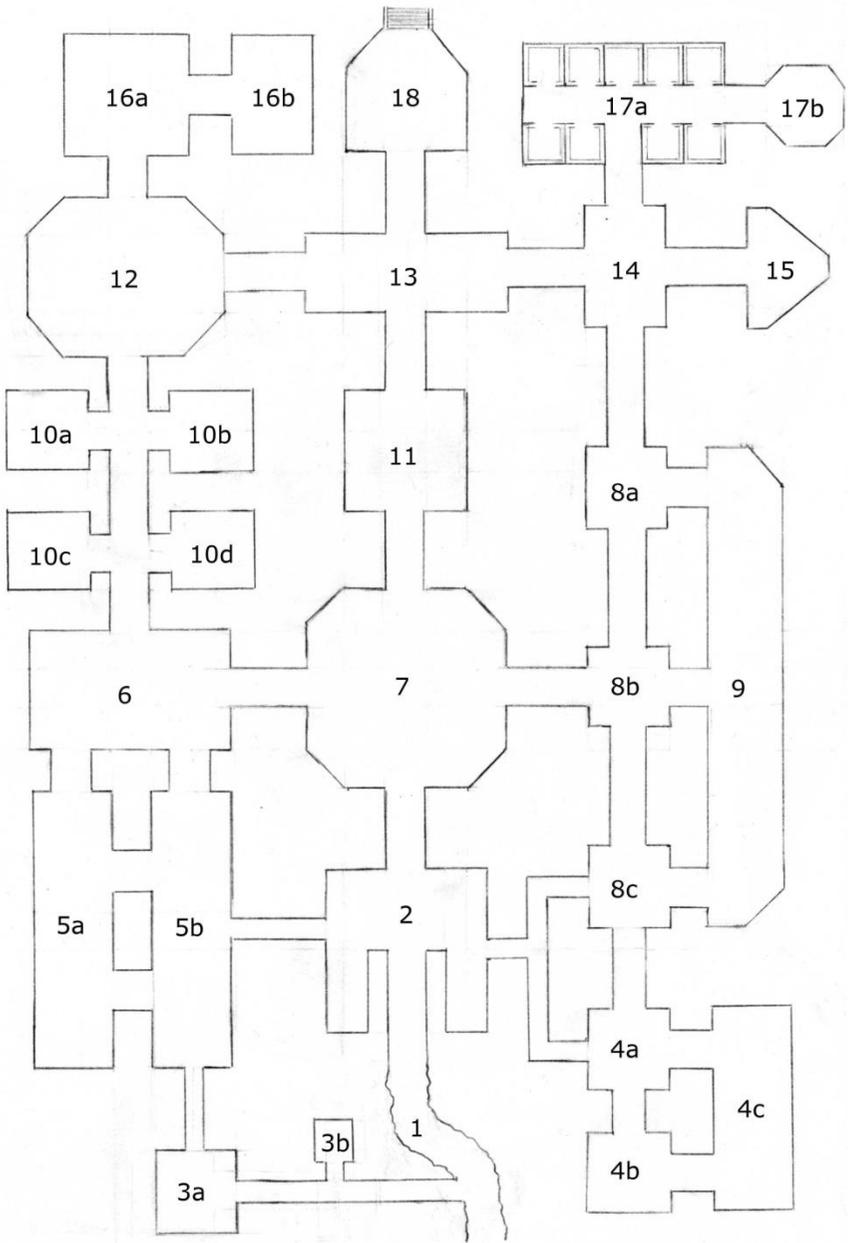


# **Orcs' Nest**

***An Advanced  
Swords & Sorcery  
Adventure for OSRIC***

***By Matthew James Stanham***

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Map of the Orcs' Nest

# OSRIC Fast Play Rules

## What is this?

An OSRIC fast play module is an introduction to traditional swords & sorcery adventure gaming, a restatement of an original rule set in which the skill of the players mattered more and the abilities of their characters less. It takes a lighter approach than many other role-playing games published under the *open game license* and is less bound by the interdependent systemisation that tends to characterise them. There are no powers, feats, skill points, prestige classes, iterative attacks, character builds or unified mechanics to be found here, just swift and dynamic combat, simultaneous action and the freedom to explore the fantastic vistas of an unfettered imagination.

Those characters who court fortune with skill and bravery may outwit treacherous demons, slay mighty dragons, or lay claim to vast treasures and establish glittering legacies, whilst those of lesser ability risk death unremarked in a dark lonely place, far from home. The life of an adventurer is a hard one, the risks deadly and the defeats bitter, but success is a sweet reward indeed, especially because it is well earned.

