new baby. Now I don't see him anymore. I went over to his house but he refused to let me in. What's wrong Melitte?" The older woman says, "You know it's funny, but Uncle Thom has been acting the same way. Maybe they're up to no..." The conversation is lost in an uproar in the bar.

The first person is the brother-in-law of Melitte. Changelings have replaced both relatives and the sensitive women are starting to take notice of their sudden differences. If the heroes do not follow up on this, then changelings will soon replace the two women as well.

- A man is sitting at a pub table looking like he's had the daylights beat out of him. He has a black eye, abrasion marks on his chin, and he's holding his ribs and coughing up blood. His two pals are sitting to either side growing more and more enraged. Their voices rise and you overhear part of the conversation. "...alley and there were four of 'em. I fought 'em as best as I could, but they were too strong. They kept sayin', "Where's the bottle? Where's the bottle?" That's when things went dark..." He stops talking as another fit of painfully coughing wracks his body.

The beating was the accidental result of a changeling overhearing the man say that he had "The Bottle" safely stashed away. A group of disguised changelings later followed the man and tried to beat an answer out of him. When the changelings realized he had meant a bottle of hard liquor, they fled the scene.

- Some town folk believe the ghosts who are haunting the woods along the valley road are actually demons who are also causing the deaths within town. The old witch is controlling the demons and she should be burned at the stake just like Ichul Grandor.

There is nothing true about this rumor. However the witch is responsible for the creation of the ghosts.

Ondro the Apprentice

Ondro, the nervous young understudy of Ingvar, was staying in a large village up the coast when he finally received the message to return. Like many of the men in Alskava, Ondro was an experienced seaman and could easily handle a small sailboat. When he finally reached Alskava three weeks later, however, he found that his master was missing and the workshop had been ransacked.

With no friends and little recourse, Ondro stayed in his quarters waiting for his master to return. (See the Wizard's Home below.) It is at this time that the heroes begin the investigation, and if they visit Ingvar's home they will find that Ondro has cleaned up the place. He knows little about why the sage went away, other than it was a mission of some importance.

Ondro does know that Ingvar had some friends who traveled with him on his mission. He did go and talk to Jens and Mylda about the Sage, but they told little of importance nothing per Ingvar's instructions. As he is just starting his instruction the magical arts, he is not familiar with Ingvar's repertoire of spells or where his spell book is hidden.

A couple of days after the investigation is begun, Ondro will receive a mysterious message warning him in the strongest terms to stay with Jens Olso. The message is signed -I-. If he has not yet been contacted by the heroes Ondro will take the letter to Jens and stay at his house. Should the changelings find where he is hidden, they will kidnap Ondro in an attempt to force Ingvar to hand over the bottle.

Turncoat

When the changelings began training in the ways of the Northron, a metamorph known as Treval discovered a fascination with the ways of civilization. He quickly learned the lessons taught by Aukuita and was one of the first to enter the town. Unfortunately, it turned out that the individual who Treval had replaced was in a somewhat rocky relationship with a vivacious and stalwart young woman called Elsie Ivin.

This relationship had been rather rocky, so at first Treval's odd behavior was attributed to displeasure. Being a persistent woman, however, Elsie soon discovered that Treval had become almost a completely different person. What's more, she liked the new Treval much better than the old. He was considerate, forthright, and treated her with kindness.

The two grew closer and soon Treval discovered he was in love with this human woman. They shared everything together, including Treval's ability to change form into any man Elsie desired. With his new love, however, Treval soon became fearful that Aukuita would discover his tryst with the human and insist that she be replaced with a suitable partner. Thus far Treval has kept the presence of other changelings from Elsie a secret, but soon he will have to make a choice between the two groups.

With his successful integration into the lifestyle of the Northrons and his newfound relationship with a human woman, Treval is beginning to reconsider Aukuita's cause. When he hears of the investigation into the

incinerations, Treval begins to think that the mission is a lost cause and he begins betraying Aukuita's plans. When the next kidnapping is planned, he will send an anonymous note to the heroes warning them about the next target.

Treval will continue to disrupt Aukuita's plans in some manner until his betrayal is discovered. Wilderness justice will then be applied, and both Treval and Elsie will "disappear".

Ichul Grandor Day

After several days of often-heated debate, the town elders decide to hold Ichul Grandor day. This consists of a large bonfire on a beach to the west town and the tossing of a stuffed representation of Ichul Grandor onto the flames. The elders decided that the town folk needed something to cheer them up and, besides, there will be a strong presence of the Lord's warriors present to watch for trouble.

The celebrations start off well enough, and three hundred of the town people are courageous enough to attend. The elders present several speeches to the cheers of the crowd and then the great heap of wood is set ablaze. There are roars of approval as Ichul's body is once more cast into the flames.

At the peak of the celebrations, however, Ingvar incinerates a changeling. (If any of the heroes are present, the GM should play up this event to let them get a taste of how a spontaneous combustion occurs.) The first sign is a ring of people all staring intently at the individual in the center. This man appears to be gasping in pain and bending over almost double. Then the victim and several of the women start to scream and the man suddenly bursts into flames. This sets off a general panic and the town people flee back to their homes. Ingvar easily manages to escape in all the confusion.

Raven Estok

Within the town lives a mentally unstable man called Raven Estok. Several years ago he was framed for adultery and his wife left him for her lover. In his deranged mental state he blames the entire town for this, even though it was the work of one man and woman. With the spontaneous incineration of the town folk, he sees an opportunity to act out his revenge. First he renders his victims unconscious by striking them on the back of the head with a short club. He then soaks them in oil, sets them alight, and leaves the bodies to burn down a side alley. In fact his ex-wife and her new spouse were the first victims, which should be a clue as to whom is committing the crime.

Several of these charred bodies appear, but they are not turned to ashes like the victims of the Sanguine Fury spell. Capturing this murderer is a side trek adventure for the heroes, although his incarceration would serve the town well. Even if the heroes bring this evil man to justice, they haven't solved the real problem, and another incineration will happen just after the fellow is killed or imprisoned.

Street Urchin

There's a street urchin who spied one or two of the changelings in their "true form". The urchin picked up on the distinctive identifying sign these changelings use, and now he is seeing changelings everywhere. So far, however, the changelings are unaware of this. But, the urchin has befriended another boy who happens to be the son of a town-guardman. The guard, a real person, believes the boys' tales to be nothing more than the imaginations of youths run wild. But a changeling has replaced the guard's sister. It won't be long before "Aunt Herenda" learns about the urchin.

The heroes have some three or four days to locate the urchin before the changelings do. At that time two of reserve changelings replace the boys. But now, Guard's daughter has become suspicious of her "brother" because of his new behavior. By now the changelings have a growing problem on their hands. Despite their best efforts, people are becoming suspicious.

The Fake Bottle

Ingvar, being a clever fellow and knowing exactly why the changelings are in the town, has devised a scheme to eliminate a large number of them at once. A few weeks back he made a secret contract with one of the town artisans to build an exact duplicate of the bottle, based on his artistic drawings and specifications. To give it a magical aura that can be detected by a wizard, he will use his Nystul's Magical Aura spell. This spell will only last for five days, however, so Ingvar will need to set the plan into action quickly.

Once the dweomered bottle is complete Ingvar will ask a trusted courier to immediately deliver it in secret to the Lord's Deputy, Erik Olfson. A note will accompany it saying that this bottle is the cause of the mysterious

incinerations that have been occurring. (A half truth.) The Deputy will no doubt want the bottle to be examined by a mage or cleric as soon as possible, and will place it under tight guard.

Ingvar's friends, Jens and Mylda, will then be asked to start a rumor that a magical bottle of great power has been acquired by the new Lord and that it is being taken south to the King. The ESP power of the Doppelganger will indeed reveal that such a bottle was recently delivered to the Lord. Hopefully the changelings will take the bait and hastily attack the Lord's unfinished keep and its guards. With any luck they'll take heavy losses despite their powers.

As the PCs are investigating this situation, they may hear the same rumor and go to the Lord's castle to investigate. If they stick around long enough they may become involved in the attack of the changelings. This should be a confusing fight for them, since they soon won't know who to trust and neither will the keep guards.

Assault on the Manor

If the heroes have not yet solved the series of incinerations, at some point events will come to a head. Ingvar makes the discovery that the changelings are using the abandoned manor for their base. Notifying the town leaders of their location may result in the deaths of the hostages, however, so Ingvar plans a secret assault on the ruins. He will contact his friends Jens and Mylda so they can begin planning the attack. He will also recover the spell book from his home as it has a few good combat spells in addition to his normal repertoire.

If either Jens or Mylda have been in touch with the heroes, they may be asked to join in the attack. The location of the assault will not be revealed to them out of fear that they will betray Ingvar to the town leaders. So the heroes will be led through the back streets to shake anybody following them before they are taken to the manor.

An all out attack against the remaining changelings without the help of the heroes has little prospect of success. Even with their help the battle will be tough. However, if they manage to gain surprise they may be able to take on the changelings piecemeal.

What happens next depends on the outcome of this attack. The death of Ingvar will obviously end the incinerations and allow the remaining changelings to keep looking for the bottle. His body will then be presented to the town leaders and the problem solved without having to pay the heroes. As best they will receive a token payment for their efforts.

A successful attack will release the hostages and put the town on its guard against the changelings. What follows will be a mass witch-hunt in which neighbor accuses neighbor, and the town leaders will be hard pressed to maintain order. If Ingvar is alive he will come forward to explain the events. Unless the characters joined the attack on the ruins the council will not be compelled to pay them more than a small sum.

See the Conclusion below for the outcome of these events.



Locations of Interest

Wizard's Home

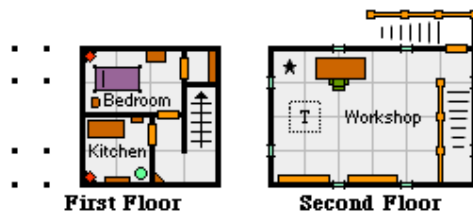


Figure 2. Map of Ingvar's Home

This two-story home is constructed with materials typical of most structures in Alskava. The building is roughly thirty feet wide and twenty feet long. The outer wall of the ground floor is built from mortared stone, while the upper half is all wood. The steeply sloping roof is tiled with slate and the rafters are open in the interior. There are no windows or outer doorways on the first floor. The narrow windows on the second floor have a single hinged shutter to keep out the wind. Stilts, mounted on heavy stone blocks, hold up a portion of the second floor. A wooden staircase on the outside of the house leads up to the entrance.

On the lower floor is a cluttered kitchen with a cupboard, heavy table, water barrel, and shelves of cutlery, dishes, cups, pots, and pans. In the far corner of the kitchen is a brick fireplace with an iron top for heating food. There is a simple bed underneath the table where Ondro sleeps.

Next to the kitchen is Ingvar's small bedroom. It contains a comfortable four-poster bed, a chest of drawers, and a nightstand with an oil lamp. Ingvar's main spell book is hidden in a cache concealed by a tile under the bed. This book includes several spells that could be useful during a battle, and some unusual spells of interest

to a historian. (Details are left to the GM.) He also has a closet with a shelf and several hooks for various articles of clothing. Most of Ingvar's clothing and travel equipment is missing, including his backpack, cloak, marching boots, walking staff, and other gear.

The second floor serves as Ingvar's workshop. The open rafters give this room an airy feel, as do the many windows around the outer wall. There is a drawing table and workbench, two stuffed chairs, an iron-stove heater, many crowded bookshelves, and a magical lantern hanging from a chain. The floor near the far wall contains a trap door leading to the open area below. An old block and tackle hangs from the rafters at this location, the remains of the previous owner's business.

The bookshelves have many old books and scrolls about ancient history, regional geography, and magic. There's also a number of drawing tools and parchment scattered about, and many pouches, jars, bottles, and tins of herbs and powders.

When Ingvar captured two of the changelings he tied them up with rope in preparation for using his ESP spell. These were released later and the pieces of rope lay in a corner. The changelings later ransacked the place, but Ondro dutifully cleaned up the mess when he returned. (There were several books scattered about as a result of Ingvar's hasty research into the nature of changelings. Unfortunately these might have provided a useful clue to the heroes.) The bone scroll and several drawings of the bottle have been carefully organized on the drawing table.

