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===== **The NET.PLOTS.BOOK** =====  
**Volume II**  
**Compiled by Aaron Sher**



**Short Summaries**  
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One of the PC's falls in love with a woman who happens to be a witch...perhaps she is allied with a group working against the PCs?

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The PCs are sent with an ambassador to another country to protect him and do his bidding. There may be some espionage, rescuing, downright bullying, etc. Could make a nice medieval special operations background.

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After a rash of thefts from wizards in the Guild, the PCs are hired to catch the perpetrators. They could be other mages, three dozen halfling thieves, demons, or even time travelers. PCs need to figure out who might get hit next, how to catch the criminals, who are they, etc.

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After a fight where all the PC's seemingly died or are captured, they wake up to the crack of a whip, as they have been sold into slavery onboard a galley. They have no equipment, they have to work to exhaustion, they get very little food, but if they play well, they might be able to escape.

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The Queen's beau (a very handsome knight-errant or something) is missing and he was last seen in a tavern at the edge of town. The PC's are the people who were determined to have useful information, after a lengthy interview/screening by the Queen's Marshall-General, etc. They set out to find him, since it is thought he is in grave danger.

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The party wakes up around a table with wine goblets near at hand. They discover that they have forgotten everything they did over the past two weeks. Apparently, as they uncover clues, they were hired by someone to do a job, and when the job was finished the person invited them to dinner. Interesting events abound as the party attempts to piece together the events of the last fortnight...

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Bonecrusher (an Orc, now a Giant Orc Chieftain) has found the Gauntlet of Grummsh (an orcish Artifact) and is kicking some serious butt, raising an orc army and is about to invade the country to, er, root, pape, and lillage the area (he's powerful, but he's still an orc.) Of course, the destruction of this gauntlet is very important to the players. Bonecrusher could be considered the Guardian of the Gauntlet, and destroying it \*will\* bring curses from Grummsh onto the party.

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Four dragons (one blue and three greens) have banded together to increase their wealth. They (gasp) spent it on various magical weapons and defences and then attacked and took over a port city. Now they've removed all laws, taxing everything. All the good folk have escaped, and some

are running a resistance force. Of course, there's a catch. The blue dragon's been possessed by a lower planar being, and is opening a gate...

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A young drow got 'left behind' after a raid to the surface. He is a mid-level fighter, slightly lower-level magic user. Maybe give him a few pet large spiders for some extra challenge. He could take over a farm house (or two) with charm spells (maybe even charm a few of the animals). He could try and trick the party into finding the entrance to the drow realm for him (or maybe kill some inconvenient big thing). Anyway, as there's only one drow, a party of four or five lower level characters wouldn't really be in too great a danger.

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In a cave, in an incredibly cold pool of water, is a large round white stone (about 3 or 4 feet in diameter). It feels to all the world like marble, and radiates magic.

It's actually a white dragon egg. It stays in stasis, just hours from hatching, until it's heated up... to just about room temperature. Then it hatches. If your players are like mine, they'll take a big white magic rock without thinking twice; it should then hatch at exactly the worst time. My players made it all the way back to their ship, and put it in the hold, before it hatched. Great fun.

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One of the things I do for comic relief is have the PCs run across a particular ship full of really stupid sailors.

They are almost always in dire trouble when the PCs come across them, like the one time they were out in the middle of the ocean and their sails were on fire. The PCs had to put the fire out for them, because they didn't think of using sea water to put it out themselves.

The name of the ship is the Storm, and the captain ("pilot") looks and sounds an awful lot like Robert Plant.

It shouldn't take too much prodding before the PC's start calling it the "Ship of Fools"....

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"Wolf in Sheep's Clothing"

A demon (e.g. Cambion demon) has taken the shape of a respected member of the community (using polymorph self) and, masking his true alignment, shape and abilities, is slowly spreading death and terror in the city. The PC's are hired (as special agents by ??) to find the perpetrator and capture/kill them before it gets even more out of control. The demon is able to change shape easily and hence occasionally changes to take the form of one of its victims to throw off the scent. Its sole purpose is to cause disruption and Chaos (or was it brought here by someone for other reasons and escaped or was turned loose ?).

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"Curse of the Incontinent Dragon"

The party ventures into a small town after their latest expedition, only to find that the townsfolk are in an uproar. The mayor tells the party about the "cursed beast of darkness" which rises from its burrows to the north and flies over the hapless village dropping flaming missiles from his bowels. As the players pass by the mayor's house, they note the gruesome stench. Gobs of acid-spitting larvae still snake through the burnt ruins. To make a long story short, the witch of the wrymwoods which surround the village has cast a curse upon the foul dragon who used to be a nature loving and solitary beast. Now, in his incontinence, he regards the town as his private toilet. Furthermore, the curse has also reduced his intelligence by, oh say, 15 points perhaps. "Aww... duh... you mean you know ahh... I wasn't a 'spose to poop der... dahhhh!"

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There's a logging town nearby that, all of a sudden, starts spending money like there's no tomorrow. They go from a little frontier town to a place like in a matter of months. The players should be "just passing through", and notice this large change. They pass a bard that tells of the eighth murder in the town in a month.

What's really going on is that someone with tons of money is having the loggers clear-cut the forest the logging town is near. Unfortunately, the forest has a guardian (a dragon) that is a bit fanatical and unscrupulous in his guardianship; to scare the loggers into ceasing from clear-cutting the forest, he hires some assassin/terrorists to kill random loggers in the city. The players' mission, should they choose to accept it, is to stop this situation from escalating any further.

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This adventure is best for a party of low-level fantasy characters.

A mage has managed to control an Ice Lizard (a la Fiend Folio), and uses it to his own ends. In my case, kidnapping a sage. The trick: it can appear to be a white dragon. Thus, the adventure seems very scary indeed from all the dragon rumours surrounding the kidnapping, but Ice Lizards aren't even pale shadows of real dragons. So, it's exciting, but manageable for low power parties.

Eventually, the party may figure out that it's not a real dragon and gain confidence to attack it (if they were too cautious). The final showdown is between the party, and the low level mage and his pet. For extra excitement, add a few minions, some traps in the lair, etc.

Naturally, the lure doesn't have to be a kidnapped sage, it could be rumours of dragon raids, a fair maiden kidnapping, or whatever you please.

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The party finds a book, a second copy of a book they have or have seen before, or can look at. On reading and/or close examination they find that the new copy has an extra passage/paragraph detailing where the famous hero/ine was buried/trapped. The book could be a history of the land, a tale of brave deeds etc. No other copies of the book have this passage, wise persons who are familiar with the work can't recall the passage in anything they've read (but maybe someone will partially confirm the rumor...).

Once they get there there are a few options (in order of time consumption increasing concerning the book):

- The place exists but is uninteresting
- The place doesn't exist (could take the party a long time to believe you)
- The place exists, but people tell the party it doesn't
- The place doesn't exist, but people say it does
- The place exists but it's somewhere else
- The place exists, but it's a trap by the scribes who confirmed its existence for you.

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The party is hired to transport scrolls to a temple in the hills, far from their hometown. They arrive in town, and discover that some townsfolk have disappeared. They meet the high priest, deliver the goods, and are prepared to leave, when they find the body of the high priest somewhere in town.

It seems a small band of doppelgangers have uncovered a lead to a magic item/relic that is buried beneath the tombs under the temple. The scrolls provide information of some sort the doppelgangers need to get to the item. The missing people are being used as slaves to dig beneath the tombs (which of course are full of nasties).

