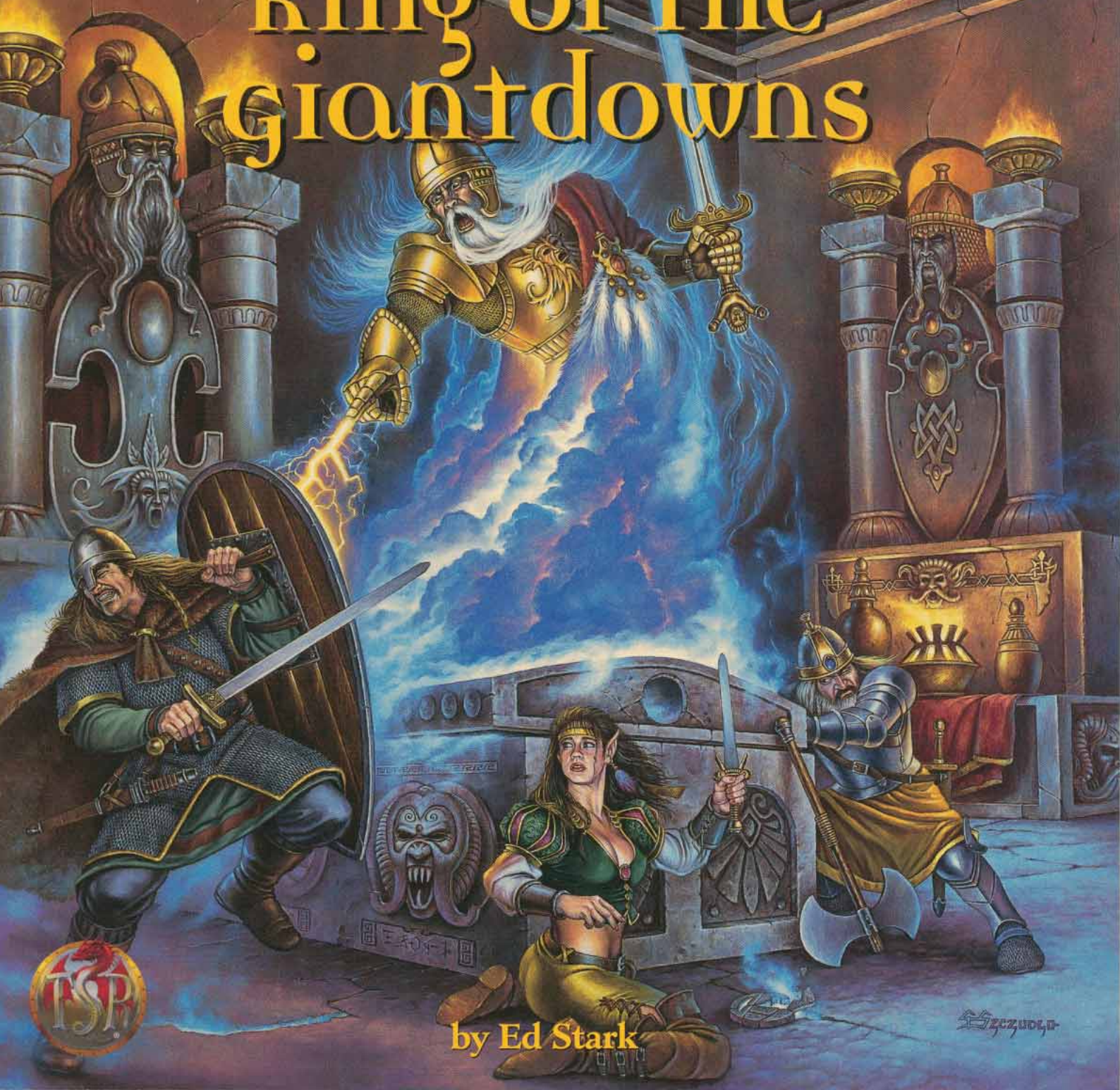


# BIRTHRIGHT®

ADVENTURE ACCESSORY

## king of the giantdowns



by Ed Stark

szczudlo



# king of the giantdowns

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Distributed to the hobby, toy, and comic trade in the United States and Canada by regional distributors.

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Lars Olafssen stood at the border of Dhoesone and the Giantdowns, gazing eastward over the green pasture and rolling hills before him. Every year, Lars and his two pack animals made the trek from Stjordvik's port city of Hollingholmen, up the Northbyrn River, through Dhoesone, and into the Giantdowns.

The coastal Rjurik believed the Great Downs were haunted and that humanoids and renegades waited beyond every hill, ready to slit the throats of honest travelers. But Lars knew better. The goods he carried on his animals would make him enough money to winter in comfort—either in Hollingholmen or Noliën, depending on where his tastes drove him. He started his mules forward.

But after fewer than a dozen steps, Lars stopped. He saw a figure in the distance, running frantically, arms outstretched. The figure was a man—clothes torn, weapon discarded—running toward him. Lars drew his sword and waited.

The man fell, struggled to rise, fell again. He was close enough that Lars could see an arrow sticking out of his shoulder. The trader started forward slowly, carrying his waterskin.

## introduction

"Everything all right, old man?" Lars said when he reached the heaving, wounded man. He kept his sword between them but tossed the waterskin down.

"They've taken Bjorlangen!" the man shouted, a mad look in his eyes. "Vikings! Orog! The White Witch!" He gasped water into his mouth, coughing and choking.

Lars knelt down and grabbed the man's arm. "You're not making any sense! What happened?"

The shaggy refugee shook his head. "The White Witch and the bandit tribe! They attacked Bjorlangen. The Watch has sailed—the Downs have fallen! I must get to . . ." Weak from loss of blood, the man fainted.

As Lars tended his wound, he thought about the man's ravings. Bjorlangen taken by the White Witch? It made no sense. Orog and bandits worked together occasionally, but could they destroy the Watch? Lars shook his head. No. The man must be mad. Besides, he reflected, surely he would have heard before now if the Old Fort at Lemnjohen had fallen. Best

make for there to check things out.

Lars placed the wounded man over one of his already-burdened animals and turned north toward the Old Fort. Just as he started out, the man woke once more, meeting Lars's eyes with a brief flash of sanity.

"That's not the worst of it, though," he said.

"Oh? What's worse, old man?"

"The dead. The dead are walking."

The Giantdowns lie between the old Anuirean Empire and the Rjurik Highlands, but belong to neither. The two elven kingdoms to the north and south do not claim them, nor can the humanoids and strange monsters of the region hold them. A few hundred Rjurik live among the Great Downs and ancient battlefields, disputing the claims placed upon the land by all others—even a newly arisen awnsheg named Ghuralli.

King of the Giantdowns is an accessory/adventure designed for characters interested in forging their own realm in Cerilia. In the midst of kings and domains, the Downs are an uncivilized, untamed region where a hero could make a name for himself and build a kingdom. Or like so many before him, he could die trying.

## what you need to play

This book is an accessory/adventure for the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign setting. In addition to this book, you need the AD&D® game Player's Handbook, DUNGEON MASTER® Guide, MONSTROUS MANUAL™ tome, and BIRTHRIGHT boxed set to play. The Rjurik Highlands campaign expansion is strongly recommended.

King of the Giantdowns provides all the information a Dungeon Master (DM) needs to construct several adventures, or even a small campaign, in the Giantdowns. It includes descriptions of the provinces, people, and important places of the Downs. The DM has plenty of room to fill in his own details and create his own adventures, but this book provides information for multiple adventures and encounters that regents, scions, and common adventurers can experience in this land.

Note that many character descriptions herein use abbreviations to denote race, class, gender, bloodlines, etc. These standard BIRTHRIGHT abbreviations are detailed in the Ruins of Empire book in the boxed set and also in The Rjurik Highlands campaign expansion.

## the adventure arc

King of the Giantdowns holds great potential for nonregent player characters (PCs). The overall goal of the series of adventures is conquest of the region. This product assumes that the PCs will want to rule the Giantdowns themselves. Should they be uninterested or unable to do so—if, for example, none of them carries a bloodline—they might be in the employ of a blooded nonplayer character (NPC).

How can the PCs win the Giantdowns for themselves? Marching an army into the region has been

tried—  
and the mounds  
and barrows of the land are  
filled with the rotting corpses of

armies that fell fighting amid the Downs. Obviously, the independent Rjurik, not to mention the various humanoid and giant bands of the region, would resist an invasion.

The Giantdowns, therefore, must be conquered from within. Any PCs interested in building a realm out of the wild Downs must come to the region and prove themselves to be heroes worthy of regency. They must impress the existing leaders of the Rjurik and win over or defeat those who might oppose them.

*King of the Giantdowns* contains adventures and background material the DM can use to construct a campaign directing the PCs toward rulership. The sections of this book detail the inhabitants of the Downs, relevant sites and adventure locales, and some suggested adventures a DM can use to get a campaign started.

Each time the PCs undertake an adventure in the Giantdowns, they should be thinking, "How can this action make me a more impressive candidate for regency of the Downs?" Even the purest adventurer, one who quests only to fight evil and defend the weak, should consider this an overall, obtainable goal.

The DM, likewise, has to think in these terms. Whether he uses an adventure from this supplement or creates one of his own using the NPCs, monsters, adventure sites, and situations presented in this book, the DM has to allow the players to build their kingdom themselves.

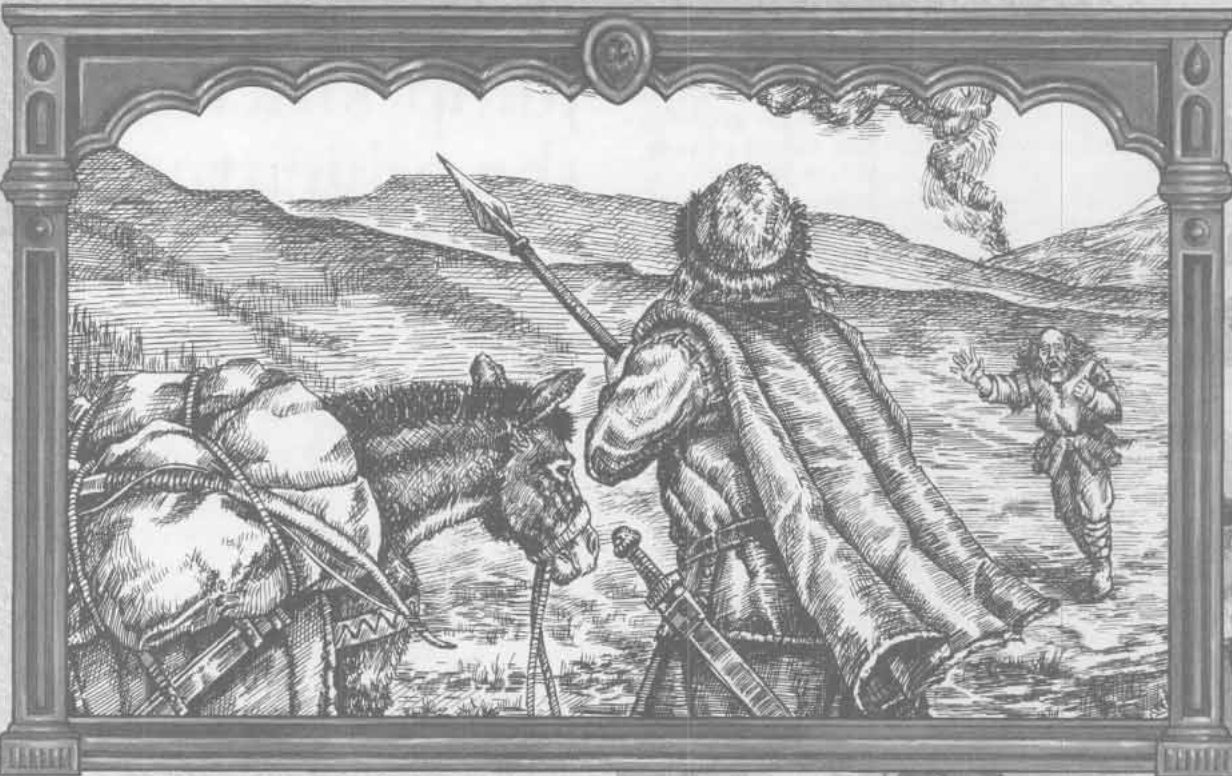
## structuring the campaign

**R**ight from the start, the DM should be thinking about a *series* of adventures rather than one adventure at a time. Each adventure should do something to move the PCs closer to their goal of rulership (or farther away if they fail in their quests). The following approach could be used as a model for a Giantdowns campaign:

**Introduce the PCs.** The first adventure or two should introduce the PCs to the Giantdowns. Even if the PCs are actually *from* the Downs, they probably aren't well-known among the settlers and need to establish themselves as heroes.

Good introductory adventures must be geared toward the level of the adventuring party (usually low-level challenges) and toward interaction with prominent NPCs. The PCs should do something important and dangerous, but the most useful thing about an introductory adventure is that it puts the PCs in contact with a few of the area's prominent people.

A good example of an introductory adventure is "The Fall of Bjorlangen" (see "Part IV: Adventures in the Giantdowns"). It contains enough action and danger to keep the PCs' attention, while allowing them to interact with some important people and make a few friends among the Rjurik settlers and the Watch (an alliance of rangers and scouts that



patrols the settled areas). The DM can easily modify the difficulty of this adventure to make it easy enough for 1st-level PCs or challenging enough for higher-level adventurers.

**Introduce the environment.** The players should be allowed to read all or some of "Part I: An Overview of the Giantdowns" either before or just after their first few adventures. (Natives of the Downs should get more information earlier than non-natives.) Or the DM can present the information from the overview as he sees fit. However, the PCs won't truly know anything about the Downs environment until they start moving around and getting into trouble.

The DM should plan an adventure or two designed to give the PCs a "feel" for the area. The introductory adventure (see above) will do so to some extent, of course, but more adventures meant to establish the environment could prove helpful.

"The Lure of the Leucrotta" adventure allows the PCs to explore the Downs and exposes them to a few of the dangers they hold. Characters will learn that the Downs are a beautiful place, full of rolling hills and heather-covered fields, but that they hide many dangers. Canny monsters and dangerous traps lie in the Downs, and supernatural foes wait not far away.

**Establish the heroes.** By the time the PCs have gone on several adventures in the Downs, they have probably met many of the important people of the area, made friends with some commoners, and established a "feel" for the region without knowing everything about it. At this point, they should actively start promoting themselves as heroes in the Downs.

To do this, they need more challenges. Characters who began their activities in the Downs region are probably at or approaching mid-level by now and can face some more impressive dangers. The DM should try to challenge them and set up some longer-range obstacles for them to overcome.

Both "The Defense of Lemnjohen" and "Infiltrating the Kjarhoelle" are dangerous adventures that could impress the right people among the Downs.

They'll give the PCs some indication of what the realm is up against, militarily and politically, and may even provide some continuing enemies and allies for the player characters.

**Get the PCs involved.** By now, the PCs should have a proprietary interest in the Downs. Even those who don't want to be rulers of the area probably have friends among the NPCs and an interest in keeping the Downs safe. The DM should now get the PCs more actively involved in decisions involving the realm and the defense of the Rjurik settlers. He can do this by

setting up external and internal threats (a few of the prominent Rjurik may not have the Giantdowns' best interests at heart) and by placing the PCs squarely on the bull's eye of any incoming trouble.

"The Raid on Rhuiddar" is an adventure that may not profit the PCs personally, but they could undertake it for the good of the Rjurik living in the Giantdowns. "The Barrow of the Giant-King" adventure does not involve a particular threat, but gives the PCs an opportunity to establish for themselves a power base in the Downs region.

**Continue adventures and plotlines.** The DM must work to establish continuing characters, subplots, and overall goals for the PC party. While all the adventures in the Downs can be encapsulated, they should have effects that spill over into future adventures, either presenting problems or yielding benefits. The DM can use the large number of NPCs and detailed adventure sites to establish this continuity, and he can exploit the PCs' own needs and desires to this end.

**Crown the king.** The road to regency will wind and bend differently for each adventuring party. The PCs (with the DM) must figure out for themselves how to establish one of their number as "King of the Giantdowns" (and the others, if they so choose, as vassals or rulers of landless domains within the Downs). But ideally, at some point the PCs will have dealt with enough threats, performed enough acts of heroism, and established enough supporters and friends throughout the Downs to make a bid for rulership.

## jump-starting the adventure

**I**deally, you as the DM will read through this whole book and plan a long-term story arc for your players. If, however, you don't have time to read everything beforehand, read through this introduction, skim the overview in Part I, then skip to the adventures in Part IV and choose one of the early ones. "The Fall of Bjorlangen" and "The Lure of the Leucrotta" in particular can be read in a few minutes, and each refers you as needed to any other parts of the book you should consult.

Later, when you have more time, review the rest of the book and proceed with long-range planning.

The lands known as the Giantdowns remain untamed by man, elf, or awnshegh. Rjurik herdsman and independent settlers struggle to survive. Monsters and magical creatures hide themselves among long, solitary hills, and legends of a giant race sleep uneasily in the minds of all who visit the region.

The Anuirean armies of occupation marched, fought, and died over the Giantdowns, and many a Rjurik warrior fell and mingled his blood with the ancient soil of the land. When the Rjurik and the Anuireans proclaimed peace, they settled the northern lands and civilized the coastal provinces but the Giantdowns remained remarkably free of civilization's stain. Even today, more than fifteen centuries after the Anuirean armies marched forth to claim the northern kingdoms as their own, and hundreds of years since the Rjurik regained their independence, the Giantdowns remain unclaimed—an almost forgotten memorial to a long-forgotten age.

## ancient history of the downs

When humans came to the open area between the Aelvinnwode and the great northern forest, they found the land beneath the Silverhead Mountains cleared almost entirely of trees and unpopulated by any civilized or near-civilized race. The elves, in the days before the *gheallie Sidhe*, must have told them the legends of the Great Downs, however, for Rjuven adventurers turned their steps back toward the sea rather than face the dangers of the land that would become known as the Giantdowns.

Legends are all this region knows. Humans have moved through (but not really inhabited) the area for nearly two millennia, and they still tell tales

learned from the elves. Even that ancient race knows no real history of the Giantdowns—their legends and myths are speculative, and they say the Great Downs region remains much the same today as it was before humans arrived.

The long, low, regularly spaced hills of the Great Downs are the most distinguishing feature of this region. Extending west into Dhoesone

# part I: an overview of the giantdowns

(where they break up quickly and become "normal" hills) and east

within the borders of the Gorgon's Crown (where they have an even more infamous reputation), the hills of the Giantdowns seem eerie to the least sensitive observer.

Many believe that a race of giants, more cultured and civilized than those found on Cerilia today, inhabited the Giantdowns long ago when the elves were little more than a scattered people exploring the secrets of the woodlands. These noble giants, according to legend, roamed all of Cerilia. They carved cavernous homes out of the great mountains and cleared the forests for their herds of giant cattle. The people who believe these tales cite the Three Fingers of Danigau and the flattened pass of Two Giants' Tread (both in nearby Brechtür) as evidence of possible giant construction. They believe the Downs are the burial grounds of the last civilized giants.

This conviction might explain the superstitions most Rjurik settlers harbor about the rolling hills of the Downs. It could also explain the presence of the region's many monsters—guardians of barrowed bones.

## the coming of men

In -400 HC, the first Rjuven settlers established footholds in the Highlands. They began by settling the coastal provinces, spreading out along the sea and inland as necessary. The Rjuven always needed more room than did other races of men—they proved to be wanderers from the start, forming into tribes and clans that established nomadic boundaries with plenty of land between them.

Still, before the Rjuven could penetrate too far inland (only a few hunters and trappers brought back eerie tales of the Great Downs and the

### player information

Most of the information in this chapter can be shown to any player whose character would have basic knowledge of the Giantdowns—for instance, characters native to the area. Adventurers coming into the Downs from other regions won't know all the information presented here (probably very little of it); even those PCs who grew up in or around the Giantdowns won't know everything. The Dungeon Master may censor what he reveals to the players and when, but he may show this section to them without fear of revealing DM secrets.

	Fort
	Village
	Homestead
	Downs
	Pine Forest
	Mountains

LLCABRAICHT

REALM OF THE WHITE WITCH

THE BLOOD  
SKULL  
BARONY

Barrow Woods 0/7

Cae'r Cwinnar 0/7

Silverhead Mtns

Silverheart 0/7

Rhuddar 1/6

Ghuralli's Stronghold

Trondelaag 0/6

Kjarhoelle Tribe

Haldallen 0/6

Boganhaar 0/5

# The Giantdowns

Skansoeren 0/5

Bjorlangen 0/5

Old Fort of Lemnjohen

Lemnjohen 1/4

Toreles

Vossic Clan

Vjelthelma 1/5

Thorsen Homestead

THE GORGON'S  
CROWN

Midjarna Village

Midjarna 1/5

Law Holding (the Watch)

Law Holding (Ghuralli)

Law Holding (White Witch)

Temple Holding (Emerald Spiral)

DHOESONE

TUARGHUELL

strange creatures they encountered there), the *gheallie Sidhe* assaulted the Rjuven in earnest. War started on all inland fronts, driving the scattered tribes toward the sea. The Giantdowns region, lying precariously between two elven forests, remained largely unsettled and unexplored.

Open conflict with the elves ceased only after the battle of Mount Deismaar, when the armies of both sides were greatly diminished and a watchful peace began. Luabright and Tuarhivel closed their borders to all incursions—but kept their own people inside as well.

The first Rjurik nations were founded only a few short years later. Again, the coastal provinces were settled first, and the Rjurik had only just begun to look inland when the Anuireans arrived. Still strong and very unified after the War of Shadow, the southerners sought to bring Anuirean overlordship to the Rjurik Highlands. The Rjurik, however, fighting on their own ground, repelled the imperialists.

The Anuirean Empire negotiated peace with the collective Rjurik nations, offering the Rjurik realms equal partnership in the empire. The Rjurik agreed. The Giantdowns and other areas along the southern borders of the Highlands were set up as boundary states. Since almost no Rjurik lived among the Great Downs, it made a good buffer zone between the two peoples. The Giantdowns, during the great Anuirean-Rjurik cooperation, remained largely forgotten.

From then on, the Giantdowns became only peripherally significant in the histories of the two nations. During the battles for neighboring Hjal-sone, clansmen fled from the Anuirean armies into the Great Downs, hiding among the hills for weeks at a time and braving monsters and humanoids to strike back at the occupying forces. But their efforts came to naught, and Hjal-sone became Dhoesone, the northernmost Anuirean realm. Many clansmen died and were buried in the Downs, adding still more supernatural potential to the land.

Until 1100 HC, when the Anuirean influence was completely driven out of the Highlands, the Giantdowns provided a haven for Rjurik freedom fighters, Anuirean refugees, bandits, smugglers, and all other sorts of people who wanted to avoid attention. A few stayed and became the ancestors of today's Giantdowns dwellers. Most died there or fled to the west.

## the giantdowns today

Many years later, the Giantdowns remain remarkably unsettled. The land continues to serve as a haven for strange creatures, humanoids, and bandits; only a few brave Rjurik men and women have chosen to make their homes here. The Great Downs continue to inspire superstitious fear in the natives, and even the humanoids seem to

avoid the greatest hills. Perhaps they have good reason—strange monsters still live among the mysterious hills, hiding in ravines and tunnels, waiting for the unwary wanderer to come too close.

The most notable feature of the region is still the Great Downs. Long hills lying in uncanny symmetry cover over half the domain. Generally grouped in one or two areas of each province, they can be—and usually are—easily avoided by the sparse Rjurik population.

The Silverhead Mountains abut the great forest to the north but do not mark the northern border of the Giantdowns. They protect the southern provinces from the harshest weather of the north, making the Downs area itself relatively temperate and fertile. Still, the Silverheads have a reputation nearly as fearsome as the Downs themselves—thick with orogs, goblins, gnolls, bandits, and giants, these mountains loom menacingly over nearly half of the Downs' twelve provinces.

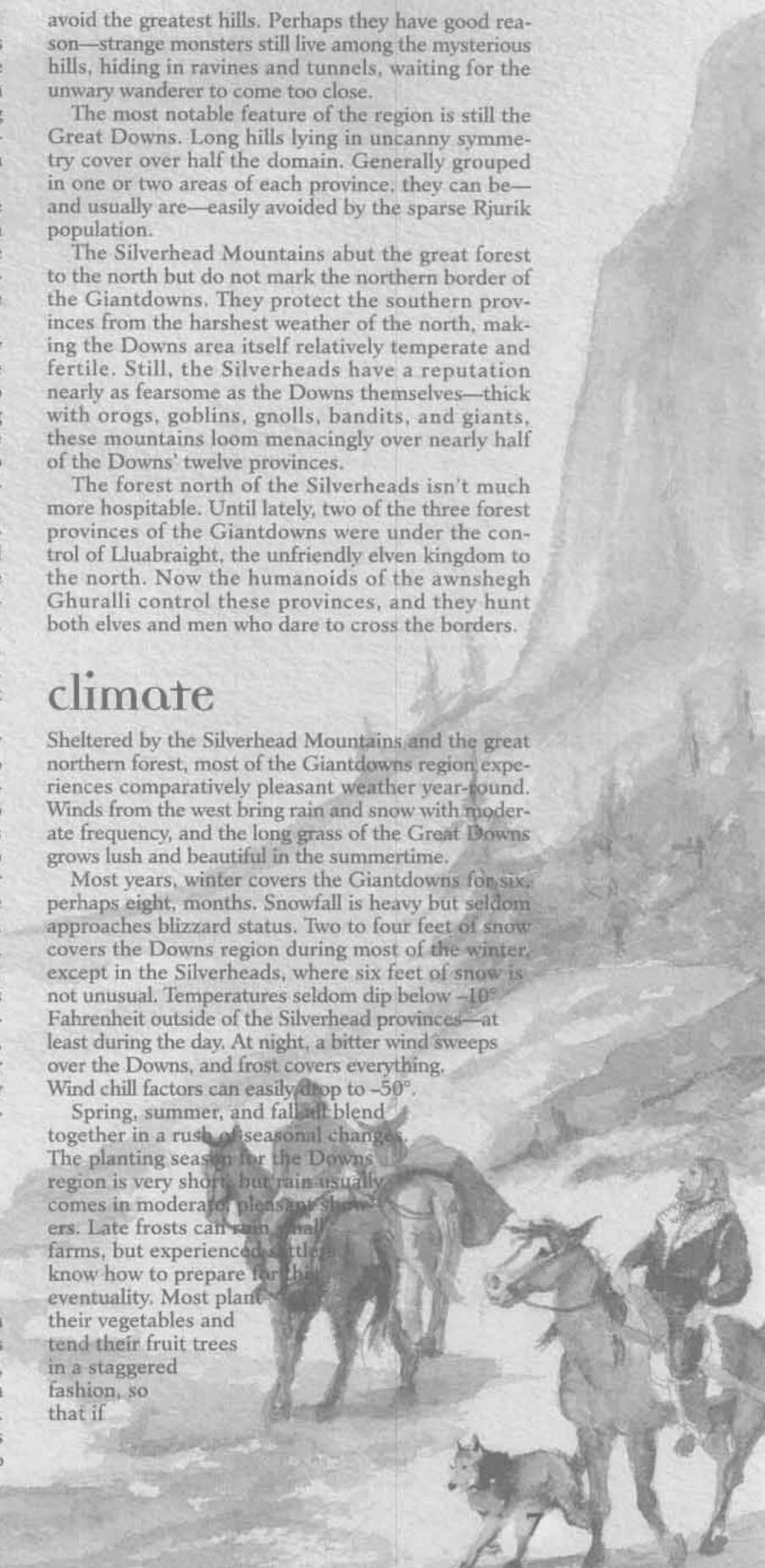
The forest north of the Silverheads isn't much more hospitable. Until lately, two of the three forest provinces of the Giantdowns were under the control of Luabright, the unfriendly elven kingdom to the north. Now the humanoids of the awnsheg Ghuralli control these provinces, and they hunt both elves and men who dare to cross the borders.

## climate

Sheltered by the Silverhead Mountains and the great northern forest, most of the Giantdowns region experiences comparatively pleasant weather year-round. Winds from the west bring rain and snow with moderate frequency, and the long grass of the Great Downs grows lush and beautiful in the summertime.

Most years, winter covers the Giantdowns for six, perhaps eight, months. Snowfall is heavy but seldom approaches blizzard status. Two to four feet of snow covers the Downs region during most of the winter, except in the Silverheads, where six feet of snow is not unusual. Temperatures seldom dip below  $-10^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit outside of the Silverhead provinces—at least during the day. At night, a bitter wind sweeps over the Downs, and frost covers everything. Wind chill factors can easily drop to  $-50^{\circ}$ .

Spring, summer, and fall all blend together in a rush of seasonal changes. The planting season for the Downs region is very short, but rain usually comes in moderate, pleasant showers. Late frosts can ruin small farms, but experienced settlers know how to prepare for this eventuality. Most plant their vegetables and tend their fruit trees in a staggered fashion, so that if





one crop is ruined by an unpredicted frost, the next won't be. Fortunately, the area's population supports several druids of the Emerald Spiral temple (as well as many independent priests of Erik) who travel the human-dominated provinces during the spring months to provide what assistance they can.

Summer comes and goes quickly. Heather and tall grass mingle on the Downs, and the sheep, goats, and cattle of the Rjurik grow fat. Wild animals also prosper; the Giantdowns seem covered with life during its summertime. Temperatures can climb into the 90's, though they average in the high 60's and low 70's. Rain keeps the ground fertile and moist, and droughts seldom occur.

In fall, when the farmers of Vjelthelma, Midjarna, and Lemnjohen cut their wheat and hay, and the predators of the Downs (animal, monster, human, and humanoid) begin stocking up for the winter, only a few trees in Lemnjohen, Bjorlangen, and Midjarna shed their leaves. The forests to the north are evergreen, and the Downs mark the change of seasons only with the yellowing of the grass. Bitter winds sweep over the Downs, producing an eerie "wuthering." The sound of the wind reminds the Rjurik of the dead that may rest uneasily in the Great Downs and of the cold winter to come.

Human settlers thrive during the spring and summer of the year, when the sun is bright and the weather remains fairly pleasant. Humanoids claim the fall and early winter, preying upon those who reaped an honest harvest. The winter belongs only to the hardest monsters and creatures of the Downs—and perhaps the ghosts and other undead in the region. Even the humanoids and giant-kin of the Downs hesitate to stir from their lairs in the dead of winter.

## fauna

Many natural animals inhabit the Downs, though most appear only seasonally. Herd animals are

plentiful. The Rjurik raise sheep, goats, and cattle, and many of these animals come from wild stock still found in the area. Herds of deer run between the low hills, and even the shy rothé can find a home. As for predators, one can find bears, badgers, wolverines, and some northern cats among the Downs.

All manner of smaller mammals make their homes here: hedgehogs, minks, ferrets, ermine, and several varieties of rodents, to name a few. Many adapt to winter weather among the Downs; a few migrate into the warmer southern woods or dig deep holes to hide from the cold.

Though the Ruide River flows along only the southern border of the Downs, many streams, creeks, ponds and small lakes exist here. In spring and summer, the melting snow and heavy rains cause dry beds to overflow. In the southern provinces, this effect helps irrigate the land and even provides some freshwater game for the inhabitants of the region. In Trondelaag, Haldallen, Silverheart, and even Skansoeren, however, flash floods and mud slides are not uncommon.

## flora

Several species of unusual plants grow in the Giantdowns. To a casual observer, most of the Downs region looks like one great series of rolling hills covered by tall grass. But many herbs and plants grow in this area, some valued highly by alchemists, healers, and cooks.

Many trappers and hunters forage for herbs to supplement their incomes or to provide for their own needs. The "Foraging for Herbs" sidebar provides examples of the more exotic herbs found in the Giantdowns, along with a brief description of

## foraging for herbs

In the Giantdowns, many people forage for wild herbs they can use (or sell) for healing, cooking, or alchemy. Foraging is difficult and time-consuming, but can be profitable.

Every herb listed here has a rarity rating (similar to the creature frequency listing in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome). This rating indicates the likelihood that the herb is present in an appropriate area during the appropriate time of the year (as defined in the herb's description).

Rarity	Chance
Very rare	4%
Rare	11%
Uncommon	20%
Common	65%

Before rolling to see if a particular herb can be found in a given area, the DM should instruct the characters involved to make Herbalism checks (or Intelligence checks at a -6 penalty) to see if they can remember how

to identify the herb. If the check succeeds, the DM may increase by up to 20% the chance of a particular herb being present (because the characters will be able to recognize all signs of the herb).

The DM may also increase or decrease the chance based on other factors that could affect the herb's availability. For example, if the PCs or others have foraged for the herb recently (within the last month or so) in a particular area, all of it may have been harvested. However, if the timing or placement of the characters' foraging is particularly appropriate (the middle of summer on top of a hill for an herb usually found on hills in summertime), the DM may increase the chance by up to 20%. He then rolls to determine whether the herb is present, keeping this roll secret (since the PCs won't know until they search).

Once the DM has determined whether the herb is present, the players roll to see whether their characters were able to find it. Each searching PC makes a Survival check (or an Intelligence check with a -4 penalty). A complete search takes 1d4 hours. If the roll succeeds, (and if the herb was present in the area), the PC finds some of the herb. Unless otherwise noted in the herb's description, only one "dose" of any particular herb will

their appearances  
and effects.

Other valuable and unusual herbs grow among the hills, mountains, and forests of the Giantdowns. Most have value to someone in the area, though few people know all the different useful herbs that a careful worker can harvest. If the DM wants to create more herbs, they probably should be no more powerful than the ones listed here, or considerably more rare and expensive. Less powerful herbs (many with only mundane uses, such as cooking) grow all over the Downs.