## Exploration

*Time:* Time is measured in turns, rounds and segments. Normal exploration takes place in turns, whilst combat takes place in rounds. There are ten rounds in a turn; similarly, there are ten segments in a round. A segment is important for determining how far a character is able to move during a round before an effect takes place, such as a spell or ranged attack, the segment being determined by initiative and casting time.

*Vision:* Adventurers often find themselves in the dark places of the world and usually require sufficient light to see by. A torch sheds light up to thirty feet for six turns before expiring, but may well be seen at much greater distances, affecting the chances of surprise.

*Movement:* During a turn of exploration, a character may move up to his full movement, though stopping to search, talk or otherwise interact with the environment will reduce this by an amount determined by the game master. During a round of combat, an otherwise unengaged character may also move up to his full movement over ten segments [i.e. a character with 120 ft movement moves 12 ft per segment].

*Fatigue:* It is usually necessary for a party to rest for one turn after five of exploration or a period of protracted exertion. The game master should apply suitable penalties to those who do not, such as -1 to hit in combat, increased surprise probability, or some other reflection of increasing fatigue and decreased competency.

## Combat

*Surprise:* An unexpected encounter may result in surprise. Under normal conditions, each side has a one in three chance of surprising the other, but the probability may be altered, or even eliminated, by the game master to take into account many factors, particularly stealth, scouting, alertness and awareness. An unsurprised party may take a free segment of movement and make a round of attacks against a surprised party. If neither or both parties are surprised, then combat proceeds as normal by rounds.

*Initiative:* At the beginning of each combat round, and after actions are declared, initiative is determined by rolling 1d6 for each side. The side with the lowest result strikes the first blows in melee, in the case of a tie blows are simultaneous. Movement and most other actions are resolved without reference to initiative.

*Charging:* At the beginning of a combat round, an unengaged character can choose to charge the enemy; his movement rate is doubled and he gains +2 to hit, but his armour class also becomes one worse [i.e. AC 5 becomes AC 6]. The distance he moves affects the segment in which he attacks.

*First Strike:* A character who does not begin a combat round in melee does not use initiative to determine if he strikes first, but the length of his weapon. A spear strikes before a two handed sword, which strikes before a long sword, which strikes before a short sword, which strikes before a dagger; other weapons follow a similar pattern, at the discretion of the game master, whilst weapons of the same length strike simultaneously. Attacks with ranged weapons are generally best resolved before charges.

*Attack Roll:* Most characters can make one attack in a round. To determine whether they hit an opponent, the player rolls 1d20 and adds any modifiers; the game master compares the result to the armour class of the target in accordance with the below chart.

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10

A result equal to or greater than the required to hit roll indicates a hit and damage must be determined. When monsters attack player characters, the game master uses the chart associated with that monster. [Optional Rule: A character using a two handed weapon may add +1 to hit].

*Ranged Weapons:* All missile weapons have an associated range, this is the distance at which they may be shot or hurled without penalty. For every multiple of this distance greater than 1, there is a cumulative -2 penalty to the attack roll [i.e. if the weapon's range is 50 ft, then at 51-100 ft the penalty is -2, at 101-150 ft it is -4, etc...].

*Hit Points:* All characters and monsters have a hit point total. When they are hit in combat, damage is rolled according to the weapon used and their total is reduced. A character's hit points may also be reduced by traps, falls, spells and other game events. When reduced to 0 hit points a character is unconscious; if reduced below 0 hit points a character is also injured, the severity of the injury depending on how far below, with -10 indicating indisputable death. A character can be healed by spells or potions and may rest to recover hit points at a rate of one every eight hours. The consequences of an injury are at the discretion of the game master, such as reduction in an attribute or penalty to hit, and usually take far longer to recover from.

*Spell Casting:* A character who is capable may cast a spell from memory or from a scroll during a combat round as his action. The effects take place in accordance with initiative, but the spell caster adds the casting time of the spell to the roll. If he is interrupted before the spell is completed, such as by a successful attack, then the spell is ruined. A spell can only be cast once from a scroll or as many times in a day as spell slots are devoted to it, and an interrupted spell counts as cast.

*Withdrawing:* An engaged combatant can choose to make a fighting withdrawal from combat, sacrificing their attack to fall back up to half their movement. Opponents who are able to do so, may pursue the retreating character.