The final scene should be between the head doppelganger and his cronies just as the item is unearthed.

I've kept the details out of the description, because a lot of the stuff (like what's in the scroll) can be campaign-dependent. But if the players are perceptive/paranoid, they might blow this into a full-blown campaign: Did their employer know the high priest was a doppelganger? Is there a conspiracy to get doppelgangers into power in the human world?

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In a big classy town that the PC's have reason to go to every once in a while (I have it set in a city near a paladin training center) is an even classier restaurant called Chez Ralph. It's about as nice a restaurant as you could possibly have. Waiters check on you every minute or so, there's a string quartet playing in the background, and glasses of water ("Mineral water, imported from halfway around the world" is what they tell you, and they're telling the truth) cost around 20 gp.

Besides being a wonderful place to have players dump some cash, it's also Soap Opera City. The bizarrest people show up there, at the same time the PCs are there - but since nobody wants to make a scene, the whole feeling is very tense. Old girlfriends, major enemies, spies, polymorphed dragons, you name it, end up eating there - and usually with each other.

This requires a lot of continuity in the game. Most games couldn't support the type of background and tension Chez Ralph requires. You need long-term NPCs that the PCs have come to hate - and put them here, where you just can't DO anything about them!

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## "Tower Snatch"

A mage returns home after 1 year away and finds that someone has taken over his tower in the city. He wants it back and hires the PCs to reclaim it. He can supply maps etc of what it was like when he owned it (but someone may have moved "Walls of Stone" and placed whole new trap areas etc). The PC's can keep anything in the tower which is not specifically his (of course he can claim anything interesting and they won't know) and a cash reward. No-one knows who has it but he suspects someone respected in the community, hence the attack must be done fairly quietly so as not to warn the current possessor (the mage can prove that he is the owner however, he is not setting them up - unless you want this to happen). The tower is appropriately trapped and guarded, mostly with the expectation of killing the mage who owns it when he tries to return. The guards and traps are there to kill (not capture) anyone breaking in. City guards etc will not take sides unless the conflict ends up outside the tower.

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This is a non-linear adventure, good as a sideline for whenever the PC's happen to be home.

The PC's are based in a large city. The city is basically composed of three sectors. Two of which are virtually lawless and the other is extremely well controlled. The law portion is extending outward and slowly taking over the other two sections.

A faction war is taking place in the city. There are two opposing forces at war with each other (it could be a peasant/slave revolt, or a religious purge, or a supernatural invasion, or whatever.)

The war expands steadily, more and more groups getting dragged into it and being forced to choose sides. An interesting twist would be for 2 groups that 2 different PC's belong be on different sides. Great chance for roleplaying here!

The war could develop while the PCs are away, and upon return they get the opportunity to jump in.

Think of it, the politics! The adventure! The intrigue! The danger! The chance to be hunted by one of the most powerful groups in the city/county/country/kingdom!

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## "Gamma World"

An item has been stolen from a temple/mage/lord etc, the thieves trailed to a portal leading to an unknown plane/realm. The PC's are hired to follow and retrieve the item and/or scout the realm. The realm escaped to is from the Gamma World game. Several thousand years after an atomic war, patches of technology still exist. Most survivors are animal and/or human mutants and have a mix of equipment. Laser pistols, bow and arrows, smart missiles, swords, armalite rifles, battle axes, war robots etc. Survivors are TOUGH and many have physical and/or mental mutations, as the weak ones have already died out. Several technological installations still exist, guarded by robots etc. PCs must trace the item, find the current owners, retrieve the item and return before radiation traces in the atmosphere slowly kill them. (Optionally, the portal is now set so that it

can only be used by someone carrying the stolen item, hence stopping the PC's escaping or more raiders coming through). Equipment bought back may or may not work. PCs with laser pistols, rocket launchers and mini-tanks are worrying in fantasy worlds.

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A plot for a Paranoia campaign:

A Death Leopard Head Honcho decides to run a scam on the First Church of Christ Computer Programmer. Her theology is fairly limited: "Jesus H. Christ" stands for J. HARLEY C., and Harley is the 3rd person in the Trinity. Jesus said "Have Fun!", and Harley shows us HOW to have fun. As the prophet of the Lord, she begins convincing lower Church members of the truth (her Death Leopard handle is Son of David, which she changes to Son-U-David for missionary purposes, and which also allows a handy link to Harley). The main mission consists of forming a rock group where she and her lieutenants take on yet more persona as ELL's Angels (Gabr-I-ELL, Raph-I-ELL, Mike-I-ELL and Ur-I-ELL) and give impromptu concerts to the Infrareads, inciting all 30 000 of them in the sector to "Have Fun!" She proposes a link between the Church and Death Leopard, which shall be called the First Church of Harley Games Programmer. It is a vital, yet little understood (especially by her) part of her theology that Jeremiah was a bullfrog.

Troubleshooters should be inserted, perhaps as agents for the high Church officials in Internal Security, who may or may not have varying degrees of certainty on how heretical all this is. Of course, if the Troubleshooters are IntSec, they have a good chance of being Church themselves, and may get caught up in the low clearance revivalist atmosphere...

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The party has just cleaned out some ex-mage's compound. In the scenario I was working with, the party had found a virgin ring of spell-storing and some matched jewelry, but just about any similar high-power magic would be useful as a set-up.

The party is resting from their endeavors when a well-dressed person comes to find them at their current quarters. He is an emissary from a high-level noble of a nearby country. He asks if the party is the one that cleared out the mage's quarters. If the party denies it, he produces proof. After the identification, the emissary asks if they have the magic item. He explains that the item belongs to his master, it was commissioned and paid for. He demands the item and offers little or no (DM's choice as necessary to provoke the party) reward. When the party refuses the emissary explains that by the laws of the country he comes from the item belongs to his master and they must return it to him.

If the party still refuses, the emissary declares them outlaw (something most countries ignore) from his country.

Whenever life is getting boring after that, send an assassin or two or maybe thieves to steal the desired item after the party. If the party tries to go after the noble they will have the difficulty of maneuvering in a country where they are outlaws. The whole setup provides a good hook for several other plots and can be used to cause havoc wherever the PC's go.

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The group has come to a city of which half has been taken over by orcs. The humans still control the other half. This stalemate has lasted for approximately 2 weeks with occasional border penetrations by each side into the opposing half (guerilla raids, party loves 'em, 2sp/head!).

But things have changed for the better/worse. An army from the north, in an attempt to make good on the city/kingdom's problems, has sailed into town. They wiped out the mercenaries guild (the only opposing force) and stated that all people were now citizens of the new empire and they would be rid of the orc menace within two weeks. Everyone has been drafted into the militia. What is really bizarre about the army is that it consists of all sorts of races (human, elf, 1/2 elf, etc), all speak a common tongue, they are VERY well organized yet are individuals. (Everyone has personal weapons, armor, etc.)

The party can decide what to do. They may not like the idea of being drafted into the militia to be used as fodder (for an empire they don't belong to) to rid the town (that they are only visiting) of the menace. However, it WILL provide for some good roleplaying trying to explain to the new invaders why the group should (or rather wants) to remain together.

The plus is that after the orcs are gone, the militia will be disbanded (or so the invaders say) and the members will be free to go on their way as citizens of the new empire (more lands to visit). The other bonus is that the party may be able to get ahold of a little of the recaptured territory.