Ingvar didn't have any assistants besides his understudy. There is a threatening letter left on his workbench, but written in a native tribal tongue so that only Ingvar could understand. The changelings constantly watch the place in case Ingvar returns. They know that Ondro has returned but will take no action until Ingvar contacts him. If anybody in the neighborhood is asked, they'll say that the sage has been away for several months but that they heard a disturbance a few weeks back. Nothing unusual has occurred since that time.

Cemetery

Located three miles to the southeast of the town is the old burial mound. When the lord of the town dies, he is placed in his raiding ship out in the harbor and the vessel is burned to the waterline. The residents of the town, however, receive no such honor and are instead buried on this mound. Each decorated body is sewn up in a watertight leather bag, then buried beneath a rock and dirt cairn. As a result the mound grows a little taller each year. There is a considerable amount of precious metals and ornaments in the mound, but anybody caught grave robbing will be sentenced to death by drowning in the harbor.

Valley Road

The old dirt road passes through the dense woods to the south of the town before gradually wind its way up the valley. The ground beside the path is rocky grassland, with the occasional bare patch of stone bearing glacial scratch marks. An encounter with warriors patrolling this road is likely, especially in the vicinity of the woods.

Cave

A grumpy black bear lives in this hill side cave, coming out each day to forage in the meadows and woodlands. The dirt floor of the cave is covered by animal scat, shed hair, and broken animal bones.

Old Dragon Bones

This grassy meadow is located to the south of the town of Alskava near a fork in an ice melt stream. At one time this was a favorite grazing ground for the town's sheep, as the grass grows thick and the water is clear and fresh. During the battle with the Pyric brotherhood, however, the Ash Wyrn was slain in this very meadow and its massive bleached bones still lie in the field. The dragon's blood has spoiled the earth, leaving a large dead patch, and the animals will no longer graze here. This bad earth has spread to the stream, which is now toxic.

As a result the town people no longer bring their sheep here for grazing or water. The superstitious townsfolk are also too scared of the bones to go near them, just in case the dragon rises from the dead.

Shipwreck

Located among the rocks near the harbor, this shipwreck is famous for the legendary amount and quality of salvage recovered by the townspeople. This rich merchant ship from the east sought shelter from a storm in the

bay, but the winds drove it onto the rocks during the night. The ship has been a landmark in the harbor ever since.

The hull of this vessel is cracked wide open in the center, and half the ship is underwater during high tide. The forecastle, however, still stands high and dry above the waves. Ingvar chose this room as his hiding place. He has sealed up the drafty openings and recovered the old copper stove from the wreckage. This stove is used to warm the room and to heat up his evening meals.

The whole structure is canted slightly, making moving about a little awkward. Ingvar has strung up a canvas hammock from the spars so he doesn't have to sleep on the sloping floor. Most of Ingvar's travel equipment is stashed in the lower corner. A small chest with a broken lock was recovered from among the wreckage and now the sage uses it to keep his important spells and material components dry.

The shipwreck is located close to an islet that holds the harbor lighthouse. This wooden tower structure serves the vital purpose of guiding visiting ships past the rocks. The reclusive old man and woman tend the tower from their small home on the islet. They use a small rowboat to pilot larger ships in and out of the harbor, earning a few coins in the process. The couple is also good friends with the Ingvar so they help him stay concealed and keep a lookout for intruders.

Witches' Hovel

If the heroes approach the hovel during the daylight, read the following aloud:

As you draw closer to the edge of the thick woods, you spot a very odd sight. Perched atop a tripod of heavy trunks is a ramshackle structure. The trunks are lashed together in the center of their height, and a frail looking combination of rope ladders and wooden steps leads up to the hovel at the top. A thin wisp of smoke can be seen emerging from the roof and a flickering fire and some movement can be seen in the interior.

Out of sight (but not necessarily out of mind) of the town, is Trathasha's hovel. Trathasha is a witch of unknown origin. She's lived here long enough to witness the atrocities committed by the Pyric Brotherhood. Some of the town folk still come to her for the unique balms, remedies, and charms she provides. As a result the witch is quite conversant on the events in the town. Although many of the townsfolk suspect her of evil doings, she manages to stay just out of suspicion of the local rulers.

As she provides some services for the townsfolk, the town is split on their reaction to her. Some probably side with the church, saying that she's evil; uses witchcraft for her magic brews; and is the cause of the incinerations as well as other unmentionable atrocities. Others feel that she is a misunderstood saint, since her "concoctions" *really* work, and are *much* cheaper than what the temple charges.

Trathasha's hovel is located at the edge of the woods almost directly to the south of town. There is no path leading up to the hovel, but almost anybody in town can direct the heroes here. The rustic structure is perched atop a tripod of heavy trunks, near the treetops. (The witch is arthritic, so she doesn't like to live near the ground where the frequent sea fog makes her bones ache.) A rope and log step ladder spiral up to the front porch of the hovel.

Anybody approaching the hovel stairs will cause a family of crows in the nearby trees to begin cawing and flying about. Ascending the steps will cause the whole structure to creak noisily, but the building has stood here for many years and survived countless winter storms. (Oddly the witch doesn't create any creaking sounds when moving about.) The porch is wrapped in a banister that is decorated with strange wooden figureheads with distorted expressions of anguish. The whole place looks very old and dilapidated.

The interior of the hovel is in sharp contrast with the exterior. Everything is neat and clean, but very busy with many unusual decorations and knick-knacks that Trathasha has collected over the years. The hovel is a small structure with a single bedroom, a workroom, and a closet. There are several cats roaming about that the witch keeps as pets.

The witch owns a magical ring that allows her to perform a variety of minor magical tricks, including keeping the place looking neat and clean. As a result, when the heroes enter there is a broom sweeping up the floor; the pot is being stirred; and some of the pots are doing a happy little jig. The hovel is uncomfortably warm thanks to the blaze in the stone fireplace. A blackened bronze cauldron hangs by a chain over the fire. The cauldron is filled with a greenish soupy substance, which is boiling and emitting a strange odor. There is also a water

barrel to catch water run-off, a winch and bucket to lower items to the ground, and a trap door for dumping refuse.

Trathasha is a wretched old woman. Although she appears human, she's not. She's a mix of human, elf, and hobgoblin. Although her racial blend might lead one to think she's a mongrelman, her elvish blood kept her looking more "human" than anything. Even so, she appears as the classic old hag. Trathasha is prone to laugh and cackle at many things, humorous or not. Her laughing is often followed by a brief coughing fit.

She is also something of a cannibal, and has been "dining" off of the occasional townsfolk (as well as unfortunate humanoids who wandered too close to her hovel) for longer than anyone alive in the town. Prior to cooking her victims she likes to "play" her Pipes of Haunting. She enjoys the fear in their eyes and the pipes save her having to clean them out later.

The Cauldron of Enraged Ghosts is the large, blackened bronze pot in which Trathasha cooks her victims. The pot steals the sight from the spirits of the victims, providing her with visions of future events. These visions are often couched in the form of a dream-like message, so she spends much of her free time trying to divine what they really mean. She keeps a journal of her visions, but to most readers they would seem like the random scribbling of a lunatic.

The spirits of Trathasha's magical pot are cursed to rise from the grave in a few days. Their eyes are glowing orange from having their sight stolen, and they wander about in a perpetually enraged state seeking revenge against their slayer. In the past Trathasha has carried their cracked and cleaned bones into the enchanted meadow so the corrupted spirits would be concealed by its cloaking magic. Now, however, the vessel has allowed the ghosts to escape and they are wandering through the woods nearby, never far from where their bones yet lay.

Recently, Trathasha has struck up an arrangement with the shape changers who are infiltrating the town. They supply her with "replaced" townsfolk in exchange for money, magic assistance and information about the town. However, the arrangement is very fragile. Even as the shape changers are using Trathasha, they eventually intend to eliminate her. At the same time, a few of the shape changers she caught wandering through the woods have become victims of her cauldron.

With the incinerations, however, the suspicions of the townspeople have been cast her way. Trathasha is innocent of that, but doesn't want or need the extra attention. So she's willing to help the heroes get to the truth of the burnings as best she can. But she has her own skeletons in the closet, so to speak, that could compromise her situation. So she is careful about how she answers their questions and aids them in their investigation.

The witches' crow familiar is called Darkeye. The bird is a leader of a family of crows who gather in the trees around the hovel. These announce any visitors to the hovel, as does the creaky nature of the structure. The familiar is well concealed among the flock, so Trathasha is willing to put up with their constant, annoying caws.

There is a secret panel in the floor of the bedroom that hides the witch's private treasures. These include 2 small gemstones worth about 15 gold crowns each, 5 gold crowns, 43 silver shields, 120 copper farthings, 13 copper bits, and her spell book. There are also a few personal effects from her victims stashed in here that the changelings didn't take. These include common bead jewelry, a bronze cane cap, two silk scarves, and a silver belt buckle. These would confirm to the town folk that she was responsible for the deaths of some of their citizens.

The stuffy temperature in Trathasha's hovel is the result of a fire sprite magically bound to the stone fireplace. In the past the witch has tormented the sprite by spraying it with water for speaking while visitors are present, so it will remain silent. If released, the sprite might be able to assist the party in finding the secret glade. (The sprite listened to the witch when she talks to herself, and it also knows roughly how long she was away to dump the cracked and cleaned bones of her victims.) The magical sight of the sprite would help to find the exact spot. However, the meadow spirit will definitely not like a fire creature burning up the foliage.

The sprite knows a number of other facts of interest, including the fact that the witch has a group of allies who supply her with victims. Getting this information out of the sprite will not be easy, however, as it will insist on being freed first. The heroes will need to find out how to release the binding spell that summoned and trapped it here.

Abandoned Manor

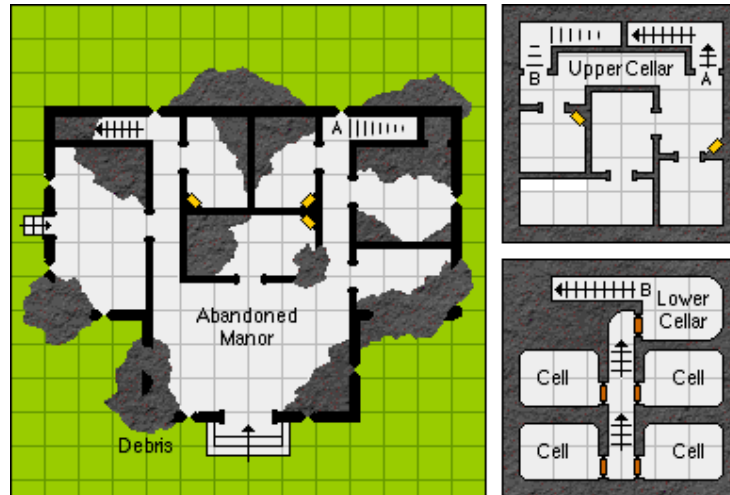


Figure 3. Map of the abandoned manor

If the heroes approach the manor ruins during the daylight, read the following aloud:

The crumbling stone ruins of this long-abandoned manor lie slowly crumbling in the midst of the grassy fields. Only a few decaying beams from the roof still stand above the structure. Large portions of the outer wall have completely collapsed in heaps of stone around the exterior. Most of the mortar has worn away, seemingly leaving the remaining sections of wall close to collapse. Only a few arrow slits can be seen in the intact sections of wall. In the front a short flight of steps leads up to a wide, arched doorway that once formed the grand entrance. There is no sign of life nearby and even the grazing Caribou seem to avoid this relic to a dark moment in Alskavan history.

This ruin was once the fortified manor of the towns' lord. But the Lord and his contingent of warriors were ruthlessly killed during the incursion of the Pyric brotherhood. The home was partially destroyed during the final battle, leaving little more than a stone shell. The new lord decided to build a stronger structure on the other side of town atop a prominent hill, leaving the old manor as a ruin.

If somebody in the party has the tracking skill, they may be able to detect recent tracks leading to and from the ruins. Aukuita most likely made these during her frequent visits to her people. Depending on recent circumstances, is a smaller chance that a large number of tracks will be found here as a result of the changelings from the town returning to discuss plans.