*Fleeing:* If things are looking bad, an engaged character may elect to flee a combat at the beginning of the round at his full rate of movement. In doing so, he exposes his back to the enemy who may make an immediate attack with +4 to hit and give chase. Unless the character can move faster than his opponents or has some plan in mind, he would be ill advised to take this course of action.

*Saving Throws:* Adventuring is hazardous and occasionally characters must rely on reflexes, willpower or sheer physical stamina to avoid danger. A saving throw is made to resist certain spell effects, avoid breath weapons, resist poison, and avoid traps, amongst other things; in many cases precautions can avoid the necessity of this, but not always. There are five categories of saving throw, which appear in the form [a/b/c/d/e] in character and monster entries. They are as follows: 1) *aimed magic items*; 2) *breath weapons*; 3) *death, paralysis or poison*; 4) *petrification or polymorph*; 5) *spells that do not specify*. To succeed, the player must roll equal to or above the number indicated on 1d20; the game master may apply modifiers to the roll beforehand to reflect the circumstances.

## **Thief Abilities**

*Pick Pockets:* A Thief may try to steal from even alert and watchful targets, but failure by more than 20% indicates that his unlucky attempt at thievery was noticed by the victim, which may elicit a violent reaction.

*Open Locks:* A Thief has the ability to open locks and disarm or set traps, though he usually requires tools of some sort and sufficient time; failure to deactivate a trap may result in it going off to his detriment.

*Find Traps:* Though any character can search for traps, the Thief has the uncanny ability to detect their presence by mere observation; such a search requires sufficient light and one uninterrupted turn.

*Move Silently:* Whilst any character can sneak and thereby increase their chance of surprising foes, the Thief has the ability to move at his full movement rate in virtually undetectable silence, even over surfaces such as squeaky floors.

*Hide in Shadows:* If unobserved, a Thief can blend into the shadows, becoming invisible to the naked eye whilst he remains still. This is quite different from conventional hiding, which can be accomplished by any character with sufficient cover.

*Hear Noise:* All characters have a base 1 in 10 chance of hearing otherwise imperceptible noises, but the trained ear of the Thief hears more frequently. Characters must listen for one turn and remove any obstructing headgear.

*Climb Walls:* Any character can climb with sufficient handholds, but only the Thief has the ability to negotiate otherwise unclimbable surfaces and even cling to ceilings. The more difficult the climb, the more slowly it must be attempted and the more frequently checks are called for. A failed check usually indicates a fall.

*Back Stab*: If the thief can approach an enemy by stealth and surprise, he may strike from behind with a melee weapon and with a +4 bonus to hit. Furthermore, weapon damage from a backstab is doubled, though damage modifiers are not (such as those derived from strength or magic).

### **Task Resolution**

Whilst many combat actions and abilities are described in some detail above, they are only a few of the things that characters may potentially attempt. This is not an oversight or omission made to conserve space, but a purposeful methodology. In traditional adventure role-playing games, character level has only as much influence on task resolution as the game master deems appropriate. That is to say that a level 0 nomad can be as expert a horseman as a level 10 fighter. Similarly, there is no necessity for level 7 blacksmiths or anything of that sort, nor is it required that a character gain an experience level in order to acquire a new skill or improve an old one. Indeed, numerically expressed skills are entirely rejected as an impediment to a swords & sorcery mode of play.

Instead of following predetermined mathematical formulae, all tasks are resolved by deferring to the concepts of reasonable probability and environmental interaction. In the case of the former, the game master simply assigns a reasonable probability of failure and the consequences thereof, often taking into account the attributes, race, class, level, background and circumstances of the character. For many actions, perhaps even the majority, there need be no risk of failure and so no die is rolled; similarly, some tasks will have no chance of success and so require no randomisation. The only reason to assign a probability to a task is to randomise the outcome, a measure that is rarely necessary, except to heighten tension or resolve uncertainty.

Whilst assigned probability provides an abstract means of resolving tasks, environmental interaction takes a more literal approach; it encourages players to think carefully about their imaginary surroundings and make intelligent decisions based on the flow of information between them and the game master. For instance, players who think to have their character inspect a chest for a false bottom, look behind a specific tapestry, or seek to trigger a suspected trap should be rewarded with the logical outcome of such actions, given that there is something to find or a mechanism to trigger. The environment thus becomes something of an open ended puzzle that is as complex and challenging as the game master cares to make it.