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#### "Acquainted With the Night"

A group of players \*start\* by discovering that one of their friends has been bitten by a vampire. They follow through the entire process, possibly killing their friend once he/she has risen again, probably hunting down the vampire that bit their friend. Happy ending.

Then the vampire community seeks retribution. Yes, it was clumsy of the vampire to get caught, but it's not the place of the herd to exact justice on the vampires. The complexity of this scenario depends upon how you imagine the entire supernatural community.

One possible idea is that vampires -- the cool manipulative Undead -- just don't exist. Vampires are mindless creatures which reek of clotted blood and which fixate on their families because those are the strongest memories left. A vampire is what happens to someone who dies of a ghoul- bite. (Doesn't happen often because ghouls don't usually bite live people. NOTE: these are obviously not Vampire: The Masquerade ghouls.) The image of the vampire is the result of a plot between the ghouls and the werewolves: they wanted a patently false supernatural image that would distract attention from themselves. In this case, the PCs are under attack because they have a sample vampire to look at and modern science may discover the connection.

If you're running Vampire: The Masquerade, then the PCs are initiated by a Sire for their own protection. The Sire has some long- standing grievance against the Sire of the clumsy vampire, or has some ideological conflict with those who would kill the PCs.

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## "Dandelion Party"

North America is balkanized, split into twelve smaller countries, most of which call themselves the United States of America (except for two which call themselves Canada and one Quebec). Teleporting aliens (the Dandelions) have discovered Earth, which means that the other races of the interstellar Confederation have found us.

All trade agreements are tentative and depend upon Earth's acceptance into the Confederation. We are engaging in an exchange of art objects (yeah, I know I stole this from *\_Doorways In The Sand\_*), and Earth seems to have lost one of the alien artifacts. [When I ran this, it was a "pure" AI they lost; a wirehead had accidentally jacked it into the world network. Choice of artifact depends upon how the artifact was lost (by accident or not) and who is after it.]

Each country wants to be the one to find it. [Country of choice], which had the artifact when it disappeared, doesn't want the news to get out, though all the security services know about it. A subgroup of carnivorous aliens don't want the humans to find it.

Alien motivation: Humans may make amusing game or food animals, but it's not practical to ship them across interstellar space. However, if humans fail to make it into the Confederation, the aliens can bid on copyright to human DNA, producing clones for whatever purposes they want. [Intelligent species own their own copyrights.] Aliens may also have internecine struggles.

The characters could be innocent bystanders, diplomats, detectives, police officers, spies for the L-5 colonies, ninjas, yakuza...

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## "Not All Be Changed"

Superheroes seem to form their own communities, their own strata in society. Given that some of these people have the power of a nuclear bomb, it's understandable that certain espionage, police, and security agencies would want a mole in the superhero community.

The easiest types of supers for a non-super agent type to simulate are martial artist-gadgeteers and armoured-suit guys. (Actually, the agency may not have the budget for a \*really good\* armoured suit; I ran it with a martial-artist gadgeteer as the mole.) And having a secret ID is a good excuse for wandering off at odd times (and making reports to superiors).

The problem begins when the mole goes native. He forgets about making reports, he forgets about his loyalties, he's just caught up in the entire experience of being one of the Good Guys and thumping the Mauve Marauder. He ignores a recall order, so the Agency sends people in to collect him.

The PC's can be the agents sent to collect the mole, or they can be other supers, who are helping to defend the mole without knowing quite what's going on.

If you need to make things more confusing, there's the fact that he's been recalled because his ID has become known to \*other\* Agencies, and they want to capture him (in the guise of a supervillain, perhaps) and wring his brains about that little escapade in Bangkok four years ago, or the defection of Gyorgi Dimitrov, or whatever suits your political inclinations.

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For a mostly non-human party:

The party is approached by an elf. He explains the following situation:

His nephew (niece, whatever) was visiting some relatives a ways away, and during the travel home was "invited" to stay with a human lord. The lord sent a message that he wanted to arrange a "lease" of some territory for his brother to hold for (say) 30 years or so. The elves are very aware that such "leases" nearly always end up being permanent. They wish to secure the return of their relative, without allowing the lease. By their standards the health of their relative is more important than the relatively small lease, but they cannot act directly as the lord is on the other side of a neighboring humano-centric country. An elven force large enough to take the relative back would have to fight its way there and break long-standing peace treaties and probably start a war. So they want someone to act in stealth for them, they cannot provide any security outside their own country. The party's job, should they accept it, is to find the relative, break it free and return to the elven territory... without causing an inter-racial incident in the process.

The lord's holding should be strong enough that a direct attack by the PC's is suicide. Be prepared to have the party try several different methods.

Some twists possible: The elf is a mage, but has lost/used up all his spells and the lord has his spell-book hidden. The elf is drugged and won't cooperate. The elf is forced by a magical curse to stay near the lord's castle. A member of the elf's retinue is a traitor and tries to interfere with the party in non-obvious ways..... (traitor is a polymorphed human?)

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"Make Judgement by Their Rules" A starship receives a distress signal from a cold-sleep colony ship launched X years before, to an unexplored section of space. When they arrive, they discover that the entire colony ship is under the death sentence (or has already been killed) because a native killed one of the colony ship's scouts. The reason was that the scout violated . You may up the stakes by leaving the entire colony ship, still in cold sleep, in orbit, and the captain apparently committed suicide. The scenario is a mystery: why do \*we\* get punished for \*them\* killing us? \*Why\* did they kill us?

The crew of the starship is soon under the same death penalty. Evidence shows that the scout had a slight xenophobia--("Well within bounds, though--he was a scout, after all.") The aliens happen to be horned hominids, vaguely Satanic looking. Further examination shows that the scout also had a strongly religious background.

Eventually, peculiarities in the alien culture are explained when it's discovered that they are telepathic in some ways, and that 'concept' is \*Privacy\*. Or maybe \*Aggravated Mental Assault\*. The scout didn't have the decency to keep his/her emotions under control, the alien

picked them up and broadcast them back, and \*voila\* positive feedback cycle wherein the alien was tougher than the human, and won the fight.

This scenario depends upon a universe where telepathy is not impossible but is also not present among any of the players and probably not common or reliable in player space. I've never run it because I haven't had any brilliant thoughts about a society created by gramnivorous telepaths.

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## "Sword Of Kadorn"

An introductory fantasy adventure. Players are a group of village adolescents who have discovered a Sword of Power. The local lord responsibly decides that it should be sent to the capital, where they have mages who would understand such a thing, and since the PC's are not needed between spring shearing and harvest, the lord sends them with an advisor (village hedge-wizard, old man-at-arms, family retainer, whatever). The sword has chosen one of the PCs as its carrier.

Beyond the simple journey to the capital is the fact that the sword has its own agenda. Possibilities include:

- The sword was created to kill a particular ethnic group in a war; that ethnic group subsequently won the war, and it turns out that all the PC's but the chosen carrier are descended in some way from that ethnic group. Over the course of the journey, that PC argues with the sword over whether or not the other PC's should be killed. (PC: "It will be rather a long fight if I have to kill everyone in the province" SWORD: "But the glorious fight will at last be won!")
- The sword is a Lawful Good sword created a millennium ago, when morals were considerably different. \*It\* wants to encourage the kind of behaviour that it believes is good, probably rough eye-for-an-eye justice that is frowned upon in most civilized societies.
- The sword is a weapon to be used in an upcoming Apocalyptic War between Good and Evil (tm) and is searching for the best Hero (tm) for the war. In this case, the PC's are simply a vehicle for it to get to the capital. It may have magical abilities that keep the PC's alive during the early parts of the journey, but after it leaves them, they must learn to live without it.