It has been rumored for many years in town that ghosts of the warriors slain by the Pyric brotherhood now haunt the abandoned manor. When Aukuita heard about this, she decided to take advantage of the superstition in order to scare away any unwelcome visitors. As a result the changeling guards on the surface level will look and act like horrible undead corpses.

The old manor home had a deep cellar built with much effort, leaving two floors below the ground. The changeling guards currently occupy the top cellar floor, while the lower floor is now a dungeon that houses the remaining kidnapped town people. Many of the changelings remain in the manor cellar, both to guard the prisoners and to act as a reserve in case any more town people need to be replaced. Thilma Liesk is held in the most secure room in the back of the lower floor.

The doors to the cells on the bottom cellar floor are in bad shape, and could be broken down by a large and determined group. However, the prisoners are completely cowed due to the ruthless methods of the changeling guards. Many of the prisoners are badly beaten as a result of efforts to extract useful information, especially about the location of the Bottle of Rath.

The changeling guards occasionally send out hunting parties to take one of the town sheep in order to feed the prisoners. The doppelgangers play on the town folk's fears of the old dragon legend by leaving dead Sheep and Caribou partially consumed as if by a large beast. Several of these corpses have been left in the vicinity of the gray ghosts, further clouding the picture. The remains of the sheep are incinerated in an old fire pit late at

night, leaving the slight stench of burnt flesh lingering in the air. This is spooking all the animals and they avoid the place.

It is possible that one or more of the heroes will become prisoners of the changelings. These creatures are not especially malicious, but they are desperate to succeed and may resort to unpleasant means to gain their ends. When Aukuita returns to visit her people, she usually begins by leading them in the following prayer to Tiahr. This is likely the first exposure of the heroes to this rather obscure deity.

Father Tiahr,
Change me.
Grant me a form of your choice.

I have no form.

I had a shape.
I thought it was mine,
But it rotted
The worms ate it.

Let me be your worm.
I want to eat myself.

Self-eater, Tiahr,
The serpent of my soul
Swallows itself, understanding that
There was no apple
No eater,
And no Tree.

Being nothing, make me anything.
Ragged claws, six legs, pipe-stem eyes
I'll scuttle to your altar
Bearing gutted shells.

The exact contents of the cellars are left to the GM, but should include all the possessions of the Changeling tribe.

Lord's Keep

When the characters approach the keep during the daylight, read the following out loud to the players:

The unfinished keep on the prominent hill is visible from the outskirts of town. As you approached you could make out a wooden framework built around the exterior of the keep as the masons and laborers continue to work on the walls. Thus far only two floors have been completed, although the main gate has been installed and two guards stand watch just outside. The keep appears to be crudely patterned after fortifications in the Broken Kingdoms to the south, although the masonry is somewhat sloppy and the stones poorly fit together. A wagon sits along the outside stacked with more stones for the walls and one is being winched up even as you watch.

The Lord's Keep is located on a rise about seven miles to the southeast of Alskava. Several laborers, plus a stone mason and an architect have gradually been building the structure over the course of two decades, and are now nearing the completion of the third level. As a result the keep is covered in a wooden framework to hold up the structure and support the workers. A wagon arrives every few days with more stones cut from a quarry in the mountains.

With the first two stories and the cellar completed, the Keep is now partially occupied by the Lord's men-at-arms, plus his lady and several servants. The Lord and the majority of the warriors are away on a raid to the Broken Kingdoms, and the command of the garrison has fallen to his Deputy, Erik Olfen. With the recent troubles in Alskava, Erik and his eight men have been very busy and morale is low because of their inability to deal with the ghosts.

Spirit Glade

As the heroes approach this glade, read the following aloud:

After travelling quietly through the dimly lit woods, you eventually notice that you are coming to an opening in the trees ahead. Peering between the trees you can see eerie lights moving and dancing about beyond the shrubs at the edge. Drawing closer, you see beams of light spin off from the grassy knoll in center of the glade, providing a beautiful light show. There appears to be nobody about who could be causing this odd phenomenon. A lovely sea of blooming wild flowers carpets much of the ground, adding further beauty to the scene.

The caretaker of this enchanted glade is a greater spirit called e'Brunloge, who normally wards the area from outsiders. His magical ward has a mind warping effect that compels those caught in its unseen grip to avoid the area without knowledge they are doing so. As a result the glade has lain pristine and undisturbed until very recently. Only native wildlife is permitted to enter the glade and enjoy the peaceful surroundings.

E'Brunloge draws his life essence from the glade and would die if he left. He has a leafy beard, short branches for hair, and knotholes for eyes. He is good in nature and will only become visible to those of an agreeable personality.

Outsiders first discovered the glade when Trathasha noticed the magical aura that pervades the surrounding forest. She was able to unravel the mystery of the ward around the glade and now visits regularly to drop her victims where they will not be located by townspeople. The glade spirit is all too aware of her activities and has been battling to drive away the enraged ghosts that seem to arise whenever Trathasha visits. He could keep her out with his spiritual powers, but that would also drive away the creatures he so loves.

The second visitor to the glade was the sage Ingvar. E'Brunloge found the wizard much more to his liking, and allows him to visit from time to time as long as he tells no other. When Ingvar came to hide the Bottle of Rath, e'Brunloge agreed to harbor the vessel as long as he placed magical wards to drive away other intruders such as Trathasha. Ingvar used a spell of Animate Undead from a scroll of spells and placed nine skeletons to guard the vessel and the glade. These are armed with branches and rocks.

Unfortunately Ingvar never reckoned with the magical properties of the bottle. Its ability to absorb magical energy in the vicinity has been drawing the very life essence from the glade and overpowering the bottle. As a result the magical ward around the glade has vanished and the dancing light show has appeared in the center. The magic-draining effect of the Bottle of Rath has taken a terrible toll on e'Brunloge, and he now appears as a cross between a diseased tree and an old man. His foliage is fading as from the touch of fall and his leaves continue to fall off. As a result e'Brunloge desperately wants the bottle removed and will aid any heroes that help him in this task.

Another side effect of the magically overloaded bottle is that it can occasionally bring non-sentient undead up to a sentient level. Three of the skeletons that guard the glade have now become sentient and broken free of Ingvar's control. These will ambush isolated guards and take their weapons and some of their armor. The subsequent actions of these sentient skeletons are left to the whims of the GM, but most likely they will flee the area. In time they will become powerful undead.

The key to ending the magical draining of the glade is to remove the bottle. The dimensional pocket will gradually close over several weeks as the tremendous amount of magical energy absorbed leaks out. The bottle will become just a bottle again, and its powers will be barely accessible by the heroes, if at all. It is likely that only Ingvar will be able to restore the dimensional pocket through the use of his magic.

Conclusion

There are two ways for the heroes to claim their full reward. Either they capture or kill Ingvar before he discovers the location of the changeling base, or join him in the final assault on the ruins. If taken alive, Ingvar will be taken to the Lord's Keep and thoroughly interrogated. Once Erik Olfson learns of the changeling's plans, he will immediately take all necessary measures. The heroes will be asked to join him for the final attack. (If Aukuita learns of Ingvar's capture, she is unlikely to sit still for the expected crackdown.) The details of this outcome are left to the GM.

Possession of the bottle and controlling ring by the evil forces of the Darkseeker would have a devastating effect on the Allemande kingdom and may even cost them the war. To prevent this fate, the heroes will have to

find a means to destroy it permanently. This will not be easy as the vessel is magically warded against all mundane forms of damage and can absorb almost unlimited magical energy. Perhaps one of the great wizards will know a means to destroy this device...

The interior of the bottle has yet to be explored. It may contain several of Synzhen's henchmen who were caught inside when it was stolen. It could also include a multitude of diabolical chambers and residents that Synzhen added for some mysterious reasons. Getting into the bottle's dimensional pocket will present a problem, however, as it requires magical abilities that the heroes may not yet possess.

The fate of the Children will depend on how many survive the harsh test presented at Alskava. Their exposure to human civilization will certainly have a dramatic effect on their society. If they obtain the bottle, they will be sorely tempted to live among humans in a safer location. However they will still need a magical source of power for the bottle, and they can also be detected by other means.

Without the bottle the Children are more likely to form a village in a remote spot and attempt to establish their own civilization. As they can readily pose as humans, they can trade with nearby settlements and may in time prosper. Almost certainly they will continue to worship Tiahr, whether he be a real god or not.

Appendix A – Notes

Encounters

Enraged Ghost

This gray-hued spirit has burning, sightless eyes and so wanders blindly about their gravesite. The manner of their death enrages and corrupts the spirit, so they unrelentingly seek the death of their slayer. Enraged ghosts do not possess the normal "powers" of a ghost, however, instead burning the flesh with their touch. They are always semi-materialized and can be struck by non-magical weapon with some difficulty. It is confined to a 2-mile radius around its corpse, and can orient itself by the location of its remains.

Fire Sprite

This diminutive, fire-based creature resembles the Sprite, although it is continually wrapped in fire. The flames radiate a heat equivalent to a campfire, enough to make a room stuffy. It possesses several magical abilities related to fire, although these require some type of combustible materials. It is a very charming presence, and will chat on any topic for hours with anybody willing to listen. Much as it tries to be nice, the Fire Sprite is disliked by woodland beings because of its tendency to start forest fires. The fay sight of this being allows it to see the magical nature of anything within its view as per a *detect magic* spell.

Metamorph

Following his failure with the Shadow Shapers, Synzhen began experimenting with cellular-level metamorphic powers. These allow the Inach to reconfigure their entire bodily structure by passing through an intermediate, disordered state that closely resembles certain gelatinous oozes. Not only does this allow the Metamorph to adopt any bodily shape, but also it can squeeze its way through narrow cracks and openings. This mutability also allows the Metamorph a mild regenerative ability and it can heal any wound within a few hours.

Unfortunately the solidified state of a Metamorph is somewhat unstable and it must revert to its gelatinous state for at least one hour a day. It also has difficulty holding its form in warm or hot temperatures. Thus the Metamorph is somewhat limited in its operational capability. It is most stable when it reverts to its natural appearance as a somewhat tall, slender Inach with pale flesh and gray eyes. In this stable form it can live anywhere except the tropics or deserts.

Shadow Shaper

The earliest of Synzhen's children, these were perhaps his least successful attempt. In their native form they are the closest of the children in appearance to their Inach ancestors. They have the magical ability to shape light and shadow around themselves to change their appearance and to some extent their hue, although they will be somewhat dark in appearance. They can also wrap shadows around themselves to become all but invisible in darkness.

Their change in appearance does not stand up well to close examination, and is more in the nature of a disguising power than true shape shifting. He also tends to be somewhat shorter than a normal human in stature, although this height can be altered slightly. When the appearance of the Shadow Shaper is cloaked by

his shadow powers, he also loses his natural shadow. Somebody who is aware of this defect can readily identify a Shadow Shaper in an illuminated area.

Shapeshifter

Following the creation of the Metamorphic race, Synzhen spent much time and effort to come up with a more successful breed of changeling Inach. The result was the Shapeshifter, the changeling progenitor of the Doppelganger. Save for a certain difficulty in exactly mimicking other beings, the Shapeshifter proved remarkably adaptable. They could take the form of any humanoid or animal, and partially imitate their physical abilities. Shapeshifters would make excellent scouts for an invasion force. However, Synzhen still considered them a failure, suitable only for providing breeding stock to produce the true Doppelgangers. Unsuitable specimens were exiled to the wilderness.

Magic Items

Bottle of Rast

The Doomed wizard Synzhen and his artificer aid Darken Rast originally created this magical device. The bottle was created with a controlling ring in order to make theft more difficult. Anybody wearing the ring need only twist it to open a portal into the interior, which is actually an extra-dimensional space of immense proportions. This would allow entire armies to be carried in secret deep into enemy territory.

The bottle appears to be made of a smoky green crystal that is free from defects. It is roughly a half-meter in length, with a wide base and a fluted neck. It is possible to pour a liquid inside the bottle and seal it with the ornate hinged crystal cap. On the bottom of the bottle is a ring of small runes, the only indication from normal observation that the item is magical.

Neither Synzhen nor Darken had the knowledge of how to construct an extra-dimensional pocket, so they linked the bottle to an existing pocket they discovered after some exploration. This pocket was honeycombed with a complex of hallways and unusual chambers which proved impossible to fully explore. The walls are semi-translucent and a constant dim light filtered through the walls. All surfaces proved unbreakable, including the walls and doors. The entry was warded by a massive portcullis, which could be lowered from the outside.