### **Success and Failure**

A successful adventure outcome is not guaranteed. Character death is a normal part of the traditional adventure gaming experience, though players should seek to avoid it and the game master to not make it unavoidable. Those characters who survive divide up the spoils and are awarded experience points for monsters defeated, treasure seized (at a rate of 1 XP to 1 GP), and anything else the game master deems worthy of reward. The total is also divided amongst them. As adventures are completed and wealth acquired, player characters may rise in experience level, a process more fully explained in the complete OSRIC rulebook, which may be freely downloaded from the main website.

# Orcs' Nest

## Introduction

The northern border marches have a long and bloody history; beyond them is the true wilderness: dark forests of ancient trees, rocky and broken hillsides, precipitous mountains that loom high, and are said to divide the world from a great waste of grey ash. From these places, or perhaps from more distant and unknown lands, have come forth many a raider and warlord, bandit and thief, to terrorise and ravage before being brought low or retreating to whence ever they came. Some were men, and some had the form of men, but many others were monstrous mockeries of mankind, twisted and malshaped, or bestial and savage beyond reason. The marches are no place for the meek.

Greedy men will risk many dangers for profit, still more will they risk the lives of others. The services of the player characters have been engaged by an apprehensive man named Cervanas, a merchant by trade, with an overdue caravan. For the princely sum of one hundred gold coins, they agreed to seek out his lost sheep and bring back one item in particular, a small rosewood box, but more particularly the iron and silver star shaped talisman that it contains. The caravan was easily found, or what little was left of it, but no sign of the merchant's prize, only many booted tracks leading into the wild. Rather than return empty handed as the bearers of ill news, the adventurers followed the signs of the raiders for a day or more, through deep woods and along high hills, being led at last to a great cleft in a steep rock face, a passage descending into darkness.

## A Dynamic Dungeon

The *Orcs' Nest* is an ancient stronghold that has been recently reoccupied by a band of evil Orcish freebooters. It is not an easy dungeon for low level characters and a party that seeks to repeatedly directly confront its denizens in combat will come to a bad end. There are encounters here that are simply not designed to be defeated by conventional means, if at all. To be successful, player characters must make use of stealth, think creatively and be mindful of their resources. If the alarm is raised or the adventurers are discovered, the game master must not be afraid to have the monsters respond by moving between rooms to take appropriate offensive or defensive action.

## Wandering Monsters

After every six turns of exploration in the wilderness, or three in the dungeon, there is a base 1 in 6 chance of an encounter randomly determined or simply selected from the table below. The probability can be increased if warranted.

1d12	Wilderness	Dungeon
1	Drake	Giant Spider
2	Renegade Orc	Drunken Orc
3-4	Scouts	Guards
5-6	Patrol	Patrol
7-8	Patrol	Patrol
9-10	Scouts	Guards
11	Wounded Owl Bear	Fleeing Goblin
12	Elf Ranger	Human Slave

A patrol has three to six individuals and is led by an Orc sergeant, whilst groups of guards number only two to three; scouting parties have one to three members and will attempt to find a patrol if unobserved or allowed to escape. There are three patrols abroad and two groups of scouts; almost all other encounters are unique and should be rerolled if already faced or defeated. The sole exception is the guards encounter, which may occur as many times as the game master pleases.

## Dungeon Key

1. *Entrance Passage:* A long rough cut tunnel descends into the rocky hillside; it is low ceilinged and variably narrow, making it unsuitable for the use of weapons that require considerable space. Just prior to connecting with the worked stone of the upper gate are two traps. A piece of twine has been extended across the passage, about six inches from the floor, and is connected to a crude tin bell set into a recess in the wall. Incautious adventurers will trigger this alarm and likely rouse the guards beyond. To add injury to insult, a pit trap has been dug just beyond the twine, so the same incautious individual may fall 10 ft onto crude wooden spikes for 2d6 damage. Both traps are easily spotted and avoided; the pit may be edged around or leapt over.

A careful search of the west wall will reveal a secret postern gate as yet unknown to the denizens beyond. It is very slightly ajar and worked so as to appear a natural part of the passage wall. A party conducting a general search of the tunnel has a 3 in 6 chance of detecting its presence.

2. *Upper Gate:* A short stone cut and dressed passage leads to a guard room beyond; the entrance is flanked by inward facing arrow slits, four on either wall, the areas behind which are only accessible from the guard room. At each end of the passage are ancient timber gates that may be barred from the inside against intruders, as well as iron and wood portcullises, which may be dropped to trap enemies between. However, the stonework around the arrow slits has been poorly maintained and may be broken through in a few rounds by a character of sufficient strength; similarly, a character with strength 16 or greater may attempt to lift a portcullis for two or three rounds.