**DM note:** Of all the information presented in Part I, the DM may want to be the most careful with the details about herbs. Only PCs with the Herbalism proficiency, or familiarity with the Downs or nature (rangers or druids), should have access to the extensive information on specific herbs presented here. A typical Rjurik settler might know that "barroweed grows on the Great Downs and is very dangerous," or "muttonroot is good to eat and can be dried and preserved indefinitely," but his player won't know the game statistics, exact rarity, or even exact cost.

## provinces of the giantdowns

The 12 provinces of the Giantdowns may again come to the attention of the powers in Cerilia. A virtually unsettled, unclaimed land in the middle of the western half of the continent, the Downs could attract the attention of would-be kings and existing overlords who recognize its untapped potential. The superstitions of yesterday might become the tall tales of tomorrow—or the horrors of today, should they prove true.

be found during a search. An Herbalism +4 check is necessary to harvest any herb, unless otherwise specified in the description.

The cost listed for any herb is by dose. They are relative costs only—any trader, druid, ranger, or other forager may charge significantly more for an herb, especially if it is out of season, requires unusual risk to find, or is needed desperately.

**Alsuien** rare 5 gp (preservative)  
50 gp (poison)

This stem of a small, white flower can be harvested during any season except winter. During the early spring, the stem is a dangerous poison. If this herb is ingested, the victim must succeed at a saving throw vs. poison or suffer 1d10+4 points of damage. The tongue and lips of victims turn greenish-blue for 1d4 days (corpses retain this discoloration indefinitely). If alsuien is gathered during the summer or fall months, the stem is a powerful food preservative and one dose can keep virtually any meat or dairy product fresh and free of harmful bacteria for nearly a year. Only a successful Herbalism check can distinguish ripe alsuien from the poisonous variant. Cut alsuien can be kept fresh, unused, for 1d3 weeks.

## midjarna (1/5)

If the Giantdowns had a human-controlled capital, it would probably lie within the province of Midjarna. Ruled loosely by the Watch and shepherded by the Emerald Spiral, this sparsely populated region contains at least one permanent settlement (Midjarna Village), and more may be forming. The Watch carefully patrols Midjarna's borders, and the settlers report the sighting of any humanoids or strange creatures. The reluctant, aging regent of the human-controlled Giantdowns provinces lives here, along with the leader of the Watch.

## vjelthelma (1/5)

The Watch maintains as strong a presence as it can in the semi-civilized province of Vjelthelma, mainly to patrol the long border between the Giantdowns and the Gorgon's Crown. In the history of the realm, no armies have marched from the Gorgon's Crown into the Giantdowns—but the Rjurik do not count too heavily on the Gorgon's respect for tradition.

Most of the Rjurik in Vjelthelma live on great homesteads owned by individual landholders or large, important families. These landowners govern their own homesteads as they will, but generally respect the authority of the Watch.

The Emerald Spiral holding here helps the Watch by unifying the Rjurik settlers. They keep the people in a military frame of mind, and the secretive druid Kalla (FRJ; Pr8, Erik; Br, minor, 18; CG) makes her semi-permanent home here.

## boganhaar (0/5)

The Watch once made its presence known in Boganhaar and was supposedly scouting this province for

**Barroweed** rare 500 gp

This coarse, blackened grass seems to grow only on the burial places of Anuirean and Rjurik warriors who died during the long-ago battles between the two races. At close range it can be distinguished from normal grass, but far away it blends in with its surroundings. It grows in patches (usually 1d3 doses per patch). The Rjurik do not usually collect it, however—they see it as a warning sign against intrusion. If mashed or even sufficiently bruised barroweed comes in contact with human, demihuman, or humanoid skin, the individual must succeed at a saving throw vs. poison or suffer, over the next 2d4 hours, effects identical to those caused by a *staff of withering*. During the time of withering, a *neutralize poison* or *cure disease* spell will cure and reverse this process, but after the barroweed has done its work, only a *limited wish* or *wish* spell can cure the victim. Barroweed remains potent for one hour after harvest, though protecting it from bruising and storing it in moist earth taken directly from the barrow it grew over can keep it fresh for up to 1d3 months. While most Rjurik, even evil ones, want nothing to do with barroweed, assassins and poisoners in other cultures pay highly for a dose.

future settlement when the White Witch attacked Bjorlangen. Now the Watch has pulled back all but its most experienced scouts from this region, leaving the few nomadic settlers (mainly hunters and herdsmen) to their own devices. Many unaligned humanoids live here as well, though they maintain an uneasy truce with the Rjurik. The Downs of Boganhaar do not seem to be as evenly spaced as those in other provinces, possibly implying that they were either added later (if one believes the tales of giant burial grounds) or were completely natural in the first place.

Many of the Downs' strangest monsters live in Boganhaar, and Ghuralli's humanoids have been known to raid this province from his stronghold in Rhuiddar.

## lemnjohen (1/4)

The Watch added Lemnjohen to its list of patrolled provinces somewhat unwillingly after a band of adventurers drove a group of bandits, giants, and humanoids out of a crumbling fort near the northeastern corner of the region. Settlers from Bjorlangen poured in, making the small province nearly as densely populated as Midjarna. When Bjorlangen fell to the White Witch, Lemnjohen became a refuge for those Rjurik and other settlers who could flee across the border. Now the Watch patrols both the eastern and northern borders—though not as well as its members might wish, had they more personnel to devote to the task. Two of the original adventurers who cleared the fort remain here, one as the leader of the local Rjurik Watch.

## bjorlangen (0/5)

Once under the control of the Watch, Bjorlangen fell to agents of the White Witch only a few short

months ago.

Rjurik renegades and mercenary humanoids currently scour the plains of northern Bjorlangen for those who still resist the White Witch's occupation. Any remaining Rjurik settlers in Bjorlangen have probably retreated to the dubious safety of the Great Downs in the south or fled to Lemnjohen. If any still survive, they have probably found little comfort there—the Bjorlangen Downs are reputed to be the oldest and most treacherous of all.

## skansoeren (0/5)

One of the two completely wild provinces of the Giantdowns, Skansoeren has been the site of more battles than any other province in the region. Many human barrows lie within this province's boundaries, though only a few "giant graves" can be identified by those who believe the old tales. Bordered by two Watch-ruled provinces, a Ghuralli province, and the White Witch-occupied land of Bjorlangen, Skansoeren currently exists under a "watchful peace." The next great battle of the Giantdowns may be fought over the rocky barrow hills of Skansoeren if any of the warring factions move to provoke another. An independent goblin faction lives somewhere within Skansoeren, trading with both the Rjurik and Ghuralli's humanoids in an effort to remain free.

## silverheart (0/7)

The awnshegh Ghuralli barely keeps control of the mountain province of Silverheart. Only a few of the famed Great Downs lie here beneath the shadow of the Silverheads, but more than enough danger exists in this region for two Ghurallis. Rumor has it

**Black russel** common 10 gp  
Large (3d4 distinct doses) growths of this hardy leafy herb grow almost year-round near the entrances of caves and caverns in the Silverhead Mountains. The plant can be eaten safely as a spice for meat, but it has special properties for many Rjurik. Druids who dry out black russel and burn it while praying may experience helpful visions. Usually vague and mysterious, these visions can reveal future events or past happenings related to the druid's current concerns. They may provide a guide (like the priest spell *augury*) or they could just be visions. Druids and knowledgeable rangers (usually those who worship Erik) recognize the potency of black russel and will pay (and charge) full price for it. Others may value it at only five or six silver pieces per dose.

**Bloodstock** very rare 200 gp  
A thin, reedy plant found only in the pine woods of the northern provinces, bloodstock holds great value for warriors. Rich in nutrients, it can be shredded, boiled in water, and ingested before battle to give any human or humanoid an additional burst of energy and ferocity. A person who eats it gains a +2 bonus to his damage rolls for 1d6+1 rounds. However, if the same person eats more than two

doses of bloodstock in a one-week period, he must make a system shock roll or be completely incapacitated (though conscious and in terrible pain) for 2d6 turns. If the same character takes a third dose of bloodstock during the same week (whether or not he succeeded at his first system shock roll), he must make another system shock roll or die of heart failure immediately.

**Fernflower** common 30 gp  
The long leaves of this fernlike plant can be harvested during the summer and fall. It grows nearly everywhere in the Downs except in forest and mountain provinces. Ingested directly, it causes minor disorientation and nausea. If placed on an open wound or mixed into a poultice, it relieves pain and can heal 1d6+1 points of damage. The herb loses potency 2d6 days after harvest.

**Gjorlab** very rare 500 gp  
The root of a small berry-bush, gjorlab becomes effective when one dices it and boils it in water for five minutes. The resulting brew, if consumed within one hour, can *cure serious wounds*, *cure disease*, and *neutralize poison*. The root can be harvested only in autumn, but it keeps indefinitely once dried.

that the stone  
and mountain giants of  
the Silverheads, with some of  
their mysterious allies, contest Ghuralli for  
the right to rule this region. If the awnshegh did not  
need this province to support his battles in Barrow  
Woods, he might abandon it to strengthen his other  
holdings.

## trondelaag (0/6)

The wild province of Trondelaag provides shelter for  
the worst the Giantdowns has to offer. The bandit  
tribe of Kjarhoelle winters here at the feet of the  
Silverhead Mountains and makes a summer camp  
among the southern Downs. The bandits raid  
Rjurik settlers and humanoids alike, warring with  
any who cross their path. Skulking in the shadow  
between the mountains and the Great Downs, the  
people of Kjarhoelle are better than their humanoid  
competitors by only a small degree—at least they  
keep the Blood Skull orogs from pouring over the  
Silverheads and into the Downs areas. They may,  
however, have an arrangement with the White  
Witch's invading army.

## haldallen (0/6)

Haldallen is another sore spot for Ghuralli. His  
humanoids use the mountains as cover for striking  
east at the Rjurik settlers of Boganhaar, and to keep  
watch on the "no man's land" of Skansoeren. In  
turn, his minions suffer the predations of mountain  
giants defending their territory and, supposedly,  
that of the giants' allies—a small colony of dwarves  
in the Silverheads.

## caer cwnnar (0/7)

The elves of Lluabright fought most determinedly  
for Caer Cwnnar, but eventually Ghuralli and his  
humanoids overcame all resistance in this section of  
the northern forest. In the past few months, Ghu-  
ralli has moved to strengthen his hold in this prov-  
ince, hunting out all remaining elves and working to  
increase his influence over the independent human-  
oids and Rjurik of this area. Rumor has it that a few  
Rjurik, unwilling or unable to abandon their homes  
in Caer Cwnnar, have joined with a few hearty elf  
warriors to fight Ghuralli's advance.

## rhuiddar (1/6)

Ghuralli's headquarters, dark Rhuiddar has become  
a haven for the most powerful and evil humanoids  
of the Giantdowns, and a place of fear and loathing.  
Ghuralli himself strays from this province only on  
errands of warfare, since it borders three of Llu-  
abright's elven provinces to the north and two  
Rjurik provinces to the south. Reports from escaped  
slaves and prisoners confirm that Ghuralli has a  
dark fortress among the trees somewhere within  
Rhuiddar, but an assault on this province likely  
would prove dangerous and foolhardy. Ghuralli is  
fully detailed in Part II of this book.

## barrow woods (0/7)

If Rhuiddar has an evil reputation, the Barrow  
Woods has a bloody one. Recently, the Scarlet  
Baron of the Blood Skull Barony has made efforts  
to extend his rule over Barrow Woods, but Ghuralli  
has opposed his plans. The creatures of Barrow  
Woods object as well, and they make some fear-  
some arguments.

<b>Muttonroot</b>	uncommon	5 sp
A tuberlike plant with a peculiar weedlike above-ground growth, muttonroot was once a staple of the Rjurik diet. A virulent pestilence all but wiped out the plant, however, and now it grows only on the sides of the largest hills (but not in the mountainous provinces). Muttonroot, when harvested, provides 1d6+1 "mutton tubers" that can be dried and preserved almost indefinitely. It is a very tasty root that provides enough sustenance for a grown man for one day.		

<b>Nettlesap</b>	rare	10 gp
A type of thorny nettle found only along the southern border of the great northern forest, nettlesap produces a minor analgesic used by woodsmen and elves to relieve minor aches and pains. Alchemists of Anuire and Khinasi have studied the liquid (produced by the plants only during the summer months) and found that it, when mixed with a few common components, could reduce swelling and relieve the joint-stiffness that affects so many older people throughout Cerilia. These rare nettles can be bundled and shipped during summer months; they don't lose potency for nearly a year. Unfortunately, Ghuralli and his humanoids occupy two of the three		

provinces where nettlesap can be found, and they fight with the Blood Skull Barony over the third. Bundles of these nettles (which produce about 10 doses each) can fetch up to 200 gp on the open market.		
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<b>Turtleroot</b>	uncommon	25 gp
Turtleroot isn't actually a root, but a fungus that looks very much like a medium-sized turtle shell when it grows on rocks inside the ravines and caverns of the Downs provinces. It can be found only in caves where no natural light reaches, usually in damp places. Turtleroot, when harvested and dried properly, can be burned to produce a bracing, refreshing, mint-like odor. Inhaling the smoke increases the alertness of anyone in a 10-foot radius of the fire. Characters who inhale the smoke can remain awake for up to eight hours (after a normal day's activity) without feeling drowsy. Such characters are surprised only on a roll of 1. Repeated uses of turtleroot can prove dangerous, however. If a character inhales turtleroot smoke twice in five days, he must succeed at a system shock roll or suffer from nervousness, paranoia, and insomnia. This effect decreases his Constitution by 1d4 points and all his saving throws by 4 points for the next month.		

Plenty of hill and mountain giants live within Barrow Woods, and they are known to hunt any living creature they can find. Wolves, made stronger by their humanoid competition, also roam the province, keeping the "peace" between the Giantdowns and the Blood Skull Barony.

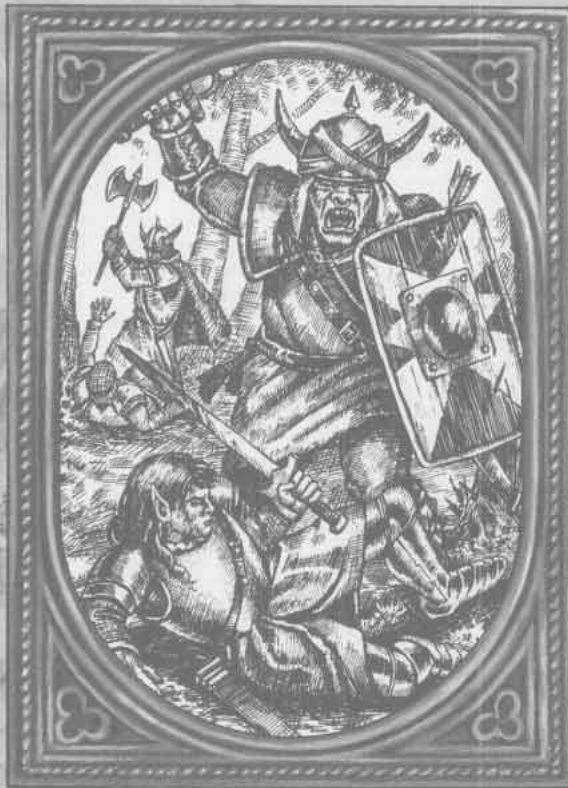
Some say the White Witch may have influence in this region, and she may have used the reputation of Barrow Woods to pass her agents over the Silverheads and into Bjorlangen. None can confirm or deny this rumor.

## neighbors of the giantdowns

**L**ying in the center of so many conflicts, the Giantdowns have more than their share of interesting neighbors. Not all consider the Giantdowns of strategic or civilian importance, however.

### the gorgon

The Gorgon takes little note of the Giantdowns. Until he decides to expand his growing empire into this region, he probably will leave the Giantdowns alone; he is confident that the haunted hills on his side of the border ensure that his neighbors do the same.



## Iluabright

The fair folk of the northern forest hate the humanoids of the Giantdowns, particularly Ghuralli, for taking part of their forest away from them. Still, they seem more concerned about holding the borders they have now than pushing into the Giantdowns and regaining what they have lost.

### the white witch

The White Witch has shown active interest in expanding southward into the Giantdowns. Whether she hopes to rule or is after something else remains to be seen. She seems to have formed some sort of alliance with the Kjarhoelle tribe of Trondelaag, however—a relationship that could spell difficulty for the Watch.

### the blood skull barony

The humanoids of the Blood Skull Barony have tamed (in their definition) most of their realm. Surrounded by enemies, they may look to oppress the humanoids of the Giantdowns for their own evil purposes. However, they provide only an occasional threat—one attack from Hogenmark or another neighbor and they could ignore the Giantdowns for years.

### dhoesone

A few adventurers, traders, and settlers leave Dhoesone every year and travel into the Giantdowns. Some become permanent inhabitants; most either get what they want and leave, or die trying. Dhoesone is a comparatively peaceful land and its regent worries about its wild neighbor. Every few years or so the humanoids or monsters of the Giantdowns raid along the Dhoesone border. Since the institution of the Watch in the Downs, these raids have become less frequent, though they have yet to cease entirely.

### tuarhievel

The elven kingdom to the south has even less use for the Giantdowns than do the elves of the north. The elves of Tuarhievel enforce the border formed by the Ruide River, and the Watch tries to make certain the hunters and trappers of Midjarna respect that border as well. On rare occasions, Rjurik rangers of the Giantdowns have crossed over into Tuarhievel; a few have even returned.

The Giantdowns are filled with life and unlife. Natural and fantastic animals roam wild, while humans, humanoids, and giants make their homes here. The ancient and the recent dead haunt the troubled landscape.

This section describes some of the species, races, groups, and individuals that adventurers might encounter while exploring the Downs. Some individual characters are described in detail; these NPCs will probably become important to adventures and campaigns set in the Giantdowns. Other characters, described only in passing, will likely serve in behind-the-scenes capacities or as sources of information and intrigue. If necessary, the DM can flesh out NPCs not fully detailed here.

The statistics of the animals and monsters described in these pages can be found in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome unless otherwise noted.

## Rjurik settlers

The Rjurik have tried to settle the Giantdowns many times. To date, no attempt at civilization has held. Humanoids so thrive in the region that even the hardy, independent Rjurik cannot oust them from the Downs.

Still, independent Rjurik families and small clans have come to the Giantdowns in hope of settling the region. In truth, many of the earliest settlers were refugees, fleeing Anuirean armies or Rjurik clan justice. Today, however, most of the families permanently settled in the Giantdowns are descendants of these refugees and have comparatively honest histories. The life of a settler in the Giantdowns is rough, though, and few residents can be considered civilized or urbane.

Indeed, a few would-be kings and overlords have moved into the Giantdowns region on several occasions. Most recently, a small army of mercenaries employed by a prominent younger son of Stjordvik tried to "civilize" the Giantdowns in much the same manner the Anuireans once tried to "civilize" the Rjurik. The mercenaries and their leader moved in, the pretender declared himself "King of the Giantdowns," and they tried to rule.

The venture failed utterly. Loyalty among the scattered settlers was abysmal. They did not want a king, let alone an outsider king, ruling over them. The humanoids and the giants made trouble for this would-be lord, and the Rjurik settlers refused to aid him in driving the creatures back. Eventually, the "King of the Giantdowns" tucked tail between legs and headed back to his homeland.

Two generations ago, however, one man did make a somewhat successful run at rulership. Sturm Gundar, a powerful landowner whose family had scratched out

a living in the Giantdowns for decades, built a large farm south of the Great Downs in Midjarna. Possessed of a minor bloodline and good fortune, Sturm attracted men, women, and whole families to Midjarna with the promise of protection, community, and independence. He asked little of those who followed him, except that they help work his large homestead occasionally and unite to protect their mutual holdings from humanoid raiding.

Sturm employed many Rjurik on his homestead as land-clearers, farmers, shepherds, hunters, and trappers. They hardly noticed his rulership (since he had only a small holding), except when he helped mediate conflicts between families and the small clans. He encouraged his followers to build their homes near his own and to farm and herd outward, to clear the land and make the settlement defensible. This area would later become known as Midjarna Village.

In Sturm's old age, he did what he could to encourage traders and crafters from Dhoesone and Stjordvik to come to his tiny village, in the hopes of making it grow. He tried to make the passage safe, but the way was never clear of bandits or humanoid raiders during his lifetime. Eventually, Sturm died, leaving his small domain—a law (1) holding in Midjarna—to his daughter and son-in-law.

Sturm's daughter, Anneke, and her husband, Gunnar, took over where Sturm left off. They continued to encourage trappers and herdsmen among the Rjurik settlers to establish winter homes in Midjarna, and

# part II: denizens of the giantdowns

they allowed small families to build more farms near their own. The village grew slowly.

But tragedy struck. Even as Gunnar and Anneke considered expanding their settlement beyond one province, a terrible plague known as the "gray wasting" swept through the land. Little is known of the disease's origin, but some say it was a product of the Gorgon's magic, sent to disrupt the growing Rjurik settlement. Others believe the disease came out of one of the ancient barrows, disturbed by a would-be treasure hunter.

Whatever its origin, the gray wasting devastated human and humanoid populations alike. Only the magical creatures of the Downs seemed immune, and the disease nearly wiped out the small village in Midjarna. Gunnar died of the disease, along with many of his strongest warriors, but Anneke and their three young sons survived.

Little remained of Midjarna Village.

Many of the Rjurik who did survive fled the area in the belief that being gathered together in a community had enabled the disease to spread more quickly. In actuality, Midjarna province suffered much less than the scattered Rjurik in other areas of the Giantdowns, but this fact was not known until much later.

Anneke lost heart. She concentrated on raising her sons and ordering her much-reduced homestead. Though most of the remaining Rjurik still looked to her as their regent, her realm almost collapsed. It probably would have disappeared entirely if not for a retired Halskapan warrior named Hogrun Njalsson.

Hogrun was still in his prime when he arrived in the Downs. He told little of his past, but rumors followed him. A former member of Halskapa's elite Wolf Guard, he left service in that kingdom under unusual circumstances but not in dishonor. He wished to retire to the Downs and build a homestead of his own. He did not desire responsibility or the role of a leader.

The beleaguered regent of Midjarna did not allow Hogrun to retire. Anneke used the warrior's sense of duty against him and persuaded Hogrun to take up the mantle of leadership, if not the actual regency. She made him her vassal and lieutenant, and set him about the task of rebuilding Midjarna and the outlying settlements. He created the Watch, a pseudo-police/army/scouting organization dedicated to patrolling the Downs and helping those Rjurik who would accept aid.

Under Hogrun's leadership, Anneke's realm expanded to include the provinces of Vjelthelma, Bjorlangen, Lemnjohen, and, most recently, Boganhaar. Though the White Witch's troops have recently wrested Bjorlangen from Anneke's grasp, the remaining Rjurik provinces remain under her loose supervision.

## clans and tribes of the giantdowns

No large clans or tribes exist amid the Great Downs, except the bandit-tribe of the Kjarhoelle in the province of Trondelaag. As mentioned previously, settlers usually came here as individuals or in small groups.

Still, the clan tradition has begun to reassert itself. In areas where the Rjurik are the most populous (such as the provinces of Lemnjohen, Vjelthelma, and Midjarna), families have been growing together for years. In and around Midjarna Village, for example, several prominent homesteaders have whole families working for them and looking to them for direction. While no new clans have officially formed, the process is well on its way.

## the general population

In the debate between urban and rural Rjurik, the Giantdowns' inhabitants definitely fall into the latter category. Most do not even belong to distinct tribes. Rather, the settled Rjurik of the Giantdowns tend to live in small family or extended family units throughout the human-dominated provinces.

A typical Rjurik household might include a patriarch or matriarch, a spouse, one or two elderly relatives, two to four children (ranging in age from infants to adults), and perhaps spouses for one or two adult children. The average household comprises seven individuals; prominent homesteads may extend their families to include up to twice this number.

A household in the Giantdowns occupies a large area. Since most settled Rjurik tend sheep, goats, or cattle and have vegetable gardens or wheat farms as well, they need a lot of land. A large family even in relatively civilized Midjarna may live 5 to 10 miles from its nearest neighbors. If more than 20 families have permanently settled in Boganhaar or Skansoeren, Hogrun and his Watch patrols would be surprised to hear it.

Unsettled or wandering Rjurik include trappers, traders, hunters, foragers, and a very few shepherds who have yet to stake out a claim. More and more, these wanderers are expected to check in with local householders or the Watch garrisons in Vjelthelma, Midjarna, or Lemnjohen before setting up temporary camps. Hogrun and the Watch try to keep the settled and unsettled Rjurik from coming into conflict over resources.

Unfortunately, one other group of wandering Rjurik exists in the Giantdowns: bandits. The Downs are open country. The Rjurik need to defend themselves against humanoids and monsters—and against their own kind. Fortunately, the Watch discourages most bandits from heavy predation, and the settlers are tough enough to survive minor thefts or assaults.

The village of Midjarna and the Old Fort at Lemnjohen represent what "urban" population exists in the Giantdowns. Over the past few summers, the population of Midjarna Village has swelled to the point where a few traders have set up permanent posts and some settlers have abandoned unsuccessful farms to live in the village and work at other trades. In Lemnjohen, the Old Fort has had to extend its protection to a refugee camp (built by those fleeing Bjorlangen) that also threatens to become a permanent settlement.

Vjelthelma province took a different approach. Mirroring the early development of Midjarna, the Vjelthelmans have settled into large homestead areas. A few landholders own the land and many Rjurik families work for them in exchange for protection. So far, most of the Vjelthelman landholders respect the Watch's authority in the region, though there have been occasional clashes.

The following individual descriptions represent some of the more notable personages among the Rjurik and their allies in the Giantdowns.

## hogrun njalsson

Watch Commander,  
13th-level Rjurik ranger

S: 17  
D: 15  
C: 15  
I: 12  
W: 15  
Ch: 11  
AL: CG  
AC: 3  
hp: 70  
MV: 12  
THACO: 8  
#AT: 2  
Dmg: 1d8 (long sword)  
Bloodline: None.



**Equipment:** Hogrun owns a valuable magical item, the *bow of Gyddren*. This elven weapon, probably crafted by the bowyers of ancient Lluabright, functions as a *longbow +3* and has a ROF of 3/1. Hogrun prizes this artifact above all other possessions and guards it with his life. He seldom wears armor any more, but he does have a set of improved mail that he dons when necessary.

**Description/History:** Hogrun serves as Anneke's lieutenant and chief adviser, though many of the Rjurik settlers believe he actually runs the realm.

In reality, Hogrun desires nothing more than independence and a little peace. For reasons known only to him, Hogrun retired from Halskapa's prestigious Wolf Guard and came to the Giantdowns. He had heard of a Rjurik leader trying to forge a realm out of the wild lands, and he intended to offer his services in exchange for a small homestead. Instead, Hogrun ended up becoming perhaps the most important Rjurik inhabitant of the Giantdowns, though he longs for peace and as little responsibility as possible.

**Usual Location:** The village of Midjarna.

**Notes:** Some in Midjarna have been spreading rumors about Hogrun's past, present, and future. Most agree that he did not leave Halskapa under any cloud of scandal or suspicion, but that he fled because of a woman he could not have. Whether this woman died or rejected him is unknown, and Hogrun refuses to discuss the situation.

Those who say Hogrun rules the Rjurik Giantdowns know nothing of the real situation. Hogrun became Anneke's lieutenant only under duress and even now tries to persuade her that he should step down in favor of one of her sons or some other worthy replacement.

As for the Watch commander's future, many romantics believe he will marry Anneke and become King of the Giantdowns, but these rumors are even more fanciful than the first. While Hogrun and Anneke respect and care for each other, Anneke is nearly 20 years Hogrun's senior and neither has expressed the least romantic interest. Hogrun will probably grow more and more uneasy with his responsibilities until he can find someone to take over his position for him. Then, he can retire to his small farm and relax (or so he hopes).

## anneke sturmdotter

0-level Rjurik matriarch

S: 8  
D: 9  
C: 14  
I: 17  
W: 16  
Ch: 9  
AL: LG  
AC: 10  
hp: 5  
MV: 9  
THACO: 20  
#AT: 1  
Dmg: 1d4 (dagger)  
Bloodline: Reynir, tainted, 9.  
Blood Abilities: None.



**Equipment:** Anneke carries no special equipment. She has a modest longhouse in Midjarna Village, which she shares with her three sons. At her house, Anneke stores all sorts of herbs and a few family heirlooms (see the description of her home in "Part III: Sites of Interest"). She allows Hogrun to watch over the meager treasury of her realm.

**Description/History:** Anneke's history is tied to that of the Rjurik Giantdowns. Her family fled clan feuds in Hognemark long ago, and Anneke considers the Downs her only home. She grew up and lived among the Great Downs, has toiled and bled over the land, and intends to die here—but not before she finds a worthy successor to her tiny realm.

Anneke bore her husband, Gunnar, three sons: Gunnar Gunnarsen (the eldest) and twins Sigurd and Sturm. She finds fault with all of them, and cannot bear the thought of turning her realm over to any of her children. Secretly, she hopes Hogrun will marry and have a child who can carry on after she is gone.

Anneke appears frail and worn by the years. She has dark, stringy hair often tied back in a ponytail or up in a bun. She still has her own teeth, but the wrinkles on her face make her look like an old crone. Only in her eyes, in unguarded moments, can observers note the cunning intelligence that she carefully hides from all but a few close friends.

**Usual Location:** The village of Midjarna.

**Notes:** Anneke knows virtually everything there is to know about the Giantdowns—or at least, anything that any Rjurik might know. She believes most of the legends about the Downs; she knows giant barrows exist and that the graves of Anuirean and Rjurik soldiers lie haunted among them. She has a vast knowledge of herbs and animals found among the Downs, and in her longhouse keeps a catalogue

any  
weris.





Anneke does not reveal her knowledge to just anyone. Alone with Hogrun or her sons, she is intelligent and as sharp of mind and wit as she ever was. With strangers, or even with many of her own people, she acts slightly senile, good-natured, and harmless. Anneke will never admit to being the true regent of the Rjurik Giantdowns. She knows how frail her body is, and knows that if Ghuralli or any other enemies of the Rjurik people were to find out her secret, they could send assassins to kill her easily, disrupting the proper regency of the land.

## gunnar gunnarsen

9th-level Rjurik ranger

S: 18/63  
 D: 12  
 C: 17  
 I: 17  
 W: 16  
 Ch: 14  
 AL: LG  
 AC: 6  
 hp: 65  
 MV: 12  
 THACO: 12  
 #AT: 2  
 Dmg: 2d4 (claymore)

Bloodline: Reynir, tainted, 5.

Blood Abilities: None.

**Equipment:** Gunnar wields his father's heirloom weapon, an ancient *claymore* +3. Tales say that one of Gunnar's ancestors saved it from the destruction of Mount Deismaar; it has since always belonged to the heir to the house. A few legends say the sword is intelligent, but awaits the right time to make its other powers known. Gunnar wears leather armor, furs, and a cloak. He also carries a longbow and arrows at all times.

**Description/History:** The eldest of Anneke's children is most like her in temperament, but least like her in looks. Brown-haired and ruddy-skinned, Gunnar is a bear of a man, well suited to the rural challenges of the Giantdowns. He looks more like Hogrun's son than Anneke's.

But nearly all who know Gunnar would swear his brawn must make up for his lack of brain power. Always smiling and open, Gunnar acts like a big, dumb fool. Even around his mother, he appears to be clumsy with his words and hides his intelligence—easily as cunning as Anneke's own—behind a facade.

Gunnar's apparent lack of intelligence has caused a great rift between Anneke and her eldest son. Initially concerned with bringing up her sickly twins, Anneke left much of Gunnar's upbringing to her husband. She never knew how quickly her eldest learned his father's teachings. Gunnar Gunnarsen learned a lesson from his mother as well: Do not let your foes know all your strengths.

**Usual Location:** Wandering. Gunnar checks in at Andjarna Village occasionally.



### Notes: Gunnar

Gunnarsen serves as

Hogrun's chief henchman. Hogrun

knows the secret of Gunnar's intelligence but has been sworn to silence. It pains him to see Anneke dismiss her eldest son as a disappointment, but he will not speak up until Gunnar himself does.

Gunnar hides his abilities because he is the true leader of the *svinarek*, or "outriders," of the Watch. He and a few other brave agents of the Watch often infiltrate the camps of bandits and raiders, going so far as to mingle among the dangerous Kjarhoelle tribe of Trondelaag. Only Hogrun knows the risks Gunnar has taken for the good of the realm, and he is fairly bursting to tell someone of Gunnar's deeds.

## sturm and sigurd

4th-level Rjurik fighters

S: 16  
 D: 16  
 C: 13  
 I: 10  
 W: 9  
 Ch: 12  
 AL: NE  
 AC: 2  
 hp: 26  
 MV: 12  
 THACO: 17  
 #AT: 1

Dmg: 1d8 (long sword)

Bloodline: Reynir, tainted, 4.

Blood Abilities: None.

**Equipment:** Both brothers wear improved mail and carry long swords. They also bear longbows and each has a small vial of poison for the arrows. The

poison adds 2d4 points of damage to successful hits; anyone examining either the wound or a coated arrow can detect the poison.

**Description/History:**

Something went wrong between Anneke and her two youngest sons, Sturm and Sigurd. Identical twins, they take after their mother in face and form but Anneke cannot imagine where they inherited their temperaments.

While Anneke admits that her husband Gunnar often experienced moody periods of darkness and brooding, she attests that he often erupted from these moods suddenly, with rekindled passion and excitement. Both Sturm and Sigurd tend to sink into fits of glowering anger at the oddest



times, coming out only when they are able to enact a new cruelty.

Both Sturm and Sigurd have spent months banished from Midjarna, though neither remains under any particular penalty. Neither has actually performed an overtly evil act (at least, not in front of witnesses). The twins tend to be petty, spiteful, and cruel only when they can get away with it.