It was near this portcullis, in fact, that Darken discovered a note left by a mage who had been trapped in this place. Apparently the wizard had been trapped in here by the clever ploy of a warrior called Jesuitus Milan when the portcullis was slammed down. Magic didn't appear work in this world, and the pleas of the mage went unheeded. He was trapped in here, apparently with an enemy army. Darken found this amusing and wondered what had become of the mage and this armed force.

Unfortunately this dimensional space proved inadequate for Synzhen's purposes. For one thing the complex absorbed any lower order magic, such as shape shifting. In addition, it completely lacked the magical qualities that he needed for his armies. Finally, he was somewhat concerned about the nature of the unknown inhabitants of this place.

Synzhen decided to call upon his magic so warp and shape the interior to suit his purposes. He dispensed with the portcullis and the translucent walls. Instead the interior is now a series of chambers formed from the old rooms. Each is surrounded and capped by an opaque cloud of dancing lights. If you pass through the cloud along a certain wall, you always enter another chamber. But the chamber is entered from the same direction, regardless of what path you take to get there. There are many such chambers in the bottle, each with its own properties and powers. Some chambers, and groups of chambers, are much harder to find.

Despite the significant changes to the pocket, most of the original structure remains intact. Many of the chambers remain unexplored and their original inhabitants are still in place, no doubt confused about the changes. Synzhen modified the pocket dimension so that time flows more slowly than on the outside. As long as the bottle remains fully powered, time inside the bottle flows 100 times as slowly as on the outside. Thus, for every ten hours that pass outside the charged bottle, those on the inside only experience six minutes.

One of the rooms near the egress from bottle has been modified by Synzhen to produce a shower of light particles that look like rain descending from above. These have the magical power to create a screen of illusionary mental thoughts, thus making the subject immune from mind-reading spells or powers. It is this power that is of particular interest to the changelings. The illusion only lasts for 2-12 days, however, so it requires regular upkeep.

The bottle has no internal source of magical power. It instead acts like a magical battery. Spells cast directly on the bottle are absorbed and used to activate its powers of time slowing and mental cloaking. It can absorb enough magical energy at one time to remain fully powered for ten days.

Overcharging the bottle will begin to distort the area nearby. It creates a dimensional field around itself that resembles cascading beams of light that dance around it like a cloud, much like the interior. The beams spin off into the surrounding area, providing a beautiful light show. These beams of light completely surround the bottle, hiding it from sight. It takes a certain knack to enter this light field and retrieve the bottle, almost like mentally stepping sideways into a closet. Once this is done, the bottle can be retrieved.

The overcharged bottle will occasionally produce some random alterations to beings within the dimensional field, such as making automatons fully sentient, temporarily erasing random memories, accelerating growth rates, and so forth. The exact game effects are left to whims of the GM.

If a detect magic spell is cast and the inert bottle examined, it gives a faint sensation of magic and an impression somewhat like a riverbed in the desert. The riverbed is very broad so it can carry a flood, but only a few shallow pools of mud remain. As the magic in the device is activated, the impression changes to a broad, shallow flow that increases in strength and fury as more and more magic is cast into the device.

Cauldron of Enraged Ghosts

This magical item consists of a large and heavy bronze cooking pot. There is a curved handle attached that can be used to suspend the pot from a hook. On the front of the cauldron is an untarnished plaque with the bas relief image of a large, staring eye held between two hands. If an intelligent entity is cooked alive in this cauldron, then the pot steals the sight from the spirit as it passes beyond. This power provides the owner with dream-like visions of important future events. The meaning of these visions is often obscure, however, and requires some effort to try and deduce their meaning. Any being slain by the cauldron will rise from the dead in a few days as an enraged ghost.

Ingvar's Journey Spell Binder

This tome of spells consists of several sheets of parchment held between two leather-bound boards by two buckled straps. The front cover is embossed with a northern tribal symbol for sacred knowledge. The sheets are neatly organized and carefully written.

Trathasha's Spell Journal

This journal-sized tome consists of many sheets of frequently handled parchment bound in a bleached white leather jacket that is covered in many stain marks. In the center of the cover is a diamond with what appears to be an empty eye socket. The socket seems to sink deep into the book, but is actually a small dimensional pocket. Unfortunately this empty socket sometimes oozes various unpleasant fluids. Along the sleeve of the jacket is a small pentacle with a tiny ruby at each point of the star.

Spells

Sanguine Fury

This spell, created by a forgotten and savage wizard, was used as a device of torture and sadistic pleasure. It causes the victim's blood to heat up to dangerous temperatures, even to the point of death and combustion (causing the body to literally burn to ashes.) The victim first experiences hot flashes and their cheeks and skin flush. As the temperature quickly increases, the target suffers agonizing pain before finally bursting into flames.

Appendix B - AD&D®

The following stats are appropriate when running this module using the AD&D® rules.

Significant Characters

Aukuita: Doppelganger; AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; P3; hp 14; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; S 9, D 13, C 12, I 13, W 13, Ch 16; ML 14; SA Surprise; SD Special; Memorized Spells: 1st-*Cause fear, Curse, Darkness*; 2nd-*Augury*, Holy Symbol of Tiahr, staff. Non-weapon Proficiencies: Healing 11, History (Changelings) 16, Reading/Writing 14, Weaving 12. Can use *ESP* and is able to duplicate victims with 90% accuracy. Immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells. Makes saving throws as a 10th level fighter.

E’Brunloge: Glade Spirit; AL NG; AC 8; MV 9; HD 10; P7; hp 21 (49); THAC0 11; #AT 0; SA Spells; SD Spells; Memorized Spells: 1st-*Entangle, Healing, Locate Animals or Plants*; 2nd-*Speak With Animals, Trip, Warp Wood*; 3rd-*Plant Growth, Speak With Dead*; 4th-*Cure Serious Wounds*. Cast spells and turn undead as a priest of the same level, but limited to the All, Divination, Healing, and Plant spheres. (Requires no holy symbol or components to cast these spells.) Become *invisible* and *detect alignment* at will. Always incorporeal and so can not perform any physical tasks. Requires a +1 or better weapon to hit. Loses 1hp per day when not inside the full magical enchantment of the glade, and can not be healed. (*He is down to 21hp at the start of the adventure. However, the restoration of the glade will eventually return e’Brunloge to existence regardless of how many hit points he has lost.*)

Erik Olfsen: Human, AL LN; AC 5; MV 12; F5; hp 34; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type, +1 Dmg.; S 16, D 12, C 15, I 11, W 12, Ch 13; ML 13; ring mail, shield, +1 ring of protection, long sword, spear, +1 dagger; Weapon Proficiencies: Long Sword, Spear, Dagger, Staff, Sling; Non-weapon Proficiencies: Riding 15, Seamanship 16, Tracking 12.

Ingvar Gunderson: Human; AL NG; AC 4; MV 12; M5; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 15, C 13, I 16, W 14, Ch 12; ML 12; bracers of defense AC 5, dagger +1, scroll (*Fumble, Wizard Eye*); Memorized Spells: 1st-*Change Self, Mount, Sleep, Spider Climb*; 2nd-*ESP, Invisibility*; 3rd-*Sanguine Fury*; Weapon Proficiency: Dagger; Non-weapon Proficiencies: Ancient History 15, Artistic Ability 14, Astrology 16, Etiquette 12, Herbalism 14, Reading/Writing 17, Riding 17, Swimming 11.

Jens Olso: Human; AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; F3; hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type, +1 Dmg.; S 16, D 14, C 12, I 13, W 12, Ch 9; ML 14; studded leather armor, round shield, long sword +1, boots of elvenkind; Weapon Proficiencies: Long Sword (specialized), Short Bow, Spear; Non-weapon Proficiencies: Ancient (Military) History 12, Armorer (x2) 13, Blind-Fighting, Fire-Building 11, Riding 15.

Mylda Ondheim: Human; AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; T4; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 15, C 13, I 14, W 9, Ch 15; ML 11; ring of protection +1, leather armor, short sword; Thief Skills: PP 15%, OL 40%, F/RT 45%, MS 35%, HS 20%, DN 30%, CW 75%, RL 10%; Weapon Proficiencies: short sword, short bow; Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Appraising 14, Gem Cutting 13, Tailor 14.

Trathasha: Mongrelman; AL NE; AC 9; MV 12; M3/T4; HD 5; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 15, C 16, I 17, W 13, Ch 9; ML 12; pipes of haunting, ring of cantrips; Thief Skills: PP 70%, OL 22%, F/RT 17%, MS 22%, DN 55%, CW 80%, RL 8%; Memorized Spells: 1st-*Charm Person, Sleep*; 2nd-*Ray of Enfeeblement*; Weapon Proficiencies: Short Sword, Dart; Non-Weapon Proficiencies: (4) Cooking 17, Herbalism 15, Musical Instrument (Pipes) 14. +1 to surprise rolls due to Crow familiar. Use mimicry, pickpocket (70%), and camouflage (80%)

Encounters

Black Bear: AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18, THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; Int 3; ML 10; SA Hug; SD None; MR None; S 6’; XP 175. A hit of 18 or better does an additional 2d4hp damage.

Crow Familiar: AL N; AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18; HD ½; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; Int 3; ML 9; SA None; SD None; MR None; S 1’; XP 15. Empathically linked with Wizard. When in physical contact it gains Wizard’s Saving Throws versus special attacks. Lose 1hp per day if separated.

Enraged Ghost: AL NE; AC 6*; MV 9; HD 5+1; hp 15-20; THAC0 19*; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; Int 10; ML 15; SA Fear; SD Special; MR None; S 6’; XP 650. AC and THAC0 are *reduced due to blindness and it must locate foes by listening. On sight of Enraged Ghost, save versus paralyzation with a +4 or be immobilized with fear for 1-4 rounds. Ghost is immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, and cold-based spells, as well as poisons and paralyzation attacks. Non-silver, non-magical weapons only do half damage. Holy water inflicts 2-8 points of damage when it strikes an Enraged Ghost. A *remove curse* spell will permanently destroy the Enraged Ghost manifestation.

Fire Sprite: AL CG; AC 7; MV 9, Fl 18 {C}; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; Int 13; ML 12; SA See below; SD Resistant to Fire; MR None; S 2’; XP 420. Immune to non-magical fire and heat, as well as red dragon breath. Magical fire inflicts –1 hp per die of damage, but cold-based attacks cause an addition +1 hp per die. It can use the following once per day at the 2nd level of ability: *affect normal fires, burning hands, fire burst*, and *friends*. The Fire Sprite radiates heat equivalent to a campfire and automatically ignites flammable materials on contact. It has a base Charisma of 12.

Lord's Guards: AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; F1; hp 6-8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; Int 10; ML 11; SA None; SD None; MR None; S 6'; XP 15. Long sword, round shield, spear, dagger, brigandine armor, 9 cp, 4 gp.

Metamorph: AL CN; AC 8; MV 9; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 19; Dmg 1-6 (by weapon); Int 10; ML 11; SA None; SD Regeneration; MR None; S 6'; XP 65. Hide armor plus dagger, staff, or club. Slip through cracks and holes as small as a rat hole. Use an enhanced version of *Change Self* at will for up to 23 hours a day with no components. Recover 1 hit point per hour until fully healed. Must revert to gelatinous form 1 hour per day. For every degree of temperature over 70 F, a Metamorph has a 1% chance per day of spontaneously reverting to its gelatinous form for 1d6 rounds. The gelatinous form has the same stats, but is unable to wear armor or wield a weapon.

Shadow Shaper: AL CN; AC 8; MV 9; HD 1-1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (by weapon); Int 10; ML 10; SA None; SD None; MR None; S 5'; XP 35. Hide armor plus dagger, staff, or club. 80% chance to *Hide in Shadows*. Use an enhanced version of *Change Self* at will with unlimited duration and no components. A Shaper has no shadow when using *Change Self*.

Shapeshifter: AL CN; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1+1; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (by weapon); Int 10; ML 11; SA None; SD None; MR None; S 6'; XP 65. Hide armor plus dagger, staff, or club. Use an enhanced version of *Alter Self* at will with unlimited duration and no components.