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(This is an entire campaign, and begins with 1st level chars that have never met each other.)

Each PC is doing normal, everyday things (sword practice, study, drinking, etc) when he is arrested by the city police (knocked unconscious if they do not go peacefully). The PC's all end up in the same jail cell. The next day, they are brought to trial for the murder of some important official. They are convicted and sentenced to burn tomorrow. They are returned to their cell (stripped of all equipment) to await their execution.

The PC's have at least two escape paths: (more, if they're creative)

- If they carefully search the cell, they can find a loose stone under a cot (everyone gets a 'concealed doors' roll) (and if they look, they will eventually find it: the odds are in their favor, if there are more than a few PC's). By falling through, they can drop into sewers, float to the exit, batter away the grate, and they are free.
- Have a mage do something to the single guard (charm comes to mind immediately)

Once they are out, they must flee the city (if they try to stay, tell them the police have noticed their escape, and are beginning a house-to-house search. This information could come from a bartender or similar person.) They may wish to steal some equipment, or maybe a friend will provide them with weapons, urging them to run.

The PC's can travel either to the ocean (if they can capture a small vessel) or to the unexplored mountainous regions. There, they can gain experience and hide until they are ready to return, and find out who framed them for the murder. (It was the judge, or maybe another politician. After killing the victim, he planted evidence pointing to the PC's. The PC's may have been political opponents of him, or just randomly chosen.)

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### "Double-Cross"

The PC's are hired to retrieve a family heirloom which was stolen from the family 5 years ago. The family has just found who now has the heirloom and want the PC's to steal it back. The current owner is the original thief and is an accepted member of the community (probably not Lawful Good but not CE either). The theft must be done quietly so as not to attract attention as the family would lose social esteem if it was known that the object had been lost i.e. no questions asked in town etc. The current owner has a normal house with normal traps and precautions to protect this type of treasure, plus whatever skills or guards are required.

After the theft has been performed, the object handed over and the PC's are still congratulating themselves on a job well done, reward posters go up around town for the return of the object, the thieves wanted dead or alive or the object returned and no questions asked. The PC's have been suckered, the object has ALWAYS belonged to the person they stole it from and they are forced to either flee the area (never to return), or to get it back again from the person they originally stole it for (probably a member of the local Thieves' Guild or similar). The preferred method is to lead them toward stealing it back again (if they can break into the thieves' guild etc) as there are no other safe alternatives. If they are captured, no-one will believe them unless the PC's pay for a cleric to "Detect Lie" (very expensive under the circumstances) and no-one will mind if they are accidentally killed while trying to retrieve the object.

Last time I did this the object was a diamond tiara and used in royal coronations (one of which was due in 2 months). Nearly brought the whole political structure down.

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### "Time War"

An experimenting Cleric/Mage has opened a portal to another realm. Accidently this corresponded with an experiment in a modern-day underground military base which is performing a physics experiment on time/space. A trans-Time/dimensional portal is formed, both attuned to each other such that neither can be closed until both are closed simultaneously. Meanwhile, a military scouting party of Rambo types have passed through and are exploring the AD&D area (walky talkies, hand grenades, sub-machine guns and pistols, hand-to-hand combat etc). They don't believe what they've ended up in (save vs illusions and mind- affecting spells at +4) and are taking prisoners of anyone who can give information on the situation.

Problem 1: Stop the scouting party (including retrieving their gear if possible).

Problem 2: Find what equipment is needed to close both portals simultaneously - sages can probably help with this - and get the required equipment. (I used a Redeye missile and Staff of power, both of which were in the possession of a Barghest on the plane of Gehenna).

Problem 3: Go through the portal to the Underground base, find the source controlling the portal, and get control of the area. The guards are the (US ?) army equiped with modern gear, but the primary security structure is to block access to the experimental area, rather than the area itself.

Problem 4: Destroy both portals simultaneously. For example, fire the missile into controlling computer complex, while simultaneously breaking (retributive strike) the Staff of Power at the fantasy-side entrance to the portal. Then get the surviving PC's from the underground base to their home realm (either use plane shifting magic or have a time delay on the portal destruction).

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The elderly Lord of a small adventuring town was found missing from his home a after a visit from some strange men. The man's family determines that he has been kidnapped and hires the PC's to find him. The PC's, following various clues, find the man, and, after a bit of a fight with Kenku and (some other bird race) the Kenku call for a truce. They say they were hired to kidnapped the man and the person who hired them has not shown up with their money. They want no more trouble with the PC's and hand over the old man. So far, so good. What the PC's don't know is that the 'man' they take back is actually the Kenku leader, shape-changed into the old lord's appearance. The Kenku were able to use magic (my version allow them to be up to 3rd level mages) to ESP and CHARM the lord into telling them about his home, servants and treasure. All goes well until a few days after the PC's return the 'lord'. It seems that most of the servants have been fired, guard captains dismissed for failing in their duties, etc. In other words, the 'lord' is clearing the castle of any who could recognize a difference in him. His family (if any - in my campaign there was a granddaughter set off to a nunnery and a son who was locked in the dungeon for treason - he was blamed for the kidnapping!!) have been done away with and most of the loyal servants/guards are gone. The 'lord' has hired new 'people'; more Kenku coming in as advisors, guards, etc. Once this was done, they began cleaning out the castle treasury. Needless to say, the PC's will be curious, and the townsfolk furious. The 'lord' has diverted all monies to his "new and worthwhile projects" while neglecting the town and allowing things to decay. In the meantime, servants (Kenku) are looking for a ship (with a captain that would not ask questions) to come to the castle's dock during the night. This does not go unnoticed by the PC's. It all comes down to the Kenku, loading the castle treasure into the ship, and in the midst of

this, the PC's come in and battle the Kenku and their mercenaries. They may also find the true lord and his son in the castle dungeon.

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The PC's, after wandering into the nearest town for some R&R, suddenly find themselves drafted into an expeditionary army as a scouting party or even a small, \*expendable\* unit with an NPC leader. The pay is a little money plus food and any necessary clothing. If you want to be nice, you may assign the PC's horses, if they don't have any. As a scouting party, the PC's don't have to travel with the main force of the army, which gets rid of the possibility of \*huge\* battles.

At this point the PC's have several options:

- Join the army (possibly in anticipation of relieving the kingdom's enemies of unnecessary wealth)
- Play draft dodger and be chased by an elite group of warriors (plus MU's and clerics, if you want to get nasty)
- Pretend to join and desert at first opportunity (this would tend to rocket the PC's to the top of the local "10 Most Wanted" list).

Any way they choose, you can follow up with new ideas or just adjust the outcome so they wind up back in the army. The overall goal of the army is up to you. Whether it is to rescue a princess, lend aid to a besieged town or outpost, explore uncharted territory, or even to defeat an opposing army, the PC's need not participate in any large-scale battles. The job of scouting gives many opportunities for encounters. Wilderness encounters, encounters with enemy forces, a ruined temple, or a castle or two, are just some of the things that can be encountered. Nature itself can provide lots of good role-playing opportunities. For example, do you make the dangerous trek over the mountains or go around? How are you going to cross that rain-swollen river? The possibilities are endless.