**Usual Location:** Midjarna Village, Skansoeren, Boganhaar, and Vjelthelma. The twins are usually together.

**Notes:** Sturm and Sigurd do love their mother and respect her authority. They have never argued against any punishment dealt out by her, and no one can truly call them cowards. They fear only one thing: Hogrun Njalsson. Hogrun sees through their dissembling and into their hearts, and he knows they lust after their mother's regency. Both Sturm and Sigurd hate the Watch commander for the trust Anneke has shown him. They consider their brother Gunnar a fool to be used and manipulated when he might prove useful.

Rumor has it that Sturm and Sigurd have begun negotiating with bandits among the Downs (especially in Skansoeren). They may want to set up their own realm, or usurp Anneke's when she grows too weak to oppose them. They would certainly oppose any new favorite among the Rjurik and do their best to oust any competition they might have.

## the watch

The men and women who patrol the Rjurik Giantdowns and keep settlers relatively safe from their enemies are known as the Watch. They operate casually in all the Rjurik-settled provinces, though they keep small garrisons in Vjelthelma, Lemnjohen, and Midjarna.

The Watch is broken into three branches, all under the command of Hogrun Njalsson. The most visible members of the Watch serve in the *holmjarllen*, or "home guard." They are actual garrison troops meant to repel humanoid or monster attacks. Vjelthelma, Lemnjohen, and Midjarna each support one *holmjarllen* garrison. Each garrison keeps between 200 and 400 men and women under arms (one to two units of Rjurik irregulars). With the recent unpleasantness in Bjorlangen, Hogrun has begun recruiting a third unit in Midjarna, but he doesn't know how he will pay or outfit the troops. As it is, keeping as many as six military units on the Giantdowns' payroll is nearly impossible without substantial effort.

The second branch of the Watch is called the *marklorjen*, or "march warden." The *marklorjen* patrol the borders of the Rjurik Giantdowns, keeping a watch against invasion or danger. One unit of Rjurik *marklorjen* makes up the entire *marklorjen*, and they can be assembled into an actual military unit only with a few weeks' advance notice. Unfortunately, a significant number of *marklorjen* died during the invasion of

Bjorlangen, and more retreated into Lemnjohen (and are cut off from the rest of the Rjurik Downs), so Hogrun is desperate to recruit new members.

The *marklorjen* have won the respect and admiration of many Rjurik settlers in the wild provinces of Skansoeren and Boganhaar by helping them with seemingly minor disputes and troubles. Recently, a *marklorjen* band managed to negotiate a treaty with the humanoids of Skansoeren, who promised not to raid any human settlements in the area. The Rjurik do not trust the free humanoids any more than they do Ghuralli's humanoids, but the treaty has done some good—for now.

**Typical *holmjarllen* or *marklorjen* Watchman, MRj or FRj, F1 or R1:** AC 6 (leather armor); MV 12 (unencumbered); hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (claymore) or 1d6 (long bow); SZ M (5'8"); ML steady (12); Int very (11); AL LG; XP 15.

**Note:** For every 10 Watch members, there should be one sergeant of 2nd to 4th level. He will have improved mail or studded leather armor.

**Personality:** Loyal, watchful, serious.

**Special equipment:** All Watchmen are equipped with an alarm horn and an insignia marking them as members of individual garrisons or units. They have a secret method of displaying the insignia when asked, so as to keep their ranks from being infiltrated.

**Usual location:** The *holmjarllen* maintain garrisons in the Old Fort of Lemnjohen, the village of Midjarna, and in Vjelthelma. The *marklorjen* patrol all the southern provinces, with the exception of Bjorlangen.

**Notes:** *Holmjarllen* and *marklorjen* Watchmen can be found in any of the provinces ruled by Anneke Sturmdotter, usually in small groups. Hogrun sends his *holmjarllen* to each of these "controlled" provinces to set up semi-permanent way stations where Rjurik settlers can find them in need. The *marklorjen* patrol most heavily in the uncontrolled or barely controlled provinces (such as Skansoeren and Boganhaar).

The last branch of the Watch does not officially exist. Those few who know of it call it the *svinarek*, or "outriders." Only Hogrun and the outriders' secret leader, Gunnar Gunnarsen, know the exact number of members in this secret band, but it cannot amount to more than two or three dozen men and women of various races and backgrounds.

The *svinarek* have the dangerous jobs of infiltrating the renegade bands of Rjurik throughout the Giantdowns (the Kjarhoelle of Trondelaag being the most notable, but not necessarily the most dangerous), spying on the humanoids, and keeping a watch on non-Rjurik

provinces. They often operate completely alone for seasons or even years at a time, and few live to collect the plot of land and the home promised all Watch members on retirement.

Currently, the svinarek are desperately trying to gather information regarding the fall of Bjorlängen. They hope to confirm whether or not the White Witch had help from renegade Rjurik, and what her future plans might be. Many svinarek among the Kjarhoelle have not reported to Gunnar in over a year now, and he worries about their survival.

**Typical svinarek:** There are no typical members of the svinarek Watch. Rumor has it that only half their number are Rjurik men and women. Others might be elves, half-elves, dwarves, halflings, or humans of other races. They masquerade as tinkers, merchants, bandits, and adventurers. Usually, they range in level from 4th to 8th, and tend to be warriors and rogues (though some say at least one druid is among their ranks).

**Usual location:** Secret. Individuals or small groups of svinarek may be encountered anywhere, and they may report in to Gunnar at the village of Midjarna. Currently, the svinarek concentrate their activities on Trondelaag, Bjorlängen, Skansoeren, and Haldallen.

**Notes:** Few encounter the svinarek, unless the svinarek want to be encountered. Gunnar and Hogrun hope that the svinarek can contact each other on occasion, though this has proven very difficult in the past. Sometimes, these independent operators use go-betweens and dupes to do their communicating for them.

## dagmar druesbane

5th-level Rjurik fighter

S: 17  
D: 12  
C: 15  
I: 12  
W: 14  
Ch: 9  
AL: LN  
AC: 3  
hp: 39  
MV: 12  
THACO: 16  
#AT: 1  
Dmg: 1d8 (long sword)  
Bloodline: None.

### Equipment:

Improved mail, shield, long sword, long bow +1, bag of tricks, command insignia, heavy cloak, high boots.



### Description/History:

Older than she looks, Dagmar Druesbane has a twisted smile and closely cropped red hair (just long enough to poke out from under her helmet) that is starting to gray. She is in excellent shape and bears few scars from her very rough life.

Dagmar came to the Giantdowns at a very young age, serving a party of adventurers with origins all over the continent. One by one, they died amid the Downs, fighting humanoids, giants, and—rumor has it—the ghosts of ancient barrows. Dagmar and a tough old dwarf too stubborn to die lived to recruit new members to the adventuring party; she eventually became its leader. The party cleaned out the old hill fort of Lemnjohen and made it a stronghold and way station for Rjurik. She contacted Hogrun Njalsson and made the fort available to the Watch—for a small, seasonal stipend. Hogrun gladly pays Dagmar a retainer, and sends supplies, soldiers, and assistance to the hill fort whenever he can. Dagmar commands the fort in the name of the Watch, though she is not technically a member.

**Usual Location:** The Old Fort of Lemnjohen.

**Notes:** Recent events have placed the Old Fort of Lemnjohen in dire circumstances. The fall of Bjorlängen has cut Lemnjohen off from the Watch's strongest province, Midjarna. Help and supplies won't arrive from that quarter any time soon. Dagmar may attempt to court Dhoesone for assistance, or try to bypass Bjorlängen using a dangerous shortcut through Tuarhivel or a hazardous long route through Silverheart and Trondelaag. She believes the attack on Bjorlängen was only a precursor to an invasion of Lemnjohen, so she won't spare the troops necessary to break through Bjorlängen to Midjarna.

## gris oldstone

8th-level dwarf fighter

S: 18/01  
D: 10  
C: 15  
I: 9  
W: 13  
Ch: 8  
AL: LN  
AC: 0  
hp: 70  
MV: 6  
THACO: 13  
#AT: 2  
Dmg: 1d4+1 (war hammer)

**Bloodline:** Vorynn, minor, 14.

**Blood Abilities:** Resistance (minor).

**Equipment:** Full plate and shield, throwing axe +2, war hammer +2, iron-shod boots, heavy fur cloak, potion of extra-healing.

**Description/History:** Old even for a dwarf, Gris earned an impressive reputation on countless



battlefields  
before he "retired" to  
become a wandering adventurer.

Teaming up with several humans (including a very young Dagmar, above) and an elf, Gris and his companions traveled throughout northwestern Cerilia—but they met their match in the Giantdowns. One by one, the members of Gris's adventuring party died or were lost among the Downs. Only he and Dagmar remain of the original party.

Gris's gray skin has been scarred many times, but the only wound that still aches is the loss of his and Dagmar's last original adventuring companion. Lioch Dunnagh, a cheerful elf warrior, helped clean out the Old Fort of Lemnjohen, but he suffered a terrible death at the hands of the last humanoid still holed up in the fortress. Gris, for some reason, blames himself for the elf's death, and often drinks heavily to keep the pain away.

**Usual Location:** The Old Fort of Lemnjohen.

**Notes:** Though Gris has grown old, he still maintains himself very well (when he's not drinking). Dagmar counts on him for advice, and he helps train the young Rjurik men and women who volunteer for service at the Old Fort. Currently, he's trying to repair the south wall of the fort, using nothing but a few stones and a group of willing hands.

But the dwarf's drinking binges have grown more frequent of late. In one of his maudlin, drunken stupors, he revealed that he believes Lioch's ghost haunts the hill fort, and that it beckons him.

## the emerald spiral

**T**he Emerald Spiral temple, devoted to the worship of Erik, has holdings in nearly all the Rjurik kingdoms throughout the highlands. Run by Gretta Seligsdotter (*FRj; Pr 12, Erik; Vo, major, 28; CG*), it has very conservative views and focuses on respect for nature.

In the Giantdowns, two temple holdings have appeared, one in Midjarna and the other in Vjelthelma. While Gretta Seligsdotter is the overall regent of the Emerald Spiral, two druids share responsibility for the people of the Downs.

## kalla

8th-level priest of Erik

S:	8
D:	12
C:	15
I:	12
W:	18
Ch:	13
AL:	N
AC:	8
hp:	33
MV:	12
THACO:	16
#AT:	1
Dmg:	1d6 (hand axe)

**Bloodline:** Reynir, minor, 15.

**Blood Abilities:** Enhanced sense (minor).

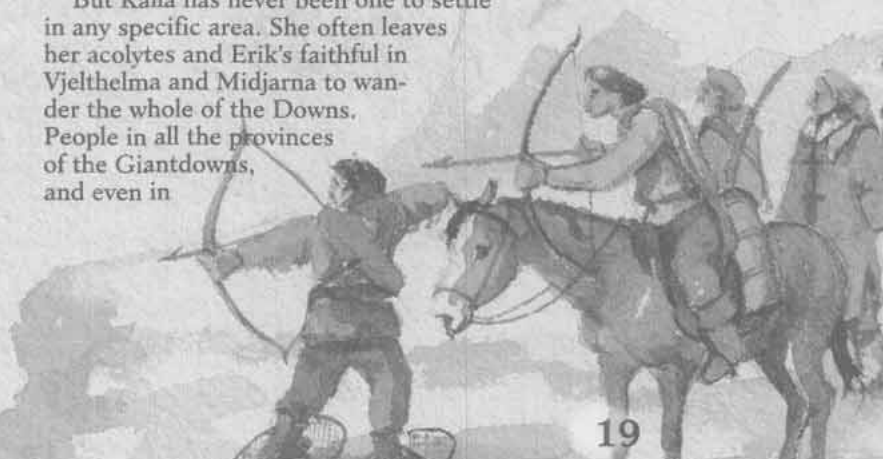
**Special Druidic Abilities:** *Move silently, hide in shadows*, and animal empathy as an 11th-level ranger; identify plants, pure water, and animals perfectly; pass through overgrown areas without trace; knows five languages of woodland creatures (DM's choice); immune to *charm* spells cast by woodland creatures; may shapechange into a reptile, bird, or mammal up to three times per day, using each form once per day (healing 10–60% of damage taken per change).

**Equipment:** Leather armor, druidic robes, pack with herbs and other supplies, hammer and chisel (for carving symbols on stone), hand axe.

**Spells Usually Prepared (5/5/4/3):** 1st—*animal friendship, bless, create water, cure light wounds, locate animals or plants*; 2nd—*augury, charm person or mammal, goodberry, messenger, speak with animals*; 3rd—*hold animal, meld into stone, plant growth*; 4th—*animal summoning I, giant insect, speak with plants*.

**Description/History:** Until recently, the druid Kalla acted almost independently of the Emerald Spiral. She worshiped Erik and respected the temple, but no holdings existed in the Giantdowns. She simply roamed the wild lands bringing comfort to scattered Rjurik settlers. Now a middle-aged but still active woman, she has allied herself with the growing Emerald Spiral holdings in the area—primarily in Vjelthelma. She represents Gretta Seligsdotter in all things concerning the Giantdowns.

But Kalla has never been one to settle in any specific area. She often leaves her acolytes and Erik's faithful in Vjelthelma and Midjarna to wander the whole of the Downs. People in all the provinces of the Giantdowns, and even in



eastern Dhoesone, recognize her by her long gray hair and tan weathered skin. Some say she may actually have ventured deep into the Gorgon's Crown on occasion, but Kalla remains secretive about her wanderings.

Kalla seeks to help the Rjurik settlers live within the bounds shown to them by Erik. She does not want the Giantdowns to grow over-developed or "urbanized" as so many other domains have become, though she supports (at least morally) Hogrun and Anneke in their attempts to organize the existing Rjurik settlements. Kalla would likely oppose any attempts to build large fortifications or settlements—she avoids the village of Midjarna and even some of the smaller settlements in Vjelthelma out of personal taste.

**Usual Location:** Wandering. Kalla can often be contacted through the Emerald Spiral in Vjelthelma. **Notes:** This druid could prove a valuable ally for those who respect nature. She is very hard to locate, as she dwells permanently in no particular area, but adventurers or Watch members who need her assistance or advice can locate some of her druids in Vjelthelma and hope she hears their appeals quickly.

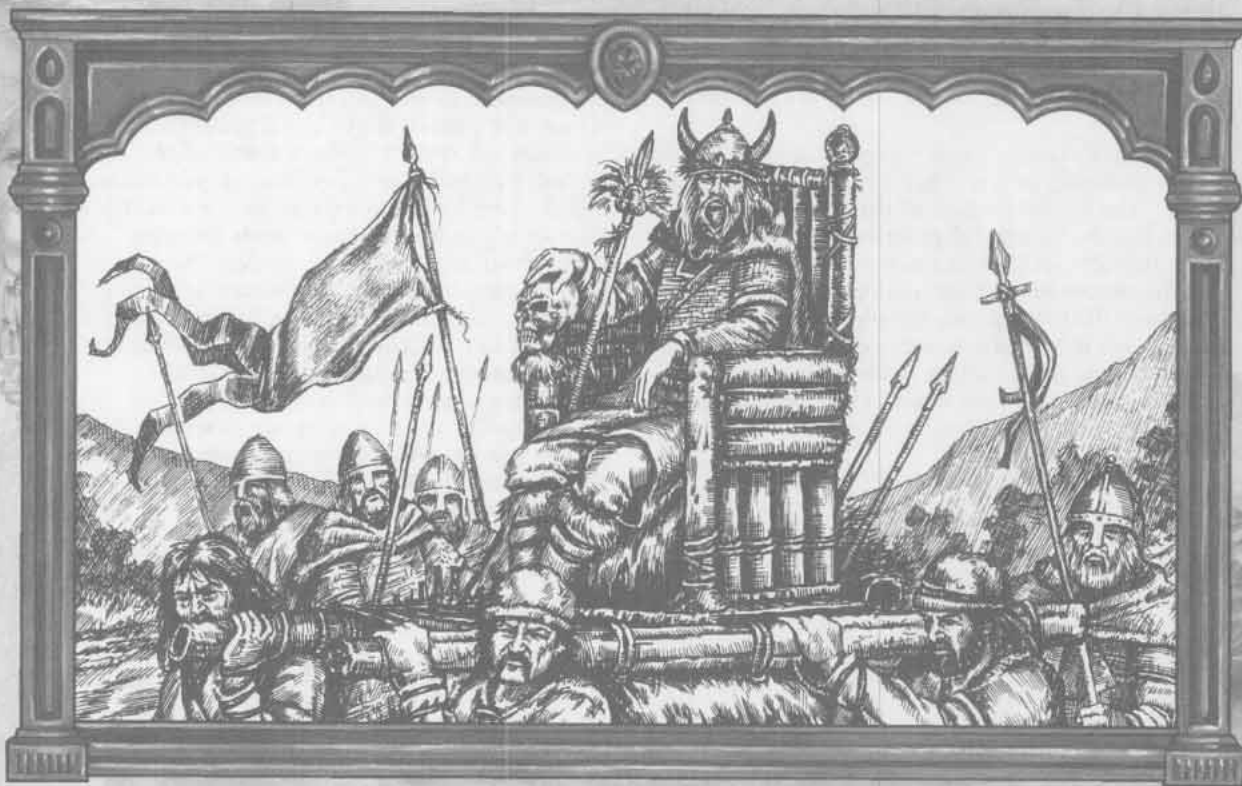
Kalla may possess knowledge beyond that normally available to humans of the Giantdowns and their allies. Rumors among the Rjurik settlers link her to a legendary ancient stone giant of the Silverhead Mountains. Some say she befriended this giant by using her druidic powers to keep watch on the hill giants and other evil giant-kin of Silverheart and Barrow Woods.

## huralla, druid of erik

Very little can be told of Huralla (*FRj; Pr?, Erik; ???; N*), another important druid of the Giantdowns region. Most of the Rjurik believe she serves the Emerald Spiral, and the druids of that temple do seem to respect and honor her. However, unlike Kalla, she has not affirmed any official link with the temple holdings of the region. A few druids and rangers devoted to the service of Erik look to her for leadership, but none know whether or not she is a vassal or servant of Gretta Seligsdotter.

This, however, is not unusual. Temples to Erik seem very informal to followers of other religions. Rather than spending their energies erecting monasteries or cathedrals, druids and followers of Erik (especially among the Emerald Spiral) simply clear wilderness areas of evil or disruptive influences and declare those places to be sacred. Worshipers gather in glades, on hilltops, or around simple stone structures. Everyone who worships Erik in the region knows where these sacred places are; nonworshippers can seldom distinguish them from other wilderness areas.

While Kalla ministers to the spiritual well-being of the Rjurik in the Giantdowns region, Huralla may have chosen to protect and represent the natural animals and creatures of the Downs. Those who claim to have met Huralla insist she is a young,



## the kjarhoelle

Brutal and wicked, the bandit tribe of the Kjarhoelle (also known as the renegades of Trondelaag) follows the example of its scarred and ancient leader, Chieftain Tjorvaal (MRj; F16; CE). In his youth, Tjorvaal made a name for himself as a vicious warrior and an unscrupulous negotiator; his infamous reputation has lasted into his old age. The wizened chief has loyal spies and servants throughout the tribe. Rumors even speak of a secret sorcerer, a black magician who serves the chieftain and will avenge his death.

The Kjarhoelle could be considered the antithesis of the Watch. While the Watch styles itself a guardian force for the Rjurik population of the Downs, the Kjarhoelle disrupt the lives of Rjurik settlers as much as possible. In the summer months, the bandits raid the other provinces, attacking settlements in Lemnjohen, Bjorlangen, Skansoeren, and Boganhaar and then fleeing back to the twisting ravines and mountain passes of Trondelaag. They engage in little trade, though Tjorvaal may have an alliance of some sort with the awnshegh Ghuralli.

The Kjarhoelle tribe has two branches. The *tarloelle*, or "gatherers," are the raiders and armed men and women of the tribe. They venture forth from Trondelaag in groups of 10 to 45 (depending on how far they intend to go), attacking either fixed targets or whatever wanderers they can find. They treat their enemies brutally, seldom killing but often maiming those they take alive.

The *hjolrag*, or "housewarmers," live practically as slaves among the Kjarhoelle. Most *hjolrag* are men and women maimed in battle, persons too young or old to travel with the *tarloelle*, or captured enemies broken to service. Every member of the *tarloelle* has at least one or two *hjolrag* to look after his possessions and territory back in Trondelaag, and woe betide a *hjolrag* who fails in his duty. Kjarhoelle warriors train themselves in torture as well as battle.

If mustered together, the bandit tribe becomes the equivalent of one Rjurik levy unit. Tjorvaal gathers his full force together only occasionally, however.

**Kjarhoelle bandit, MRj or FRj, F1 or T1 (10-45):** AC 7 (leather armor and shield); MV 12 (unencumbered); HD 1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear or short sword); SA poison; SZ M (5'8"); ML average (9); Int average (8); AL NE; XP 65 each.

**Notes:** One in every ten bandits is 2nd to 4th level and possesses a minor magical item (usually a weapon or potion); SA—The bandits' poison can be spread on their weapons to inflict an additional 1d10 points of damage after a successful attack (saving throw vs. poison for no damage).

rugged-looking

woman who wears little

or no clothing. She often seems ill

at ease and distracted even among fellow

druids, and this, her friends say, is because she spends little time in human form.

No one knows how powerful a druid Huralla has become, but she has mastered the shapechanging ability possessed by the elite among Erik's priesthood. Most who claim to have met Huralla insist that she spends nearly all of her time in either the form of a small, brown bear or a very large eagle. In these forms she watches over and defends the animals of the Giantdowns, protecting them from unnatural magic, traps, and the predations of bloodthirsty people. Huralla's followers include a few Rjurik shapechangers.

Though many Rjurik hunt and trap to make a living, those who know of Huralla respect her if they respect the teachings of Erik. Huralla does not see the killing of animals as evil—animals kill each other for very good reasons. Huralla opposes only the wasting of animal life and moves to prevent cruelty or excessive slaughter. Many a trapper, eager to make a quick fortune, has found his traps opened or slit and his camps ravaged by seemingly intelligent beasts. On the other hand, Rjurik hunters and scouts, lost amid one of the Downs' vicious and unpredictable storms, have been guided to safety by friendly animals. Those who respect nature have nothing to fear from Huralla's powers.

## bandits and renegades

**S**mall groups of bandits and outlaws (most fleeing the justice of other, more civilized realms) roam the Giantdowns in search of victims throughout the year. They lurk in hidden crevices, daring the legends of ghosts and wights among the Downs, using the Rjurik population's superstition to hide from the justice of the Watch or Ghuralli's humanoids. They prey on human, demihuman, and humanoid victims indiscriminately, striking at small farms and settlements, or small groups of travelers.

Still, the bandits and renegades of the Giantdowns seldom resort to the kind of violence bandits of more civilized realms often use. Perhaps the "Downsmen," as they have been called, do not have such hard lives (comparatively speaking) and know that if they ever do cause too much trouble, Hogrun and the Watch, or Ghuralli and his humanoids, will move to eradicate them.

In general, a farm can expect to lose a few animals or a few bags of grain every year (usually right before winter), and travelers who encounter the Downsmen may leave the region poorer than they entered it but not destitute. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule.

**Personality:** Brutal, greedy.  
**Special equipment:** Fighters use spears and carry long bows while thieves wield short swords and slings. The leaders of individual bandit groups may carry minor magical items (a +1 weapon or 1d3 doses of a minor potion).

**Thief abilities (thieves only):** PP 25, OL 30, F/RT 25, MS 15, HS 10, DN 5, CW 85, RL 0.

**Usual location:** Trondelaag and Bjorlangen.

## magnus vaalen

8th-level Rjurik warrior

S: 18/93  
 D: 12  
 C: 18  
 I: 12  
 W: 10  
 Ch: 13  
 AL: LE  
 AC: 2  
 hp: 66  
 MV: 12  
 THACO: 13  
 #AT: 2  
 Dmg: 1d8+2  
 (battle axe +2)

**Bloodline:** Azrai, minor, 9.

**Blood Abilities:** None.

**Equipment:** Battle axe +2 ("Skullcrusher"), improved mail +2, war horse.

**Description/History:** Rumor has it that Magnus is Tjorvaal's son by a captured Rjurik or Anuirean woman. He bears a striking resemblance to the Kjarhoelle chieftain and has become one of the tribe's foremost warriors.

Still, no love passes between Magnus and Tjorvaal. Many say that the younger Kjarhoelle negotiated an alliance with the White Witch against the chieftain's advice and the old man had to scramble for control or be ousted from his position. Magnus intends to take over the tribe when an opportunity arises, and he has made himself too popular among the Kjarhoelle for Tjorvaal to dispose of him easily.

**Usual Location:** Trondelaag, or with a raiding party of Kjarhoelle.

**Notes:** Magnus may be entertaining thoughts of manipulation, planning to use the White Witch's general against his father and then supplant her as well. Some believe that Magnus is partially responsible for the depleted morale among the White Witch's troops occupying Bjorlangen.



## garradh devlynsen

5th-level half-elf bard

S: 15  
 D: 16  
 C: 17  
 I: 14  
 W: 14  
 Ch: 17  
 AL: N  
 AC: 6  
 hp: 40  
 MV: 12  
 THACO: 16  
 #AT: 2  
 Dmg: 1d6+2 (rapier),  
 1d4 (dagger)

**Bloodline:** Masela, minor, 12.

**Blood Abilities:** None.

**Bard Abilities:** CW 70, DN 40, PP 30, RL 45.

**Equipment:** Rapier +2, dagger, leather armor, reed pipes, purse with 50 gp, light war horse, amulet of proof against detection and location.

**Spells Usually Memorized (3/1):** 1st—affect normal fires, cantrip, friends; 2nd—invisibility.

**Description/History:** Still apparently young and hearty, the half-elf Garradh Devlynsen has roamed the Giantdowns for several human generations. The bright-eyed, brown-haired Garradh most often frequents the provinces of Vjelthelma, Boganhaar, and Skansoeren. He used to visit the village in Midjarna fairly often, but Hogrun Njalsson dislikes the bard and has made his feelings about Garradh's occasional visits quite clear.

Garradh earned a reputation as a bandit and a trickster before Hogrun ever arrived in the Giantdowns. However, while it is true that Garradh has occasionally engaged in banditry, burglary, and outright thievery, nearly all Rjurik welcome the storytelling, singing, joking half-elf into their homes without reservation.

Most of the Rjurik settlers believe Garradh travels the Downs only for his own amusement. He has been known to help destitute families and individuals in distress as often as he mocks authority figures or robs rich traders from Dhoesone or Stjordvik. Hogrun, however, remains convinced that Garradh's jovial persona hides sinister motives.

Hogrun could not be more wrong. Garradh is simply as he seems. He thinks very little of the future and dislikes any restrictions. He does not go out of his way to help or hinder anyone (usually), though tales of infamy and heroism surround him. Garradh may travel into the dangerous Barrow Woods to retrieve a healing herb desperately needed in Midjarna, or sneak into the Old Fort of Lemnjohen to steal the commander's ruby ring—it all depends on the circumstances.

**Usual Location:** Garradh frequents the small settlements of Vjelthelma. He goes to the village of Midjarna only in disguise.



### Notes:

On occasion,

Garradh leads a small band of outlaw Rjurik in raids against the humanoids, renegade Rjurik, or stray giant-kin. He has never mustered more than 30 brigands at any one time, and he has yet to send this raiding party against any Watch-protected Rjurik. Indeed, few claim Garradh has ever led an attack on the independent Rjurik. He seems to save his worst assaults for the humanoids and evil Rjurik in the area.

## the army of the white witch

**N**o one expected the White Witch to attempt an invasion of the Giantdowns, which is probably why she managed it so easily. As near as anyone can tell, the awnshegh made some sort of alliance with the Kjarhoelle tribe and avoided the worst of the humanoids in the mountains. She used a collection of Rjurik and humanoid agents to muster a small army of mercenaries in Trondelaag and northern Bjorlangen, then sent them against the Watch's meager defenses. This move did not catch the Watch completely unprepared (the organization expects trouble from the Kjarhoelle and the humanoids), but the vicious attack swept away its defenses.

Now the White Witch's mercenary army occupies Bjorlangen. She has managed to set up a small holding there (an armed camp just north of the Great Downs) and has picket riders along the eastern and western borders. The Kjarhoelle continue to raid and pillage the area, and the army's main concern seems to be keeping the Bjorlangen Rjurik from escaping before they can be enslaved.

## rowena manspear

6th-level Rjurik fighter

S: 16  
D: 16  
C: 15  
I: 13  
W: 10  
Ch: 14  
AL: LE  
AC: 2  
hp: 49  
MV: 12  
THACO: 15  
#AT: 2  
Dmg: 1d6 (long bow)  
Bloodline: Brenna, major, 22.  
Blood Abilities: Alter appearance (major), detect lie (minor).



**Equipment:** Long bow +2, short sword, improved mail, quiver with 24 arrows.

**Description/History:** Rowena Manspear possesses a streak of cruelty that belies her pleasant features. Her long, blond hair and pale complexion give her the appearance of a young maiden—until her face twists into a killing sneer that could make a hardened warrior leap back.

Rowena comes from the Realm of the White Witch and learned her trade in the western armies. A talented archer, she trained a large number of the renegade Rjurik in Bjorlangen. When an arrow struck down the original leader of the White Witch's invasion, she took command.

The mercenaries and humanoids who participated in the fall of Bjorlangen follow Rowena for money—and for fear of what she might do to deserters. Rowena always longed for command when she served in the western armies; now that she's obtained her desire, she cannot master it. Rowena cannot control her frightful temper or lust for cruelty long enough to build up a cadre of loyal soldiers.

Still, she surpasses her predecessor in her knowledge and application of tactics. Fewer than two dozen Rjurik have escaped Bjorlangen since its fall, and her army has come together twice to repel sorties from Midjarna and Lemnjohen. Now it looks like the White Witch could hold Bjorlangen indefinitely—if Rowena doesn't inspire her mercenaries to desert.

**Usual Location:** Bjorlangen, among her troops.

**Notes:** Currently, Rowena canvasses her units for a good second-in-command. She knows she needs someone to temper her wild rages and to build loyalty among the troops. She doesn't want to give up her control of the army, however, so she wants someone she can intimidate. Rowena has talked occasionally with Magnus, the apparent heir to the Kjarhoelle chieftain, and hopes to use him as leverage against her own enemies.

**White Witch's mercenaries, MRj or FRj, F1 (4-20):** AC 7 (studded leather); MV 12 (lightly encumbered); HD 1; hp 8; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear or long bow); SZ M; ML average (8); Int average (8); AL NE; XP 35 each.

**Note:** For every 10 mercenaries encountered, one sergeant of 2nd to 4th level will be found. For every 20 mercenaries, include one sergeant and one officer (3rd to 6th level).

**Personalities:** Greedy, organized.

**Special equipment:** Each mercenary is armed with a spear, a dagger, and a long bow (with 12 to 24 arrows). One in every four mercenaries is not proficient in the use of his long bow.

**Usual Location:** Bjorlangen, in camps and along the border.







#### Notes:

The White Witch's mercenaries patrol the borders of Bjorlangen in groups. They have orders to stop anyone from entering or leaving the province without a special pass from the White Witch, the Kjarhoelle chieftain Tjorvaal, or Rowena herself. Currently, they seem concerned mainly with pillaging the province and collecting slaves. At least 400 mercenaries occupy the province (at least one or two infantry units and one archer unit). There might be a cavalry unit in Bjorlangen as well, fresh from the White Witch's southern provinces. If so, Rowena has kept it a closely guarded secret.

When winter arrives, most of the mercenaries will look to desert into Dhoesone and make their way into Stjordvik, unless Rowena finds some way to inspire them to stay. So far, she has been alternately paying them more than their shares of plunder and making harsh examples of would-be deserters. Morale isn't particularly low at the moment, but could take a nose dive soon. If Rowena runs out of money, Bjorlangen could fall into anarchy in a matter of weeks. She may attempt to plunder the barrows of the Downs if she can.

## humanoids

**T**he humanoids of the Giantdowns cannot be lumped together. At best, they can be grouped as two factions: one organized and evil, the other more loosely affiliated and easier for the Rjurik to deal with.

The most cohesive group of humanoids in the Giantdowns is the one led by the awnshegh known as Ghuralli. Recently, with the help of some giant and giant-kin allies, he built a small humanoid realm in the Giantdowns. With orog, goblin, and gnoll minions doing his bidding, he rivals the Rjurik for control of the region.

The larger of the two humanoid groups, however, comprises the remaining goblins, orogs, and gnolls in the area. Led only by small band or tribal chieftains, they do not claim a realm for themselves—but the Rjurik settlers have learned to respect their territorial boundaries. In many respects, they resemble the nomadic Rjurik, moving within set territorial limits throughout the region and generally respecting each others' tribal areas.

# ghuralli

*Awnshegh*

S: 14 (see below)  
D: 12  
C: 15  
I: 15  
W: 13  
Ch: 18 (to humanoid and giant-kin/6 to PC races and good or neutral giants)

AL: LE  
AC: 3  
hp: 80  
MV: 6  
THACO: 3  
#AT: 1



Dmg: 4d10 (see below)  
Bloodline: Azrai, major, 19.  
Blood Ability: Fear.

Equipment: Ghuralli seldom carries any equipment.

Special: Once per day, Ghuralli can heat his metal body to white-hot intensity, causing a bonus 2d10 points of damage in melee (total 6d10) for 1d4 rounds. He is exhausted after such an attack, and his normal melee damage drops to 2d10 for the next 2d4 hours.

Description/History: Ghuralli gained his gleaming, black metal body as the result of contact with a baatezu imprisoned somewhere in southern Lluabright. The incident also caused his powers as a fledgling awnshegh to emerge. The former orog chieftain has begun his own quest for empire in his old stomping grounds. (For more information about Ghuralli's history, see *The Rjurik Highlands* campaign expansion.)