Typically, three Goblins and an Orc may be found here; they are lax in their duties and so may be surprised with a base probability of 3 in 6. However, if the alarm trap in the entrance passage is triggered or a party is excessively noisy, then these will be alert and virtually incapable of being surprised. Furthermore, if the party is seen, a goblin will be dispatched to fetch reinforcements, which will take the form of an Orc patrol that arrives a few rounds later. There are two winches in the guard chamber that operate the portcullises in the passage, as well as two wooden bars for the gates and a thick plank of timber some eight feet long and thirty inches wide.

Aside from an open stone dressed portal in the north wall, there are secret doors to be found in the east and west walls. The west door is known to the Orcs, but the east door has remained undetected, or at least unopened, for many years uncounted. They cannot be opened from this side by normal means, though they could be forced open with significant effort and damage to the surrounding stonework.

3. *Postern Gate:* A narrow lightless tunnel leads from the entrance passage to a disused and open doored chamber. In the north wall of the passage is an opening that leads to a smaller ancillary room. An inspection of the ceiling reveals that the section between the mechanism chamber entrance and secret door is different from elsewhere.

a. *Armoury*: A seemingly long forgotten and abandoned chamber, thick with dust and cobwebs; rusty arms and rotted armour are strewn carelessly about, intermixed with broken timbers. There are doors to the north and east. A close inspection of the debris will reveal a large number of bones, both large and small. Unbeknownst to the party, a Giant Spider has a nest here and lurks above their heads. It is unlikely to be surprised itself, but will surprise the party with a base probability of 4 in 6. The passage to the north leads to a secret door that may be easily found and pushed open.

b. *Mechanism Chamber*: A very small and dusty chamber that contains a winch and three iron levers set into the north wall. The central lever has been pulled down, whilst the two others are in the upright position. These were intended to be used to operate a deadfall trap in the event that the postern was overrun. Pulling the two upright levels down will cause the roof of the passage between the chamber entrance and the secret door to fall, killing anybody caught beneath. Characters standing on the edge of the effect may make a saving throw versus petrification to dive clear.

4. *Forgotten Forges*: The passage from 8c is choked with rubble, but a character without bulky equipment may squeeze through in a round or two, one at a time, of course. The only other method of access is by way of the narrow secret passage.

a. *Entrance*: A small dark room, strewn with rubble and neglected by the ages; a simple search reveals only the remains of long broken and rotted arms and armour, though for the diligent there are signs of long dried stains that lead eastward through a door that hangs awkwardly on its hinges; the door to the south is rusted shut and will require a combined strength of 20 to noisily open. There is a secret door in the west wall that a general search has a 2 in 6 chance of detecting. One of the flagstones in front of the door may be removed to reveal a mechanism that will unlock the door and allow it to be opened by simply pushing. There is a rusted iron catch on the wall of the tunnel that will fix the door open when hooked into an iron loop on its exterior.

b. *Weaponers' Forge*: Another small and long disused chamber with evidence of a forge set into the south wall and the remains of a workshop and tools suited to the manufacture and maintenance of weapons. The oaken door to the north is closed, whilst the door to the east has long rusted off its hinges.

c. *Armourers' Forge*: An unlit rectangular room with two forges set into the east wall, three armourer's blooms nearby, and various other rusted bits and pieces that hint to the purpose of this place; both doors are open. More significant are the decayed remains of a dwarf, lying propped up against one of the blooms; his rusted mail corselet is rent and torn, evidence of the cause of his demise. By his side is a battered and aged scabbard, which contains a *dwarvish short sword +1*. Any character who takes this weapon without intending to bury the remains of its last master will be cursed with misfortune; in addition to any other appropriate expressions of ill luck the game master deems fit, his armour class and attack rolls worsen by 1.

5. *South Barracks*: Two rectangular unlit chambers, the portals between which lack doors, relying instead on ragged curtains to divide them. Both are littered with refuse and are rarely used by the current inhabitants.

a. *West Room*: Concealed amongst the refuse in this room is a loose flagstone, beneath which is hidden a small pouch that contains the treasure of one particularly cautious and avaricious Orc; twenty three gold coins, eighty seven silver coins and a bloodstone set silver bracelet worth seventy five gold coins. The north passage once contained a door, but now a simple barricade suffices.

b. *East Room*: A door closes this chamber off to the north. The secret door to the south has a 2 in 6 probability of being discovered during a general search, but cannot be

opened from this side without significant damage to the stonework. The secret door in the east wall is already jammed open and the mechanism for opening it is exposed, the flagstone that concealed it lying cracked nearby. The once secret passage leads to the upper gate and characters who attack via the passage will usually achieve surprise on the guards in that chamber without need to roll.