The total outcome of the whole campaign can also be the basis for another adventure. What happens if the army is defeated or routed? Do the PC's try to carry on and complete the mission? What will the PC's do when they find themselves stranded deep in hostile territory or deep in an uncharted wilderness? If the campaign is successful, will the PC's be tempted to split up by being promoted to higher positions in the military? Will the PC's distinguish themselves and become heroes or celebrities? Will they fail and be looked on as traitors and criminals? The rewards can be great and so can the risks.

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Baron Harksheen requests an audience with the adventurers. Background checks will reveal very little is known about this baron. The local vassal is named G'caird, and is a duke. G'caird has never heard of Harksheen. Harksheen castle is rather remote, to say the least.

If asked, Harksheen will relate a story about saving the life of one of the kings' children several years ago, and how he received this barony quite by surprise some years later. If the party asks too many questions, they may be imprisoned in the baron's dungeons. The baron has 15 men at arms, and can command the skeletons which inhabit all of the numerous suits of armor displayed in the great hall. (Note that this armor gives the skeletons much better than normal defenses and

weapons.) If the party notices the skeletons in the armor, the baron will claim they are the remains of the great warriors who died in the armor.

The Baron's story is that he would like to obtain a certain suit of armor that has fallen out of sight. He has uncovered some clues (which he will be glad to show any mages in the group), that indicate that the armor, called "The Hide of Harker", was interred with the remains of one Keforid, apparently a priest of some sort. The Baron would like to commission the party to recover the armor, will provide escort and livestock, and allow the party to keep all other booty.

The Baron's real name is Harker, he's a demon. The armor was once his hide. Besides the defenses of the armor, and the fact that it is nearly weightless, it has the following abilities: Telepathy with Harker, sense danger, protection from cold. If Harker is killed, the telepathy converts to a sort of scrying from his skull. Without it, he is pretty weak, but if he gets his hands on it (or rather, the other way 'round), look out. He will warn the party that the armor is cursed, and to be careful not to wear it. (It isn't cursed per se, but with it's special abilities, wearing it might be a tip off.) The real reason Harksheen won't go after the armor himself is that the Wraith wearing the armor would know what he was going to do next and would be an extremely formidable opponent.

If the party looks closely at the warrior statue in the crypt, they'll notice that the base of the statue is a defeated demon who looks a lot like the Baron. One of the Tapestries depicts the skinning of the demon.

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This plot can be used to get the party together.

During the last few weeks, the characters have been hearing rumors of bandit raids on caravans travelling the road. These raids are carried out against fairly large and well protected caravans, indicating a well prepared and large group of bandits. Regular travellers are almost never bothered. (Note: In my campaign, this is set in a largely agricultural area. Locals aren't worth it).

In addition to the caravan raids, several minor officials and merchants have been kidnapped and ransomed. The bandits are well informed, leading the local authorities to believe they may have an informant in their midst. Also a local minor cleric of the temple of <insert local good deity here> has vanished without a trace.

Some member of the party is contacted by the local government's intelligence organization (preferably one that makes sense. I have a rogue/spy/courier in my group). They are tasked with gathering a group of adventurers to scout out the bandits and locate their lair. They are not to engage the bandits, as the city government is planning a full scale attack. They are also given some appropriate amount of money to give the characters incentive. The group gathered is not to know they are working for the local government. Let the player devise a cover story.

At the same time, a cleric/paladin character (hopefully of the same temple as the one above) is contacted by the head of their order, and instructed to find out what happened to the vanished cleric.

For a more twisted plot, have a party thief in the group be contacted by the local guild, and told about a supposed government expedition to find the bandits. Instruct the player to join the party and sidetrack/stop them if possible.

Behind the scenes, the bandits are actually not as powerful as it seems. It just so happens that the band's wizard has developed/found a more powerful version of the sleep spell, which allows the bandits to gain a great initial advantage. Furthermore, they are working with the local thieves' guild to plan their attacks and are sharing the profits with the guild. In return, the guild provides information and fences goods for the bandits. The thieves' guild would be most upset if their safe and profitable arrangement is disturbed.

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(This is played as semi-serious comedy and is a good way to lighten PC's of extra equipment, normal and magic e.g. armour, swords, potions, etc)

The PC's hear rumours of a Dragon down the coast, not far (30 miles) from the village through which they are currently passing. The local council can't afford to pay anyone to get rid of it but it's been a pest to all the local fishermen for years. (It used to be worse but has been a bit quieter for the last 15 years). The PC's will be heroes and a small reward may be found. The Dragon is actually Puff the Magic Dragon (from the song for anyone who knows it) and was drawn into this realm from the dimension of Dreams by a young boy's imagination (young Jacky Papers). They always used to play together terrorizing pirate ships (fishing boats) etc until Jacky outgrew his boyhood "imaginary" friend. Puff has become broken hearted with the loss of Jacky and just mopes around all day in his cave (hidden in the mists of the coast). He is also a compulsive coward, and the only valuables he possesses are those things he and Jacky collected when Jacky was younger (balls of string, used pirate's flags, blocks of sealing wax etc). Puff is a green dragon (nonstandard) with a sonic breath weapon (his cry/wail) which shatters/disintegrates metal/crystal etc within 40'-70' (save applies) and does appropriate damage to people as suits the scenario. He can wail every 2nd round with NO limits and will usually do so (he really is depressed). (This makes it hard for fighters to do much to him unless they are lucky with their magical armour, magical swords etc).

At any time the PC's approach him he will be sobbing gently. He is a huge Ancient Dragon of green color (NOT a Monster Manual 1 Green dragon), hit only by magic weapons and the tears he is crying (every round) are actually large drops of acid (splash all within 20' for damage as appropriate). If they hurt him much at all, he will try to escape, still sobbing and wailing. Even when escaped, he will try to stay close to his cave (Jacky's toys are there) unless it is too dangerous. He will NEVER try to seriously hurt anyone! Any damage is incidental and caused by crying. If the PC's try to talk to him, he will check to see if Jacky is with them, then stop communicating, breaking into even more heart-rending sobs (tears in all directions - splashing out to 40' for 3 rounds).

The preferred solution to all this, if they bother to actually find out what's going on (the local sages/mages know and will explain for a fee), is to either send Puff back to the realm of dreams (extra adventure) or find Jacky Papers and reunite them (he is probably that madman wandering the kingdom having lost his memory with a great feeling of unease about dragons).

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## "Artifact Search"

(This is based in a world where some great despotic Wizard-kings used to rule before the free races allied against them and collapsed their rule, some time in the distant past.)

Recently, a farmer in a rural area fell into an underground cavern while hunting. Within the cavern are remnants of a vanished culture with gleaming buildings and strange creatures moving about on unknown errands. The farmer fled the scene immediately but his stories soon spread, prompting several expeditions by locals and greedy adventurers. The only person to return from these was found dead outside a village in the area, clutching an object fashioned of a strange crystal form. The area is now treated with caution and fear.

The mage who acquired the crystal form is now hiring a capable group with the intentions of exploring further in search of greater treasures.