With the help of a special unit of humanoids, ogres, and giants, Ghuralli has carved out a small realm in the northern Giantdowns. He rules the provinces of Haldallen, Rhuiddar, Caer Cwnnar, and Silverheart, and currently competes with the Blood Skull Barony over control of Barrow Woods. His emerging powers, imposing presence, and natural leadership abilities have made him something of a god to the humanoids in his provinces, and he even has the respect and support of many evil giants. Ghuralli has one to two scattered units of monsters in his stronghold and one in Barrow Woods.

Usual Location: Unknown. His stronghold appears to be in Rhuiddar.

Notes: Ghuralli intends to take over the Giantdowns as soon as he can make his existing realm secure. Unfortunately for him, he's made enemies with every step he's taken. The Blood Skull orogs currently resist his expansion into the Barrow Woods, and they have sent orog and goblin spies to disrupt his forces. The giants and the dwarves of the Silverheads have

helped the scattered Rjurik settlers in the region to escape and resist Ghuralli (without revealing their positions to him). Under the trees of the great northern wood, Ghuralli has fought his bitterest (but most successful) battles against the elves of Lluabright. The remaining humanoids of the Giantdowns have managed to resist his attempts to recruit or enslave them. And finally, Ghuralli sees Hogrun Njalsson and the Watch as his bitterest foes (though they have yet to fight a pitched battle) and believes he must secure himself against their meddling before he can expand his realm.

Ghuralli's Guard: Made up primarily of the toughest orogs, goblins, and gnolls of the Giantdowns, this already-impressive humanoid company has been reinforced with hill giants, trolls, and ogres. Fortunately, Ghuralli has no completely trustworthy lieutenant among them, so he must lead his elite troops personally into battle or on a raid.

Some of Ghuralli's Guard can be encountered in the Silverheads (particularly Silverheart and Haldallen) or in Rhuiddar, Ghuralli's stronghold. A hunting pack consists (normally) of 2d6 orogs, 3d4 goblins, 2d4 gnolls, 1d2 ogres, 1d2-1 hill giants, and 1d2-1 trolls. Other humanoids or giant-kin may accompany a hunting pack from time to time, but usually for a specific reason only.

# ulzor sned

*6th-level goblin thief*

S: 9  
D: 15  
C: 10  
I: 14  
W: 8  
Ch: 9 (4 to nongoblins)

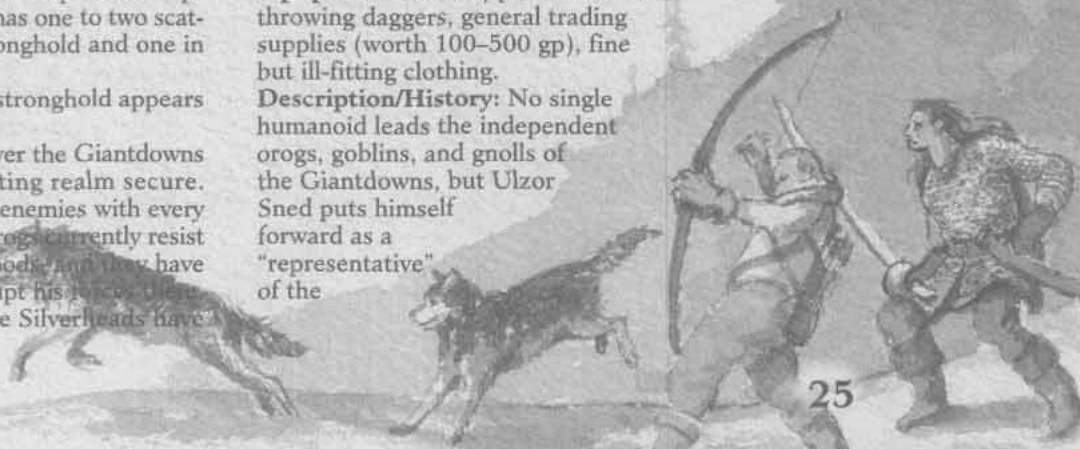
AL: LE  
AC: 7  
hp: 23  
MV: 12  
THACO: 18  
#AT: 2  
Dmg: 1d3

Bloodline: Vorynn, minor, 12.

Blood Ability: Unreadable thoughts.

Equipment: *Cloak of protection +1*, six throwing daggers, general trading supplies (worth 100-500 gp), fine but ill-fitting clothing.

Description/History: No single humanoid leads the independent orogs, goblins, and gnolls of the Giantdowns, but Ulzor Sned puts himself forward as a "representative" of the



humanoid races not ruled by Ghuralli. He makes his home in a ramshackle "fort" amid the Skansoeren Downs, but travels all over the region trading with anyone willing and able to pay his prices.

Ulzor's mannerisms and trading acumen would make the least scrupulous Brecht merchant cringe. While the goblin often possesses some of the finest goods to be had for sale within the Giantdowns, he cannot completely overcome his desire to cheat or lie or bilk his would-be clients. To be fair, Ulzor seldom says anything that isn't technically true about a particular item—but he may leave out quite a few details in the process.

**Usual Location:** Skansoeren or Boganhaar, though Ulzor has occasionally visited northern Midjarna.

**Notes:** The goblin trader specializes in herbs, furs, weapons, and armor. He obtains the herbs and furs from Rjurik traders, trappers, and foragers who've made enemies in Midjarna or prefer to avoid civilization for a variety of reasons. Some of the humanoids who look to him as a leader (or at least as a source of income) hunt, trap, and forage for Ulzor, but only on occasion.

Ulzor won't say where he gets most of his weapons. He has been accused of raiding burial grounds (recent ones) outside the Rjurik settlements, and some say he employs roving goblin, gnoll, and orog bands that raid incautious adventuring parties. Such tactics would not be beneath him, but Ulzor takes pride in his ability to trade anything out of anybody.

In general, when Ulzor is encountered, he probably has a lot of junk in his little caravan. (Ulzor seldom travels without three or four pack mules bearing his goods, a dozen humanoid bodyguards, and a decent amount of cash on hand.) But he may have a few treasures as well. Many Rjurik whisper and laugh about cheating Ulzor Sned at his own game. One such tale tells of a Khinasi paladin who could *detect magic* at will. When the Khinasi traded Ulzor a *potion of delusion* he'd found amid the barrows, he received a magical, legendary sword in return. It was covered in rust and nicked in many places, but it cleaned up very nicely.

Ulzor may react badly to these rumors in person, but secretly he helps foster them. Ulzor may get taken now and again, or may even *allow* himself to be cheated: The next hundred customers will roll the dice against him as well, and Ulzor's

pretty sure most of them will lose.

The goblin also keeps his true desire secret. He wants to become a guild regent in the Giantdowns.

Ghuralli's humanoids frighten him,

however. Right

now, he's small-time and can get away with trading and bargaining with the Rjurik. Without a strong ally to protect Ulzor Sned, Ghuralli would crush him if he ever tried to grab that much power.

Currently, Ulzor seeks to ingratiate himself with the Watch and Hogrun. The goblin trader wants to ally with the Rjurik settlers against Ghuralli, and he hopes that he can use the Watch to deflect Ghuralli's inevitable strike against his power. Hogrun remains suspicious of the goblin trader but may invite him to the Midjarna Village marketplace sometime this year, if Ulzor is willing to put up a considerable bond against his good behavior.

## other peoples

The humanoids and the Rjurik do not have a monopoly on dwelling in the Giantdowns. Other intelligent races exist here, though they hardly have as great an impact on the region as those mentioned above. At least, that's what the humanoids and Rjurik tell themselves.

## the stone giants of the silverheads

Most inhabitants of the Giantdowns believe to some extent the legends of civilized giants living in Cerilia's northern lands. These civilized giants are gone now, but they have left a legacy among the Downs.

They have also left something else. More than any other region of Cerilia, the Giantdowns are thick with hill giants, ettins, fomoriens, trolls, ogres, and other giant-kin. Most inhabit the provinces around the Silverhead Mountains, though a few lair in Skansoeren and Trondelaag. No Rjurik or humanoid settlement anywhere in the Giantdowns is safe from the evil giant-kin when they decide to raid.

But other giants live among the Silverheads as well. A race of stone giants seems to have inherited the remnants of civilization possessed by the ancient giants of the Downs. These giants are secretive and few in number; an adventurer might search the mountains of Silverheart, Barrow Woods, Trondelaag, and Haldallen for months and not see one sign of them. Or an explorer entering the Silverheads might be greeted immediately by a booming, disembodied voice (or a thrown boulder).

The stone giants of the Silverheads are not kindly creatures. They have little patience for intruders, though they bear no particular malice toward humans, elves, or dwarves. It is said that the stone giants of the Silverheads keep the higher mountain passes clear of orogs, goblins, and evil giant-kin, though the tale may be exaggerated. A few adventurers claim the stone giants have allied with a band

of dwarves in the Silverheads and that the two races protect each other from outside intrusion.

**Morsjarlur the Ancient:** According to the druid Kalla and a few other adventurers daring (or foolish) enough to brave the high passes of the Silverheads, the stone giants of the area have a leader. The highest peak of this range, known as Mount Silverhead, houses an ancient stone giant called *Morsjarlur* ("King of Wisdom"). He is said to be a source of ancient wisdom for those who can find him. The quest for knowledge is a dangerous one, however. Snow and ice cover much of Mount Silverhead throughout the year, and *Morsjarlur* lives in a hold at the mountain's highest point.

## the giant-kin

Many giant races live among the Giantdowns. While they do have lairs in the extreme northern, eastern, and western Silverheads (even into the Blood Skull Barony), most have been driven out into the Downs themselves. These beings live primarily in the Barrow Woods (among Ghuralli's humanoids and loyal giant-kin), Skansoeren, Lemnjohén (away from the Old Fort), and Boganhaar. The Rjurik of Vjelthelma have had a hard time driving evil giant-kin out of their province, but the tide has definitely turned in the human's favor.

**Hill giants:** The population of independent hill giants dwindles every summer. Most hill giants either flee the Downs, die fighting the Rjurik or the humanoids, or join up with the awnshegh Ghuralli. However, it has been estimated that several hundred hill giants still exist.

Many hill giants have made lairs within the Downs themselves. A few have managed to excavate old Rjurik and Anuirean barrows (they avoid the truly ancient giant tombs for fear of deadly magic) and they use these strongholds as hiding places when organized Rjurik or humanoid forces hunt them. They are probably most numerous in Haldallen and Boganhaar, though several aggressive tribes have been marked in Skansoeren.

**Fhoimoriens:** Organized into small bands and raiding parties, the ancient horrors known as fhoimoriens seem to roam the Downs in search of vengeance. They attack and pursue Rjurik and humanoid prey alike, taking great pleasure in acts of cruelty that would make a Kjarhoelle warrior shudder. The independent fhoimoriens fight against extinction on the Downs, as well as the order imposed by Ghuralli. The greatest pleasure an independent fhoimorien can have, in fact, is killing and consuming a fellow fhoimorien who has enlisted in the awnshegh's guard.

**Ettins, trolls, ogres and other giant-kin:** These creatures tend to mix with other giant groups or band together for hunting and defense. A hill giant "family," usually consisting of nine to sixteen indi-

viduals, may also have a few ettin, troll, or ogre hangers-on or servants. A few troll and ogre bands exist alone in the Downs, but they do not have the influence of the larger races.

**Other giants:** Frost giants, mountain giants, and other giants of varied description might exist—or may have existed—in the Giantdowns, but it seems unlikely. Any mountain giants that may have made homes among the Silverheads have long been driven out to die on the Downs or mingle with the hill giant population. In winter, confused reports of frost giants may actually describe stone giants in winter garments. No race known so well for its cruelty, chaotic nature, and overall stupidity could remain hidden in so small an area for so long.

## the dwarven colonies

The first dwarves came to the Giantdowns nearly a thousand years ago. They arrived in small families and individually, perhaps fleeing the Gorgon's corruption of Mur-Kilad or the tightly organized societies of Baruk-Azhik and Khurin-Azur. They made their way west in search of new homes. Drawn to the isolated Silverhead Mountains, many settled in the caves and caverns of the northern Giantdowns, carving out homes and mines for themselves.

But the dwarves encountered the various giant-kin of the mountains early in their history. They fought the hill giants, ogres, and other evil giant-kin of the region—only the most evil dwarves have ever tolerated such creatures. They may have even come into conflict with the scarce stone giants—though neither race's numbers would cause them to crowd each other in any way. Besides, the stone giants, seeking isolation from other races, stayed primarily in the peaks and high places of the mountains, while the dwarves delved inward and downward.

Still, at some point the dwarves must have proved numerous enough to cause the stone giants some concern. It is said that *Morsjarlur* himself came down from Mount Silverhead and spoke to the dwarves. He found they had no true leader, and he had to negotiate with each small family or clan. But virtually all the dwarves agreed: They would help the stone giants keep their mountains clear of the enemies of both races, and the dwarves and stone giants would leave each other alone.

This respectful beginning grew into partnership and, after long years, friendship. Both stone giants and dwarves are slow to make friends, but once either does so, they prove faithful even under the most trying circumstances. The two races leave each other alone



(mostly), but they trade with each other and help each other keep the mountains secure. It is said that the dwarves have helped the stone giants make their homes beautiful (stone giants have plain tastes) and the stone giants have directed the dwarves toward the richest mineral wealth in the mountains.

Today, few dwarves exist in the Silverheads. They have always been slow to breed, and their semi-secret community attracts few immigrants. Of late, younger, adventuresome dwarves have come down from the Silverheads and mingled or traded with the Rjurik settlers (though they refuse to have anything to do with Ulzor Sned's humanoids), causing tales of the settlement to leak out. The Rjurik settlers warily welcome the dwarven traders. Both races are proud folk with strong traditions. They tend to be reticent in their dealings with one another, each hoping to avoid offending the other.

At least one case of true friendship has occurred between the dwarves and the Rjurik. Dagmar Druesbane, while clearing the Old Fort of Lemnjohen, killed a particularly vile shoimorien known as Drue (which explains her surname) that had been plaguing the dwarven colony in southern Silverheart. The dwarves of Silverheart gifted Dagmar with some gold and silver (which she has used to rebuild part of the Old Fort) and they were considering assisting her in the restoration when the White Witch's troops invaded Bjorlengen.

The dwarves of the Silverheads may continue to make friends among the Rjurik, especially with the human warriors. Ghuralli and his humanoids have proved bitter enemies for the scant dwarf population, and rumors of slave-taking by the awnsheg have made the dwarves nervous. They know Ghuralli's organized army of humanoids and giant-kin could become more of a threat than the raiding bands they drove out of the mountains years ago.

## gJOR upshar

5th-level dwarf fighter

S:	16
D:	9
C:	18
I:	12
W:	10
Ch:	9
AL:	NG
AC:	4
hp:	44
MP:	6
THACO:	16
#AT:	1
Dmg:	1d8 (battle axe)
Bloodline:	None



### Equipment:

Chain mail +1, helmet, greaves, battle axe, two daggers, trail rations, pony.

**Description/History:** GJOR Upshar turned 70 last spring, making him a young adult dwarf. But GJOR's dark eyes have seen much in his "short" lifetime, and his gray skin already bears the scars of several conflicts.

GJOR grew up in northern Silverheart, among the dwarf settlers there. He has worked with his family for nearly 30 years, mining, building new homes for his people, and fighting evil humanoids and giant-kin. Recently, however, he has grown restless among the mountains. His father, in the hopes of working this restlessness out of his son, has made him one of the chief traders for the dwarves.

At least twice a year, GJOR and a dozen or so other young dwarves make their way down from the mountains, avoid the humanoids and renegade Rjurik, and travel to either Midjarna or Lemnjohen. Once there, they trade weapons, armor, and other manufactured goods for foodstuffs, fur, wood, and herbs produced or gathered by the Rjurik settlers. Then, one or two of the dwarves (usually accompanied by members of the Watch for protection) travel back to the mountains with their goods while GJOR and the others continue to other Rjurik settlements.

GJOR looks forward to these expeditions into the Downs because he has made a few friends among the Rjurik. One of his best friends is Gunnar Gunnarsen; GJOR is one of the few individuals who knows of Gunnar's secret position among the Watch.

**Usual Location:** During the spring and summer months, GJOR wanders between Lemnjohen, Midjarna, and Vjelthelma. He usually winters in the dwarven holds of Silverheart, but has spent at least one winter in Midjarna Village as a guest of his friend Gunnar. GJOR talks of building a "dwarven longhouse" (no one knows what that means) on the outskirts of Midjarna Village for use by the dwarves during their visits.

**Notes:** GJOR believes in trading fairly with the Rjurik he encounters, but he bargains hard. He will cut his prices on commissions, though most people who want commissioned work have to wait at least a year for it to be completed. Nevertheless, many of the better-off Rjurik settlers and a few traders from Dhoesone and Stjordvik make a point of commissioning armor, weapons, and other manufactured goods from him whenever he passes through the Downs.

All the dwarf traders seem gruff and close-mouthed around strangers, but GJOR has made an effort to act in as outgoing a manner as he can. He and all the other traders refuse to divulge the exact location of the dwarven colony in the Silverheads, and most Rjurik are tactful enough not to press them for an answer.

## creatures

A wide range of legendary beasts and creatures inhabits the Giantdowns. Many live secretly in the crevasses, ravines, and tunnels of the area. A few make their presences known and their territories inviolate. The following chart, "Creatures of the Giantdowns," provides a partial list of magical creatures that might be found in the Great Downs. The general known location of each monster follows its name on the table. All creatures listed here are described in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome.

**Note:** Creatures described elsewhere in this section (giants, humanoids, humans, and undead) are not listed on this chart.

## creatures of the giantdowns

Creature	Known Locations
Aurumvorax	BW, CC, R
Beetle, Giant (Boring)	Bg, Sk, V
Behir	H, Sv, T
<i>Brownie (and Killmoulis)</i>	Bg, V
<i>Carrion Crawler</i>	Subterranean
Centipede (any)	Generally underground
Cloaker	Subterranean
<i>Displacer Beast</i>	BW, H
<i>Doppelganger</i>	Unknown (associated with CC, R)
<i>Dryad</i>	Southern Midjarna
Ettercap	BW (forest), CC
<i>Galeb Duhr</i>	BW (mountain)
Gargoyle	BW (undermountain)
<i>Gloomwing (Tenebrous Worm)</i>	BW (forest), CC, R
<i>Gremlin, Jermaine</i>	Subterranean (mountains)
<i>Hag (Annis, Green)</i>	Bj, Sk, T
Hippogriff	L, Sv, V
Leucrotta	Bg, Bj, H, Sk
Lurker (Trapper, Forest)	BW, CC, R
<i>Lycanthrope (Werebear)</i>	Bg, Bj, L, Sk
<i>Lycanthrope (Werewolf)</i>	Bw, T
Mold	Subterranean (barrows)
Nymph	CC (near Lluabright border)
Ooze/Slime/Jelly	Subterranean (barrows)
<i>Otyugh (and Neo-otyugh)</i>	Subterranean (BW, T)
Owlbear	BW, CC, R
Peryton	T
Pudding (Black)	Subterranean
Roper	Subterranean (Sv)
Spider (most except Sword)	BW, CC, R, T
Sprite (any land)	Unknown
Stirge	BW, CC, H, L (northern), Sv, R, T
Treant	All forest regions
Unicom	Lluabright border
Worm (Rot Grub)	All provinces
Wyvern	BW

**Abbreviations:** Bg=Bogahaar, Bj=Bjorlängen, BW=Barrow Woods, CC=Caer Cwnnar, H=Haldallen, L=Lemnjohel, M=Midjarna, R=Rhuiddar, Sk=Skansoeren, Sv=Silverheart, T=Tronde-laag, V=Vjelthelma. *Italicized* creatures are considered mythical by the general population; if they do exist, they are extremely rare or unique in the region.

## the unquiet dead

The site of hundreds of battles, unjust and tragic slayings, and more than a millennium of destruction, the Great Downs host one of the most diverse and unusual populations of undead on Cerilia. Some say the veil to the Shadow World stretches thin over the Giantdowns, and they might not be far wrong.

"The Unquiet Dead" chart, below, lists most of the undead creatures found amid the Giantdowns. While most Rjurik and other civilized folk among the Downs aren't entirely sure they exist, all but the most foolish people avoid their supposed lairs.

## the unquiet dead

Creature	Rumored Location
Banshee	CC, R, H, Bg (northern), V (northern)
Ghost	Any (giant ghosts inhabit some of the most ancient barrows of the Downs)
Ghoul (and Ghast)	Any province
<i>Lich (and Demilich, Archlich)</i>	Barrow, subterranean
Shadow	L, BW, Sv, T (subterranean/abandoned forts)
Skeleton	Any province (particularly mass graves)
Spectre	Any province
Wight	Any barrow
Wraith	Any province
Zombie	Any province (particularly mass graves)

**Abbreviations:** See "Creatures of the Giantdowns" chart.

## waking the dead

Few of the undead in the Giantdowns roam the night constantly or even at will. In general, most of the undead await specific circumstances or a personal call to rise and walk. The majority of Downs inhabitants carefully avoid any action that might wake the dead, and they learn to stay home at times when the undead are most likely to stir.

Still, adventurers often encounter undead when they invade their resting places or wander the Downs on the wrong nights. A whole army of skeletons and zombies, led by ghosts of old commanders, might rise up to reenact a long-lost battle on any given night—and Erik help any unfortunate caught in their path.

The only province in which the undead seem to rise at the slightest cause is Barrow Woods. Ghuralli and his humanoids have been fighting the forces of the Blood Skull Barony there for months now, and they have stirred up most of the monsters and the undead of the region. Many outsiders believe both armies spend more time fighting the monsters and undead of the province than battling each other.

The Giantdowns have been an area of wilderness and danger for thousands of years. Even during the battles between the Rjurik and the Anuirean armies, creatures roamed the Downs, preying on the unwise, unwary, and unlucky. Some permanent settlements have sprung up recently inside the region, but such attempts at civilization have happened before. The wildness of the Downs could claim them overnight, leaving nothing but heather waving silently on the hills.

The following sites of interest can be used as places of adventure, bases of operation, or sources of intrigue or trouble for PCs adventuring amid the Downs. A few have been described in great detail and will probably figure prominently in adventures described in Part IV.

Most characters and creatures described in "Part II: Denizens of the Giantdowns" are linked to areas detailed in this section. A few minor NPCs not described in Part II are mentioned here; most of these characters are important only in their association with particular sites (such as the smith of Midjarna Village or the undead in the barrow of the giant-king). The DM, of course, can expand the description of any or all of these NPCs should they become more prominent in the PCs' exploration.

## Rjurik settlements

For the most part, the Rjurik of the Giantdowns are clanless but not friendless. Since the institution of the Watch, permanent settlements have begun to fill up the emptiness between the shepherds' and hunters' camps. One cannot wander the provinces of Midjarna, Vjelthelma, or Lemnjohen anymore and not expect to encounter some evidence of Rjurik civilization.

### village of midjarna

The Rjurik village in the province of Midjarna grew up around the large homestead of Sturm Gundar. He chose a beautiful area just north of the Rude River and just east of the Bjorlanger border to settle his family, and many other Rjurik chose likewise. They thinned out much of the heathenwode (on their side of the Rude River) and cultivated a little of the land for farming. Now their sheep, goats, and cattle roam the land between the homesteads

(carefully watched by their tenders, lest they make trouble in the cultivated lands) and the whole area has a very pastoral atmosphere.

But the village of Midjarna does not sleep its way through history. Throughout the year, the settlement bustles with activity. In the spring, trappers, hunters, and seasonal shepherds tramp into town for their supplies, bargaining with furs, wool, and other goods they gathered during the previous fall. Many of the roughest Rjurik visit the village at this time, having spent the entire winter at their solitary homesteads or roaming the Downs in search of winter animals and herbs. The Watch guards the peace closely, but springtime is a time for rebirth and re-equipping, not trouble.

Summertime comes quickly in the Downs, and the Rjurik make the most of it. Traders from Dhoesone and even faraway Stjordvik come to the Downs hoping to trade their manufactured goods for fine furs and rare herbs. The trade days of the village draw the best and the worst people from all the nearby provinces; many a would-be Downsman makes the trek through Midjarna Village during the summertime hoping to scout out potential victims for future crimes. A few dwarves, Anuireans, and Brechts have been known to visit the village—usually on their way somewhere else.

Autumn is the time for harvest. The seasonal trappers and hunters come to winter-down and trade with the last of the departing merchants. Fine furs, herbs, and other goods wrested from the northern Downs swap hands in exchange for good wine, new knives, and friendly favors. The Rjurik look forward to autumn as a time of merriment and celebration. However, fall also becomes the time of bandits, smugglers, and cheats. Hogrun and the Watch put their training to good use during harvest days. Tempers flare among the proud Rjurik easily, and one-time friends draw knives over the least misunderstandings.

Midjarna Village does sleep during the winter. But it is a guarded, watchful sleep. Few travelers make their way into or out of the village at this time, and many villagers who worked for farmers in the outer lands now go to live with them, to conserve precious fuel and food. New clans are forming in Midjarna around the homesteads, farms, and herds. Clans of convenience and necessity have sprung up, and the villagers respect these unwritten alliances even if they don't speak of them openly.

### points of interest

Refer to the map on page 33 when reading the following descriptions.

# part III: sites of interest



### 1. Watch Stations.

Small one-room huts provide shelter for the patrols of holmjarllen that Hogrun has instructed to watch the main road into the village. At least four or five more stations have been set up throughout Midjarna province for use by the marklorjen, and similar stations exist in Vjelthelma. All Watchmen in the area share the responsibility of upkeep for the Watch stations, and most have a steady supply of dry wood, provender for animals, and a little food for travelers. Hogrun makes certain the two main Midjarna Village stations are constantly manned by at least four holmjarllen. (The third station, near the Ruide River, is actually more of a toll house than a fully staffed post.)

Hogrun wants to build the western Midjarna Village station into a fort but he lacks the funds and personnel. He has increased the number of marklorjen patrolling the western border of the province, but the Watch is woefully understaffed.

**2. Erikholme.** The Emerald Spiral maintains an outdoor worship place for followers of Erik. Kalla the druid occasionally makes an appearance here, though those seeking the protection or advice of Erik's priests usually have to leave word with the initiates tending the grove and hope she responds.

Both the Watch and the Spiral's initiates maintain the ferry running across the Ruide River—little more than a raft permanently affixed by three thick ropes. It takes a strong man to pull himself all the way across this calm section of the river, so often several people visit at once. During the winter, the river usually freezes thick enough for safe passage, but in spring the crossing can be hazardous.

It has been said that denizens of the Aelvinnwode have occasionally visited the druids here. Other creatures, natural and magical, might also frequent the woods around Erikholme.

**3. Watch House Inn.** The current proprietor of the only real public-house in the Giantdowns inherited the inn from her father. Kara Rjurlas, the bluff matron of the Watch House Inn, continues her father's tradition of welcoming members of the Watch to her table or her bar. Originally built by old Rjurlas as a place for the Watchmen to relax and spend their pay, the Watch House Inn still depends on Hogrun's soldiers for most of its business.

The Watch House Inn has become a central meeting place for the town. Men and women of the village gather here at irregular intervals to discuss matters of interest and importance. Of late, the discussion has been a fretful one concerning relatives and friends lost in the fall of Bjorlangen.

Mostly, however, the Watch House Inn is a place for farm workers, Watchmen, and occasional travelers to come, relax over a flagon of mead or ale, and engage in banter, gossip, and news-swapping. Kara tries to keep the rough-housing to a minimum, but angry words and fights (arising over anything from

grazing rights to old clan feuds) do break out from time to time. Fortunately, if things get too rough, Kara can send someone across the road to the Watch garrison for help.

The inn itself is a two-building structure. In the late fall, winter, and early spring months, the two-floor building nearest the road is easily large enough to provide seats and tables for 20 or 30 patrons (nearly three times the customers Kara expects on even a mild winter night). Three rooms upstairs can house any traveling visitors (usually farmers too drunk or tired to walk all the way back to their homesteads at night), and Kara herself has a room under the stairs. The kitchen is small, but in the wintertime Kara serves only a few meals every day.

In the summer, however, business booms. From late spring and the planting/breeding season to early fall and the harvesting/trading days, the inn accommodates all manner of visitors. Rjurik farm hands and small homesteaders, working 12-hour days, still find time for a jug of beer at the Watch House, and marklorjen patrols report to Kara anything Hogrun doesn't classify as privileged information.

The inn overfills on market days in the summer, and Kara hires boys and girls from the village to help her out. They put up large tents in the back, over log tables and benches, and Kara does most of her cooking at the outdoor grill next to the building that serves as her storage shed, smokehouse, and wine cellar. Travelers consider themselves lucky to get space on the common room floor most nights, and many sleep on the tables and benches outside.

Kara Rjurlas tries to make all visitors to Midjarna feel welcome, though her gruff nature may put off many travelers. Kara believes in talking loud and telling stories, and any stranger who doesn't provide a little news or gossip will quickly become the subject of both.

**4. Home of Hogrun Njalsson.** The Watch commander built a small home when he came to the Downs, but he has since had to expand it. He still lives in the small two-room dwelling he constructed, but he has attached a small office out front and has thought about building another Watch barracks out back. Hogrun can be found either at his office or in the Watch barracks during the day or night—with occasional visits to Anneke Sturmddotter's homestead to the south.

Hogrun keeps maps of the Giantdowns in his office, including complete plans for expanding the Watch stations in Boganhaar, Bjorlangen (back when Anneke ruled the province), and Vjelthelma. He has other plans concerning expansion into Skansoeren that he has had to put aside for





now. Several communiqués, passed to him from his svinarek (through Gunnar) concerning the current situation in Bjorlangen and Trondelaag, lie hidden in a secret drawer in his desk.

Hogrun keeps most of his personal items in his home. His prized bow and other weapons usually occupy a revered space on one wall, but Hogrun keeps all his military service mementos in a box under his bed. A Wolf Guard uniform (with an officer's emblem) has been carefully laid to rest there, along with a picture of a beautiful young woman in a well-made dress.

**5. Holmjarllen Barracks.** Hogrun appropriated an old barn when its previous owner died of the gray wasting some years ago. He had it restored and uses it to house those holmjarllen and marklorjen who don't live with families throughout the province. During the winter months, many of the younger sons and daughters of the area live under this roof and serve in the Watch to take the burden of support away from their families. Hogrun permits this as long as they serve at least one month of duty in the spring, summer, or fall.

The holmjarllen barracks could house an entire unit of men and women (more than 200 soldiers), but seldom provides bunks for more than half that number. During the summer, the few men and women serving the Watch full time or fulfilling their one-month obligatory service have room to spread out and live comfortably.

**6. Rigger's Smithy.** One of the more peculiar inhabitants in Midjarna is Wester Rig. Known to most of the villagers simply as "Rigger," the smith is a sight to see. A burly, "tall" halfling, he looks almost like a small, beardless dwarf as he toils bare-chested over his outdoor forge repairing farm tools and weapons, or using his crucible to melt down bits of metal for arrowheads and spear tips. During the slow months, Rigger indulges himself making new tools, unusual weapons, and even armor.

Many of the permanent members of the Watch pride themselves on carrying items forged by Rigger. His weapons are about the best available south of the Silverheads and boast an attention to detail that would satisfy a dwarf (and has—

Gjor Upshar of the dwarven colonies has offered grudging compliments to Rigger on several occasions, which pleases the unusual halfling to no end). Rigger himself lives in a small hut attached to his smithy and accepts foodstuffs more often than gold as his payments.

**7. Cobbler's Row.** Several families live along Cobbler's Row. Most of them spend their spring,

summer,

and fall months

working on farms outside

of the village proper—usually as

foremen or in other supervisory positions.

Often, they combine the resources of their own small gardens to provide for themselves and sell surplus produce at the open-air marketplace that springs up every year between their homes and the center of town.

Cobbler's Row got its name because many of the younger sons and daughters of the families living there haven't hired themselves out as farm hands to the homesteaders. They make their livings by doing odd jobs or perfecting specific trades. The district features one tailor, two leatherworkers, a few general tinkers, and several jacks-of-all-trades willing to do almost anything for a fair wage. They supply themselves mostly by running the marketplace and selling their services to travelers and villagers alike. Most have drive and ambition to spare, though a few shiftless cheats do hide themselves among the honest workers.

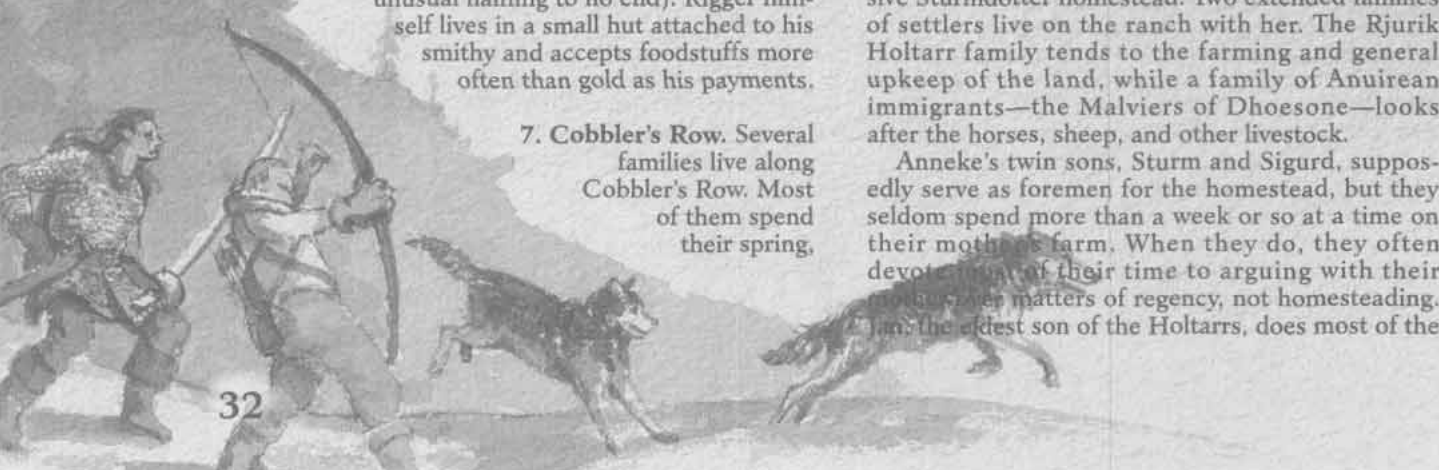
Many denizens of Cobbler's Row frequent the Watch House Inn and have taken a proprietary interest in the place. Kara Rjurlas, the innkeeper, often has one or more "cobblers" working on improvements or repairs in exchange for their drinks or dinners.