6. *North Barracks*: This brazier lit room is where the bulk of the Orc and Goblin denizens dwell in the hours of daylight, mainly sleeping on filthy pallets. There can normally be found here five Orcs and six Goblins, in various states of readiness. Their arms and armour lie strewn carelessly about, unless the alarm has been sounded. Doors leading out of the chamber are usually kept shut, though the creatures themselves may move to other areas of the dungeon in response to perceived threats.

7. *Courtyard*: A large torch lit chamber with a raised central dais and four stone dressed open portals that lead in the four cardinal directions. The walls are decorated with raised reliefs that flicker disturbingly in the torchlight; depictions of demons, monsters, unknown battles and other unpleasant acts of violence seem to dominate. The east passage is filled with rubble and debris, though two characters with strength 13+ could clear sufficient room to pass in three turns.

8. *Empty Chambers*: It is not clear what purposes these unlit chambers once served, but they are now blocked off from the main dungeon.

a. The passage leading north from here seems to have been purposefully filled with stones and broken timbers. It is passable, but only one character may scramble through per round.

b. The corridor leading west seems to have suffered a partial collapse at some point; the obstruction needs to be removed to allow passage.

c. The way south is almost entirely blocked with debris, though an unencumbered character could potentially squeeze through eventually. There is a secret door in the west wall of this chamber, which has a 2 in 6 base probability of detection during a general search of the area. Like others in the dungeon it cannot be easily opened from this side.

9. *East Gallery*: A long wide chamber that is illuminated during the daytime by the light that filters through arrow slits in the east wall, and a hole broken through the masonry of its southernmost part. A Drake dwells here atop a mound of bones, filth and lost treasures; if the adventurers are fortunate it will be ahunt outside the dungeon, if not it will be here, perhaps asleep, possibly waiting for them or maybe even prowling the empty chambers, stalking them as prey.

Should the adventurers be fortunate enough to plunder its nest, they may find the following treasures amongst the debris: seventy six gold coins, two hundred and thirty three silver coins, a gold ring set with amber stones worth one hundred and fifty gold coins, an *amulet of protection +1 against undead*, two scrolls of *cure light wounds*, a *ring of invisibility and inaudibility* (limited use, one charge remaining), and a *large shield +1*.

10. *Officers' Quarters*: The passage between the north barracks and the refractory is flanked by four closed doors, each illuminated by torches set in iron brackets. All lead to separate similarly sized rooms, three of which are occupied by an Orc captain and his six sergeants. The last chamber serves as a strong room and its door is the only one that is kept locked.

a. *Captain*: A somewhat more ornate chamber than the others, hung with rotting tapestries and divided by a dirty curtain. Behind the curtain is the once rich sleeping

pallet of the Orc captain and a cloth covered altar dedicated to an evil power. The captain himself may be encountered here. There is a secret compartment beneath the altar that may be triggered by pushing on the raised wooden relief that adorns it. Of course, it is trapped so that at the same time the door springs open a noxious vapour fills the immediate vicinity. Characters within ten feet must make a saving throw versus poison or die within six rounds; those who succeed, but inhale any of the vapour will be afflicted with a hacking cough for thirty days. The trap can be avoided by opening the compartment slowly and unhooking the door from a flask lid within. Inside is a small leather bag that contains seventy two gold coins, one hundred and fifty two silver coins, a small human skull within which is an emerald worth five hundred gold coins, and the merchant's missing talisman!

b. *Sergeants*: A brazier lit room that contains three thick, but filthy, pallets. Two Orc sergeants can typically be found here, arguing, drinking, or rolling bones. Their weapons are to hand.

c. *Treasury*: An unlit chamber that stores the goods and treasures seized by the Orc raiders and stockpiled. In evidence are furs, wool, iron ore, pottery, jars of oil, a book, seasoned timber, tools, a few weapons, shields, two helmets and even some pieces of body armour. All in all perhaps a thousand gold coins worth and more. Amongst these items can also be seen the rosewood box that the merchant described. Though his talisman is not inside, there are three hundred and fifty two gold coins dispersed amongst six hundred and fifteen silver coins.

d. *Sergeants*: A second room with three pallets and illuminated by brazier. Both the fellows of the Orc sergeant here are likely leading patrols. In their absence, he sleeps, but lightly; hanging from his belt is the ring of keys for the prison cells.