Skeletons: AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4-7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (by weapon); Int 0 or 10; ML Special; SA None; SD Special; MR Special; S 6'; XP 65. Immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *fear*, and *hold* spells. Immune to cold-based attacks. Edged or piercing weapons only do half damage. A vial of holy water does 2-8 points of damage. Due to the Bottle of Rath, three of these skeletons have become fully sentient and will act accordingly.

Magic Items

Bottle of Rast

Whenever a spell is cast upon the bottle, the magic is absorbed and the energy is used to maintain its internal powers. This maintenance requires a minimum of 10 spell levels per day. Thus a 5th level wizard can just maintain the power level by casting most of his spells on the bottle. Up to 100 spell levels can be cast into the bottle, and the charge is drained at the same rate of 10 spell levels per day.

Cauldron of Enraged Ghosts

Each live and fully intelligent victim who is cooked in the cauldron grants the owner 2-5 somewhat obscure visions of the future. After 1-3 days, however, the victim will arise from the dead as an Enraged Ghost.

Ring of Cantrips

The wearer can cast the *cantrip* spell one time each day for every level in the Wizard class. Obviously non-Wizards are unable to use the power in this ring.

Ingvar's Journey Spell Binder

Spells: 1st-*Alarm*, *Change Self*, *Detect Magic*, *Mount*, *Nystul's Magic Aura*, *Sleep*, *Spider Climb*, *Wizard Mark*; 2nd-*ESP*, *Invisibility*, *Knock*; 3rd-*Hold Person*, *Sanguine Fury*.

Trathasha's Spell Journal

Spells: 1st-*Charm Person*, *Detect Magic*, *Find Familiar*, *Read Magic*, *Sleep*, *Unseen Servant*, *Magic Mouth*; 2nd-*Ray of Enfeeblement*.

Spells

Sanguine Fury

3rd-level wizard spell
Alteration

Range: 15 yards/level
Components: S, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell targets one creature with blood or similar cardiovascular system (such as fish, mammals, reptiles, and so on) and causes 1d6+1 points of damage (save for 1/2 damage, up to 10d6+10). Anyone who is not killed by this spell will experience a severe fever and internal body pains, causing them to writhe around and making them less effective in battle. (They are at -4 to hit, +4 AC, +4 initiative, and unable to cast spells. If the victim saved, then half the To Hit, AC, and initiative penalties apply. The victim may also cast spells.) If the creature suffers enough damage to cause death, then a bright aura of fire will engulf the corpse and burn it to cinders. Magical resistance from heat will also provide appropriate protection from this spell.

The material components of this spell are a vial of Ape's blood and a burning splint. Apart from the faint smoke emitted by the burning component, this spell is completely silent allowing it to be cast from concealment without revealing the location of the wizard.

Appendix B – GURPS®

The following stats are appropriate when running this module using the GURPS® rules.

Significant Characters

Aukuita

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 11/17.

Speed 5.75, Move 5, PD 1, DR 2.

Dodge 6, Parry 9 (staff).

Advantages: Allies (Children of Synzhen), Blessed, +4 Charisma, +2 Clerical Investment, +2 Clerical Magic, Combat Reflexes, Divine Favor, Literate, Mimicry, Morph, Night Vision, Sharp Claws, +5 Strong Will, Telepathy 7.

Disadvantages: Fanaticism, Fear of Illusionists, Sense of Duty to Children, Vow to Deity.

Skills: Acting 17, Area Knowledge (North Lands) 13, Augury 12, Brawling 15, Cooking 13, Disguise 15, Fast-Talk 13, First Aid 11, History of Changelings 16, Language: Northron 12, Language: North Coast 13, Leadership 16, Sacrifice 11, Singing 12, Staff 11, Stealth 13, Survival (Arctic) 12, Teaching 14, Telereceive 14, Weaving 12.

Spells: Fear 15, Panic 13, Bravery 13, Light 13, Continual Light 13, Darkness 15, History 13, Divination 16, Itch 13, Spasm 13, Clumsiness 14.

Equipment: holy symbol of Tiahr, staff.

E'Brunloge

ST 12, DX 16, IQ 13, HT 13/21(31).

Speed 7.25, Move 7.

Dodge 8.

Advantages: Awareness, +3 Clerical Magic, Empathy, Immunity to Disease, Immunity to Poison, Insubstantial (always), Invisibility (can become visible at will), Night Vision, Slow Regeneration (inside enchanted glade), Spirit Empathy, +5 Strong Will, +10 Temperature Tolerance, Unaging.

Disadvantages: Duty (protect glade on 15 or less), Glade Life Support (lose 1hp/day without glade magic), Intolerance of evil-natured beings, Pacifism (cannot kill), Phobia (civilization), Phobia (fire), Shyness, Truthfulness.

Skills: Naturalist 24, Singing 19.

Spells: Sense Life 16, Sense Foes 16, Sense Emotion 16, Persuasion 16, Beast-Soother 16, Beast Summoning 17, Beast Link 17, Seek Plant 14, Identify Plant 14, Heal Plant 14, Plant Growth 14, Tangle Growth 14, Hide Path 14, Lend Strength 14, Lend Health 14, Minor Healing 14, Major Healing 13, Death Vision 14, Summon Spirit 15, Turn Zombie 14, Itch 14, Spasm 15.

Note: at the start of the adventure e'Brunloge is down to 21 hit points due to the drain on the enchanted glade. If he falls below zero he will enter the spirit void and not return until the magic of the glade is restored.

Erik Olfson

ST 15, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 14.

Speed 6.25, Move 7.

Dodge 6, Parry 7 (Sword), Block 6.

Advantages: Legal Enforcement Powers, Military Rank (Deputy), +3 Strong Will.

Disadvantages: Age, Overweight, Duty to Lord, Sense of Duty (Alskava), Stubbornness.

Skills: Administration 12, Area Knowledge (continent) 13, Area Knowledge (north lands) 15, Boating 12, Brawling 12, Broadsword 14, Climbing 11, First Aid 11, Intelligence Analysis 9, Interrogation 11, Knife 13, Knife Throwing 13, Language: Northron 12, Leadership 13, Riding 15, Running 12, Seamanship 16, Scrounging 11, Shield 12, Sling 14, Spear 14, Spear Throwing 15, Stealth 12, Strategy 11, Survival (arctic) 11, Tactics 13, Tracking 12.

Equipment: ring mail (PD 3, DR 3), round shield (PD 3), ring of protection (+1 PD), thrusting broadsword, spear, dagger (+1 accuracy, +1 damage).

Ingvar Gunderson

ST 10, DX 14, IQ 15, HT 12.

Speed 6.5, Move 6.

Dodge 6, Parry 7 (knife).

Advantages: Literate, Longevity, Magery 3.

Disadvantages: Absent-Mindedness, Dependent (Ondro), Enemies (changelings, 9 or less), Sense of Duty (Alskava), Truthfulness.

Skills: Archaeology 16, Area Knowledge (continent) 15, Area Knowledge (north lands) 17, Artist 15, Astrology 15, Climbing 13, Diplomacy 14, Disguise 14, History (Northern Lands) 19, Knife 14, Knife Throwing 15, Language: Northron 17, Language: North Coast 16, Language: Allemaine 15, Language: Mezina 14, Naturalist 16, Packing 14, Riding 17, Savoir-Faire 16, Swimming 15, Teaching 15, Thaumaturgy 16, Writing 18.

Spells: Find Direction 16, Detect Magic 18, Aura 16, Seeker 16, Trace 16, History 16, Memorize 16, Recall 16, Images of the Past 16, Simple Illusion 16, Illusion Disguise 18, Light 16, Continual Light 16, Flash 16, Darkness 16, Blur 16, Invisibility 18, See Invisible 16, Foolishness 16, Daze 16, Sleep 16, Mass Sleep 17, Drunkenness 16, Sickness 16, Apportation 16, Light Tread 16, Wallwalker 17, Sense Foes 16, Sense Emotion 16, Truthsayer 16, Mind-Reading 18, Ignite Fire 16, Create Fire 16, Shape Fire 16, Heat 16, Cold 16, Resist Cold 17, Sanguine Fury 18, Fireball 16, Explosive Fireball 16, Scryguard 16.

Equipment: scroll (Clumsiness 20, Invisible Wizard Eye 20), dagger (+1 accuracy, +1 damage), bracers of defense (PD 3).

Jens Olso

ST 15, DX 13, IQ 12, HT 11.

Speed 6, Move 7.

Dodge 7, Parry 10 (Sword), Block 9.

Advantages: +1 Alertness, Allies, Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold.

Disadvantages: Bad Temper, Sense of Duty (Alskava).

Skills: Area Knowledge (north lands) 15, Armoury (Armor) 17, Boating 14, Bow 14, Broadsword 18, Carousing 14, Climbing 12, First Aid 12, Gambling 11, History (Military) 13, Language: Northron 15, Merchant 13, Riding 16, Running 13, Scrounging 12, Seamanship 13, Sex Appeal 12, Shield 16, Spear 14, Spear Throwing 15, Stealth 13, Survival (arctic) 16, Tactics 12, Tracking 13.

Equipment: studded leather armor (PD 2, DR 2), round shield (PD 3), thrusting broadsword (+1 accuracy, +1 damage), boots of elvenkind (+2 stealth).

Mylda Ondheim

ST 10, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 12.

Speed 6.5, Move 6.

Dodge 6, Parry 7 (Shortsword).

Advantages: +2 Acute Hearing, +1 Alertness, Allies, Attractive, Literate.

Disadvantages: Impulsiveness.

Skills: Area Knowledge (north lands) 14, Boating 15, Bow 14, Climbing 18, Cooking 15, Fishing 15, Gem Cutting 14, Language: Northron 15, Lockpicking 15, Merchant 14, Pickpocket 12, Riding 15, Shadowing 13, Shortsword 14, Stealth 15, Survival (arctic) 16, Tailor 17, Traps 16.

Equipment: ring of protection (+1 PD), leather armor (PD 1, DR 1), shortsword.

Trathasha

ST 9, DX 14, IQ 16, HT 15/23.

Speed 7.25, Move 7, PD 0, DR 0.

Dodge 7, Parry 9.

Advantages: Double-Jointed, +4 Extended Lifespan, Magery 3, Night Vision, +1 Strong Will.

Disadvantages: Enemies (townspeople, roll 6 or less), Hard of Seeing, Odious Personal Habit (Cannibal), Reclusive, Sadism, -3 Reputation (Witch), Ugly.

Skills: Area Knowledge (north lands) 16, Camouflage 18, Climbing 17, Cooking 17, Darts 18, Detect Lies 15, Escape 16, First Aid 17, Herbalism 17, Hobby: Collectibles 16, Holdout 16, Intimidation 17, Language: Northron 17, Lockpicking 16, Mimicry 14, Musical Instrument (Pipes) 15, Naturalist 16, Physician 16,

Pickpocket 17, Poisons 18, Shadowing 16, Shortsword 18, Stealth 17, Sleight of Hand 14, Streetwise 16, Survival (arctic) 17, Throwing 14, Thaumaturgy 15, Traps 15, Writing 15.
 Spells: Apportation 16, Air-Golem 16, Detect Magic 16, Fear 16, Panic 16, Bravery 16, Foolishness 16, Daze 16, Sleep 16, Mass Sleep 16, Loyalty 16, Charm 16, Itch 16, Spasm 16, Clumsiness 16, Curse-Missile 16, Sound 16, Voices 16, Delayed Message 16, Sense Life 16.
 Equipment: shortsword, pipes of haunting, ring of cantrips.
 Familiar: +1 Alertness, Draw Strength, Suffer Wounds.

Encounters

Black Bear

ST: 16 **Move/Dodge:** 7/7 **Size:** 2 hexes
DX: 13 **PD/DR:** 1/2
IQ: 5 **Damage:** 1d cutting
HT: 14/18 **Reach:** 1

Bite for 1d of cutting damage. Strikes with claws (close combat only) for 1d of crushing. When standing on its hind legs to fight the bear are 1 hex creatures.