If there is a leader among the cobblers, it is Oervel Pleice. Anuirean by ancestry, Oervel was born and raised in Midjarna. His father was a trader from Dhoesone and his mother came from one of the southern realms. Both settled in Midjarna Village after Oervel's father found a regular market for several of the Downs' most expensive herbs (and received a terrific commission), but they died of the gray wasting soon after their son turned 12.

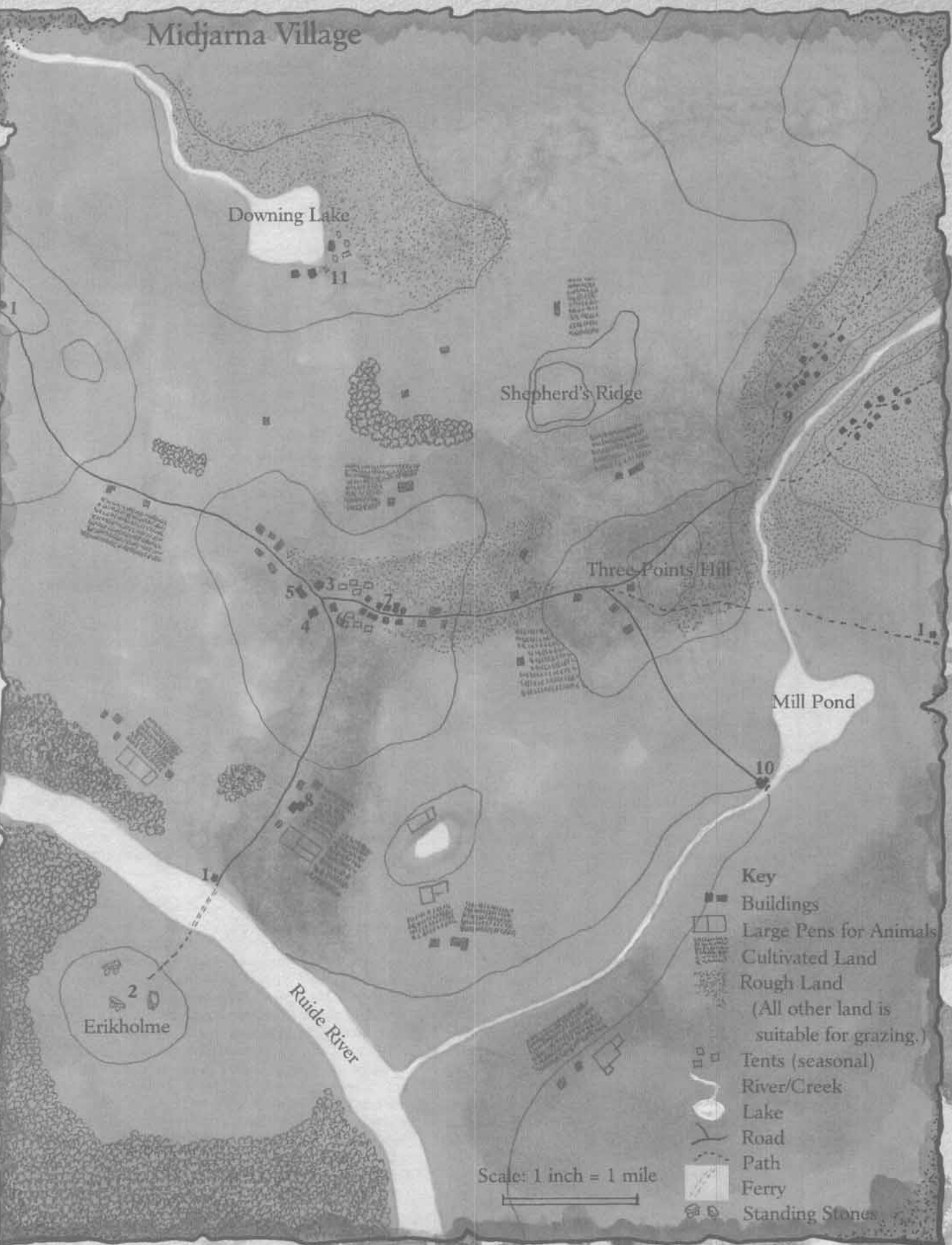
Rather than give up his inheritance in exchange for security, Oervel began performing odd jobs and tradework for travelers at the inn. He made a comfortable living as he quickly picked up many different skills; he now is among the oldest of the cobblers and the most respected by his fellows. Oervel has begun thinking about organizing the cobblers (and possibly Rigger and Kara) into a guild, but he may need some outside support.

**8. Home of Anneke Sturmdotter.** The Rjurik regent of Midjarna, Lemnjohen, Vjelthelma, and Boganhaar lives in a small longhouse on the extensive Sturmdotter homestead. Two extended families of settlers live on the ranch with her. The Rjurik Holtarr family tends to the farming and general upkeep of the land, while a family of Anuirean immigrants—the Malviers of Dhoesone—looks after the horses, sheep, and other livestock.

Anneke's twin sons, Sturm and Sigurd, supposedly serve as foremen for the homestead, but they seldom spend more than a week or so at a time on their mother's farm. When they do, they often devote most of their time to arguing with their father over matters of regency, not homesteading. Jan, the eldest son of the Holtarrs, does most of the



# Midjarna Village



Downing Lake

Shepherd's Ridge

Three Points Hill

Mill Pond

Ruide River

Erikholme

## Key

- Buildings
- Large Pens for Animals
- Cultivated Land
- Rough Land  
(All other land is suitable for grazing.)
- Tents (seasonal)
- River/Creek
- Lake
- Road
- Path
- Ferry
- Standing Stones

Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile



work required of a homestead foreman.

Gunnar, Anneke's other son, visits his mother for longer periods of time but seldom acts the role of an elder son set to inherit a prosperous homestead. He works hard at any task Jan Holtarr sets him to, but takes little initiative.

Anneke's longhouse is an interesting place to visit. The regent of the Rjurik Giantdowns has filled her small home with keepsakes from around the Downs. Most items are junk and knickknacks, but hidden treasures can be found in the oddest places. Anneke disguises her home much like she disguises herself: Clutter camouflages the many valuable herbs, maps, and other items she keeps available for her use at all times. Even her sons do not know the entire contents of her home, though Gunnar could make a good guess.

**9. Trap Town.** Set just below the rapids of Windy Creek, "Trap Town" serves as a base of operations for many of the trappers and furriers who operate out of Midjarna province. Their families and young children live in small shacks, cabins, and even tents along the river throughout most of the year while they roam the Downs in search of animal pelts. The families live by fishing and eating the meat of the animals the trappers bring back. They often make the trek,

individually or as a group, down into Midjarna Village for supplies or to trade.

Hogrun once thought to establish a Watch station in Trap Town, but the area has become a good hiding place for petty bandits and others who might want to avoid the law of the province. If Hogrun moved in, Trap Town would move on. So, Gunnar and some of his svinarek check in occasionally at the trappers' settlement (a few actually live there disguised as trappers) to keep an eye out for dangerous characters.

Trap Town is not a place for an outsider. Adventurers may pass through the little community and even purchase some limited supplies there, but few will be encouraged to spend a night or two. Most new would-be trappers must build homes downriver of the settlement and work their way slowly into the tiny community.

**10. New Mill.** Hubert Eajsbegger and his two daughters own and operate the "new" mill (it is actually almost 20 years old, two years older than Hubert's elder daughter). Born in Brechtür, Hubert married a local woman and has spent much of his life in the Midjarna Village area. His mill services virtually all of Midjarna and he occasionally has customers from Skansoeren and Boganhaar.

Many of the Midjarna Rjurik consider Hubert an outsider, despite his years in the community. Most of this feeling probably stems from his way of making a living. Like most millers, he takes a small part of every portion of the goods brought to his mill for processing, and many of the farmers think of him as a parasite. Still, Hubert deals fairly with his customers and gets along well with the nonfarmers of the village, particularly the halfling smith, Rigger.

### 11. Hunters' Camp.

Like Trap Town, Rjurik hunters and fishers constructed a few log cabins and longhouses around Downing Lake years ago to serve as a base of operations for their expeditions into the Downs. In recent years, however, Hunters' Camp has become a haven for shepherds and free-range cattle drovers in the area. A few hunters live there, but the tents and other seasonal dwellings belong mainly to shepherds and their companions. Most of the remaining hunters have become independent scouts for settlers and adventurers who wish to travel through the Giantdowns.

## adventuring around midjarna village

The Watch and the prominent homesteaders keep more than half an eye on strangers wandering around and through Midjarna Village. They encourage travelers to stick to the roads (unless they have specific business with individual traders) and many a curious traveler has been run off the larger homestead lands by mounted cattle hands. Still, most Midjarnans will generally accept strangers in their midst—as long as they don't look like trouble.

This attitude has helped the village adapt to some difficult times recently. Refugees from Bjorlängen have been alternately pouring and trickling into the area, setting up camps and making temporary homes within the sphere of the village's protection. This situation hasn't pleased many of the homesteaders; most require open land for their large farms or cattle herds and don't need squatters in the area.

Hogrun and Anneke, however, believe it is their duty to help these refugees as much as they can. During fair weather, they have tried to help them settle east of the village, along the forest. In winter-time, they construct temporary housing in and around the center of the village so the refugees don't come into conflict with the homesteaders.

This approach hasn't always worked. The Rjurik of Bjorlängen hardly recognize the authority of the Watch and don't like the attitude of the Midjarnan people. They don't want pity; they want homes.

Adventurers could make themselves very useful helping the overtaxed Watch relocate some of the refugees into less-settled areas in the province (possibly evicting dangerous animals or creatures) and clearing out those squatters who refuse to go. As long as the PCs don't act undiplomatically toward the refugees or the homesteaders, they could avert an apparently inevitable showdown.

If the PCs don't want to get involved in the refugee situation, they may find work driving off occasional wild animals, humanoid raiders, or dangerous creatures, especially to the north of the village. Trap Town and Hunters' Camp, and the independent homesteads in between, have always been easy prey for raiding parties out of Skansoeren or hungry creatures of the Downs.

## the hill fort of lemnjohen

Built by Anuirean forces during one of their abortive attempts at invasion, the hill fort (or "Old Fort") of Lemnjohen has become a base of strength for the Watchmen of that province.

But the Old Fort was not always a boon for the Rjurik inhabitants of Lemnjohen. Until very recently, it was a haven for bandits and dangerous monsters (particularly giants and giant-kin) right in the center of the westernmost province of the Giantdowns. Until a party of adventurers led by the now-famous Dagmar Druesbane "cleaned out" the Old Fort, its inhabitants made safe passage between the Downs provinces and Dhoesone almost impossible.

Currently, a contingent of Watchmen (holmjarllen and marklorjen) staffs the Old Fort. Dagmar Druesbane, now semiretired from adventuring, serves as their commander. She runs a more military-oriented Watch contingent than Hogrun Njalsson does in the rest of the Downs, but she follows his lead in most other things.

## the old fort

Resting on a tall hill in the center of Lemnjohen, the Old Fort overlooks the safest trail between the Great Downs into Dhoesone. Rjurik and Anuirean settlers have begun to inhabit the area in the shadow of the Old Fort's protection, and the region now teems with activity. Refer to the map on page 37.

**1. Main Tower.** Three stories above the ground, the main tower of the Old Fort stands higher than any of its companions. From the wooden platform on the roof, guards look out over the province and can see the Silverheart Mountains to the north and the Aelvinnwode to the south. When the White Witch invaded Bjorlängen, it is said Dagmar Druesbane saw the burning from here and summoned all the holmjarllen and marklorjen to her with one bright signal fire.

Dagmar makes her home on the second floor of the main tower. The third floor contains barrels of oil and other ammunition she has stored in case of attack. The first floor houses Gris Oldstone, her dwarf lieutenant, and perishable stores (such as herbs).

**2. Dhoesone's Watch.** Brand new this year, the western tower of the Old Fort is constructed of new stone dragged from local creek beds, carved, and positioned under the direction of Gris. It is only two stories high, but features a watch platform on top.

The second interior floor contains ammunition and oil stockpiled against a siege, while the first floor serves as a barracks for five of the fort's junior officers. Since at least one is on duty at all times, no more than four (usually two or three) officers will be found here at any one time.

**3. Gate Towers.** Two stories high, the Old Fort's two gate towers have pointed, Anuirean-style roofs made to shed arrows and even catapult shot (one hopes). They overlook the gate and portcullis (3a); the gate can be locked or opened, and the portcullis dropped or raised, from inside either tower.

On the first floor of each gate tower live four guards who watch the gate and check new arrivals to the Old Fort. They bear the responsibility of keeping undesirables out of the installation, and Dagmar makes certain they take that charge seriously.

**4. Ruined Wall and Tower.** As much as it pains the fort commander to see it, more than 100 feet of wall and a second wide tower lie in ruins along the southern aspect of the Old Fort. Dagmar has hurried her overworked builders along as much as possible, and Gris Oldstone provides as much advice and input as he can, but they just cannot seem to rebuild the wall fast enough to suit the situation. A fortified scaffold has been constructed inside the wall area to help repel attackers from the south, but it would provide little real challenge for a determined invader.

But Dagmar has a few tricks up her sleeve. Unbeknownst to anyone but herself, Gris, and a few trusted builders, she has set a trap amid the ruined wall for any erstwhile attackers. By entering the ruined tower and pulling a secret lever, she can cause the scaffold, much of the tower, and even part of the "ground" underneath the ruined wall to implode and seal off that area quite nicely. She fully intends to remove that trap once the wall is finished, but until then she hopes to give a nasty surprise to anyone attacking the Old Fort from the south.

**5. Barracks.** Most of the holmjarllen and marklorjen assigned to Lemnjohen have quarters in this barracks. The single-floor building is fairly crowded, but Dagmar keeps at least a quarter of the population outside and busy at all times to avoid "cabin fever." She staged regular patrols and maneuvers outside the Old Fort even before the fall of Bjorlängen and now has doubled her efforts.

**6. Well.** While Lemnjohen has many creeks and small ponds around the Old Fort, Dagmar wisely instructed her men to dig a deep well in the center of the fortification. Not only does the well provide water for the entire base without anyone having to

go outside, but it serves as the safest remaining access to the lower levels (see below). Most of the people in the Old Fort—even Dagmar's officers—don't know of this side benefit.

**7. Stables and Corral.** Lemnjohen has always lacked horses and Dagmar has managed to lay her hands on only half a dozen decent steeds. Travelers are welcome to board their mounts here (provided they pay for the upkeep), but most often the corral is occupied by sheep, chickens, or pigs while the few horses spend time in the stables or being walked around the yard.

**8. Storage Buildings.** The Old Fort's stockpiles of foodstuffs have been strained of late by refugees from Bjorlängen. Dagmar, who was in the habit of charging travelers a very modest fee for a night inside the Old Fort, now considers increasing her tolls to help fill these warehouses. She knows from experience that if she hasn't filled them with grain, salted meat, and other supplies by winter, the season will pass slowly and uncomfortably in the Old Fort.

**9. Smith and Carpenter.** The Rjurik Poulsen family lives in this sizeable home and maintains the Old Fort's only smithy and carpentry shop. Hedda Poulsen, a powerful-looking woman with red hair and a ruddy complexion, works the smithy while her husband, the darker but no less cheerful Holt Poulsen, sees to the carpentry needs of the fortress. Their two daughters, Inga and Kolina, are too young to help out much around the shops and have apparently become mischievous mascots of the Old Fort.

**10. Tack and Bridle.** One of the older Watchmen, an Anuirean named Hadrien, received permission from Dagmar to open up a leatherworking practice and general store in the Old Fort—as long as it didn't interfere with his duties as one of the holmjarllen. The experiment worked so well that Dagmar made Hadrien her chief quartermaster and allows him to trade on behalf of the Old Fort with merchants and travelers alike. He keeps a small percentage of the profit for himself (and his general store) but turns most of it over to Dagmar and the fort treasury. Hadrien is known throughout the Old Fort as a well-meaning scavenger. Often, he employs youngsters of the region (including Inga and Kolina, the smith and carpenter's daughters) as foragers, though Dagmar has placed safety restrictions on his operations of late.

**11. Courtyard.** The fort's open area sees use by the men of the garrison as a training ground and a game field (depending on their duties of the day). On particularly nice days, traveling merchants set up small tents around the training or playing field and sell their wares to the soldiers and camp followers who watch the activity. Some talked of establishing a permanent trading post here before the troubles in Bjorlängen began.

## lower levels

When Dagmar, Gris, and their party of adventurers "cleaned out" the Old Fort, they had more than the above-ground structure to contend with. Gris tells stories of under-halls and flooded passages beneath the Old Fort, and he gets a haunted look when he makes reference to the beasts they found there. Most of Gris and Dagmar's companions died under the Old Fort, killed by monsters neither will speak about. Dagmar has sealed off all known entrances to the lower halls and prefers not to think about them.

Two passages down into the lower halls still exist, and a third could be opened. Dagmar and Gris know of the first passage. Fifty feet down the well, just above the highest waterline, is a stone panel that can be removed. The opening leads to a winding passageway and into one of the most complex tunnel systems of the Downs.

The other passage remains unknown to either former adventurer, though probably not for very long. The ruined tower stands over a trap door and a stairway leading into an underground stronghold built by the Anuirean soldiers. Only four or five rooms still remain accessible, but these may possess dangers of their own—Dagmar and Gris never explored this area. No one, as yet, knows of their existence.

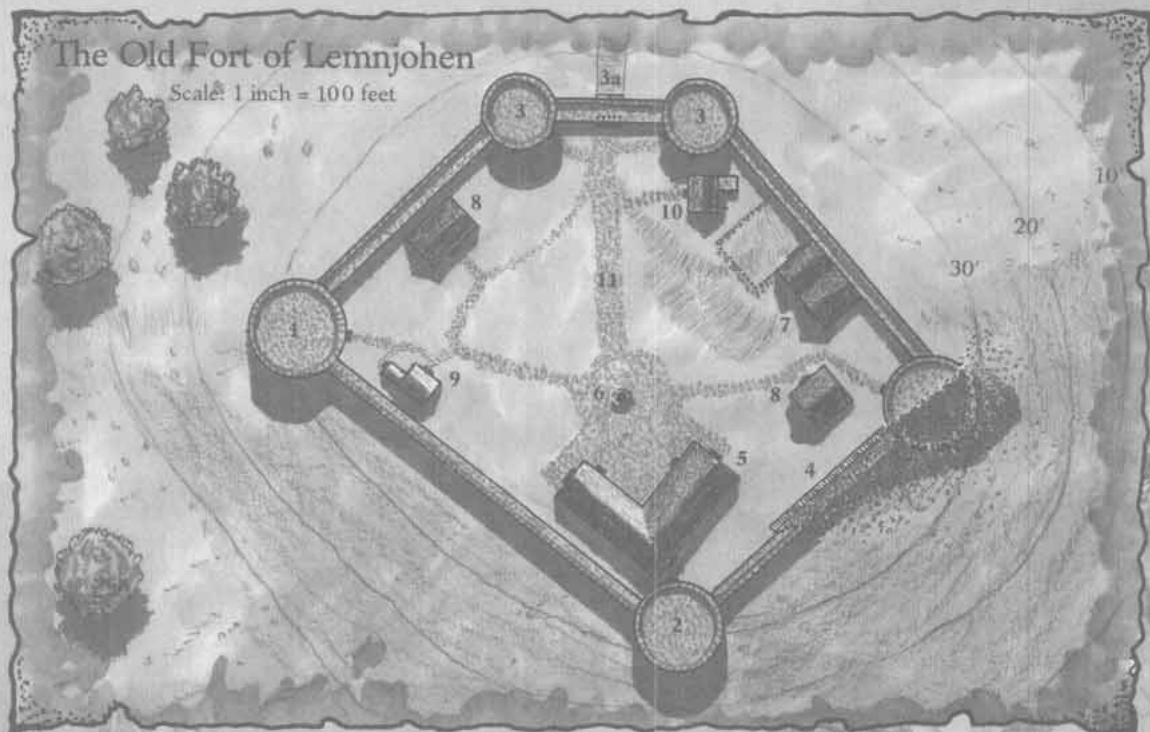
Finally, Dagmar blocked up a passageway leading down into the tunnels under the Old Fort when the rebuilding of the structure began. Buried under stone and sealed with a *wizard locked* secret door, this passage lies in the center of the bottom floor of the main tower. Dagmar's party escaped from the tunnels under the Old Fort this way (those who survived), but they left dangers behind.

## the surrounding area

Most of the Rjurik of Lemnjohen live within a few miles of the Old Fort, and a small village has sprung up just down the hill from the main gates. Most of the population of this village may be transient, however, as they come from the fall of Bjorlangen. As Dagmar takes little interest in the civilian population of the province (except to protect them or collect Anneke's taxes), they may stick around. Most of the Rjurik from Bjorlangen like her kind of "hands off" leadership.

## nomad camps of vjelthelma and boganhaar

No veneer of civilization surrounds the Rjurik settlements in Vjelthelma and Boganhaar as it does the Old Fort of Lemnjohen or Midjarna Village. These two Rjurik-ruled provinces are almost completely wild. The Watch patrols both of them, but Anneke and Hogrun's influences are scarcely felt.



## ranchers of vjelthelma

Vjelthelma contains nearly as many Rjurik settlers as does Midjarna province. However, most of the settlers live on large homesteads spread out over the long province. No real villages or communities exist in the shadow of the Gorgon's Crown, and most of the Rjurik (at least the most influential ones) in Vjelthelma like it that way.

Hogrun established several marklorjen Watch stations throughout the eastern province of the Giantdowns in the hopes of attracting communities of Rjurik, but that hope has so far failed. Vjelthelma has turned very clannish, and nearly all the Rjurik in the province look to individual ranchers rather than the Watch for protection. When they come into conflict with each other, they settle their differences in "the old ways." Clan feuds and range wars often rage in Vjelthelma.

However, most of the prominent ranchers *do* respect the regency of the Watch in most things. They recognize the fact that they live in the Gorgon's shadow and their cattle drovers and sheep herders could not stand up to a military invasion. They pay their taxes to Anneke Sturmdotter (through Hogrun Njalsson) and listen to the Watch when its members speak about the province's security.

The most prominent homesteaders of Vjelthelma province include the following families.

**The Thorsens:** A large family led by a strong matriarch, the Thorsens bravely settled the southern tip of Vjelthelma between the Ruide River and the province's southernmost barrows. The matriarch's name is Freya; in her youth, she was one of the hottest-tempered, most beautiful women in the Downs. When she married into the Thorsen clan, she quickly became its leader and now she and her five sons manage a large cattle homestead within sight of the Gorgon's mountains. On some summer days, when the Ruide River becomes shallow and muddy, Freya's sons have even taken their herds over the border into the Gorgon's Crown to make use of the awnsheg's western pastures—though they are always careful to flee at the first sign of scouts. The Thorsen clan contains at least 15 other families, and many individual cattle hands and homestead servants.

**Pyotr of Vosgaard:** When Pyotr Dmitrivic came to the Giantdowns, he brought a group of Vos raiders eager for plunder. They had heard legends of the Great Downs' treasures and hoped to claim them for their own. But the land treated him and his men like any other—the Downs stood and endured while Pyotr spent his energies in futile searching and raiding. Eventually, most of Pyotr's raiders left the region, but the older warrior stayed with his cadre of officers and his wife, Pola. Now they control much of the land in the center of Vjelthelma, which they use for sheep and cow pasture.

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**Pyotr of Vosgaard:** When Pyotr Dmitrivic came to the Giantdowns, he brought a group of Vos raiders eager for plunder. They had heard legends of the Great Downs' treasures and hoped to claim them for their own. But the land treated him and his men like any other—the Downs stood and endured while Pyotr spent his energies in futile searching and raiding. Eventually, most of Pyotr's raiders left the region, but the older warrior stayed with his cadre of officers and his wife, Pola. Now they control much of the land in the center of Vjelthelma, which they use for sheep and cow pasture.

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Pyotr, despite his history as a raider, maintains good relations with the Watch and allowed Hogrun to build a marklorjen post on his ranch. Pyotr and Pola had no children of their own, but they adopted several after the gray wasting ravaged the Downs. Now, five families and many individual Rjurik settlers look to them as clan leaders. This "Vossic clan," as the Rjurik call it, strictly enforces its territorial boundaries, to the point of fighting over the rocky hills between its land and the Torele homestead to the north.

**The Toreles:** Three sisters started the Torele homestead on the base of the northern Downs in Vjelthelma, just over the border from Boganhaar. The two eldest sisters married, had children, and died of the gray wasting, but the youngest still lives. Birgitta Torele and her sisters' husbands, Landen and Darochinn, oversee the vast wheat fields and goat herds of northern Vjelthelma. Of the three major homesteads, the Toreles come into the most conflict with the humanoids raiding out of Boganhaar; they, in return, fight the most hotly with their neighbors over territorial borders. Just recently, Landen's eldest daughter, Brende, suffered critical wounds in a range dispute with the Vossic clan to the south. The Watch intervened to barely stop a range war, but the Toreles have vowed revenge on Pyotr's clan. They have been joined by six small families and several individual herdsmen on their homestead.

**Lesser homesteads:** Smaller ranches and homesteads do exist in Vjelthelma, though many may be consumed by the next range war. All three of the major homesteads hold an "if you aren't with us, you're against us" attitude toward the smaller homesteads, and some families have already fled into wilder Boganhaar in the hopes of avoiding the dangerous middle ground.

## boganhaar nomads

Few of the Rjurik in Boganhaar have permanent homes. Like many in the highlands, they are migratory. These Rjurik travel throughout the province and into nearby Skansoeren, Vjelthelma, and Midjarna in the course of a year.

This movement concerns the Watch greatly. The nomads of Boganhaar reject almost all claims of rulership set upon them by Anneke Sturmdotter, and actively avoid the protection of the Watch. Of all the Rjurik in the "settled" lands of the Giantdowns, they fall prey most often to the humanoids and monsters of the region. Fiercely independent and loyal only to their own families, they stand and fall alone.

Nevertheless, Hogrun and Anneke have managed to coax some cooperation out of the nomads occasionally. When one of their own number goes

missing, or is raided by the humanoids, these herders, trappers, and hunters pitch in with the marklorjen to help find the victims and punish the guilty. It takes a crisis to get them together, however, and many would rather look to their own well-being than that of their neighbors.

## Ghuralli's Holdings

The awnshegh Ghuralli rules several provinces of the Giantdowns, including Caer Cwnnar, Haldallen, Silverheart, and his capital, Rhuiddar. Still, he gains little enjoyment from his tiny empire. Caer Cwnnar harbors almost as many dangerous monsters as does its neighboring province, Barrow Woods, and both Haldallen and Silverheart contain resisters to his rule. Only in Rhuiddar does Ghuralli feel at all secure, and even that province borders the powerful elven realm of Luabright.

## the forest lair of rhuiddar

A hilly, rough, forest province covered with pine trees and little underbrush, Rhuiddar has become dark and dangerous of late. Ghuralli's Guard, a collection of the most deadly humanoids and fiercest giants and giant-kin in the region, camps here, protecting the awnshegh's growing citadel. They still hunt the occasional elf in this forest; when they catch one, they make his screams echo through the trees for days.

All of the Giantdowns, it is said, are ringed with subterranean passages and beast lairs. In Rhuiddar, this is known to be true. Ghuralli himself occupies an above ground/underground lair in the southwest of the province, and has several underground holds hidden throughout the forest. (See map on next page.)

Many brave svinarek died to provide the Watch with the sketches of Ghuralli's stronghold. Individual spies and informers, sneaking in and out of Rhuiddar at great personal risk, returned with sketches and descriptions that Gunnar Gunnarsen compiled into a series of maps. Though Gunnar trusts the information obtained by his spies, even he knows that many features of the awnshegh's stronghold may have changed.

**Ghuralli's Lair.** Built into the side of a steep hill somewhere in central Rhuiddar, Ghuralli's longhouse is the center of his stronghold. His humanoids have cleared most of the trees from the hill and the surrounding area (approximately 100 yards from the base of the hill), but it is unlikely

anyone save a veteran woodsman could spot the clearing from 200 yards away, as the trees grow thick in Rhuiddar.

The humanoids left a stand of four ancient pine trees on the summit of the hill, and they use these as a watchtower to look over the cleared area. Reports state that the pine trees are joined by a multi-layered platform and that a tunnel from the surface leads down into the hill and directly to Ghuralli's quarters.

**Humanoid Camps ("The Maze").** Ghuralli and his captains live in the longhouse and underneath the central hill, but the line soldiers of his army must make do outdoors. Ghuralli's humanoids have constructed at least two "mazes" of wooden, or hide and fur, walls in which they camp. Inside the maze areas, individual ologs, giants, or goblins may have lean-tos or even small cabins, but most simply rely on the overhanging pine trees for a roof.

**The Maze (side view).** The wooden walls of the mazes, which range from 8 to 20 feet in height, may be thick enough for guards to patrol on walkways. A few platforms and guard towers are scattered throughout each maze structure, so that Ghuralli can keep his troops from fighting each other (too much). Some of the wooden walls even boast doors. The leather and fur dividers, only 6 to 10 feet tall, were added to the outer maze areas for new recruits. Eventually, Ghuralli may replace them with wooden walls.

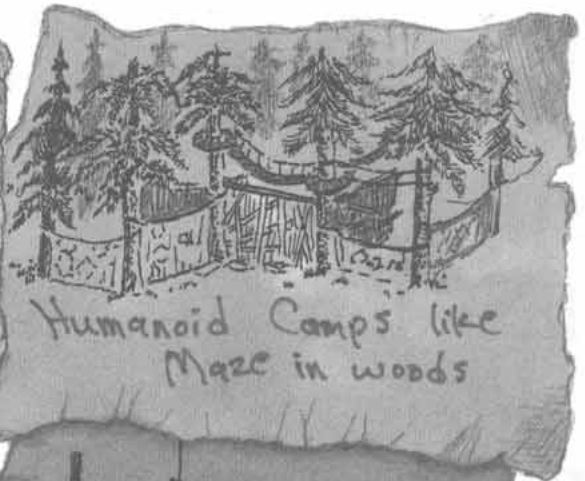
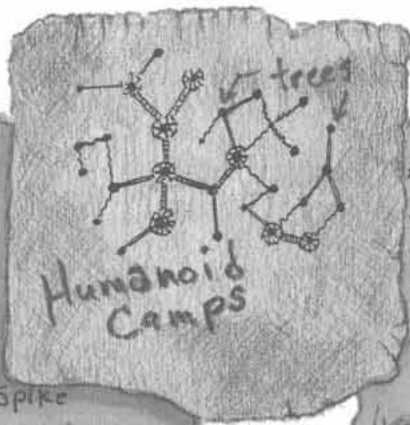
**Tunnels.** The secret to Ghuralli's defense of his stronghold is his tunnel system. Tunnels riddle the hills and underground of Rhuiddar, and Ghuralli's humanoids move through these subterranean passages almost constantly. In the wintertime, Ghuralli allows his soldiers to camp in some of the outer areas.

Ghuralli's longhouse and quarters actually extend into the hill behind his home. These tunnels link up with other passages that range out in a spiderweb formation beneath the clearing and into the woods beyond. Entrances to the tunnel system outside the longhouse may be hidden inside an old pine tree, underneath a rotting stump, or beneath a carefully hidden section of earth. Many svinarek scouts perished trying to explore these tunnels—the humanoids have riddled them with many traps of the most devious construction.