### Options:

1. The item was actually an artifact from the Wizard Kings and where there is one there should be others (Greed inspired).
2. The item was a portion of an unknown artifact, the rest is desired (Interest and fascination inspired).
3. The item is now known to have been the key holding a major servant of the Wizard-Kings imprisoned. He/She/It is now free and the PC's are required to capture/track/kill it. (Fear and caution inspired). Maybe the servant knows where some of the Wizard-kings are still alive, hiding in suspended animation or with their souls held in a magical gem, waiting their moment of rebirth.
4. The item is actually a map to a hitherto hidden realm (in a magically shielded valley or alternate dimension) where the cavern's inhabitants have come from. They have been preparing themselves for a looting/slaving expedition into this realm and must be stopped before they have a chance to expand out of their cavern. (This sets up a possible major campaign: first clean out the cavern area, then gain access to the hidden and unknown realm and scout it, then find those who intend the raiding expeditions etc and stop them).
5. The item is the key to time-travel. The mage who has it wants to travel back to the time of the Wizard-Kings, alter history so that the Wizard-Kings win and rule with them over one of the realms. He intends to trick the PC's to act as his advance guards and protectors and take them with him to spoil the plans of the allied free people. (This would involve lots of trickery and be sneaky to manage, as the players can't find out what's going on until too late - at which point they will probably want to stop him and go home again).
6. The object has given its new master some great abilities and he now wants to use the powers of the PC's to slowly build his personal power until he is able to rule as the great Wizard-Kings ruled. (See 5).

In the far west, under a permanent cloud, sits the Obsidian Castle. Twice it has protected some powerful beings bid of domination of the world, twice it has been foiled. But the Castle is patient, and is already nurturing the third, who has already begun his march.

The Castle is made of jet black obsidian, each block is exactly the same size, mortared to the next with a dull brown film, the blood of the victims sacrificed to build it. Enchantment runs through the entire structure, ordinary weapons can make no mark upon the walls. The castle is black - gloomy, and horrific. Light cannot travel far within it - absorbed by the walls. The floors within are pure black ebony, with no trace of light or color. It's hard to breathe in the castle, though character never seem to run out of air.

The castle actively protects the Dark Lord. It has a nearly infinite supply of glassy obsidian or ebony or black granite guardians. Gargoyles guard the upper heights, razor-winged obsidian bats range the great halls, the moat has no water but is filled with delicately balanced sheets of razor-sharp glass that would instantly shred anyone who fell within, even in armor, for the points would find every gap and pierce the body within.

The Castle is the home and last redoubt of the Dark Lord. Your characters must raise an army to defeat his orcs, ogres and trolls. They must forge a treaty with the beings of the light and air - the eagles, the ki-rin - to provide protection and cover against the Dark Lord's leather-winged reptilian flyers. But the army is mere diversion - to get the players into the Castle.

Deep inside the bowels of the Castle is a room perhaps 100 feet wide and nearly as high, and paved with gold. The walls are bright polished marble, hung with cloth-of-gold and studded with endless tiny gems. The ceiling has an enormous crystal chandelier, whose bright glow is nearly eclipsed by the six-foot-diameter gem on a low dais in the middle of the room. The gem is a composite, made of thousands of smaller gems, from fist-sized to tiny grains, of every shape and kind. They are packed into a great sphere, facet-to-facet, edge-to-edge, and the sphere is alive with light of every color in the spectrum. Bolts of light flash from point to point within - tiny dots in many colors swirl about inside. The evil spirit of the Castle - its "brain" - dwells within. No living being has ever entered this room - or even knows it exists, but until the gem is destroyed, the Obsidian Castle will always rise again, and new Dark Lords will threaten the world...

Of course, you'll need to work out a lot of details, but this idea should be good for three or four campaigns before they figure out that it isn't "just another Dark Lord" but the Castle itself that is the real enemy, and that destroying it is merely a temporary setback. You'll need to decide who built it, and why, and when. You'll need more monsters in the "broken glass" idiom - many people are afraid of broken glass, it's a powerful symbol. Perhaps the Castle is lit with black light torches - you can see, though all is black and dark, and the flames rime the walls with frost and burn like frostbite...



## Long Summaries

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"Large Hideous Monsters"

Mostly huge, garishly colored slimy monsters have overrun the Eastmarch. Refugees are crowding into the city, and a large refugee camp by the north wall has been set up. The Temple of Osiris is advertising for adventurers.

The monsters are all different. Even the occasionally recognizable monster is the wrong color, and they're mostly very underpowered. One refugee has been celebrated as a "Dragon Slayer", since he took out a huge, firebreathing beast with one blow of his yard rake. The tale definitely grew in the telling, but the man, "Lucky" Luke Sty-walker, former pig rancher, hasn't let it go to his head. After all, after he killed the "Dragon", a giant slug ate his house.

On the other hand, there was the "killer bunny", that killed 6 sheepdogs and a wolf one night, right in the middle of town! It would have probably continued the rampage, except that it started to melt at sunrise (a Rarebit of luck, that.)

Finding the source of these monsters is the quest, obviously, and this is not too difficult a task, as long as the adventurers don't get eaten. Nearly every monster has left a clear and obvious trail. The trails all converge on a stream bed. Near the headwater of the stream is a cave mouth. An idiot ogre couldn't miss the fact that major traffic has issued from it. Inside the cave mouth is a very standard set of caves, caverns and corridors, unique only in the fact that all of the normally expected cave denizens are absent from, or dead in, their lairs. One exception; the first side cave from the entrance has a very dead 12' cavebear, and a very cute, and hungry, cavebear cub (about 60 pounds). the cub is likely to attach itself to the first adventurer that doesn't hurt it. Like most Ursines, it is omnivorous. Monsters issue from the cave at about 5 per night (2d4/night), and come into being at the narrow end of the large cavern. Some don't even survive walking the length of the room, which provides the heartier monsters with a much needed snack. None of the monsters can eat anything terrestrial. Well, they can chew and swallow, but not derive sustenance.

During the 12 phases of the creation, a light can be seen coming from "somewhere else". Careful attention will reveal that this `light' seems to be coming from a desk lamp. Also visible is a desk with a hunched- over "dwarf" in outlandish garb (actually, it's a kid in a striped T- shirt). Anyone stepping into the circle of light will be transported into a 12'x15' basement room filled with strange and wonderous objects, most of which will not function properly if brought back to the "real world" On the desk are the kid's `lucky dice', which are powerful magic items, and radiate magic strongly (noticed on 11-, 8- by spellcasters). These dice create monsters if rolled 12 times. The monsters appear in whichever universe the dice are NOT in. the Dice can be easily destroyed in either plane, but that destruction will close the trans-dimensional door that is in the basement behind the desk (which is also obvious to most adventurers.) While the door is open, anyone leaving the room will be transported to their own world. Also, magic and technology both work in the basement room only (and in the cave).

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On a hill near the characters' home village once stood a proud castle. About forty years ago a mage resident there summoned up something he couldn't handle, and it pretty much trashed the place. The castle consists now of the ruins of the outer towers and gatehouse, about twelve towers in all, only a couple of which have even part of a roof, six inner towers (including the

inner gatehouse) most of which are in very much disrepair, and the inner keep, which is mostly collapsed. Most of the castle walls are also torn down, and the moat is overgrown as well. Under the main keep is a cellar (about three rooms worth.) All of the wooden buildings, interior wood etc. was burned. The place is rumored to be haunted, about twenty years ago old Fred went there and never was the same since.