Crow Familiar

ST: 2 **Move/Dodge:** 8 flying/7 **Size:** <1 hex
DX: 14 **PD/DR:** 0/0
IQ: 5 **Damage:** 1
HT: 12/3 **Reach:** C

The movement rate is 1 on the ground.

Enraged Ghost

ST: 10 **Move/Dodge:** 4/5 **Size:** 1 hex
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 0/0
IQ: 10 **Damage:** 1d+1
HT: 8 **Reach:** 1

Advantages: Immortality, Non-silver/non-magical weapons do half damage, +10 Strong Will.

Disadvantages: Blind, Frightens Animals, Phobias (holy men), Obsession (kill Trathasha), No Body Heat, Unliving, Vulnerable to Holy Water.

Neither passive defense nor damage resistance protects against attacks from an Enraged Ghost.

Fire Sprite

ST: 5 **Move/Dodge:** 6 (9 fly)/8 **Size:** <1 hex
DX: 14 **PD/DR:** 0/0
IQ: 13 **Damage:** 1d (fire)
HT: 10/6 **Reach:** C

Advantages: +1 Acute Hearing, +2 Alertness, +4 Body of Fire (always on), +4 Charisma, Detect Magic, Flight (winged), Heat Tolerance, Infravision, +3 Magery (fire college only), Voice.

Disadvantages: Cowardice, Impulsiveness, Pacifist (self-defense only), Phobia (cold), Vulnerability (cold-based attacks), -2 Weak Will.

Skills: Bard 15, Carousing 15.

Spells: Ignite Fire 14, Seek Fire 14, Slow Fire 14, Fast Fire 14, Create Fire 14, Shape Fire 14, Heat 14, Burning Touch 14.

Lord's Guards

ST 13, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 12.

Speed 6, Move 7.

Dodge 6, Parry 6 (sword), Block 6.

Advantages: +1 Strong Will.

Disadvantages: Bloodthirsty, Duty to Lord.

Skills: Area Knowledge (north lands) 11, Boating 11, Brawling 11, Broadsword 13, Carousing 13, Knife 12, Knife Throwing 12, Riding 11, Running 11, Seamanship 12, Shield 12, Spear 12, Spear Throwing 12, Stealth 11, Survival (arctic) 11.

Equipment: brigandine armor (PD 2, DR 2), round shield (PD 3), thrusting broadsword, spear, dagger.

Metamorph

ST 9, DX 11, IQ 11, HT 10.

Speed 5, Move 6.

Dodge 5, Parry 5 (knife).

Advantages: Knack: Body of Water, Knack: Morph, Night Vision, Slow Regeneration.

Disadvantages: Impulsiveness.

Skills: Area Knowledge (north lands) 11, Knife 11, Knife Throwing 12, Mimicry (human) 11, Running 13, Singing 11, Spear 12, Spear Throwing 13, Shapeshifting 12, Survival (arctic) 12.

Equipment: hide armor (PD 1, DR 2), dagger, staff, club.

Metamorph must rest in liquid form for one hour each day or he is unable to morph. For every degree of temperature over 70 F, a Metamorph has a 1% chance per day of spontaneously reverting to its liquid form for 1d6 minutes.

Shadow Shaper

ST 8, DX 11, IQ 11, HT 9.

Speed 5, Move 6.

Dodge 5, Parry 5 (knife).

Advantages: Knack: Hide (only in shadows), Knack: (Perfect) Illusion Disguise, Night Vision.

Disadvantages: Impulsiveness.

Skills: Area Knowledge (north lands) 11, Knife 11, Knife Throwing 12, Mimicry (human) 11, Running 13, Singing 11, Spear 12, Spear Throwing 13, Survival (arctic) 12.

Equipment: hide armor (PD 1, DR 2), dagger, staff, club.

When the *illusion disguise* is active, the Shadow Shaper has no shadow on the ground.

Shapeshifter

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 11.

Speed 5, Move 6.

Dodge 5, Parry 5 (knife).

Advantages: Knack: Alter Body, Knack: Shapeshifting, Night Vision.

Disadvantages: Impulsiveness.

Skills: Area Knowledge (north lands) 11, Knife 12, Knife Throwing 13, Mimicry (human) 11, Running 14, Shapeshifting 12, Singing 12, Spear 13, Spear Throwing 14, Survival (arctic) 12.

Equipment: hide armor (PD 1, DR 2), dagger, staff, club.

The Shapeshifter can change into any humanoid form plus one animal type. Each Shapeshifter has his or her own animal form that is determined during puberty.

Skeleton

ST: 9

Move/Dodge: 5/5

Size: 1 hex

DX: 10

PD/DR: 0/0

IQ: 8

Damage: 1d

HT: 10

Reach: 1

Skills: Shortsword 10, Throwing 9.

A missile, beam, or impaling attack does -2 damage, and no bonus damage, to a skeleton. However, crushing damage that gets through the armor is doubled.

Magic Items

Bottle of Rast

The Bottle acts as a type of magical magnet. For a wizard to charge the bottle, he must cast a spell on it. However, once a spell has been cast on the bottle, it can not be used to recharge it again until the original charge is lost. In addition, until the charge is lost the spell acts as if it remains on. This reduces the skill level of all spells by -1. This effect is cumulative.

Each spell used to power the bottle produces enough magical energy to keep it charged for a full day. In addition, if the spell has a magery requirement, the charge is increased by one day per point of magery required. The bottle can be charged for a maximum of ten days. Spells are "recovered" in the reverse order in which they were cast.

The thought masking rain within the bottle produces an effect similar to a Hide Thoughts spell. In addition, however, the thought mask will also hide the fact that a subject successfully resists an attempt to read their mind. The effect lasts for 2-12 days.

Pipes of Haunting

When these pipes are played, the music has the effect of a Fear spell at level 20.

Ring of Cantrips

The wearer of this ring can cast each of the following spells once per day. IQ plus Magery equal to 14 or better is required to use this ring. Note that possession of this ring does not satisfy any spell prerequisites. Spells: Air-Golem 15, Colors 15, Decay 15, Haircut 15, Light 15, Perfume 15, Preserve Food 15, Restore 15, Season 15, Shape Light 15, Simple Illusion 15, Soilproof 15, Tell Time 15, Touch 15.

Spells

Sanguine Fury (VH)

Regular; Resisted by HT-2

This spell does 1d damage for each round it is maintained. Neither passive defense nor damage resistance protects against this injury! It requires no vocalization and has no audible or visible side effects. However, the target must remain in view to maintain the spell. Sanguine Fury has no effect on targets that lack a circulatory system.

Duration: 1 second.

Cost: 2 to cast; base 1 to maintain plus 1 for every 2 additional rounds. (Thus the fourth round costs 2, the sixth round costs 3, and so on.)

Time to cast: 3 seconds.

Prerequisite: Heat, Sickness, and Magery 2.

Appendix C – HERO®

The following stats are appropriate when running this module using the HERO® rules.

Significant Characters

Aukuita

13 STR, 14 DEX, 11 CON, 10 BODY, 13 INT, 15 EGO, 17 PRE, 6 COM
3 PD, 3 ED, 3 SPD, 5 REC, 22 END, 23 STUN

Powers

- Variable Power (Mimic) Pool (50 points), No Skill Roll Required, Only to mimic known person (-1/2), must have had contact with person (-1/2), takes 1 turn.
- Shape Shift (any form), 0 END, must be living form (-1/2), requires Sight PER roll, Extra Time: 1 turn.
- 6d6 Mind Control, Only to Flee in Fear (-1/2), Gestures, Incantations, OIF Holy Symbol, Single Recoverable Charge (Rest 8 hours to recover), Religious Restrictions, No effect on Undead (-1/4) – *Cause Fear*
- 3d6 Drain DEX, Only to Reduce OCV/DCV, Gestures, Incantations, OIF Holy Symbol, Single Recoverable Charge (Rest 8 hours to recover), Religious Restrictions – *Curse*
2d6 Drain EGO, Linked, Gestures, Incantations, OIF Holy Symbol, Single Recoverable Charge (Rest 8 hours to recover), Religious Restrictions.
- Images to Sight, 6" Radius, Only to Create Area of Darkness (-1/2), Gestures, Incantations, OIF Holy Symbol, Single Continuing Recoverable Charge lasting 2 hours (Rest 8 hours to recover) (+1/4), Religious Restrictions – *Darkness*
- Presentience, Only to see immediate future (-1/2), Activation 14-, Gestures, Incantations, OIF Holy Symbol, Single Continuing Recoverable Charge lasting 10 minutes (Rest 8 hours to recover) (+1/4), Religious Restrictions – *Augury*
- 1d6-1 HKA, reduced penetration (-1/4) - claws
- Combat Sense 11-.
- Familiarity w/ Quarterstaff.
- +1 w/ Unarmed Combat.
- Danger Sense 12-, Mystical.
- Ultraviolet Vision.
- Acting 14-; Concealment 12-; Conversation 12-, Disguise 14-; Mimicry 14-; Paramedic 12-, Persuasion 14-, Shadowing 12-; Stealth 12-, Survival 12-.
- AK: North Lands 13-; AK: Arctic 11-; KS: History of Changelings 16-; KS: Cooking 11-; KS: Singing 11-; KS: Religious Dogma 12-, KS: Religious Procedures (including sacrifice) 14-, PS: Teaching 11-, PS: Weaving 11-.
- Language: Northron (Native, Literate)
- ES: Deduction 8-; ES: Oratory 8-; ES: Tracking 8-.
- Perk: Priestess; Perk: Leader of Children of Synzhen.

- ES: Climbing, Conversation, Deduction 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- Distinctive Features (Easily Concealable, Major Reaction).
- Physical Limitation: Cowardly (Common, Strong).
- Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with freeing Children of Synzhen (Common, Strong).
- Psychological Limitation: Fear of Illusionists (Uncommon, Strong).
- Psychological Limitation: Ruthlessly protects her flock (Very Common, Strong).

OCV: 5; DCV: 5; ECV: 3; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Equipment: Holy Symbol of Tiahr, Staff (+1 OCV, 4d6N, 13 STR).

E'Brunloge

- STR, 11 DEX, - CON, 10 BODY, 11 INT, 25(40) EGO, 20 PRE, - COM
- PD, - ED, 3 SPD, - REC, - END, - STUN

Powers

- Images (sight, sound, 1 hex), 0 END.
- 2d6 Entangle, Indirect (+3/4), Area Effect (Hex), Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Only where plants can grow (-1/4), Single Recoverable Charge (Rest 8 hours to recover) - *Entangle*
- 2d6 Healing, Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Single Recoverable Charge (Rest 8 hours to recover) - *Cure Light Wounds*
- Sense Life, Range, Discriminatory, +4 PER, Only to identify a specific plant or animal (-1/2), Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Single Continuing Recoverable Charge (Lasts 5 minutes, Rest 8 hours to recover) - *Locate Animals or Plants*
- 4d6 Telepathy, Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Single Continuing Recoverable Charge (Lasts 5 minutes, Rest 8 hours to recover), Animals Only (-1/2), Extra Time: Full Phase (-1/2) - *Speak With Animals*
- 10d6 Dispel Running, Area Effect (Hex, Nonselective Target), Does Knockback, Double Knockback, Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Single Continuing Recoverable Charge (Lasts 1 hour, Rest 8 hours to recover), Extra Time: Full Phase - *Trip*
- 6d6 Minor Transform (Warp Wood), Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Single Recoverable Charge (Rest 8 hours to recover), Extra Time: Full Phase - *Warp Wood*
- 1d6 Entangle, Area Effect (20' Radius), Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Single Recoverable Charge (Rest 8 hours to recover), Extra Time: 2 Phases (-3/4) - *Plant Growth*
- Retrocognition, Sight and Sound, Limited to life of one spirit (-1/2), Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Single Continuous Recoverable Charge (Lasts 5 Minutes, Rest 8 hours to recover), Extra Time: 2 Phases (-3/4) - *Speak With Dead*
- 4d6 Healing, Gestures, ½ DCV Concentrate, Single Recoverable Charge (Rest 8 hours to recover), Extra Time: 3 Phases (-3/4) - *Cure Serious Wounds*
- Normal Vision, Night Vision, Normal Hearing.
- Sense Emotions, Range, Discriminatory, +2 PER.
- Sense Psychological Limitations, Range, Discriminatory, +2 PER.
- Universal Translator 12-.
- Perk: Sacred Spirit (x2 PRE versus Undead)
- KS: Naturalist 24, KS: Singing 19.
- Running 5''.
- ES: Concealment, Conversation, Deduction, Shadowing, Stealth 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- Dependence on Forest Glade Enchantment (Uncommon, 1d6/week)
- Repelled by civilized places (Uncommon, Strong)
- Must protect glade (Common, Total)
- Intolerant of hateful or malevolent beings (Common, Strong)
- Cannot kill (Uncommon, Strong)
- Fear of civilization (Uncommon, Moderate)
- Fear of fire (Uncommon, Strong)
- Truthful (Uncommon, Strong)
- Shy and timid (Uncommon, Moderate)

OCV: 4; DCV: 4; ECV: 8(13); Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Note: at the start of the adventure e' Brunloge is down to 25 EGO due to the drain on the enchanted glade. If he falls below zero he will enter the spirit void and not return until the magic of the glade is restored.