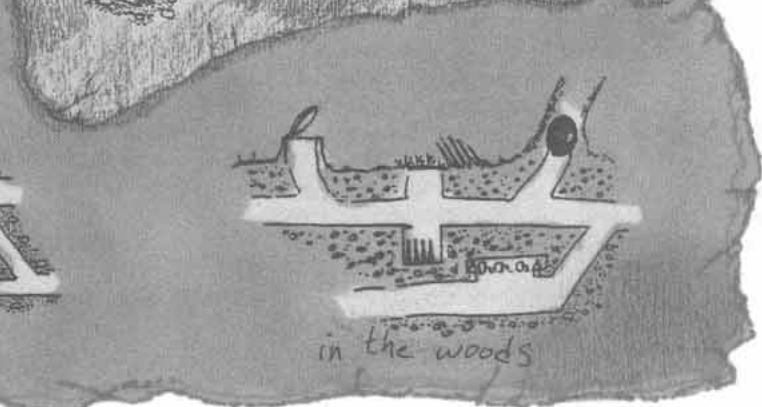
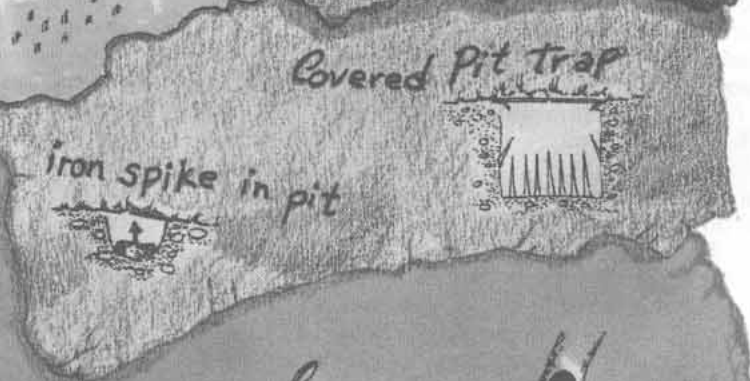
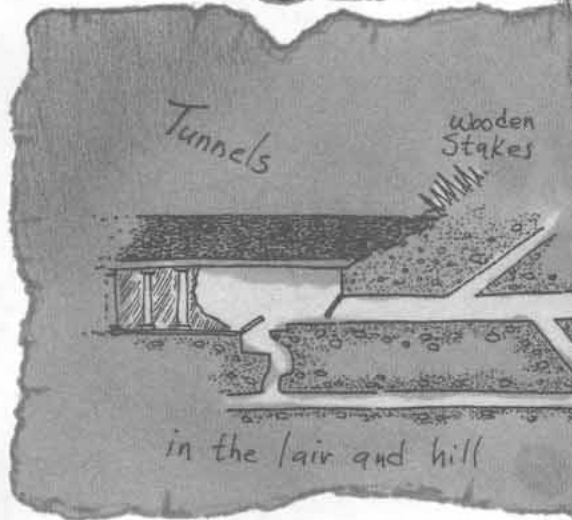
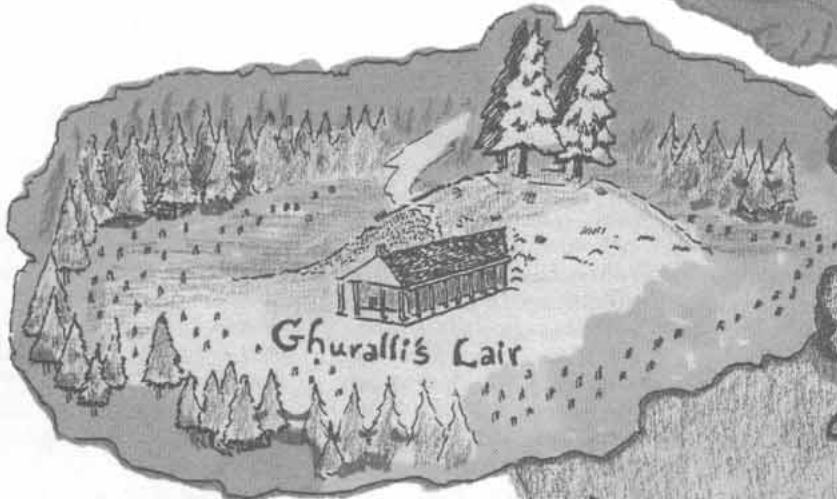
**Alarms and Traps.** Ghuralli does not depend solely on his humanoids to report invaders in his woods. He has had them construct hundreds of alarms and traps throughout the surrounding forest. The alarms are almost always







### Ghuralli's Stronghold



trip-wires, hidden in the thick bed of pine needles on the forest floor; the alarms they trigger sound out to watchers either in the trees or underneath the ground in the hidden tunnels. Most trespassers never realize they have sounded an alert.

The humanoids set traps inside the alarms to discourage or disable adventurers and spies, not to decimate armies. Many of the traps will only wound or discourage would-be explorers (characters must succeed at a saving throw vs. paralyzation or suffer 1d4 to 1d6 points of damage from a hidden pit or single-spike trap), while others cripple or kill (a swinging-spike trap could cause up to 4d10 points of damage or more, if the unlucky traveler doesn't succeed at a saving throw vs. paralyzation).

## the shadows of caer cwnnar

Ghuralli has tried to occupy Caer Cwnnar for years, fighting first the elves and then the monsters of the region. Elves still battle the humanoids along the northern border occasionally, but pressure from Lluabright appears to be the least of Ghuralli's problems in Caer Cwnnar.

Natural tunnels and caves honeycomb the southern hills of Caer Cwnnar. The northern pine forests hide many natural and unnatural beasts that would just as soon feed on humanoids as on other creatures. Ghuralli's gnom and goblin forces have managed to claim about half of the southern tunnels as their own, but the rest are occupied by independent humanoids, monsters, and even a few restless undead.

Ghuralli's forces are stymied in the northern areas of the province. Ettercaps and giant spiders, as well as other predators, live there and prey on anything warm-blooded they can find (though the humanoids have driven most of the natural animals north into Lluabright). Perversely, the monsters of the dark wood in Caer Cwnnar actually provide protection for the awnshegh's subjects from those who would seek to exterminate them.

It is rumored that baatezu and tanar'ri, trapped by the elves of Lluabright, may still exist in some of the tunnels under Caer Cwnnar. For this reason, Ghuralli refuses to allow his army to excavate the area completely: He fears another humanoid may find and free one of these otherworldly fiends and gain power the way he did, long ago.

## the haunted barrow woods

The most dangerous province in all the Cwinn Downs is Barrow Woods (sometimes known as the Zed Woods). Before Ghuralli came to power, no sane

Rjurik went into this province without good cause. Now it stands all but impassable by any individual or small group. Only the White Witch's army, protected by her magic, has passed through the area unscathed.

Barrow Woods province lies thick with undead and monsters that defy accurate description. To make matters worse, the Blood Skull Barony humanoids have begun fighting Ghuralli and his forces over the region in hope of curtailing the awnshegh's influence.

Even the mountains of Barrow Woods suffer from this situation. Ghuralli once thought to take the northern Silverheads as a western base of operations for himself, but evil and neutral mountain beasts drove his humanoids shrieking back into the valleys of the north. Now the awnshegh has only a tiny foothold in the region, on the hills just inside the pine forest northwest of the mountains. Svinarek Watchmen who have braved the region report that both Ghuralli and the Blood Skull Barony lose nearly 100 troops a month in the province (mostly to undead and monster attrition), making Barrow Woods important to the Rjurik. If it didn't exist, Ghuralli could employ that many more humanoids against the Rjurik provinces.

## the white witch in bjorlangen

No one knows why the White Witch chose to invade Bjorlangen, or how she managed to get past Ghuralli, the Blood Skull troops in Barrow Woods, and the Silverhead Mountains. Most of the Watchmen agree that her primary forces in Bjorlangen appear to be renegade Rjurik and members of the Kjarhoelle tribe from Trondelaag.

The loss of Bjorlangen puts a thorn in the Watch's side, but taking it gives the White Witch little in return. She pays mercenaries for her campaign among the Downs, and it is a costly one indeed. Her current captain, Rowena Manspear, has had problems with morale and desertion ever since the victory. There just wasn't enough plunder in Bjorlangen to make the trip worthwhile.

This situation makes more than a few people wonder whether the White Witch has ulterior motives she hasn't revealed even to her captain. Some have speculated that she intends to raid the Bjorlangen Downs in the hope that some of the hills hide giant barrows. Since Bjorlangen was cleared of most challenges by the Rjurik settlers, it becomes an easy target for this sort of operation.



On the other hand, one or two rumors state that the White Witch has a grudge against either Anneke Sturmddotter or Hogrun Njalsson. Perhaps when Anneke's family fled Hogunmark to avoid "clan feuds," they were actually avoiding the Witch's wrath. Or, when rumors speak of the Watch leader leaving Halskapa's elite Wolf Guard under a cloud of mystery (involving a woman), perhaps the White Witch was involved.

Regardless of what caused the invasion, the White Witch is in Bjorlengen now. Her troops have dug in and, barring any mass desertion or disaster, intend to hold the province and await further orders. They patrol the province (especially along the borders) and capture slaves (mainly for trade with the Kjarhoelle), and they have already repulsed at least two uprisings among the survivors of the initial attack.

There are at least three armed camps in Bjorlengen. The southernmost, between the two clusters of Downs in the region, may be Rowena's headquarters. If so, it probably contains most of her best warriors and is the most heavily patrolled. It is the farthest south the White Witch's troops will go; they seem to be mortally afraid of the Downs themselves and their rumors of evil magic and undead.

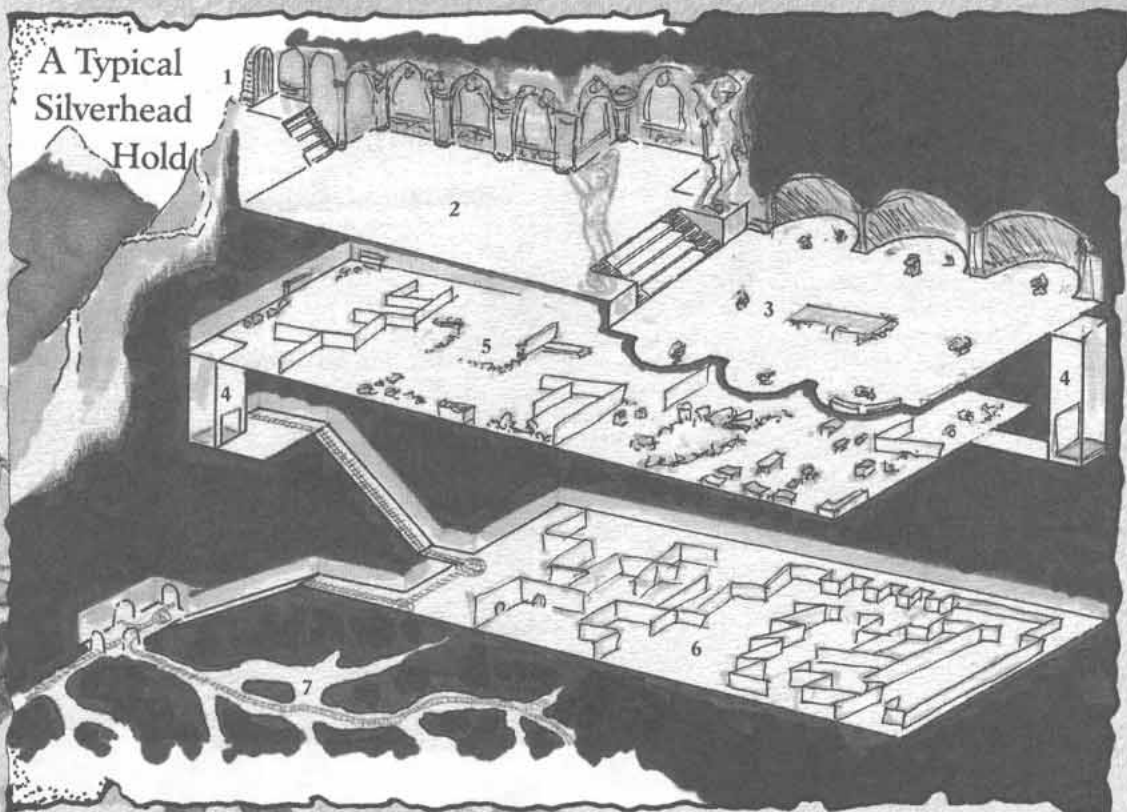
The two other camps lie on the borders of Lemnjohen and Skansoeren. There may be a way station between Trondelaag and Bjorlengen, but no fortification protects the White Witch's armies from the Kjarhoelle. This fact is probably what convinced the svinarek scouts that the White Witch made some sort of deal with the bandit tribe, since it would be Tjorvaal's style to attack a conquering army just when it was at its weakest.

## the silverhead holds

It has been said that dwarves and giants live among the Silverhead Mountains, and this rumor has finally been confirmed. When Gjor Upshar came out of the mountains to trade with the Rjurik in Midjarna, Lemnjohen, and faraway Vjelthelma, he revealed some of what has happened in the mountains.

Apparently, most of the evil giant-kin have been driven out of the central mountains in Silverheart and Trondelaag, and the stone giants and dwarves (and even a few gnomes) live there. They live a secretive existence, and decided to let anyone know their whereabouts only very recently. They claim to have become strong enough that they do not fear humanoid or monster attack, but the wise in the Giantdowns suspect an ulterior motive for their newfound openness.

The dwarves of the Silverheads come from somewhere else, and the legendary stone giants must be few in number and decreasing in population every decade. With Ghuralli winning battles and becoming more powerful in the region, the stone giants and dwarves must risk contacting other enemies of the humanoids to defend themselves. Soon, it seems, Gjor may invite individual Rjurik or other friends back to the Silverhead holds for visits and talks of alliance.



## a typical silverhead hold

When the dwarves came to the Silverheads and forged alliances with the stone giants already present, they helped their giant allies build vast underground holds to protect them from their more numerous enemies. (Refer to map on page 42.)

**1. Main Entrance.** Built to admit giant-sized occupants, the main entrance rests nearly 1,000 feet up one of the Silverhead Mountains. Often hold entrances are concealed by a great stone door made to look like the side of a mountain, or by an overhang of ice. A mountain-climber could scale the outer face of the hold and never know it was there.

**2. Stoneholme.** The stone giants love the mountains: inside *and* outside. The dwarves refined and reconstructed their caverns to make them impressive works of art. The stone giants who live inside the hold tend toward communal living in these huge cathedral-sized halls, but the dwarves generally avoid the great open caverns unless important business draws them out.

**3. Work Hall.** Stone giants and dwarves alike labor in the work hall. It has a lower ceiling than does the upper stoneholme; several forges, often fueled by volcanic activity prompted by stone giant magic, line the walls. The stone giants have to stoop to enter the work hall, but they don't seem to mind. The dwarves feel much more comfortable working with the stone ceiling not so far away from their heads.

**4. Cart-Shafts or Lifts.** Most Silverhead holds have either cart-shafts or lifts (or both) built by the dwarves to service them and their goods. Operated by a complicated pulley-system, an individual cart or lift could carry the weight of two stone giants—if those individuals could actually squeeze into the area. The lower work areas are seldom built to accommodate adult stone giants, though their children often visit the dwarves and help by carrying large burdens for the smaller occupants of the hold.

**5. Dwarven Hall.** Each Silverhead hold features at least one dwarven hall. Similar to Rjurik longhouses, these halls tend to be longer than they are wide, and often have arched ceilings. But even the smallest dwarven hall "dwarfs" a Rjurik longhouse. The dwarves build these halls to house themselves, their children, and their grandchildren. Unfortunately, in the dangerous Silverheads, the dwarven population has not increased as quickly as the dwarves might have hoped. A few gnomes might be found mixed in with the dwarves here, generally performing quartermaster and food-stockpiling duties.

**6. Mountain Storage.** The dwarves usually oversee the storage and preservation of foodstuffs, armor, and weapons for the occupants of the hold. While

the stone giants keep their personal weapons and even some foodstuffs in the stoneholme, the dwarves have an amazing ability to condense provisions and supplies to such an extent that any Silverhead hold could shut its doors for nearly a year and not run out of provisions. The dwarves also tend to build their storage holds much like their living quarters (only plainer) on the off-chance that whole tribes of dwarves might come to visit someday (regardless of their comparatively rural nature, no Silverhead dwarf would violate the hospitality laws respected by all good and neutral dwarvenkind).

**7. Mines.** Dwarves wouldn't know what to do with themselves if they didn't have several mines in operation at once. They dig for whatever they can find in the Silverheads—usually coal and copper, often iron, and sometimes gold and silver. They even discover occasional deposits of precious gems, which the dwarves tend to offer to the stone giants. (With the dwarves around to polish and set the gems, many of the serious, stoic stone giants have found they like gemstones and jewelry.)

The mines of the Silverhead Mountains nearly always hold one or two surprises. In most cases, this surprise is one the dwarves have prepared for invaders or betrayal by the stone giants. (Even the nicest dwarves don't completely trust nondwarves.) Most of the mines have one or more secret exits that lead through complicated traps and tricks to the outside (usually at the base of the mountain) or inside another mountain. One story tells of a dwarven "escape hatch" that actually led into another dwarven mine. The two colonies almost came to blows before the first agreed to wall up its tunnel and dig in another direction.

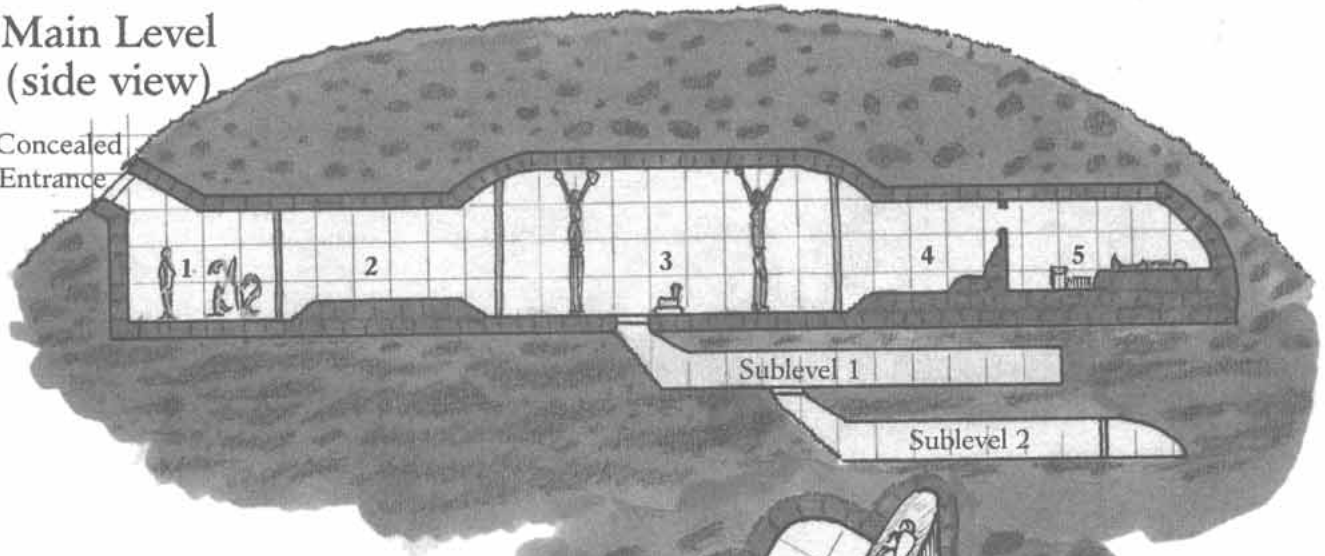
The second surprise is for the dwarves. The region around the Giantdowns has always been thick with magic and thin in separation from the Shadow World. Ghuralli freed a baatezu from magical captivity just a few miles away in Lluabright; some say individual other-planar creatures may have been trapped or buried beneath the Silverheads. If the dwarves dig too deep or too incautiously, an unpleasant discovery may await them.

## the haunted downs

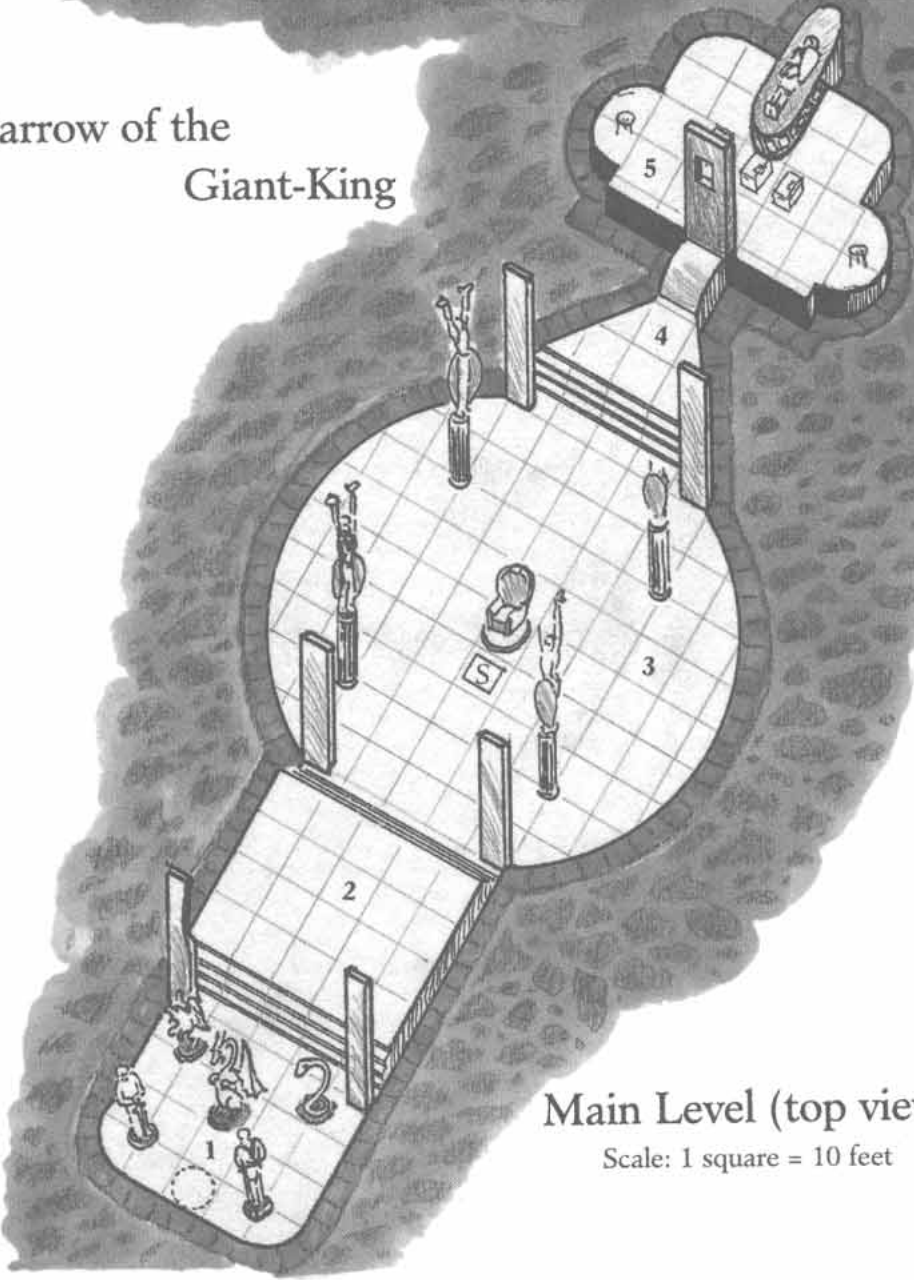
**N**ot everyone in the Giantdowns believes the legends of ancient giant burial grounds or a race of noble giants who strode the land when the world was young—but everyone agrees that *something* haunts the low hills of the region.

# Main Level (side view)

Concealed  
Entrance



# Barrow of the Giant-King



# Main Level (top view)

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

-  Statue
-  Secret Trap Door
-  Dais
-  Columns
-  Brazier
-  Chest
-  Sarcophagus

Most of the haunts can be easily explained. Strange creatures found nowhere else on Cerilia do live among the Downs. They hide among the long, low, regularly spaced hills, hunting and preying on anything that comes within reach. They drag their victims off to underground lairs—possibly built by older inhabitants, possibly not—and these “strange disappearances” appear to be the work of ghosts or spirits of the hilly, silent land.

But some of the legends *are* true. A few giant burial grounds and hidden treasures *do* lie undiscovered in haunted mounds. Several brave (and foolhardy) adventures have already visited some of these barrow hills, and the rumors have spread.

Trouble brews among the Downs as well. Dead warriors, long resting undisturbed, do not like grave-robbers and fortune-hunters poking among their bones. Many Anuirean, Rjurik, and humanoid graves lie among the legendary giant barrows, and the ghosts seldom bother to distinguish the motives of various trespassers.

## the barrow of the giant-king

There may be more than a dozen barrows of dead giant lords among the Great Downs (there could be hundreds, in fact). It would be impossible, and unnecessary, to detail them all here. Let this Barrow of the Giant-King serve as an example of the monuments once made by an ancient, extinct race of giants to their most prominent lords.

**Historical note:** The Barrow of the Giant-King was found and explored by a group of Rjurik warriors during the great battles against the Anuirean Empire. The levels below the main level were built by these warriors as a secret hiding place for a single unit of Rjurik troops and their gear. Unfortunately, it was never fully used (partially due to the magic of the barrow and partly because those who knew of the secret base died before they could pass on the knowledge). The entrance to these secret levels is in the throne room (area 3). If the DM creates any other giant barrows based on the one presented here, it is unlikely such later construction exists.

### main level

Designed by the best craftsmen and stonemasons of the ancient giant race, the thick stone walls, ceilings, and floors of the king's barrow appear air- and watertight. The dimensions for this structure seem enormous—adult giants of this lost race must have been at least 20 feet tall, to judge by the stairs, ceilings, and scant furnishings.

Thick, gray stone dust covers everything in the barrow and is the only evidence of wear. PCs must brush away this dust to see details described in any of the areas. Also, when the PCs move through the

barrow, they stir up quite a bit of dust; any light source they have will be diminished by these clouds of particles. Normal torchlight, for example, generates a sphere of light only 10 feet in diameter.

This limitation makes determining dimensions of the various rooms very difficult. The PCs must examine most things closely to obtain detailed descriptions. It is almost impossible to see the ceiling in any room (without a better light source than normal torches), and the PCs may miss seemingly obvious features.

#### 1. Entrance.

As you descend into the entryway of the barrow, you notice stone dust hanging thick in the air, suppressing all sources of light. It is especially hard to make out the dimensions of this apparently large room, though you can see the outlines of giant figures standing silently around the tomb's entrance. Do they bid you welcome, or beware?

A concealed trap door opens to a steep drop into a dusty room. The walls and ceiling of the entrance are stone. In the room are five giant-sized statues:

- ◆ *Housecarls of the King:* Two giant warriors watch over the entrance to the tomb. They stand tall and straight and foreboding, flanking the other statues. The pedestals upon which they stand have been engraved (in an ancient giant language) with their names and ranks—meaningless information to any present-day adventurer.
- ◆ *The Griffon:* A winged leonine creature stands on its pedestal, screaming defiance into the darkness. Engraved on its pedestal in ancient giant are the words “The ferocity of the king kept all his enemies at bay.”
- ◆ *The Serpent:* Poised to strike at some unknown intruder, a giant serpent displays its fangs and stares evilly at all intruders. Its engraving says “The cunning of the king kept evil from this land.”
- ◆ *The Dragon:* The only statue that could not possibly be life-sized, a dragon rears back on its haunches as if preparing to breathe fire at those standing before it. On its pedestal are the words “The king's strength was respected by all, and none dared to cross him while he lived.”

The statues are not magical. The runes on the pedestal, however, are not from any known language. Characters who attempt to decipher the runes will spend quite a bit of time at it, and may make only very approximate interpretations. *Comprehend languages* will provide an accurate translation.

**The archway:** The stylized archway leading into area 2 has giant runes inscribed upon it. To anyone who can read them, they say "Enter here, giant or friend of giants, and pay homage to the king."

## 2. The Death of the King.

Deep steps stretch from wall to wall underneath the archway. They lead to a large platform. Dust covers the stairs and the platform, and the darkness above yields no clue as to how high the ceiling rises.

If the PCs examine the side walls:

A complicated fresco depicting a battle between two armies of giants lines both walls along the platform. Dragons and other beasts fly overhead, breathing fire and striking at both forces. One army looks familiar—it comprises hill giants, trolls and ogres. The other, smaller army seems to comprise larger, more noble-looking giants, ringed around a wounded giant who could only be their leader.

The stairs leading up to the platform are extremely deep (having been made for giant legs). The surface of the platform, covered in dust, is made of dark marble or obsidian. The walls, from ceiling to floor, feature a complicated fresco depicting a battle between "civilized"-looking giants (they resemble Cerilian legends describing a supposedly extinct race of cloud giants) and more familiar beings—hill giants, ogres, ettins, and other giant-sized creatures. Dragons and mythical beasts participate in the battle on both sides, and the cloud giants appear to be losing the fight badly. In the center of the fresco, a small bodyguard surrounds the wounded king of the civilized giants, vainly trying to protect him from harm.

This area radiates strange magic (*detect magic* will reveal this). If any character moves more than 20 feet onto the raised platform, the magic takes effect. The character does not actually have to touch the platform—the whole area is enchanted, not just the floor. The magic seems to transport all those on the platform to the outside, among the Downs.

Your eyes are flooded by suddenly bright light. You are outside, among the Great Downs. The clash of arms and shouts of rage and pain surround you. Everywhere, you see giants, ogres, trolls, and magnificent beasts fighting and dying. They are all around you, leaving you little ground on which to move around. A spear streaks over your head, embedding itself in an unlucky ettin, while a hill giant's club shakes the earth just in front of you.

This is a magical reenactment of the last battle fought by the king of the giants entombed in this barrow. Old magic, before the War of Shadow, was used to impress this spell into the barrow, and it cannot be dispelled or destroyed without leveling the barrow itself. It is a memorial to the dead giant-king, but it is also a trap.

The magic of the battle is such that it feels and appears real to all tests the PCs might attempt. The giants and creatures on both sides appear to act and think as they should—an *ESP* or similar spell will reveal thoughts coming from the creatures. A *detect magic* spell does reveal powerful magic here.

The PCs may attempt to disbelieve the battle, but they will not succeed. The magic causing this effect predates the battle of Mount Deismaar by some millennia, and has imbedded itself too firmly in the land to be overcome by mere disbelief or modern magic.

If the PCs simply watch the action, they can safely view the entire battle. They remain completely untouched (physically) by the scene. For 10 rounds, the civilized giants and their allies fight the evil giants and their minions. Even though the civilized giants are outnumbered, they fight with a ferocity and a determination that eventually puts the evil giants to flight. At the end, only the wounded king and three bodyguards remain alive on the battlefield. On the 11th round, the king dies, and his remaining guards mourn him. Then the scene slowly fades and the PCs return to the reality of the barrow.

Should any of the PCs leave the platform (in either direction) while the battle still rages, they return to the barrow. If other PCs remain on the platform, the battle continues for them. Their compatriots on either side of the platform can see them (if they have a light source), but they cannot see the giant battle at all.

The trap inherent in the reenactment comes into play only if one or more of the PCs attempt to participate in the battle. This trap was laid for the unwary or ignorant grave-robber, not the would-be mourner. When a PC starts fighting on either side of the battle, the combat becomes completely real for him. The evil giants will attack the PC; the civilized giants attack only if the PC attacks them first. The PC can still flee the platform, but if he sustains any wounds, he takes the damage with him—and bears all the signs of having been in a fight (torn clothing, bloody sword, etc.).

There is a way out of the trap, however. The civilized giants realized that good and noble people who came after them may want to pay homage to the king of the giants. If a PC stays and fights on the side of the civilized giants for the entire battle, he finds his wounds healed after the giant-king dies. The magic of the reenactment rewards the PC for his noble efforts (though they were in vain). Even PCs unfortunate enough to be killed in the battle



find themselves *resurrected* or *raised* (presuming they make their system shock rolls successfully). They all bear the signs of battle upon themselves, however—the battle became real for them, after all.

If the PCs do fight the giants, use the statistics from the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome for hill giants, ettins, trolls, ogres, and (if they fight on the wrong side) cloud giants for their foes. The DM may also want to include a few legendary beasts for the PCs to battle (anything of large or greater size—though a Cerilian dragon would probably be too powerful).

**Note:** If the PCs are exceptionally aggressive or particularly powerful, the DM may wish to make the battle reenactment scene a serious threat. He can make it seem like the giants *do* perceive the intruders and *are* attacking them right from the start. This may test the motives of the PCs (as the giants hoped it would when they built the memorial), forcing them to choose between the evil and the civilized giants.

### 3. Throne Room.

Less dust floats in the air of this room than in the other areas of the barrow. Perhaps the ceiling, high above your heads, has been constructed of some material other than the gray stone throughout the underground complex. The room appears to be circular, though you cannot see the far side.

The large, circular, domed room of the barrow is supported by four equally spaced pillars. In the center of the room is a large dais and an empty stone throne facing the entryway. This room is enchanted in a manner similar to area 2 and radiates magic between the pillars.

If a PC moves into the area between the pillars, the magic is activated:

Once again, you find yourself in the sunlight, but this time your "visit" to the past is not accompanied by the cries of battle. Only the sound of a slight breeze moving through the tall grass greets you.

You appear to be standing on a white marble floor set on the top of a hill in the middle of the Downs. A roof high above you shades the floor, and its dome is supported by four ivy-covered pillars. No walls block the daylight from coming into this stone pavilion, however, and you can see giants standing at irregular intervals within the structure. In the center of the "room" rests a tall king, motionless on a throne of stone, raised on a circular dais.

This area (like area 2) was constructed as a memorial to the giant-king. Though his body rests elsewhere in the barrow, he appears to sit motionless on the stone throne in the center of the circular area. Around him, also motionless, stand giant warriors.



The PCs can move freely throughout the throne room as long as they stay within the pillars. If a PC moves out of the square marked by these supports, he finds himself back in the barrow. If he or his companions still hold a light source, he can see them moving around between the pillars, but he cannot see any giant figures or the daylight of the scene.

The throne room was constructed to honor the memory of the giant-king's rule. If a PC moves up to one of the giants (other than the king), and addresses that giant in any language, that giant animates and begins telling a story of the giant-king's rule. Even if the PCs have a *tongues* or similar spell in effect, the tales make little sense. (If the DM wishes, he can create stories of Cerilia centuries ago for the storytellers to relate.) Still, they make excellent foundations for legends. If a bard or other storytelling character wishes, he may choose to attempt memorizing the stories (a Wisdom check at a -2 penalty, assuming he can understand the language). If the "student" succeeds in learning the stories, he gains +4 to any proficiency or ability check made to impress other characters with songs, stories, or poetry based on these tales.

In addition to the giant storytellers, two unusual features exist within this room. The first, created by the giants, is another trap for the unwary and evil. The giant-king does not speak, even if spoken to, and does not animate under any circumstances. However, he does appear to wear many ornaments of his office, including a large gold crown and a jeweled necklace. If appraised solely for their mineral value, each would be worth nearly 10,000 gp.