The players recently found out that the guy that built the castle had placed a mcguffin under the floor stones in each of the towers, and a large one under the keep. (The mcguffin is some sort of enchanted jewel that was supposed to keep the castle from harm or something. In practice, any enchantment has long worn off, but the jewels should be worth whatever is an appropriate amount in your campaign.) The players are the only people (that they know of) with this information, perhaps they found it in a letter used as a bookmark in an old book.

You should stock the castle mostly with animal, or animal-like monsters. Perhaps one tower is home to a couple of giant beetles, another has some feral cats, another has some snakes. A group of brigands that operates in this neighborhood uses one of the more intact towers as a camp, perhaps they have hidden some treasure under it, perhaps several of them are there. An old crone lives in one of the towers, free rent you see. She makes healing poultices (herbal gunk etc.) for the brigands in return for food. Treat her as a second level MU with a charm person spell. You might, if you like, put a more "real" monster in the main keep, perhaps some sort of sentinel creature (ex. a water weird, one of the really minor devils etc.).

Wandering monsters. Write up a wandering monster chart. Some of the entries should be true wandering things such as passing birds, cows etc. Most of them should be the inhabitants of the towers.

For example:

1. 3 of the cats from tower #1 (night only)
2. The old crone gathering herbs (day only)
3. 1d6 of the giant rats from tower #7 (night only)
4. A brigand patrol (details omitted). If there are currently no brigands, they are going to their camp in tower #9. If there are brigands in the camp, roll a d6, on a 1-3 they are going to the camp, on a roll of 4-6 the brigands in the camp leave etc.

Should the party go home before clearing out the tower, feel free to replace any slain monsters with others, especially if some time has elapsed. For instance, now that the large snake has left, a weasel family has made their home in the moat. The brigands will not always be there, sometimes there may be as many as (more than the party can handle) planning a raid somewhere. Be sure to indicate signs of some of the animals, things like droppings, meal remains, shed carapaces etc. The brigands are not all that neat, there might be signs that they are around such as the tower that they use as an outhouse, a pile of cow bones, a copper penny with a recent date, a torn but unrotted rag etc.

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"Survival"

This module is currently designed for 4-6 players of first and second level, with about 5 to 7 total levels in the party. It provides a way for the party to meet without resorting to the trite "you're in a bar" scenario.

The geographic setting is the northern plains of a continent with a cool to cold climate during the autumn season. The party begins in a country on the human side of a human/demihuman border. The demihumans in question can be either Goblins and Orcs or Goblins and Hobgoblins. The winter storms are expected to start sometime in the next 4 to 6 weeks, which will close down the commonly used trade routes through the mountainous plains to the northeast.

Each character, except thieves, starts as a merchant, messenger, or mercenary guard in a large caravan heading to another city further north. The winter seems to be setting in early and the caravan master wants to leave the city as soon as possible, due to a "special" package that a local temple has given into his care. The cleric(s) in the party are sent to "guard" this package. The fighters are mercenaries hired to guard the caravan on its seven to eight day journey, and the magic users are merchants (based on their nonweapon proficiencies) along for the ride.

During the first three to four days it becomes obvious to the fighters that the caravan master is taking a less traveled route (which is faster and dangerous) due to the package. On the fourth night, a group of thieves (some of which are PC's) from the main town catch up with the caravan, and plan to steal the package and ransom it back to the temple. While the attempt is in progress, the camp is attacked by a horde of the demihumans which results in the eventual disabling of all the PC's.

The PC's awaken (roughly at the same time) with 1 HP, no equipment, money, food, or water, in the middle of a wrecked camp. The PC's must "introduce" themselves, leading to a possible confrontation with the thief character(s), since no one knows who they are or where they are from. They must then gather what equipment they can find and attempt to make it back to civilization and SURVIVE. The obvious choice is to press onward toward the original destination.

Unknown to the party, the demihumans' camp is nearby. It is the only source of food and water for miles in the surrounding terrain. The party should stumble upon a patrol, and gain some additional items. From here they can disguise themselves to gain access to the camp and possibly steal food, water, and possibly horses.

When the party finds the camp, they discover it is actually the ruins of an ancient fortress. Several questions come up: Who is leading this company of bandits? What is their purpose? Are they a threat (to the greater civilization)? The party may investigate these questions. If they do, several options exist for the adventure from this point. Do they try and defeat the leaders? Reconnoiter to gather more information to answer some of the above questions? Try and find the treasure trove? Run? As they investigate the ruined fortress, they gain the opportunity to do all of the above and more. The dungeon also provides opportunities to introduce replacements for characters who may have died.

The adventure concludes with the PC's leaving the demihuman camp and finishing the 2 to 3 day trek to civilization on foot, leaving the bandits intact for a second adventure.

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The background is that one of the characters in the campaign, has some major bodily damage, beyond the capabilities of the party to heal. They rush him to town to find a healer.

The healer heals the character, but tells the party that it is only temporary. He says that the character will need the application of a special herb to make the healing permanent. The healer tells the party how to find a Druid whom he knows for the whereabouts of the herb. The party is able to get the Druid to agree to accompany them.

The Druid knows the general area in which the herb grows. Finding the herb is not a guarantee. After a trip taking several days into the outback, and approximately one day of unsuccessful searching for the herb, the party has an encounter with a group of orcs. (Party ambushes orcs, orcs ambush party, whatever). When searched, at least one of the orcs will have a small quantity of herb on his person. If all the orcs are dead the party will be able to track the orcs to their 'lair'. If one is alive, he will bring the party to the 'lair' if threatened. If asked about the herb, the orc is not aware that it is anything special. (The orcs gather quantities of the herb and use it as a narcotic and are unaware of the herb's healing powers, as they smoke it - not the proper form of application. If any orcs are questioned about the herb, treat it as if someone on the street beat you up, took your cigarettes and asked about their 'special healing properties'.)

The orc 'lair' is actually a small village/outpost. If this region is orc infested, make it a village (they have to come from somewhere). If the region is relatively orc-free, have it an advanced orc outpost. (i.e. no non-combatants)

Have enough orcs in the 'lair' such that a frontal assault would be nearly impossible. Sneakiness counts here folks!

The 'lair' is actually above ground. It consists of a group of huts sufficient for the orcs' purpose. (Housing, maybe a forge, food, armory, etc.) Two of the structures will be made of stone, the places occupied by the priests and the high leaders. The entire village is surrounded by a wooden palisade. (Think of old forts in western movies.) The logs are buried deep enough so that they cannot be easily moved. The wall is nine feet high with points at the top, and is treated with a sap-like residue from the local trees that make it nearly resistant to fire. (Fires take more time to start and don't spread fast.) The walls are not tough to climb by oneself and are easy with the help of another. Within the walls are several outpost towers (approx. 15 feet tall) that are used to see out beyond the walls.

The orcs have enough of the herb to take care of the injured character, plus possibly some left over for the party.

For combatants, remember that in an organization this size there will be a chain of command. I had a supreme leader, a second in command, a handful of lieutenants, many sergeants and about 150 standard fighters. I also used two spell-users to make things more lively (players

occasionally fall into the trap in which they believe they are the only ones with magic accessible to them) and an ogre to make things exciting. I also included 20 worgs in a pen. (Worgs are large semi-intelligent, evil wolves that orcs occasionally ride into battle, also called dire wolves.) The worgs will only affect the outcome if either released from the pen or if the party tries to sneak by them.