Erik Olfson

17 STR, 13 DEX, 16 CON, 15 BODY, 12 INT, 16 EGO, 14 PRE, 9 COM,
4 PD, 4 ED, 3 SPD, 6 REC, 32 END, 32 STUN.

Powers

- FAM w/ Common Melee weapons, FAM w/ Common Missile Weapons, FAM w/ Sling.
- +1 w/ All Weapons, +1 w/ Quarterstaff, +2 w/ Sword, +1 w/ Spear, +1 OCV w/ Thrown Knives/Axes.
- +1" Running (7" total).
- Perk: Low Justice, Perk: Deputy.
- Transport Familiarity: Boats
- Combat Driving: Northron Raiding Ship 16-.
- Bureaucratics 12-, Climbing 12-, Deduction 12-, Interrogation 12-, Paramedic 12-, Riding 15-, Stealth 12-, Survival 11-, Tactics 13-, Tracking 12-.
- KS: Arctic Lands 12-, KS: Intelligence Analysis, KS: Raid Planning.
- AK: North Lands 13-, AK: Continent 15-.
- Languages: Northron (Native)
- ES: Concealment, Conversation, Shadowing 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- Age 40+
- Loyal to Lord (Common, Strong)
- Must protect Alskava (Common, Strong)
- Stubborn (Common, Moderate)

OCV: 4; DCV: 4; ECV: 5; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Equipment: Ring Mail (4 DEF), Round Shield (+2 DCV), Ring of Protection (+1 DCV), Broad Sword (+1 OCV, 1d6+1K, 13 STR), Medium Spear (-1 OCV, 1.5d6K, 10 STR, 1.5-Handed), Magic Dagger (+2 OCV, 1d6K, 8 STR, Can be thrown).

Ingvar Gunderson

12 STR, 16 DEX, 14 CON, 12 BODY, 17 INT, 15 EGO, 13 PRE, 11 COM,
2 PD, 3 ED, 3 SPD, 5 REC, 28 END, 25 STUN.

Powers

- Magic Skill (INT-based) 19-.
- VPP (45 points), Study spell book to change spells (-1/2).

Includes the following spells:

- Images to Sight, Gestures, Incantations, ½ DCV Concentrate, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 18-, Limitation: only to produce disguise on caster (-1-1/2) – *change self* [END Cost: 1, Real Cost: 3]
 - Invisibility to Normal Sight without Fringe, Gestures, Incantations, 0 DCV Concentrate, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 16-, OIF Eyelash encased in gum arabic, Extra Time: Full Phase – *invisibility* [END Cost: 3, Real Cost: 3]
 - 1d6 EGO Attack, Area Effect (4" Radius) , Continuous, Gestures, Incantations, 1/2 DCV Concentrate, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 16-, OIF Rose petals (Fragile), STUN loss recovered when shaken awake (-1) – *sleep* [END Cost: 3, Real Cost: 9]
 - Clinging, Costs END (-1/2), Gestures, Incantations, ½ DCV Concentrate, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 18-, OIF Drop of bitumen and a live spider – *spider climb* [END Cost: 1/5", Real Cost: 3]
 - Summoning (14 point Mule), Gestures, Incantations, ½ DCV Concentrate, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 16-, OIF Mule hairs, Mule vanishes after 12 hours – *mount* [END Cost: 3, Real Cost: 11]
 - 6d6 Telepathy, Gestures, Incantations, ½ DCV Concentrate Throughout, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 16- – *ESP* [END Cost: 3, Real Cost: 12]
 - Sanguine Fury 13-. [END Cost: 3, Real Cost: 13]
- FAM w/ Swords, FAM w/ Thrown Knives/Axes.

- Scholar, Linguist.
- Climbing 13-, Disguise 14-, High Society 12-, Paramedic 14-, Persuasion 14-, Riding 17-.
- SS: Archaeology 16-.
- KS: Artist 15-, KS: Astrology 15-, KS: Wizardry 12-, KS: History of Magic 12-, KS: Herbalism 14-, KS: History of Northern Lands 19-, KS: Shamanism 14-.
- AK: Continent 15-, AK: North Lands 17.
- Languages: Northron (Native, Literate), Language: Allemaine (Fluent, Literate), Language: Mezina (Fluent, Literate), Languages: North Coast (Native, Literate).
- +2" Swimming (4" total).
- ES: Concealment, Conversation, Deduction, Shadowing, Stealth 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- Dependent NPC - Ondro (Normal) 11-.
- Reputation 8-.
- Hunted (More powerful, limited area, wants to kill) 11-.
- Absent Minded (Infrequently).
- Loyalty to People of Alskava (Common, Strong).
- Loyal to Friends (Common, Strong).
- Truthfulness (Common, Strong).

OCV: 5; DCV: 5; ECV: 5; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Equipment: bracers of defense (+5 DCV), enchanted dagger (+1 OCV, +1 w/ Dagger, 1d6K, 8 STR, Can Be Thrown), magic scroll (*see magic items*).

Jens Olso

17 STR, 15 DEX, 13 CON, 15 BODY, 14 INT, 13 EGO, 10 PRE, 12 COM, 5 PD, 4 ED, 3 SPD, 6 REC, 26 END, 30 STUN.

Powers

- +1 w/ All Sense Perceptions (13-).
- FAM w/ Common Melee Weapons, FAM w/ Common Missile Weapons.
- +2 w/ Swords, +1 w/ Bow, +1 w/ Pole Arms, +1 w/ Javelins.
- Combat Sense 12-.
- Defense Maneuver.
- +1" Running (7" total).
- Transport Familiarity: Boats
- Combat Driving: Northron Raiding Ship 13-.
- Climbing 12-, Gambling 11-, Paramedic 12, Riding 16-, Seduction 12-, Stealth 13-, Survival 16-, Tactics 12-, Tracking 13-, Trading 13-.
- KS: Arctic Lands 11-, KS: Armoury 17-, KS: Military History 13-.
- AK: North Lands 15-.
- Languages: Northron (Native)
- ES: Concealment, Conversation, Deduction, Shadowing 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- Reputation 8-.
- Berserk when provoked, Enraged Only (Uncommon) 8-, 11-.
- Loyalty to People of Alskava (Common, Strong).
- Loyal to Friends (Common, Strong).

Equipment: studded leather armor (3 DEF), round shield (+2 DCV), magical broadsword (+1 OCV, +1 w/ Swords, 1.5d6K, 13 STR), boots of elvenkind (+2 Stealth skill).

Mylda Ondheim

11 STR, 16 DEX, 14 CON, 11 BODY, 15 INT, 10 EGO, 16 PRE, 14 COM, 2 PD, 3 ED, 3 SPD, 5 REC, 28 END, 24 STUN.

Powers

- +1 w/ All Sense Perceptions (13-), +2 Hearing Perception (15-).
- FAM w/ Swords, FAM w/ Bows.

- Transport Familiarity: Boats
- Climbing 16-, Lockpicking 14-, Riding 13-, Security Systems 15-, Shadowing 13-, Sleight of Hand 12-, Stealth 13-, Survival 14-, Trading 13-.
- KS: Arctic Lands 13-, KS: Cooking 15-, KS: Fishing 15-, KS: Gem Cutting 14-, KS: Tailor 17-.
- AK: North Lands 14-.
- Languages: Northron (Native, Literate)
- ES: Concealment, Conversation, Deduction 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- Impulsive (Common, Strong).
- Wanderlust (Common, Moderate).

Equipment: ring of protection (+1 DCV), leather armor (2 DEF), shortsword (+1 OCV, 1d6K, 10 STR).

Trathasha

10 STR, 16 DEX, 17 CON, 9 BODY, 18 INT, 15 EGO, 10 PRE, 4 COM, 2 PD, 4 ED, 3 SPD, 5 REC, 34 END, 23 STUN.

Powers

- Perk: Follower (Crow Familiar).
- Mind Link, Familiar Only.
- +2 to Magic Skill, Only when Familiar is within 1 mile. (*factored in*)
- Magic Skill (INT-based) 17-.
- VPP (45 points), Study spell book to change spells.

Includes the following spells:

- 6d6 Mind Control, Gestures, Incantations, 1/2 DCV Concentrate, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 14- – *charm person* [END Cost: 3, Real Cost: 13]
- 1d6 EGO Attack, Area Effect (4" Radius) , Continuous, Gestures, Incantations, 1/2 DCV Concentrate, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 14-, OIF Rose petals (Fragile), STUN loss recovered when shaken awake (-1) – *sleep* [END Cost: 3, Real Cost: 9]
- 3d6 Drain STR, Gestures, Incantations, 1/2 DCV Concentrate, Requires Magic Skill Roll, 14- – *ray of enfeeblement* [END Cost: 3, Real Cost: 12]
- Ultraviolet Vision, +2 Hearing Perception (15-), -2 Sight Perception (10-).
- Double Jointed. (*not factored in*)
- +4 PRE, Only to intimidate.
- +2 w/ Concealment, Mimicry, and Sleight of Hand. (*factored in*)
- FAM w/ Swords.
- Transport Familiarity: Boats
- Concealment 14-, Contortionist 12-, Climbing 17-, Lockpicking 12-, Mimicry 13-, Paramedic 13-, Security Systems 12-, Shadowing 12-, Sleight of Hand 14-, Stealth 13-, Streetwise 13-, Survival 14-, Trading 13-.
- KS: Arctic Lands 13-, KS: Collectibles 11-, KS: Cooking 16-, KS: Herbalism 15-, KS: Musical Instrument (Pipes) 14-, KS: Poisons 16-.
- AK: North Lands 16-.
- Languages: Northron (Native, Literate)
- ES: Conversation, Deduction 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- Reputation 11-.
- Hunted (More powerful, extensive NCI, limited area, kill) 11-.
- Takes Same Wounds as Familiar (Infrequently, Fully)
- Cannibal (Common, Strong).
- Sadistic (Common, Strong).
- Reclusive (Common, Strong).

Equipment: shortsword (+1 OCV, 1d6K, 10 STR), pipes of haunting (*see magic items*), ring of cantrips (*see magic items*).

Encounters

Black Bear

23* STR, 15 DEX, 18 CON, 12 BODY, 5 INT, 5 EGO, 20 PRE, 10 COM,
8* PD, 6* ED, 3 SPD, 10 REC, 36 END, 33 STUN.

* *Bonuses for Density Increase already figured in.*

Powers

- Density Increase (5 points), Persistent, Always On.
- 1d6 HKA, reduced penetration – bite. [1 END]
- 1d6+1 HKA, reduced penetration – claws. [2 END]
- Sacrifice Throw (tripping), +2 OCV, +1 DCV, does STR damage, bear falls on victim.
- +2 PD Armor.
- +1 PRE, create fear only, only while roaring.
- +1 to Hearing and Smell Perceptions. (11-)
- Climbing 12-, Concealment 10-.
- +1 w/ H-to-H combat.
- -2 to Sight Perception.
- -1" Running (5" total). [1/5" END]

Disadvantages

- No fine manipulation
- Hibernates in winter (Infrequent, Fully)
- Frequently hungry (goes out of way to find food) (Common)

OCV: 5; DCV: 5; ECV: 2; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Crow Familiar

-25 STR, 18 DEX, 10 CON, 2 BODY, 4 INT, 5 EGO, 7 PRE, 10 COM,
1 PD, 2 ED, 3 SPD, 3 REC, 20 END, 8 STUN.