11. *Well Room*: A torch lit chamber with doors to the north and south, and a stone dressed well in its centre. A single Goblin snoozes in the corner of the room next to a half filled bucket. The well is deep and unpleasant smelling, the water murky and brackish to the taste. An empty and leaky bucket is suspended from a length of rope and can be used to draw the water up.

12. *Refractory*: A large, high ceilinged, and greatly disordered chamber, dominated by several long trestle tables and benches. The westernmost part of the room is elevated so that the tables there overlook those below. Double doors lead north, east and south; the walls are decorated with carvings similar to those in the courtyard, but have been greatly defaced. The chamber is in disarray through age, neglect and the activities of the Goblins and Orcs who sometimes gather here to feast, drink, and conduct other more vile business by torch light.

13. *Lower Hall*: A longish brazier lit chamber that runs east to west, having doors at each end and double doors that lead north and south. All of these may be barred from inside this room with old oaken beams, but only the north is kept shut. The walls are decorated with reliefs similar to those in the courtyard.

14. *Guard Room*: A small and unpleasant torch lit room with a rickety table, four stools, doors to the east and west, and open passages to the north and south. From the north can occasionally be heard the moaning of despair laden prisoners, whilst from the east comes the unpleasant stench of the cistern. There is typically an Orc and two Goblins stationed here to keep watch, not only on the prisoners, but also on the barricade that separates them from the Drake.

15. *Cistern*: A foul smelling room that narrows to the east and slopes downwards into a great mound of filth and muck. The drain has become partially blocked over time and the channel constricted, so the refuse has built up. A character who enters this chamber must save versus poison or spend 1d4 rounds retching, which will penalise any attack rolls by four and any other actions as the game master decides. Characters wearing close faced helmets may receive a small bonus to their saving throws.

16. *Kitchen and Pantry*: A pair of connected chambers; provisions are stored in the pantry and prepared for consumption in the kitchen.

b. *Kitchen*: An often unpleasantly hot place, furnished with several large and well used tables, a stone oven, and a great iron cauldron that is suspended above a fire and set into a recess in the wall. A great many kitchen implements are scattered around or hanging from wooden hooks, cleavers, knives, spatulas, spoons and more. Three Goblins are usually on duty here, one particularly fat and who fancies himself head cook. If encountered here they will be unarmed and unarmoured, so will seek to flee or surrender (though they will play any mischief they can afterwards). If pressed, they will defend themselves with kitchen implements (1d4 damage). There is a book of recipes here, mainly a status symbol for the fat Goblin, since neither he nor his fellows can read. He has added a number of unrelated documents, believing them to contain 'secrets', amongst which is a scroll with the magic user spell *knock*.

b. *Pantry*: A store of seized goods is kept here, including various spices, several sacks of weevil invested flour, oats, several almost empty barrels of ale and a selection of rotting vegetables and fruits. More discomfoting are the hunks of skinned meat hanging from iron hooks in the ceiling, for many look decidedly man like in shape.

17. *Prison*: Here are kept in unpleasant conditions the captives of the evil Orc and Goblin raiders; they are used for entertainment, slavery and, eventually, probably food.

a. *Cells*: This unlit chamber contains nine cells, within which dwell six miserable human prisoners. Each cell door is locked and barred from the outside, though a small grill at eye level allows the guards to observe any goings on in the cell. The occupants are fed infrequently and often tormented. Most are former caravan guards, but one or two are unfortunates who were caught alone in the wild. They are willing to fight for their freedom, if armed, but would rather make as quick an escape as possible. They are weak from ill treatment, so have a -1 penalty to hit when attacking in addition to any other effects that seem appropriate. The cell door locks can be picked, or they can be noisily forced open by a character with strength 13+ and a lever.

b. *Prison Pit*: This small dark room is dominated by a deep circular shaft that descends into darkness. Sounds of movement can almost be discerned below.

18. *Deep Gate*: The double doors from the lower hall open into a torch lit pentagonal shaped room. On the far side of the chamber are a pair of black iron doors; they are adorned with strange demonic images that culminate in a twisted gargoyle like face, which protrudes from their centre. Beyond the doors are further adventures as yet unknown. A great ugly beast stands before this, a hulking and giant twisted mockery of a man, an Ogre set to guard and keep watch. Near his feet are the remains of his last meal, though his appetite seems unsatiated.