If any of the party escape and at least one of the others are captured, one of the spell-users will attempt to charm the character. Once charmed the character will be instructed to find the rest of the group and bring them back to 'rescue' their comrades. (This is a -great- chance for roleplaying for the the player involved!) Set up an appropriate ambush. If the orcs' plan to entice the players back seems to have too many holes in it, that's ok, orcs aren't renowned for their great plans.

The herb, in addition to its healing properties is also addictive. For healing, the herb must be administered over a one week period. In games terms, withdrawal from the herb will result in a penalty to action. Withdrawal will be complete five days after the last time the herb was administered. During these five days, the penalties should peak at day three then gradually drop off. Since the herb has a side-effect (withdrawal), races that have a natural resistance to poison will not benefit fully from the herb.

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This plot is good for fantasy RPGs (designed for AD&D, approx. 6 characters of 6th-8th level)

A small farming community several miles from where the characters are based has made an appeal to the mayor of the village to put an end to what are described as "dragon raids". The mayor, who is coming up for re-election, has heard of the fame of the heroes and comes to them for help in slaying the dragon that has terrorized his constituents.

What the heroes are told:

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Recently (in the last few weeks), a dragon with green skin has shambled up out of the nearby marsh and carried off livestock in its mouth. The farmers are upset at this loss of their resources. A group of the farmers held a meeting and sent two volunteers out into the swamp, but they have not been heard from since.

What the heroes will find, upon investigation:

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Large, muddy footprints on the grounds of the farmers whose livestock have been stolen--mostly those living right next to the marsh to take advantage of the fertile ground--ostensibly "dragon tracks". If they ask questions of the right people, they will find someone who swears he saw the dragon change into a dragon-man and walk off into the swamp. The rest of the town thinks this old guy is nuts. The dragon has not been spotted any farther away from the swamp than about 30 yards. None of the townsfolk remember seeing any wings on the creature.

Some information the heroes \*might\* be able to discover:

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Green dragons do not, by habit, live in marshland areas. They prefer the serenity and relative abundance of game supplied by verdant forests. Green dragons also delight in deceiving and controlling human operations. A green dragon without wings is an oddity, to be sure.

In fact, the kind of dragons who DO live in the swamp are black dragons.

None of this information should be available without sage consultation.

What is actually going on:

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A little ways into the marsh is a small settlement of lizard men. These are not the ordinary warlike race, but rather a pacifistic offshoot... deadly when necessary, but downright friendly otherwise. They are, in fact, farmers themselves, cultivating nutritious plants and fungi, and keeping their own herd animals: giant lizards.

The harvest has been bad this year, and feeding the giant lizards has become second priority. So the lizards, starving, wandered off towards the human village in search of food...and found it.

The human farmers wouldn't know a dragon from an oversized water snake, so they naturally panicked. No farmer in his right mind would go dragon hunting in a swamp, nohow. And the story grew a little more fantastic with each telling....

Once, the lizard men followed one of the lizards toward the human farms. It was near dusk, and visibility was poor, so it was an easy mistake to say that the "dragon" had changed into a "dragon-man". But overall, the lizard men have avoided the humans for fear of prejudice and misunderstanding. If approached peacefully, and the situation is explained, the humanoids will be willing to pay restitution for the animals. They are also willing to open a trade avenue with the humans, if such an idea is acceptable, but that is up to the farmers.

Other goings-on:

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Elsewhere, \*deeper\* in the swamp, lairs an old black dragon. He sleeps, unaware of the turmoil occurring in the nearby village. In fact, the last time his sleep was disturbed was a couple of weeks back, when two lanky humans intruded rudely upon his nap. Fortunately for the dragon, he happened to be mildly hungry at the time.

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A noble requests the party to investigate a spook house he rents in a town. They are to locate, identify, and banish the source of the odd sounds, sights, smells, or whatever. For this, they will be paid handsomely, since the noble likes the apartment's location as a perfect "incognito" kind of place.

The house with the apartment lies in a middle-class part of the town, the buildings are not very crowded, but old. The building is registered in the name of one Raushof Gollenbacher, but any attempt to find out who this person is, will fail; nobody knows. The proprietor is an old gnome called Muschfyths, who don't like people.

Muschfyths -is- Raushof. Raushof was a name he used when he bought the house years ago. He got fake ID papers from a human forger he knew at the time - the forger later died in a traffic "accident" (these things happen, you know...).

If the party checks for the names of previous renters of the building, the list will mysteriously have been destroyed in a recent fire, and Muschfyths will have a bad memory. If the investigators insist on sleeping in the apartment at night, nothing will happen - the "ghost" will only be present on nights the investigators are off the premises.

If the rental contract is checked, any lawyer type person will see, under close scrutiny, that it contains a clause denying the renter any rights of having his/her money back, and a demand of three months advance rent.

The house is FULL of secret doors. These doors lead into other rooms. Depending on the basis of the effects:

- There is indeed a ghost, or spectre, that creates the sounds, and this ghost has been enslaved by Muschfyths, and kept on a magical jar when not needed. The other rooms of the house will contain chains of meta-steel (steel able to exist in both the ethereal and material planes), jars of iron sulphate (substitute Stinking Cloud, any AD&D'ers out there) and related "spooky"/scary things. These are applied by the ghost when trying to scare the occupants. The ghost can be banished if:
  - Muschfyths is killed. This will free the ghost/spectre from its obligations to him.
  - The jar is broken. The ghost no longer has a prison in this world. If Muschfyths is still alive, the ghost is still enslaved, but can not be "turned off" until Muschfyths can find another suitable prison.
  - The ghost can be banished by a cleric of a God of The Dead or a God of Healing (in Warhammer terms, Morr or Shallya). If Muschfyths is still alive, the chance of banishing is lowered.
- The sounds etc. are produced by mechanical devices built by Muschfyths. These devices will rely on technical knowledge far beyond the understanding of any non-gnome player, and even to gnomes, they appear strange. Treat the machinery as "traps", and feel free to include steam engines, "perpetuum mobile"s etc. to your heart's content. The characters will perceive the devices as magic unless they can detect they are not. (You might even want to make some of the devices magic...)

The devices are placed in the rooms surrounding the apartment. Muschfyths is the only person that knows how the things work. It's VERY dangerous to try and operate the devices without proper training - and if the party finds the devices, Muschfyths will have disappeared...perhaps.

Data on Muschfyths:

Race: Gnome

Age: Above middle age (for gnomes, very old for humans)

Physical: Not very strong, somewhat agile

Mental: Very bright, VERY talented in either technical areas or magic relating to beings of a spectral nature (depending on the "source", see above)

Psyche: Greedy, selfish, paranoid coward. Can be considered being of an evil alignment.

Abilities: Depending on the "source" (see above):

- Identify Ethereal Undead, Ritual: Enslave Etereal Undead, Ritual: Imprison Ethereal Undead.

- (TL stands for Technology Level) Ritual: Make/Unmake Strange Device (TL +1), Operate Device (TL +1), Identify Device (TL +0).
- Also: Weapon Use: Knives and Daggers, Hiding: Urban, Culture: Gnome.



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Many thanks to everyone who contributed material to make the second volume bigger and better than the first. Apologies to Wayne, who sent mountains of stuff, but since the Net.Plots.Book is public domain I can't include copyrighted (or even copylefted!) material. I don't do PostScript, LaTeX, or anything but ASCII. If anyone would like to convert the Book and send me a copy, I'll distribute that as well. Enjoy, everyone!

Back the [The Trap Page](#)