* *Bonuses for Shrinking already figured in.*

Powers

- Shrinking (30 pts), Persistent, Always On.
- 1-pip HKA, reduced penetration – bite
- +2 to all Perceptions (12-)
- +2 to hearing Perception (14- total)
- Mind Link, Trathasha Only.
- Concealment 12-.
- -5" Running (1" total).
- -1" Swimming (2" total).

Disadvantages

- No fine manipulation
- Hunted by predators 8-
- 1d6/day when separated from Trathasha.

OCV: 5; DCV: 5; ECV: 2; Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12.

Enraged Ghost

- STR, 11 DEX, - CON, - BODY, 11 INT, 11 EGO, 20 PRE, - COM,
- PD, - ED, 3 SPD, - REC, - END, - STUN.

Powers

- 1d6+1 BODY Drain – burning touch
- Images (sight, sound, 1 hex), No END Cost.
- Change Environment (fear) 8" radius, No END Cost.
- Sense Own Remains, Ranged, 360 Degrees.
- Normal Hearing.

Disadvantages

- Bound to vicinity of remains, physically and psychologically.
- Magic or silver weapons do damage as Consume Spirit (Infrequently, Fully).
- Other weapons do half damage as Consume Spirit (Infrequently, Greatly).
- Hates Trathasha (Always, Total).
- Susceptibility to holy water, 5d6 per phase.

OCV: 4; DCV: 4; ECV: 4; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Note that since the enraged ghost is blind, it is not susceptible to holy symbols.

Fire Sprite

4 STR, 18 DEX, 10 CON, 4 BODY, 13 INT, 9 EGO, 14 PRE, 20 COM,
2 PD, 2 ED, 3 SPD, 3 REC, 20 END, 10 STUN.

Powers

- Shrinking (30 pts), Always On, 0 END, Persistent.
- 1d6 RKA, Damage Shield, Personal Immunity, Persistent, Always On.
- Change Environment (Heat), 2" radius, No Range, Persistent, Always On.
- Change Environment (Adjust Fire), 2" radius, Only to target a fire (-1).
- 2d6 Energy Blast versus ED, Area Effect (Cone), No Range, Personal Immunity.
- 75% Resistant Energy Damage Reduction, only versus fire (-1).
- Life Support: Immune to Disease and Aging, Intense Heat.
- 10" Flight, OAF Wings.
- Running -4" (2" total).
- Infravision.
- Sense Magic, Ranged, Discriminatory.
- +2 to all Perceptions (14-), +1 to hearing Perception (15- total).
- Conversation 15-, Persuasion 12-.
- Language: Northron (Accent).
- ES: Concealment, Deduction 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- 1.5x Effect from cold (Common)
- 1.5x Effect from water (Common)
- Wants to return to home world (Common, Strong).
- Only kills in self-defense (Uncommon, Strong)
- Fear of cold (Common, Strong)

OCV: 6; DCV: 6; ECV: 3; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Lord's Guards

14 STR, 13 DEX, 14 CON, 11 BODY, 10 INT, 11 EGO, 13 PRE, 10 COM,
3 PD, 3 ED, 3 SPD, 6 REC, 28 END, 25 STUN.

Powers

- FAM w/ Common Melee weapons.
- +1 w/ H-to-H Combat.
- +1" Running (7" total).
- Transport Familiarity: Boats
- Riding 11-, Stealth 11-, Survival 11-.
- KS: Arctic Lands 12-.
- AK: North Lands 11-.
- Languages: Northron (Native)
- ES: Climbing, Concealment, Conversation, Deduction, Shadowing, Stealth 8- (ea.)

Disadvantages

- Loyal to Lord (Common, Moderate).

Equipment: Brigandine Armor (3 DEF), Round Shield (+2 DCV), Broad Sword (+1 OCV, 1d6+1K, 13 STR), Medium Spear (-1 OCV, 1.5d6K, 10 STR, 1.5-Handed), Dagger (+1 OCV, 1d6-1K, 8 STR, Can be thrown).

Metamorph

13 STR, 13 DEX, 12 CON, 9 BODY, 10 INT, 9 EGO, 8 PRE, 4 COM,
3 PD, 3 ED, 2 SPD, 6 REC, 24 END, 24 STUN.

Powers

- Shape Shift (any form), 0 END, must be living form (-1/2), requires Sight PER roll, Extra Time: 1 turn.
- Desolidification (vulnerable to fire and magic), 0 END Persistent, Extra Time: Full Minute, Only pass through solids if there's an opening (-1/2) – gelatinous form.
- Regeneration, 1 BODY/Hour.
- 1d6-1 HKA, reduced penetration (-1/4) - claws
- Familiarity w/ Common Melee Weapons.
- +1 w/ Unarmed Combat.
- Ultraviolet Vision.
- Acting 11-; Concealment 11-, Disguise 11-; Mimicry 13-; Survival 12-.
- AK: North Lands 13-; AK: Arctic 11-; KS: Singing 11-.
- Language: Northron (Native, Literate)
- ES: Climbing, Conversation, Deduction, Shadowing, Stealth 8-

Disadvantages

- Distinctive Features (Easily Concealable, Major Reaction).
- Impulsive (Common, Strong).
- Must revert to gelatinous form for 1 hour each day, or unable to Shapeshift.
- Spontaneously revert to gelatinous form each day for 1d6 minutes if temperature is over 30°C, on an 8-.

OCV: 4; DCV: 4; ECV: 3; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Equipment: Hide Armor (2 DEF), Dagger (+1 OCV, 1d6-1K, 8 STR, Can be thrown), Quarterstaff (+1 OCV, 4d6N, 13 STR), or Club (4d6N).

Shadow Shaper

13 STR, 13 DEX, 13 CON, 8 BODY, 8 INT, 8 EGO, 8 PRE, 4 COM,
4 PD, 3 ED, 2 SPD, 6 REC, 25 END, 24 STUN.

Powers

- Images to Sight Group, -5 to others' Perception, Only to change own appearance of another humanoid (-1-1/4), No Range, 0 END Persistent – illusionary disguise.
- Invisible to Sight Group with Fringe, Only while stationary in shadows (-1).
- 1d6-1 HKA, reduced penetration (-1/4) – claws.
- Familiarity w/ Common Melee Weapons.
- +1 w/ Unarmed Combat.
- Ultraviolet Vision.
- Acting 11-; Concealment 11-, Disguise 11-; Mimicry 13-; Survival 12-.
- AK: North Lands 13-; AK: Arctic 11-; KS: Singing 11-.
- Language: Northron (Native, Literate).
- ES: Climbing, Conversation, Deduction, Shadowing, Stealth 8-.

Disadvantages

- Distinctive Features (Easily Concealable, Major Reaction).
- Impulsive (Common, Strong).
- When illusionary disguise is active, Shaper has no shadow on the ground.

OCV: 4; DCV: 4; ECV: 3; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Equipment: Hide Armor (2 DEF), Dagger (+1 OCV, 1d6-1K, 8 STR, Can be thrown), Quarterstaff (+1 OCV, 4d6N, 13 STR), or Club (4d6N).

Shapeshifter

13 STR, 13 DEX, 12 CON, 10 BODY, 11 INT, 10 EGO, 9 PRE, 5 COM,
3 PD, 3 ED, 3 SPD, 5 REC, 23 END, 24 STUN.

Powers

- Shape Shift (any form), 0 END, must be living form (-1/2), requires Sight PER roll, Extra Time: 1 turn.
- Variable Power (Creature Abilities) Pool (30 points), No Skill Roll Required, Only to use same physical abilities as shapeshifted form (-1/2), takes 1 turn.
- 1d6-1 HKA, reduced penetration (-1/4) - claws
- Familiarity w/ Common Melee Weapons.
- +1 w/ Unarmed Combat.
- Ultraviolet Vision.
- Concealment 11-, Disguise 12-; Mimicry 13-; Survival 12-.
- AK: North Lands 13-; AK: Arctic 11-; KS: Singing 11-.
- Language: Northron (Native, Literate)
- ES: Climbing, Conversation, Deduction, Shadowing, Stealth 8-

Disadvantages

- Distinctive Features (Easily Concealable, Major Reaction).
- Impulsive (Common, Strong).

OCV: 4; DCV: 4; ECV: 3; Phases: 4, 8, 12.

Equipment: Hide Armor (2 DEF), Dagger (+1 OCV, 1d6-1K, 8 STR, Can be thrown), Quarterstaff (+1 OCV, 4d6N, 13 STR), or Club (4d6N).

Magic Items

Bottle of Rast

The internal properties of the bottle are powered by means of a 100-point END Reserve. This END Reserve does not have a REC, but instead must be “charged” by a wizard or other magical power. This charging functions as a 3d6 Transfer versus all magical powers of the wizard or power. The Transfer has a maximum of 100 points and is recovered at the rate of 10 points per day. But the magic must be “fed” to the Bottle; either by an act of will on the part of the wizard or by immersion in the magical power.

When the bottle is charge past the 100-point END Reserve, the remainder is absorbed into a second, “Overload” 100-point END reserve. This reserve powers the dancing cloud of lights around the bottle that makes it difficult to locate. It also powers the unpredictable adjustment power effects that occasionally alter nearby life forms.

The thought masking rain within the bottle is a linked power that combines a +10 Mental Defense versus Telepathy with a +5 PER Images to Mental Group. The powers are invisible to all senses and are maintained by a continuing charge lasting for 2-12 days. The mental images produce a seemingly normal veneer of surface thoughts that can be read with the Telepathy power.

Pipes of Haunting

Ability: +15 PRE, Only to cause fear (-1/2), Gestures throughout (play pipes) (-1/2), Incantations throughout (music) (-1/2), Requires skill roll (-1/2), OAF Pipes (-1), Independent (-2).
Active Cost: 15; Real Cost: 2.

Ring of Cantrips

This ring is a magical multipower device that can vary the lighting, make cosmetic changes, or perform light labor. Up to 16 such powers can be used per day, or the wearer’s INT score, whichever is less.

Abilities:

Cantrip Multipower (30 point reserve), Activation 14- (-1/2), ½ DCV Concentrate (-1/4), OIF Ring (-1/2), Independent (-1/2), Uses per day limited to INT (-1/4).

1. – Change Environment, 1” Radius, Adjust Color or Lighting (+1). [Fixed, 2 END]
2. – 2d6 Cosmetic Transform, Change Target into Anything (+1). [Fixed, 3 END]
3. – Telekinesis, 5 STR, Fine Manipulation. [Fixed, 2 END]

Total Active Cost: 14; Real Cost: 10.

Magic Scroll

This parchment scroll has two remaining spells that Ingvar has not yet activated.

Abilities:

1. Clairsentience to Sight – *wizard eye*
2. Telekinesis, 20 STR, Area Effect (Radius) (+1), Only to cause tripping and fumbling (-1/2) – *fumble*

Combined: Needs Good Light to Read by (-1/4), Incantations (-1/4), ½ DCV Concentrate (-1/4), Single Continuing Charge Lasting 5 Minutes, Charge Does Not Recover (-2), OAF Scroll, Fragile (-1-1/4), Independent (-2).

Total Active Cost: 80; Real Cost: 11.

Spells

Sanguine Fury

The target of this spell will suffer STUN loss until the total falls below zero. At that point the target bursts into flames and it begins to suffer both STUN and BODY damage.

Power: 3d6 EB

Modifiers: 1/2 END (+1/4), Continuous (+1), Invisible Power Effects (Sight) (+1), NND (No circulatory system, Life Support: Intense Heat; Takes BODY at minus STUN) (+1); Beam Attack (-1/4), No Knockback (-1/4), Gestures (-1/4), ½ DCV Concentrate (-1/4), Requires a (Magic) Skill Roll (-1/2), OAF Vial of Ape's blood and a Burning Splint, Expendable (-1-1/4), Character must have at least 10 points in spells from Fire College (-1/4), Character must have at least 10 points in spells from Body Manipulation College (-1/4), Does not work in water (-1/4), Extra Time: 1 Phase (-1/2). Active Cost = 64 points.

END Cost = 3; Magic Roll = -6; Casting Time: 1 Phase.

Real Cost: 13.

The End