Should a character attempt to remove either of these items from the figure of the giant-king, he finds himself instantly back in the darkness of the barrow on the stone throne. He may not find himself that way for long, however, as a bolt of energy shoots down from the domed ceiling, striking him for 10d6 points of damage. A successful saving throw vs. paralysis enables the PC to get off the throne in time to suffer only half damage. If

the character survives this attack, the throne room's magic will no longer respond to him—his friends may see the throne room and interact with the giant storytellers, but he cannot.

The second noteworthy aspect of the room was added by the Rjurik warriors who discovered the barrow nearly a millennium and a half ago. They broke away a section of marble (5 feet square) in front of the stone throne and installed a concealed trap door. It has since been covered by dust, rendering it undetectable to the casual observer.

The trap door exists only in the barrow throne room, not in the outdoor setting. However, should any character walk over this area while interacting with the giants' magical vision, he abruptly finds himself back in the barrow. The magic of this spot was disrupted by the Rjurik excavators.

The trap door may be opened with a successful bend bars/lift gates roll by any character. Up to four man-sized characters can try to lift the trap door at the same time. This cooperation makes the attempt significantly easier—for every character (beyond the first) participating, add 10 percentage points to each character's chance. If any single character succeeds, the trap door is removed from the floor, revealing steep (but human-sized) steps that lead down to area 6.

#### 4. Room of Tribute.

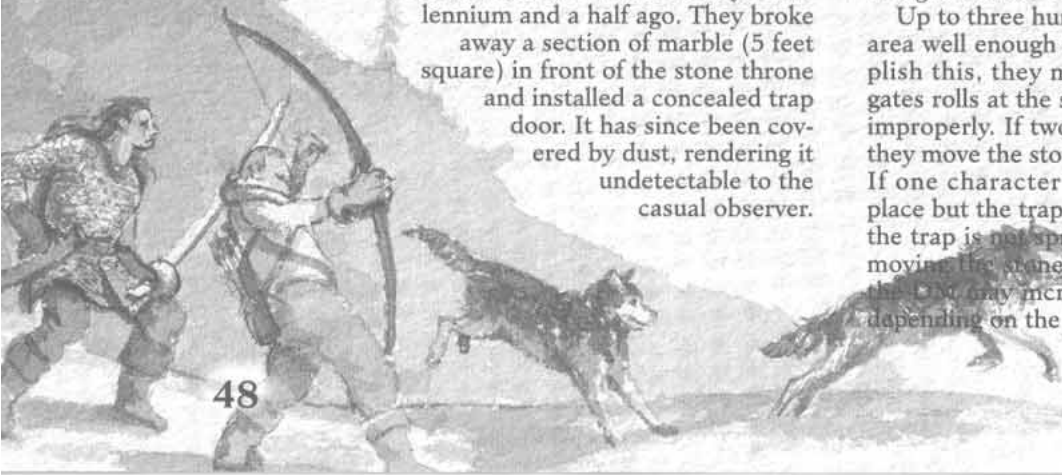
This funnel-shaped room directs you toward a low stoop. About 10 feet above the stoop is a large window that opens into the darkness beyond.

The triangular room beyond the throne was set up as a "viewing area" for giants who wished to look upon the resting place of their king. The room narrows to a 10-foot-wide area with a sharply sloping base. Large blocks of stone were placed beyond this base, leaving only a small (for a giant) view-port. A giant kneeling on the rising platform could look through the window into the next room.

The stones assembled beyond the slope *can* be moved. Large and extremely heavy, they have been placed there to restrict access, not to block it permanently. When the giants still visited this barrow, they would sometimes go within the king's room to clean the braziers or tend the sarcophagus.

The stone barrier has been made carefully. The stones are not enchanted, but are set in such a way that the top stone must be lifted straight up out of its resting place and moved before the remaining stones can be shifted. Since the structure was made to be very heavy even for giants, only two cooperating characters with Strength scores of at least 23 each can move it automatically. (The *potion of giant strength* located in area 12 could aid this endeavor.)

Up to three human-sized characters can fit in the area well enough to move the top stone. To accomplish this, they must all succeed at bend bars/lift gates rolls at the same time or they shift the weight improperly. If two of the three characters succeed, they move the stone but spring the trap (see below). If one character succeeds, the stone remains in place but the trap springs. If no characters succeed, the trap is not sprung. The characters may attempt moving the stone as many times as they wish, and the DM may increase their chances of succeeding depending on the strategies they employ.



#### The trap:

Should the PCs shift the top stone improperly, a trap springs. Spears shoot from the ceiling down toward the floor, covering the 10-by-13-foot area in 1-foot-wide increments. Characters at the entrance to the area can make Dexterity checks at a -6 penalty to jump back toward the throne room. Otherwise, those caught in the trap suffer 4d6 points of damage. The spears then retract slowly.

While a thief can successfully detect this trap, it is very hard to disarm. The trigger and the mechanism for the trap are not exposed, so the DM should allow a thief to disarm it only if he can come up with a clever, logical plan for counterbalancing the weights and removing the top stone. Magical means of removing the top stone block may or may not trigger the trap, depending on the DM's ruling.

Note: A thin or exceptionally small character (a halfling or small human) might be able to slip through the window into the room beyond. From inside, the stone can be moved more easily (though springing the trap is still very likely).

### 5. King's Room.

The last resting place of the giant-king can be only dimly lit. You see the shadows of what could be three large chests, and a sarcophagus graven with the image of its occupant. An eerie shadow engulfs the rest of the room. You can't be certain that all the dancing, shifting shadows are caused by your torches.

The king's last resting place is a large room with a sarcophagus actually built into the stone of the wall. In olden days, it was lit by two braziers, set in alcoves on the left and right walls. The light from these fires illuminated the whole room, including the three large treasure chests resting at the foot of the sarcophagus.

**The braziers:** Residual magic still exists within the braziers. They used to automatically light when a giant moved into the viewing area or the room, but their fuel has long since run out. An observant character may notice small sparks coming from the braziers' surfaces every few minutes. If someone puts oil or other suitable fuel in the braziers, they light immediately.

**The chests:** All three chests are loaded with treasure given to the king as tribute upon his death. One chest holds nearly 5,000 gp (in mixed coinage). The second contains gems and ornamental trinkets worth an equal amount in precious metals, though they might be considered priceless because of their historical value to collectors.

The third chest, however, contains the most precious prize. A large (giant-sized) ancient tome of magical and legendary knowledge lies within this chest, bound and protected by magically toughened leather. In the tome (called *Lore of the Giants*) are

tales of deeds accomplished by heroes among the giants, including those performed by the dead king. If any PC, regardless of class, alignment, or race, spends one month of time studying this book (the PC must be equipped with a *comprehend languages* spell or similar means of understanding the words), that PC will advance one level in experience. The book can be used a total of two times by two different characters (the same character cannot use it twice), after which its magic is drained completely away and it crumbles to dust. Transcribing *Lore of the Giants* is possible, but the magical effects do not transfer into the copy.

**The sarcophagus:** The final resting place of the giant-king is a huge sarcophagus. Engraved in intricate detail on the lid is the figure of a old giant warrior with a sword in his hands. The giant's image appears to be sleeping, not dead.

Within the sarcophagus lie the dry bones of the giant-king. On his forehead he wears a simple circlet of gold with an immense diamond in it (worth 6,000 gp). He also holds a giant *two-handed sword* +3. Unfortunately, only someone at least 15 feet tall with a Strength of 20 or better could wield it in combat.

If anyone touches or otherwise disturbs either the sarcophagus or the chests, they will awaken the magic of the barrow. A shadowy figure rises up through the lid of the sarcophagus, coalesces, and takes the form of the giant-king: a fully awake, very angry giant-king.

**Giant-King (undead cloud giant):** AC 0 (plate armor); MV 15 (unencumbered); HD 16 + 1d6+1 hp; hp 104; THAC0 4 (1 with *sword* +3); #AT 1; Dmg 3d10+14 (giant *two-handed sword* +3); SW cannot attack innocents; MR 25%; SZ H (24' tall); ML fanatic (18); Int very (12); AL LN; XP 10,000.

Notes: The undead giant-king cannot be turned; SW—He cannot attack those who do not attack him or do not desecrate his burial place.

The "undead" giant-king is not a ghost, but actually a product of the ancient magic of the Downs. The king's own image, powered by the magic of the barrow, guards his resting place against unwarranted intrusion but does not slay intruders indiscriminately. He appears at the first sign of desecration (opening a chest or toying with the sarcophagus) and booms out a warning in the ancient giant language. He brandishes a huge two-handed sword menacingly, but does not attack unless the PCs continue to desecrate his possessions or attack him.

If the PCs can somehow negotiate with the giant-king, they might persuade him to let them take some or all of the treasure. The giant-king protected the lands above him in his lifetime; if the PCs convince him that they are trying to do the same (say, by ridding the Downs of evil giants and humanoids), he may contribute treasure to the cause.

However, negotiation should not be easy. This is, after all, the third test of the barrow. The giant-king may force the PCs to swear complicated oaths, and he won't allow himself to be mocked or bullied. If he feels the PCs are not acting in good faith and respect, he will ignore them until they leave or attempt to take what they want without permission.

The giant-king will leave this room only if he is pursuing a thief carrying part of his treasure. He will not leave the barrow and cannot be turned or controlled by a priest of any Cerilian faith. In addition, if the undead giant-king is killed but his body (within the sarcophagus) is left at rest, his image will be able to reincarnate within 24 hours. The only way to kill him permanently is to defeat him in battle and remove his corpse from the barrow—an evil act.

**Note:** If any of the PCs fought to protect the giant-king's image from death in area 2 (and stayed for the entire battle), the undead giant-king will know it. This could make him more amenable to the PCs' negotiations. Also, any characters who listened to the stories told by the giant images of area 3 may make Wisdom ability checks to gain some clue regarding the true purpose of the giant-king's image (to test the characters, not to slay them outright).

## Rjurik sublevel one

Even the least-seasoned explorer should realize that this area was constructed centuries after the barrow above, and by different people. The rooms, stairs, and other features are all human-sized. The walls, stone with wood supports, feel damp to the touch from moisture seeping through the cracks, and puddles mark uneven patches on the floor. In places, parts of the walls and ceilings have given way, and piles of dirt and rubble mark the wear of time.

Refer to the map on page 51.

## 6. Upper Checkpoint.

The stairs leading down from the secret door appear to have been made for human-sized legs. They descend steeply and feel slightly damp to the touch, but pose no serious problems for adventurers used to underground passages.

As you clear the doorway at the bottom of the stairs, you immediately notice the differences between this room and those above. While the floors, walls, and ceilings are made of stone, they appear irregular in construction and are obviously not watertight. You hear dripping from many points and patches of slime cover parts of the walls and floor. A few puddles have formed in this room; the air smells dank. It appears to be free of the light-obstructing stone dust in the upper chambers, however.

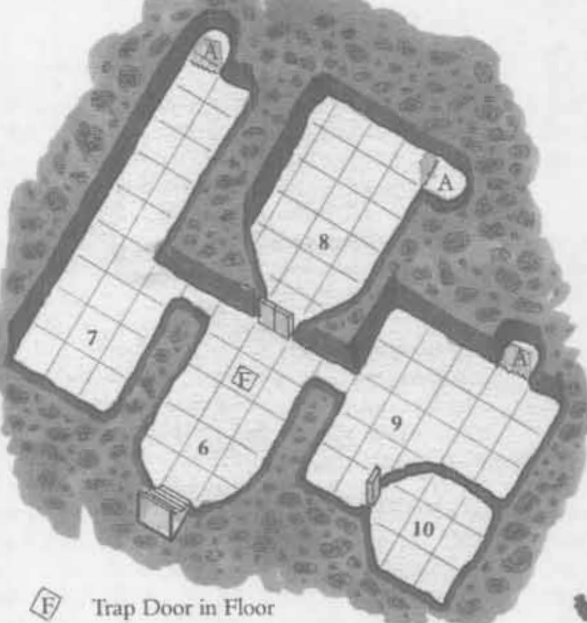
The stairs from the concealed trap door in area 3 lead down to the upper checkpoint. The Rjurik used to staff this area with four to eight guards armed with spears and crossbows. Rotted weapons still rest in ancient racks along both walls, and the ruins of a table and chairs occupy the center of the room. A few other scattered relics may be found amid the dirt and destroyed furnishings—bits of ancient armor or parts of weapons broken off in some skirmish long ago. There was fighting here once, as evidenced by scratches in the walls, cut marks in the ruined table, etc.

**The trap door:** A large, iron ring has been driven into a 5-foot square stone door on the floor. The door has not been concealed in any way, but it is locked from below by a thick, wooden beam. The partially rotted beam can be broken by a successful bend bars/lift gates roll; up to four characters may try at once, in much the same manner as in area 3.

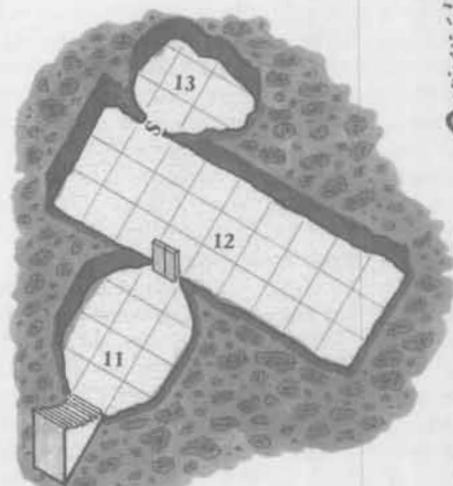
There is an easier way to open the door, however. A slot near the iron ring has been covered by slime and ooze. If cleared out (say, with a dagger), it appears to be about 2 inches long and nearly a quarter-inch wide. If the PCs clear the stone around the slot, they see a graven image that looks exactly like the officer's pendant in area 9 (on the body in the privy chamber). If someone inserts an officer's pendant in the slot, the door begins to move up and slide over. Unfortunately, the mechanism has rusted over the centuries and the door does not fully open. Still, any two characters can easily lift the door off its hinges at this point (or one character can succeed at an open doors roll to do the same).

The trap door leads to area 11.

## Sublevel 1



F Trap Door in Floor



## Sublevel 2

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

Curtain

Door

Secret Door

### 7. Long Barracks.

Ruined bunks and tattered clothing lie in regular intervals along the floor of this long room. The walls and ceilings have cuts and nicks in them, and rat or snake holes have formed between the stones. A few skeletal bodies lie among the broken bunks. This must have been a barracks at one time, long ago.

This room is a ruin of tightly packed triple-bunk beds. Scattered, rusted weapons and a few centuries-old corpses lie amid the rubbish. If the PCs examine the corpses closely, they easily find evidence of mortal wounds. More observant characters might notice that the corpses appear to have been picked through after death. No valuables can be found.

**Privy (7a):** A tattered, rotting curtain can be moved away to reveal a small privy pit. Broken clay pots filled with what must have once been fresh earth rest near a small waste disposal area.

### 8. Wide Barracks.

Nothing distinguishes this barracks from area 7 but its shape. Broken, tightly-packed beds lie amid the ruins of the room. A few more corpses can be found here. These too have been picked over. Like those found in the long barracks and irregular bar-

racks (below), they appear to be wearing the tattered remnants of an ancient uniform.

**Privy (8a):** This small room is identical to the one in area 7.

### 9. Irregular Barracks.

The walls and floor of this room are covered almost entirely with water puddles and slime. A moldy, unpleasant odor permeates everything; the tattered remains of clothing and armor still rot on the bodies of their owners. The door to the right appears to be held in its place by only rust and grime, while the curtain over the doorway to the left has all but fallen off its hooks.

The room not only has odd dimensions, but its floor and ceiling seem misshapen. Pools of water 4 to 5 inches deep have formed on the floor, and large amounts of dirt can be seen on the walls and ceiling where stones have fallen out. This barracks appears to have been built hastily and well after the rest of the rooms on this floor.

**Privy (9a):** The support beam in this area collapsed long ago, partially covering the privy pit. If the PCs search the pit, they find the skeletal corpse of a woman dressed in a tattered uniform identical to those of the other corpses in this area. While she looks as if she died from many wounds (like her comrades) and not the falling support beam (that happened years later), her corpse has not been picked over. She still bears a magically preserved *claymore +1* and a small silver officer's pendant on a partially disintegrated leather strap.

The pendant marks the woman as an officer of the Rjurik resistance group that secretly tried to make its base here. (A successful Ancient History proficiency or Intelligence check enables a character to recognize the insignia; the PCs should be able to infer the rest.) It can also be used to open the trap door in area 6 and/or the secret door in area 12. If sold, it is worth about 30 gp on the open market or more to a collector.

In order to reach the corpse, PCs must shift or lift the beam through a successful bend bars/lift gates roll. Up to three human-sized characters may cooperate in this effort; if more than one PC attempts to lift the bar, add all the percentage chances together and then double or triple the total (depending on whether two or three characters work together). Use of a lever or other device may further increase the chance of success.

Unfortunately, if the PCs search the privy thoroughly enough to find the officer's corpse, they disturb the pit's other tenant: gray ooze.

**Gray ooze:** AC 8; MV 1; HD 3+3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8; SA corrodes metal; SD immune to fire, cold, and spells (except lightning); SZ M (7' tall); ML average (10); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 270.

**Notes:** Can corrode metal quickly (chain mail or normal weapons in one round, plate mail in two, and magical armor in one additional round per AC bonus point); weapons inflict full damage until corroded.

The gray ooze has subsisted on bugs and burrowing creatures for years and will find the PCs a tasty change in diet. If they put up too much resistance, however, it will flee into the privy pit. The gray ooze has no treasure.

## 10. Officer's Quarters.

The door to this room practically falls off its hinges as you push it open. Three sets of bunk beds appear to have once been shoved up against the door, but now their remains lie scattered in a semicircular pattern around the entrance. Many broken weapons and arrows lie among the decimated remains of unidentifiable furnishings.

The door to this room still stands, but one hinge has been pulled completely out of the wall. It looks like something forced its way in and the door swung shut when it left. The room is in about the same shape as area 9 (puddles, refuse, some broken beds). No corpses rest here, but many broken weapons (especially crossbow bolts and spears) do. The remnants of a few smashed chests have been scattered about, but nothing intact can be found. A few scraps of clothing lie amid the ruins (more intact than those on any of the corpses in other rooms); a successful Ancient History proficiency or Intelligence check reveals that they bear the insignia and design of an ancient Rjurik infantry unit. The design matches that of the officer's pendant in area 9.

## sublevel two

While the second sublevel was built at the same time as Sublevel One, more care seems to have been taken in its construction. The walls and supports remain largely intact. However, water has seeped in, leaving the floor covered with muck and slime. No dry areas exist, but the walls and ceilings seem solid and safe.

## 11. Lower Checkpoint.

Slime covers the stairs leading into this room. The stink of rotting vegetable matter hangs in the air. A corpse covered in filth and slime lies on the steps, one hand stretched upward toward the trap door.

The stairs from the trap door in area 6 lead down into this rough, stone room. The entire floor is covered in slime and water, making running or other swift movement dangerous. If a character tries to run through this room (particularly up or down the steps), he must succeed at a Dexterity check or fall down and suffer 1d3 points of damage.

On the stairs lies a corpse, its flesh almost completely eaten away by time. The hands of the corpse clawed at the bar holding the trap door in place (presumably, the PCs have removed the door by the

time they see the corpse), and a broken weapon lies by the dead man's side—apparently he tried to hack his way through. A few other corpses lie in other parts of the room; all bear the marks of a violent death.

The lower half of the man's body appears to have been torn away. His leg and hip bones are shattered (the cause of his death). His body has been looted.

The dirty, slimy ceiling of this room conceals a dangerous creature: olive slime.

**Olive slime:** AC 9; MV 0; HD 2+2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg see below; SA poisonous possession; SD harmed only by acid, freezing cold, fire, or *cure disease*; SZ S (4' radius); ML average (10); Int non (0); AL N; XP 420.

**Notes:** Ignores armor. Negates Dexterity bonuses unless the target is aware of it. Contact causes a numbing poison to ooze from the creature, spreading over its victim (particularly along the spinal area) and affecting the victim's brain. Victims notice the slime with a successful save vs. poison. Good lighting grants PCs a 50% chance of noticing slime on one of their companions.

If the slime claims a victim, that person begins to become an olive slime creature (see the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome) and thinks of nothing but feeding and protecting the slime. *Cure disease* will remove the infestation if cast soon enough. In 1d6+6 days, the host suddenly and painfully metamorphoses into a vegetable creature; then only a *limited wish* will return the host to normal.

If the PCs examine any of the corpses in the room (other than the one on the steps), they find that they are all made of vegetable matter (rendered inert). Victims of the slime, they eventually died.

## 12. The Armory.

Slime and rust have sealed shut the broken doors leading into this room. Water runs slowly down the surface of the rotting wood and a mound of filth blocks the doors.

The double-doors used to bear a key lock on the outside (area 11) and a bar-lock on the inside (area 12). Now, however, both have been broken away. The doors still close, and the slime and goo around them keeps them shut tight. A successful open-doors roll will force either or both doors open.

High shelves cover three-quarters of this room, mostly to the right. Amazingly, they appear relatively untouched by time. Large, rolled tarpaulins cover items resting on the shelves, perhaps protecting them from devastation.

To the left, however, many shelves have been overturned and left to rot on the damp floor. Stones from the floor and walls have been pulled away here. As you move closer, you see a mound-like shape in the far left side of the room. Decaying bodies, broken weapons and rotting wood surround it.

Most of the armory remains relatively unchanged by the centuries that have passed since the Rjurik stored their weapons here. Aside from the 5 inches of filthy water along the floor, this room is in the best shape of any of the Rjurik structures. Most of the shelves and racks are intact, protected by old druidic spells and preservative magic.

The upper quarter of the room, however, has been changed greatly. Stones have been pulled out of the walls and floor, and a mound of rocks, almost like a tiny cairn, has been built in the center of this area. Broken and rusted metal lies around the ovoid mound, and six nearly skeletal corpses rest beside it.

These bodies are all that remain of the last Rjurik soldiers who lived in this hidden outpost. They and their comrades died fighting a creature that inhabited the barrow sometime after the resistance fighters began constructing the secret level. The giants who built the tomb for their king protected his resting-place from evil creatures, but the Rjurik disrupted the barrow just enough to allow foul spirits inside.

The corpses alongside the small cairn have been transformed into minor wights. The remaining officers of the Rjurik band, they fought the creature now resting in the mound, so their fellows could escape. Now they have been enslaved by the foul creature and must defend his resting place against all intrusion.

**Lesser wights (6):** AC 6 (no armor); MV 12 (unencumbered); HD 2+2; hp 14, 14, 13, 12, 12, 9; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (claws); SA energy drain; SD hit only by silver/+1 or better magical weapons, unaffected by poisons, paralysis, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, or cold-based attacks; SW cannot tolerate bright light; SZ M (6'tall); ML average (10); Int average (8); AL LE; XP 975 each.



*Notes:* If the normal wight in the cairn is killed, double each of the lesser wights' statistics and abilities. Until that time, they may be turned as ghouls.

These lesser wights are not nearly as powerful as their undead master (lying in the mound). Therefore, if they drain levels from a victim, but that person survives and the wight is killed, the energy reverts back to the victim. However, if the master wight is killed, all the lesser wights become normal wights instantly (in effect gaining his energy).

**Master wight:** AC 5; MV 12 (unencumbered); HD 4+3; hp 35; THAC0 15 (13 with *claymore* +2); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (claws) or 2d4+2 (*claymore* +2); SA energy drain; SD hit only by silver/+1 or better magical weapons, unaffected by poisons, paralysis, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, or cold-based attacks; SW cannot tolerate bright light; SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (14); Int average (10); AL LE; XP 1,400.

**Special equipment:** The master wight possesses a *claymore* +2 it obtained from one of the Rjurik officers. It may choose to use it (25% chance) in any given attack instead of simply raking a victim with its claws. It won't use the claymore if it thinks a victim is about to expire (it wants to produce more lesser wights under its control).

The master knows when his pack engages in combat, but does not come forward immediately. If after a few rounds the fight seems fairly even, he bursts out of the cairn and takes part. If the lesser wights are winning, he leaves them to finish off the PCs. If they are losing badly, he tries to escape into another part of the Rjurik sublevels, hoping to catch the PCs unaware as they leave. He will command his slaves to stay and fight to the death.

The wight has accumulated a vast amount of treasure by looting the entire Rjurik dwelling. The creature rests on this treasure much like a dragon on its hoard. The wight has nearly 1,000 gp worth of gold and silver, another 1,000 gp in gems and jewelry (including several officer's pendants), and a few magical items: a *potion of extra-healing*, a *potion of giant strength*, *boots of the north*, and a dozen *arrows +1*. The wight had no use for any of these items but recognized their magical energy and coveted them.

On the shelves across the room rest enough weapons and armor (predominantly swords, spears, shields, and leather armor) to equip an entire unit of infantry in the old Rjurik style. These weapons have been wrapped in and protected from the elements by oilskins and ancient druidic magic. If a regent mustered a levy, irregular, infantry or similar unit (DM's call) and supplied his troops with these weapons, he could cut the mustering cost in half. Of course, the nearly 200 complete sets of armor and weapons here cannot be easily transported by a small party of adventurers.

### The secret door:

Built and hidden by Rjurik druids and rangers, this door looks like just another part of the wall. It leads to area 13. While the PCs may have difficulty finding the secret door if they search using normal means, a *detect magic* spell allows them to find the room even through the wall. If a character finds the secret door, he will also see two parallel slots hidden in the wall. If two of the officer's pendants (from areas 9 or 12) are inserted into the slots simultaneously, the door opens inward.

### 13. Secret Room.

The room looks more like a cave than one of the other rooms of this complex. Stone shelves carved out of bedrock line the walls. Stands holding perfectly preserved armor and weapons sit in the middle of the room.

Carved out of solid rock, this room appears to have been constructed hastily. What the room lacks in sophistication, however, it makes up for in magic. The spells placed on the room ward against evil (evil PCs must succeed at a saving throw vs. paralysis or refuse to even consider entering the room), which explains why the wights never looted it.

The secret room contains the balance of the Rjurik outpost's treasury. In sacks and chests sealed against the elements by careful construction and spells lie 3,000 gp worth of gold, silver, and platinum pieces. Several weapons and suits of armor rest on stands nearby (three decorative but nonmagical claymores, two suits of *ring mail* +1, and a pair of *hand axes* +1), but the real treasure sits on a stone shelf halfway up the side wall.

This particular treasure has been protected by spells; any non-Rjurik character must succeed at a saving throw vs. paralysis to notice it, even if he is actively searching. A Rjurik character who searches the room, however, will be drawn to the shelf immediately.

The treasure is a thick book containing detailed maps of the Giantdowns, as well as parts of Stjordvik, the Blood Skull Barony, and Dhoesone. It also contains discussions and plans on how a former Rjurik scion intended to carve out a kingdom among the Giantdowns. This *Book of the Giantdowns* has been magically enchanted in many ways to help a would-be regent take control of the area.

If a scion reads this book completely (it takes about a month of continuous study), he must succeed at a Wisdom check to absorb the knowledge. If he does so, he gains 10 RP (whether he is a regent or not) that he can use only on actions taken within the Giantdowns. Ideally, a would-be regent will use this knowledge to set up one or more holdings

within the Downs, or perform other actions to civilize the area (like mustering armies). Those not interested in regency could transfer the Regency Points (by passing on the knowledge) to another character—perhaps another PC, or someone like Hogrun or Anneke. The book's specialized knowledge grants Regency Points only once, though the DM may allow the reader to benefit in other ways from the information it contains.

## other giant barrows

The giants constructed the memorial to their king while still at the height of their power. They also constructed many other, lesser barrows for other kings and nobles among their kind. In the millennia that have since passed, some of these barrows were looted by evil giants and other races. And many of the hills in the Downs are nothing more than hills.

Still, other giant graves do exist. Some have a few decorations; others hold treasure. Many contain undead guardians—some are undead giants, angry at the desecration of the Downs, while others are Rjurik or Anuirean undead, a legacy of wars past.

Most of these barrows are long, single-level affairs containing the remains of one to five giants (usually a noble surrounded by dead bodyguards or retainers). No more than three main rooms exist, and few contain magic approaching the sophistication of the king's barrow. Still, the DM should feel free to experiment with interesting magic not normally available to Cerilian spellcasters. Virtually all of the magic in the giant barrows predates the change in magic that occurred during the War of Shadow.

Likewise, lesser barrows incorporate more mundane traps to guard any treasure hidden within them. Most of these traps were designed to kill or incapacitate hill giants, ogres, trolls, and other large evil creatures, so they can be lethal. However, they might also be more easily avoided by smaller folk.





## Rjurik and Anuirean barrows

When the Rjurik and Anuirean armies met in battle amid the Great Downs, thousands of warriors died over the course of years. Most were buried where they fell; a few were never buried at all. The Rjurik and Anuirean survivors often used the "hills" of the Giantdowns as places for mass graves or more elaborate tombs, occasionally excavating existing giant barrows for their own use.

These barrows tend to be the most dangerous and haunted of all. The Rjurik set magical and mundane traps for Anuirean invaders, and their ghosts and spirits hungered for the blood of their killers. The Anuirean dead proved no less angry at their fates, and those who buried them constructed their own brand of traps and tricks to surprise the unwary. But neither army had time for much mass construction. Wholly Rjurik- or Anuirean-constructed tombs are rare: No more than a dozen exist among the Downs.

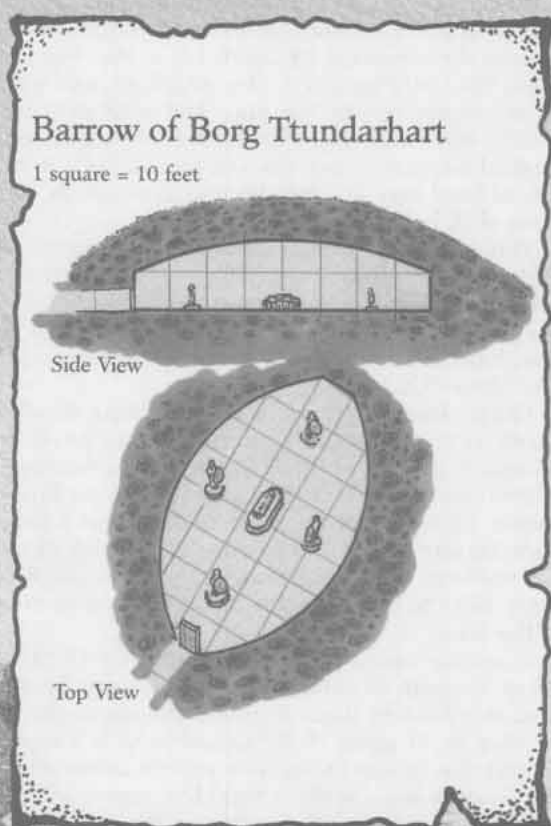
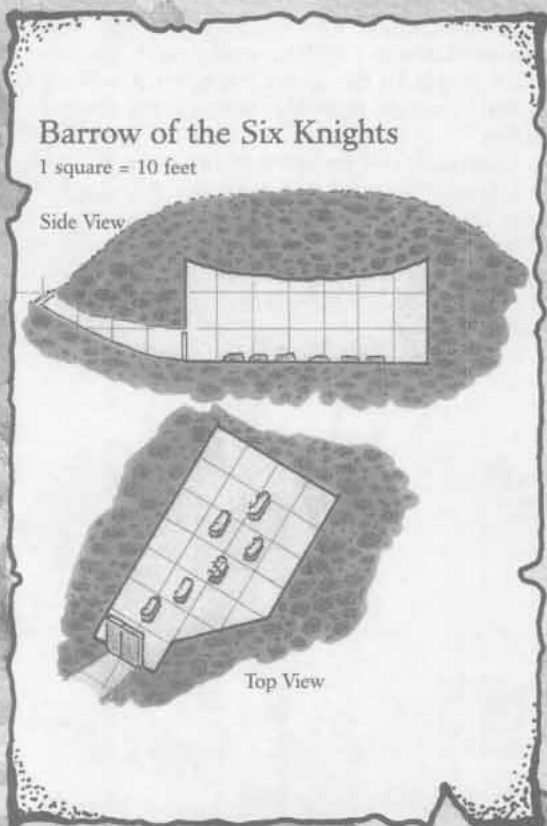
Rjurik barrows resemble the homes their dead occupied in life: long and low, with only a few rooms. Usually, a dead noble or hero occupies a centrally located resting place, while his dead housecarls lie spaced around him. Anuirean barrows are more utilitarian graves—Roele's soldiers saved the special tombs for heroes they brought back home.

The DM can use the following barrows in adventures, and can modify them or even link them together with other installations (such as the Rjurik outpost in the giant-king's barrow). No barrow should be easy to find—just digging among the hills should bring no end of attention to the would-be grave-robber (from humanoids, monsters, and incensed Rjurik settlers and Watch members who don't countenance grave-robbing). Still, even good characters may find reasons to explore the resting places of the dead.

### barrow of the six knights

Whenever possible, the Anuireans brought their nobles back to Anuirean lands to bury, rather than inter them where they fell (as they did with their common soldiers). Sometimes, however, this was not possible. Six Anuirean knights, who fell protecting a supply convoy from aggressive humanoids, lie in a former giant barrow.

Hastily laid out, the knights' graves are covered in stones like an above-ground cairn. Signs throughout the barrow indicate that any ancient protective spells put on it by the giants faded long ago. The roof's stones have begun to fall out (large stones lie along the floor) and the ceiling sags considerably. Any great disruption (such as a *fireball* or similar magic) would probably bring it crashing down.



## the barrow of borg ttundarhart

The Barrow of the Six Knights was actually designed by the Anuireans as a trap for Rjurik grave-robbers. Only five of the cairns actually house bodies. The center one (marked on the map by an X) contains the trigger for a series of arrow traps concealed along the length and breadth of the room. If anyone disturbs the middle cairn, arrows shoot out from every wall, inflicting 6d6 points of damage on any character within the tomb (a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation grants half damage). In addition, all the arrows were once poisoned, and the arrowheads may still retain some remnants. Any character struck by an arrow must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or suffer 1 point of damage every turn. Because the poison is weak, however, any type of healing herb or spell (even *cure light wounds*) will curb the poison's effect.

The barrow's danger does not end here. The five remaining cairns were invaded long ago by evil spirits; five wraiths now rest within them.

**Wraiths (5):** AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 5+3; hp 37, 35, 34, 31, 28; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (touch); SA energy drain; SD hit only by silver/+1 or better magical weapons, immune to *sleep*, *hold*, *death*, *poison*, *paralyzation*, and *cold-based* spells; SW shuns bright light, cannot attack in sunlight, holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage, *raise dead* destroys (save vs. spell allowed); SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (15); Int very (11); AL LE; XP 2,000 each.

**Notes:** SA—Each hit drains from its victim a level of experience that can be magically restored.

The wraiths roam the Downs during night hours, so only 1d4+1 of them will be found in the barrow after sundown. They usually wait until someone disturbs one of their cairns before attacking (especially if the PCs have a particularly bright light source), since they don't like fighting in their lair. (Survivors then know where they rest.)

The wraiths have seized the knights' possessions, plus treasure obtained over the years from victims. Only one of the knights had armor that survived lying in the earth for more than a millennium (a suit of *field plate* +1). Two magical weapons remain: a *long bow* +1 (no string) and a *spear* +2, and the knights were each buried with 100 gp worth of gems and jewelry. The wraiths accumulated other treasure as per their treasure type (E×5).

Borg Ttundarhart, a hero of the Battle of Dankmar, was laid to rest here after fighting Roele's armies in the Giantdowns sometime around 20 HC. His is one of the more elaborate barrows, containing his tomb (in the center) and the statues of four of his great housecarls. The statues actually stand over the resting places of the four housecarls, and they were once magically charged with protecting their lord's grave from desecration by tomb-robbers. Eventually, however, the magic faded, and the statues were possessed by evil spirits. The statues now come to life when anyone touches Borg's tomb; they fight as four stone golems.

**Golem, stone (4):** AC 5; MV 6; HD 14; hp 60 each; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8 (stone weapons); SA may cast a *slow* spell once every other round; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; SW *rock to mud* slows a golem for 2d6 rounds, *flesh to stone* makes it vulnerable to nonmagical weapons, spirit inside may be turned; SZ L (9' tall); ML fearless (20); Int non (0), average (9) for the spirit inside; AL N, NE for the spirit inside; XP 8,000.

**Notes:** These golems were possessed by evil spirits that can be turned as wraiths. If the spirits are driven out, they flee the barrow.

If the PCs manage to turn or otherwise dispel the spirit within one of these stone golems, the spirit departs but the golem fights on against its current opponent(s), obeying its former master's last orders (probably "kill"). If the golem's opponents are killed or escape, it stops attacking even if new opponents fight it. (No master remains to command it.)

Borg's treasure lies with his skeletal remains. Nearly 500 gp worth of gems and jewelry adorn his body, as well as a *ring of protection* +1 and a *battle axe* +2. The remains of the housecarls (buried beneath the golems' original places in the barrow) contain another 200 gp worth of gems and jewelry. One of the housecarls still wears an *amulet of reflection* with Erik's symbol on it. The *amulet* seems to predate the battle of Mount Deismaar—it may be a relic from Erik's days as a mortal man.



The following section provides several adventures for DMs who want to introduce players to the Giantdowns region and/or run a campaign centered around the area. Loosely structured toward an overall goal—making one or more of the PCs regent(s) of the Giantdowns—these adventures can be played in any order, modified as needed to suit the party or the goals of the campaign. If played in the order presented here, the series moves toward enabling a PC to claim rulership of the Giantdowns.

Each adventure has been organized into a particular format, beginning with the title of the adventure, a summary of the situation, and a general introduction. The five sections that follow provide the specifics of the adventure.

The **quest** discusses the goal of the adventure and how the PCs can best accomplish it.

The **obstacles** describes challenges the PCs will face. This section may also offer the DM guidance for tailoring the adventure to parties of different levels.

The **personalities** section tells the DM which characters, groups of characters, or monsters from "Part II: Denizens of the Giantdowns" will probably participate in the action and/or setup of the adventure. The name of each NPC or group appears in italics for quick reference.

Naturally, the DM may wish to include NPCs or monsters not listed here, depending on the PCs' prior actions in the Downs or the DM's own interests.

**Rewards/incentives** details the benefits PCs can gain by accomplishing (or in some cases, merely attempting) the adventure. This information seldom includes monetary reward, focusing instead on role-playing benefits. Since the PCs' goal, ostensibly, is to eventually become regents or at least prominent figures in the Downs region, the rewards and incentives of each adventure correspond most closely to that objective.

Finally, **continuing the adventure** points the way for the DM to make this adventure part of an ongoing campaign. Sometimes, this section indicates that another adventure from this book would make a good follow-up;

more often, these notes give the DM helpful advice for structuring his own transition or sequel.

## adventure one: the fall of bjorlangen

When Bjorlangen fell to the armies of the White Witch, refugees fled into the surrounding provinces. But the witch planned her attack well: Few Rjurik escaped the fall of the province; those who didn't are now either dead or living as slaves.

Now, word has gotten out that one squad of combined holmjarllen and marklorjen managed to save a small group of settlers and flee into Bjorlangen's southern Downs, not too far from the Midjarna border. The mercenaries among the White Witch's army won't enter the Downs area, but have it surrounded. The group cannot escape without help.

**The quest:** The PCs must somehow bypass the White Witch's patrols and reach the group of refugees. When they find the group, they have to lead it out, either to Midjarna Village or into Lemnjohen.

They cannot go into Tuarhievel, even if there is an elf among them: During

# part IV: adventures in the giantdowns

the Witch's attack, the elves made it clear that no refugees would be allowed to cross the border.

**The obstacles:** Low-level PCs have to deal with only a patrol or two of the White Witch's mercenaries until they find the group of five surviving Watchmen and 20 women, children, and old men. Then they have to fight or evade at least 20 more mercenaries and flee to safety. The Midjarna border is closest but most heavily patrolled. The Lemnjohen border is farther away, but aid could come from the Old Fort as they near the other province.

Higher-level PCs should undergo encounters with the monsters of Bjorlangen. Many of the region's most dangerous creatures have fled south toward the Great Downs of Bjorlangen, avoiding the army of the Witch. Alert and aggressive, they will attack the PCs and the refugees at any opportunity.

An additional challenge for the PCs could include undead from the Downs area. The refugees may have lost a few of their number to wights or other undead, and the White Witch has certainly stirred up the various undead of the area.

**The personalities:** Depending on where the PCs start, they may get involved with *Hogrun Njalsson* or *Dagmar Druesbane*. They could meet *Anneke Sturmdotter* and even *Gunnar Gunnarsen*. They will certainly get involved with the *Watch* and the *White*

#### *Witch's mercenaries.*

They may also encounter *creatures or undead* as listed in the charts on page 29.

**Rewards/incentives:** If the PCs rescue any of the refugees, they win the gratitude of Hogrun Njalsson, the Watch, and Anneke Sturmdotter (not to mention the general population of Rjurik in the region). Sturm and Sigurd, Anneke's twin sons, may find the PCs' new popularity threatening and could try to do something about it.

**Continuing the adventure:** The PCs won't have much time to look around in Bjorlangen, but they could stumble on a barrow (to be investigated later) and/or run afoul of a few interesting monsters. Certainly, if they succeed, Hogrun may entrust them with a few more jobs.

## adventure two: the lure of the leucrotta

**T**he magical creatures of the Giantdowns may be scattered and often encountered only individually, but they easily can pose as much danger as the more numerous humanoids. One particularly dangerous beast is the leucrotta, which lives in the wastes amid the Downs and hunts animals and people alike. Intelligent and thoroughly evil, the leucrotta enjoys using its inhuman intelligence to turn hunters into prey. Some leucrotta have found a particularly devious way of getting food along the Midjarna-Skansoeren border.

**The quest:** While the Watch patrols Skansoeren occasionally, Rjurik herdsman use the land for pasture and hunting on a regular basis. Though Hogrun warned them that the White Witch's army in Bjorlangen may have stirred up trouble in neighboring provinces, they continue their normal activities.

Recently, several herdsman and shepherd boys have gone missing. The remaining herdsman beg the PCs to venture into Skansoeren and find their fellows. Hogrun and the Watch cannot, since dealing with the problems along the Bjorlangen border consumes nearly all their attention.

**The obstacles:** Wandering creatures and humanoids provide ample dangers for any group of PCs. Since the characters will probably be in Skansoeren for several days, they might even encounter undead amid the Downs. Eventually, however, they will confront the leucrotta.

The leucrotta of the Skansoeren Downs live in a sheltered ravine, almost invisible until the PCs are on top of it. Before the party stumbles upon it, however, the characters will probably hear the creatures (or creature, if the PCs are very low-level) "calling" to them, using their ability to mimic noises

and voices to lure prey toward them. The leucrotta mimicked sheep and other herdsman to attract their initial prey; they might pretend to be lost or injured shepherds for the PCs' benefit.

The leucrotta may or may not lure the PCs to their lair immediately. They will probably use some of the treacherous terrain of the Downs (which includes pitfalls and sinkholes) to trap or injure the PCs first.

**The personalities:** Obviously, this adventure involves as many *leucrotta* (described in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* accessory) as the DM thinks the PCs can handle, and possibly *undead* as indicated in the chart on page 29. *Watch* members may participate initially, if only to tell petitioning PCs that they aren't able to help them at present.

**Rewards/incentives:** The leucrotta have treasure type D in their lair. The shepherds aren't rich, but if the PCs rescue any of their number from the leucrotta (which they may; the leucrotta like fresh meat and may not have killed all those they captured), they'll reward them as they can. If nothing else, the PCs will gain a reputation for doing what the Watch could not.

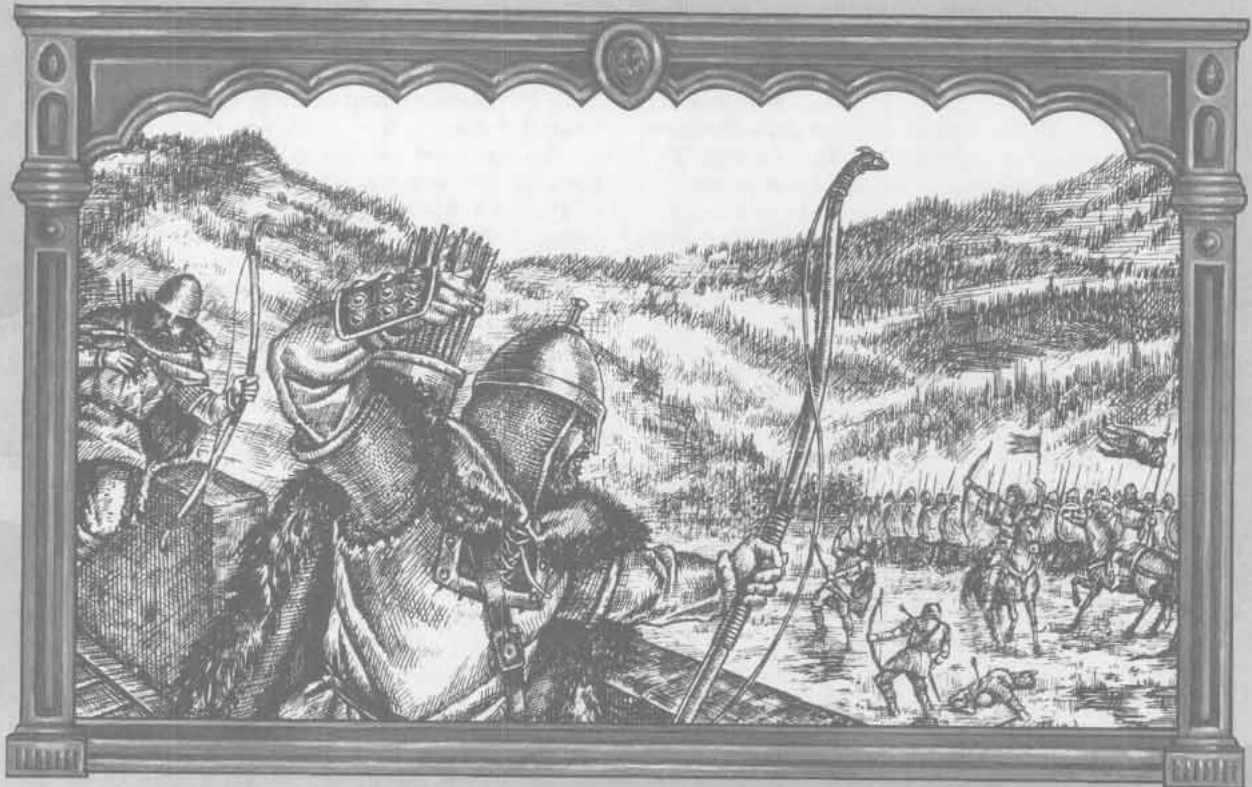
**Continuing the adventure:** The leucrotta's treasure may include several interesting items picked up from former prey amid the Downs. This treasure might include weapons or armor from the White Witch's mercenaries (indicating that the witch could be considering expansion into Skansoeren), treasure from a nearby, undiscovered barrow (enticing the PCs to visit one of the dangerous undead lairs), or any other item the DM plants to direct the PCs to the next stage of the campaign.

## adventure three: the defense of lemnjohen

**T**he only real Rjurik military outpost in the Giantdowns is the Old Fort of Lemnjohen.

Dagmar Druesbane runs the fort in the Watch's name and concerns herself with making the entire province secure. Unfortunately, the White Witch's armies are on the move, and Dagmar may not have time to prepare as much as she likes.

In this adventure, Rowena Manspear, the leader of the Witch's mercenaries, sends a probing attack against the Old Fort. She has managed to muster up two units of mercenary



infantry (in addition to her own troops) and intends to send them against the Old Fort immediately.

**The quest:** The PCs have learned of Rowena's plan (possibly by stumbling upon preparations during another adventure, or at the beginning of this one) and must get word to Dagmar. If they are already in Lemnjohen, this mission should be easy; otherwise they must travel there.

Once Dagmar knows, she has to do something. She commands only a beat-up old fortress and one unit of troops (Rjurik infantry). While her forces could conceivably defeat two units of mercenary infantry, they probably won't. She needs the PCs' help.

The player characters could try one of two things (or more, if they are particularly creative). First, they could attempt to help Dagmar militarily by fighting on the battlefield with her troops.

If they choose this option, let the PCs run the War Card battle and put them with the troops.

Another tactic would involve disrupting or demoralizing the invading troops. Rowena

Manspear isn't leading the mercenaries herself—she's appointed a temporary

lieutenant to do it for her. If he were

killed or discredited, his troops might lose heart and flee

without attacking the fort.

**The obstacles:** If the PCs aren't in Lemnjohen, they

have to get there,

through White Witch patrols,

monsters, and humanoids. They have to do so quickly as well, since Rowena intends to attack immediately.

Once they reach the Old Fort, they must decide what to do. If they want to use a role-playing solution (rather than a War Card battle), they can formulate and execute a plan against the mercenary leader. They have adequate information and can work from there.

**The personalities:** *Dagmar Druesbane* and *Gris Oldstone*, obviously, are participants. *Rowena Manspear* gets involved peripherally, and *Hogrun Njalsson* could also prove important. The PCs will certainly get involved with the *White Witch's* mercenaries.

**Rewards/incentives:** Dagmar may have some personal treasure left over from her adventuring days with which she could reward the PCs. A partial map of the Barrow of the Giant-King could make a good reward. If the PCs succeed, Lemnjohen remains free and the White Witch has been thwarted (for now). But success also wins the enmity of Rowena Manspear, who must deal with a demoralized force in Bjorlangen. She will hear about the PCs' involvement and want to do something about the meddling party—when she can afford to expend the resources.

**Continuing the adventure:** Rowena may prompt Tjorvaal, the chieftain of the Kjarhoelle, to send assassins after the PCs. This step could lead to interesting situations involving the bandit-tribe of Trondelaag. If Dagmar rewards the PCs with information, they could be prompted toward an adventure. Also, during any battle at the Old Fort, the PCs could discover the sublevels and decide to go exploring.

## adventure four: infiltrating the kjarhoelle

**T**he bandit-tribe of Trondelaag may or may not have provided assistance to the White Witch's army when she invaded Bjorlangen, but they certainly haven't made themselves welcome neighbors to the other Rjurik settlers. The Watch is concerned with the Kjarhoelle and the tribe's plans for the Giantdowns, and wants to do something about them.

**The quest:** Gunnar Gunnarsen, secret head of the svinarek (the spies of the Watch), has learned that the Kjarhoelle are recruiting operatives among the trappers and hunters of Trap Town, north of Midjarna Village. He wants to turn the tables on the bandit chieftain Tjorvaal. He (or one of his intermediaries) recruits the PCs to "join" the bandit-tribe by masquerading as rough trappers or hunters out to make some quick gold. Then they can learn all the Watch needs to know about the Kjarhoelle's current strength and plans, reporting their findings to Gunnar.

**The obstacles:** The Kjarhoelle agents aren't fools. Magnus Vaalen, the chieftain's own son, leads the recruiters into Trap Town and presents "tests" for potential spies. The PCs may have to find clever means of waylaying Watchmen, stealing livestock, or performing other nefarious deeds (ideally, without hurting anyone seriously) in order to ingratiate themselves.

The PCs then must accompany Magnus back to Trondelaag. He will be suspicious and may set up a few tests along the way. For example, he might have some of the Kjarhoelle tarloelle (gatherers and hunters) dress up as marklorjen troops and "attack" the group. If the PCs fight back and try to kill the "Watchmen" (Magnus may even let this happen), he will trust them more.

Back at the Kjarhoelle camp, the PCs can count heads, rescue prisoners (many slaves were taken from Bjorlangen) and do other things to hurt the bandits. The longer they play along, and the more information they gather, the more useful they'll be to Gunnar—and the more risk they take of getting caught.

**The personalities:** *Magnus Vaalen* will definitely be involved, and he will lead several *tarloelle*. The whole *Kjarhoelle* tribe is important as well, and even the chieftain, *Tjorvaal*, could be encountered. While the PCs may not actually meet *Gunnar Gunnarsen* himself at the beginning of the adventure, they definitely will later on when they report their findings.

As an interesting twist, *Sigurd* and *Sturm*, Anneke Sturmidotter's twin sons, may already be involved with the Kjarhoelle. They could make things difficult for the PCs.

**Rewards/incentives:** The rewards depend on the PCs' degree of success. The more information the party uncovers about the Kjarhoelle, their strengths,

weaknesses, and plans, the better for the Watch. If the player characters put themselves at great risk and accomplish great things, they could learn quite a bit about how the Watch *really* operates; Gunnar Gunnarsen might even include them in the small circle of people who know his true role.

**Continuing the adventure:** If the PCs escape from Trondelaag, they could earn the enmity of Magnus and his father Tjorvaal unless they are incredibly subtle. In this case, the two hot-blooded Rjurik will stop at nothing to kill the party and inflict heavy damage on the Watch. While they probably won't try attacking Midjarna, they take reprisals against Rjurik in Skansoeren, Boganhaar, and even Vjelthelma. The PCs should hear about this retaliation and try to stop it.

On the other hand, the characters might be able to accomplish their mission and get out without anyone knowing they are actually double-agents. With Gunnar, Hogrun, and Anneke helping, they might manage to set a trap for the Kjarhoelle or at the very least feed them misinformation. This tactic could keep the bandit-tribe off balance and ineffective in the region for months, if not years.

## adventure five: trading with trouble

**T**he Rjurik of the Giantdowns get along with the independent humanoids of the region—though neither group trusts the other too far. Ulzor Sned, the goblin trader of Skansoeren, has done his best to impress the Rjurik so that he may be invited to the Midjarna Village marketplace someday. He doesn't want to jeopardize that chance for a little profit, but when he finds out the PCs need him for something, he will make a run for their money.

**The quest:** The PCs are asked by several Rjurik families to visit and trade with Ulzor Sned for several valuable herbs (see "Part I: An Overview of the Giantdowns"), including some *giorlab* needed to cure a very ill little boy. The herb crop in the region has been unusually poor this year (exacting substantial penalties on all die rolls to find herbs for a good long while), but Ulzor claims to have all the herbs the Rjurik need.

The PCs need to enter Skansoeren, avoid any nasty wandering encounters, and find Sned. Then they must meet his price (whatever it may be) for the long list of herbs (DM's option) and get their purchases back to the Rjurik families in time to save the boy.

Ulzor won't make negotiation easy on the PCs.

He'll charge outrageous prices (triple or quadruple what the herbs are worth) or ask for "favors" in return—favors the PCs will have to accomplish before he yields the herbs. For example, Ulzor may have heard about the Barrow of Borg Ttundarhart (see "Part III: Sites of Interest") and want something specific from it in return for the herbs.

The PCs will either have to meet Ulzor's price or talk him into a different trade. Bullying or coercing Sned won't work: Not only do the Rjurik want the PCs to avoid such tactics (they don't want to antagonize the neutral humanoids), but they won't work. Sned may be somewhat cowardly, but he'll die before agreeing to a nonadvantageous deal. Still, he can be tricked or manipulated.

**The obstacles:** Sned. If the PCs can pay his price easily, he'll up it or change the terms. He wants to test these new "wild cards" in the region, though he won't (initially) be interested in harming them. If they jump through the appropriate hoops, he may even try to befriend them, helping them out and ingratiating himself for future favors.

**The personalities:** *Ulzor Sned* and his *independent humanoids*, obviously. *Ghuralli's humanoids* may get involved as well, trying to make trouble between the independent humanoids and the Rjurik. If the *Rjurik settlers* don't provide enough motivation for the PCs, *Hogrun* or *Anneke* could be used to initiate the action.

**Rewards/incentives:** The PCs will probably get a commission from the settlers for their trading activities (the better they negotiate with Sned, the more they earn) and could actually make friends with Sned. Ulzor, though basically greedy and evil, does want friends in the Watch's camp. He might choose the PCs.

**Continuing the adventure:** Ulzor knows a lot about the Downs region, its monsters, and its humanoids. He might share this information with a friend (for a price, of course). He also knows a little about Sturm and Sigurd's activities with the Kjarhoelle and other bandits, and might snitch on them if he thought revealing the intelligence would benefit himself.

## adventure six: the barrow of the giant-king

Virtually all Giant Downs natives know the land's history. Once, many believe, giants ruled the region. When they passed on, they buried their dead kings in the Downs and laid great spells upon the mounds to keep their resting places inviolate. Now, however, the need for great magic and treasure

is upon the would-be King of the Giantdowns, and he must seek aid in the strength of the past.

**The quest:** The PCs have heard about the Barrow of the Giant-King (described in "Part II: Sites of Interest") and may have a partial map of the place (the side-view of the main level only, without any secret doors or sublevels marked). They must venture to the barrow, open it, and explore. Before setting out, they should hear warnings of spells against evil or intrusion, so they know that just walking in and stealing what they find won't be tolerated.

Once the PCs get into the Barrow of the Giant-King, they may or may not find the secret levels. They will, however, eventually have to get out again with whatever treasure they find. Returning to civilization after disturbing the undead of the Downs should prove to be a quest in and of itself.

**The obstacles:** The PCs shouldn't know the exact location of the giant-king's barrow. They may end up "excavating" several mounds in the Downs area, possibly stirring up lesser undead or other monsters, before finding the right one. They also might encounter magic or mystic forces that help or hinder them along the way.

When the PCs do locate the proper barrow, they must overcome the challenges presented in its description (see Part III).

Finally, the PCs must fight any monsters, humanoids, or creatures they stirred up while poking around the Downs, and get back to civilization. They may even have to prove to certain traditionalists (DM's option) that they didn't just rob some rich Rjurik gravesite.

**The personalities:** *Anneke Sturmdotter* may have helpful hints for the PCs, if they can get her to answer questions. Both *Dagmar Druesbane* and *Gris Oldstone* have excavated barrows before and can offer advice to PCs interested in doing the same. On the way to and from the barrow, the party might encounter *creatures or undead* listed in the charts on page 29.

If the DM feels the PCs need more challenges than those presented in the Barrow of the Giant-King, he may decide to have *Sturm* and *Sigurd* (*Anneke Sturm-dotter's* sons) waylay them or follow them into the barrow—probably with numerous henchmen.

**Rewards/incentives:** Treasure should motivate any PCs interested in excavating a barrow. Fame will also be theirs, as most of the Rjurik avoid any rumored giant-barrows like the gray wasting itself.

**Continuing the adventure:** Once the PCs excavate the barrow, they may want to move into the sublevels and start building an army unit of their own. Of course, they might have to win the approval of the undead giant-king with other adventures or make several trips to clear everything out. If nothing else, the PCs may want to take a trip or two out of the Downs to sell for full value the merchandise they bring out of the barrow. Such trips could lead to encounters with bandits, other would-be treasure-hunters, the Watch (who won't appreciate a score of treasure-hunters wandering around the Downs), and others.

## adventure seven: raid on rhuiddar

**T**he awnshegh Ghuralli maintains a stronghold in Rhuiddar, but the Rjurik have never managed to get a good description of his actual military strength. If someone were to sneak into the forest province of Rhuiddar, locate Ghuralli's stronghold, and count his garrisoned forces, that person would be a hero.

Fortunately, the opportunity presents itself. Svinarek have reported that Ghuralli is staging a major offensive against the Blood Skull Barony in Barrow Woods. All his primary attack forces will be in that province (and can be counted by observers of the battle), but only his garrison forces remain in Rhuiddar. A small group of adventurers could sneak in, explore, possibly do some damage, and get out again.

**The quest:** The PCs must move into Rhuiddar (probably through Boganhaar or Vjelthelma—Caer Cwnnar will be full of humanoids and giants heading toward Barrow Woods), find Ghuralli's stronghold, infiltrate it, and get what information they can. If they have a chance, they should cause as much trouble for the awnshegh in his home base as possible.

**The obstacles:** Ghuralli has bribed the independent humanoids of Boganhaar (though not Ulzor Sned himself) to watch for just such an operation by the Rjurik. On their way to Rhuiddar, the PCs may encounter several groups of orogs, goblins, or gnolls, though these won't be main-line troops and will likely flee at the first sign of real resistance. However, if the humanoids get away, they could reach Ghuralli—and he might turn Rhuiddar into a killing ground for the adventurers.

Once in Rhuiddar, the PCs must deal with trained and disciplined humanoids, not to mention giants and rogue monsters, while searching for Ghuralli's stronghold. If they actually infiltrate the awnshegh's base, the PCs might be able to find plans for attack or other useful materials (DM's option) but they'll face Ghuralli's best guards.

**The personalities:** Ghuralli himself won't make an appearance unless the PCs flub the situation badly or the DM wants a real challenge for the players. Ghuralli's humanoids and Ghuralli's Guard should offer plenty of challenge. The PCs might get help from the Vjelthelma settlers if they pass through that province, and even Ulzor Sned could be brought on board. (Ghuralli didn't offer him a bribe personally.)

**Rewards/incentives:** This adventure provides another chance for the PCs to make friends and enemies. The mission is beyond anything the Watch or independent Rjurik of the Giantdowns had ever hoped for. Skalds will sing of the PCs' deeds (if they are noteworthy enough), and they could impress Hogrun and Anneke so much that they win lieutenancy of the realm (perhaps heirdom). Of course,





such recognition won't make them popular with Ghuralli or the twins (Sturm and Sigurd).

**Continuing the adventure:** The PCs could be recruited to go witness the battle of Barrow Woods (between Ghuralli and the Blood Skull Barony). This opportunity could lead to some interesting encounters and might even steer them into the Silverheads to meet the dwarves and the stone giants.

## adventure eight: the silverhead holds

**S**ince GJOR Upshar started coming to Midjarna Village regularly, everyone believes the legends of dwarves in the mountains. However, the close-mouthed dwarf trader won't confirm rumors concerning stone giants or fabulous treasure-mines, so speculation on those two points abounds.

Someone, however, has chosen to put the question to Upshar. On his way to Midjarna Village, bandits or treasure-hunters kidnapped Upshar and are holding him until he, or one of the other dwarves who accompanied him, tells the true tale of the mountains. Many of Upshar's traveling companions escaped, and they insist that the Watch do something.

**The quest:** The PCs must locate GJOR Upshar before the month is out or the dwarves will return to the mountains without him, never to return. Most of the people of Midjarna are upset (particularly Gunnar Gunnarsen), but there isn't a lot they can do. No one knows where Upshar has been taken.

Well, almost no one. Garradh Devlynsen, the half-elf bandit, knows. He approached the Watch with information about the abduction, but Hogrun assumed Garradh was involved and drove him out of town. The PCs may hear about this incident and contact Garradh themselves.

Garradh won't help without some assurances of immediate reward. He also won't trust the PCs not to turn around and blame him for the abduction. He does want GJOR released (Garradh is something of a noble rogue) and the other bandits punished, but he won't just let the PCs run the show.

**The obstacles:** Finding Garradh won't prove easy, and finding GJOR without him will be nearly impossible. Still, it might be done. Then, the

PCs have to confront Rjurik bandits and—surprise!—their leaders Sturm and Sigurd,

Anneke's sons. The two kidnapped Upshar in the hopes of gaining treasure for themselves that they could use to influence the Rjurik settlers to follow them.

Upshar doesn't know Sturm and Sigurd are involved (they've kept out of sight) and the PCs might not find out. If the PCs overcome the bandits (mercenaries and possibly humanoids hired by the twins), he'll insist the PCs escort him and his compatriots back to the mountains. The way undoubtedly will be fraught with peril (stirred up by the angry twins, if they are still free), but the PCs should arrive at the dwarves' Silverhead hold eventually.

**The personalities:** *Sturm* and *Sigurd* operate behind the scenes, and independent *bandits* do their dirty work for them. *GJOR Upshar* is a central player, as is *Garradh Devlynsen*; *Gunnar Gunnarsen* might get involved. At the end of the adventure, the PCs may encounter several monsters native to the Silverheart province, and even some *stone giants*.

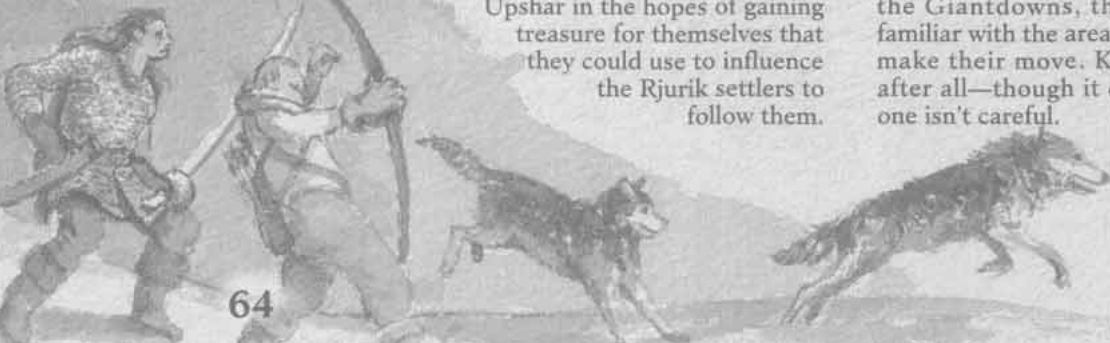
**Rewards/incentives:** GJOR will reward his rescuers appropriately (once they reach the mountains) and just being invited into a Silverhead hold should mean something to any adventurer. If possible, the dwarves will keep the way in and out a secret, but the PCs may become friends of the dwarves and giants at this point.

**Continuing the adventure:** Depending on how successful and diplomatic they are, the PCs could operate out of a Silverhead hold for a time, dealing with dangers the stone giants and dwarves must face. Or, if they return to the Rjurik settlements with any idea of who kidnapped GJOR Upshar, they could try discredit Sturm and Sigurd once and for all.

## further adventures

**T**hese few scenarios do not come close to exhausting the adventure potential of the Giantdowns. Ghuralli won't give up trying to take over the land and rule all the humanoids after one thwarted attempt, and Rowena Manspear's mercenaries certainly can't be driven out of Bjorlängen easily. Undead and monsters must be cleared out of the human provinces if they are ever to expand, and Anneke Sturmdotter won't give up her regency to anyone of less stature than a heroking.

If the PCs are serious about becoming regents of the Giantdowns, they must become intimately familiar with the area and its people before they can make their move. Kingship isn't won overnight, after all—though it can be lost in an eye-blink, if one isn't careful.



Advanced  
**Dungeons & Dragons**



# King of the Giantdowns

by Ed Stark

**U**ntamed by the laws of man, the Giantdowns region remains a buffer zone between the ruined empire of Anuire and its northern neighbor, the Rjurik Highlands. The Great Downs themselves are the stuff of legend: Giants, they say, are buried beneath the mounds, awaiting some call to rise and battle once more.

But in the meantime, other forces threaten the Downs. A new awnshegh, the humanoid known as Ghuralli, strives to make his small kingdom a rival to the neighboring Gorgon's Crown. His armies of humanoids, giant-kin, and monsters stand ready to strike at the few human settlers brave enough to live in the shadow of the Great Downs.

The Rjurik settlers need a leader, someone who can defeat Ghuralli and forge a kingdom out of their scattered clans. They need someone to step forth and become King of the Giantdowns.

This 64-page adventure accessory contains detailed information on the Giantdowns region, the people, monsters, and places that can be found within, and several adventures for beginning and experienced characters alike.

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