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## Pregenerated Player Characters

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### **Aldros** (Level One Human Fighter) Alignment Lawful Neutral

Strength 16, Dexterity 13, Constitution 12, Intelligence 12, Wisdom 11, Charisma 13, Movement 90 ft, Armour Class 4, Hit Points 10,

Saving Throws: 16/17/14/15/17

Possessions: Helmet, Mail Armour, Long Spear (1d6+1), Large Shield, Long Sword (1d8+1), Dagger (1d4+1),

A disciplined man with a strong sense of honour and duty, but also a cautious fighter with a strong grasp of tactics. Aldros is a veteran of numerous border wars, and used to being in the thick of combat, whether that means fighting in the shield wall or chasing down the ragged groups of ill disciplined raiders that plague the marches. He has a natural talent for leadership, but little experience of it.

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### **Merena** (Level One Human Fighter) Alignment Neutral

Strength 14, Dexterity 15, Constitution 13, Intelligence 12, Wisdom 12, Charisma 10, Movement 90 ft, Armour Class 4, Hit Points 10,

Saving Throws: 16/17/14/15/17

Possessions: Helmet, Mail Armour, Two Handed Sword (1d10), Hand Axe (1d6), Dagger (1d4),

A very strong willed woman, dark haired and with a dark temper to match. Merena is not reckless, but when there is fighting to be done she prefers to strike quickly and without holding back. She originally travelled to the marches to seek employment as a mercenary, but found the freedom of adventuring more to her liking. Merena does not suffer fools gladly, but has no compunctions about exploiting the weak minded.

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### **Talus** (Level One Human Thief) Alignment Neutral

Strength 12, Dexterity 15, Constitution 10, Intelligence 14, Wisdom 9, Charisma 12, Movement 120 ft, Armour Class 7, Hit Points 6,

Saving Throws: 14/16/13/12/15

Abilities: Pick Pockets 30, Open Locks 25, Find Traps 20, Move Silently 15, Hide in Shadows 10, Hear Noise 10, Climb Walls 85, Back Stab

Possessions: Leather Armour, Short Bow (50 ft), Twelve Arrows (1d6), Short Sword (1d6), Dagger (1d4), Lock Picks,

A cautious man with a keen mind, a swift blade, and a strong instinct for survival. Talus prefers not to have to engage his foes in close quarter fighting, but neither is he averse to stealing upon them by stealth and striking unawares. He saw service as a scout in his early youth, but prefers the taverns to the trees. To all appearances, Talus is a good natured man and free with his money, but at heart he is avaricious and takes insults badly.

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## Pregenerated Player Characters

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**Thagos** (Level One Human Cleric) Alignment Neutral Good

Strength 14, Dexterity 10, Constitution 15, Intelligence 12, Wisdom 15, Charisma 13, Movement 90 ft, Armour Class 4, Hit Points 9,

Saving Throws: 14/16/10/13/15

Possessions: Helmet, Mail Armour, Large Shield, Heavy Mace (1d6+1), Holy Symbol,

Spells: *Bless* (1), *Cure Light Wounds* (2),

A devoted and pious servant of righteousness, as well as a canny fighter, wise in the ways of war and men. Thagos is an ordained priest, but he is also part of an order of warriors endorsed and established by his religious superiors to help defend the marches against the threat of marauders. He is a serious soul and disciplined, but not averse to joviality, a combination of traits that often puts him in good stead with others.

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**Heldras** (Level One Human Magic User) Alignment Neutral

Strength 10, Dexterity 15, Constitution 10, Intelligence 16, Wisdom 12, Charisma 11, Movement 120 ft, Armour Class 9, Hit Points 4,

Saving Throws: 11/15/14/13/12

Possessions: Robes, Spell Book, Staff (1d6), Dagger (1d4),

Spells: *Sleep*(1),

A secretive man, perceptive and very intelligent, as well as learned in the ways of sorcery and magic. Heldras is a native of the marches and is familiar with the wilderness, having dwelt there long years whilst learning the lessons of his master. Now he seeks to put his skills to use and perhaps unravel through experience more of the mysteries of his art. Heldras is not an unfriendly individual, but he is focused on his own goals.

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**Sunara** (Level One Half Elf Magic User/Thief) Alignment Neutral

Strength 12, Dexterity 15, Constitution 12, Intelligence 15, Wisdom 12, Charisma 13, Movement 120 ft, Armour Class 7, Hit Points 5,

Saving Throws: 11/15/13/12/12

Abilities: Pick Pockets 40, Open Locks 25, Find Traps 20, Move Silently 15, Hide in Shadows 15, Hear Noise 10, Climb Walls 85, Back Stab, Resist *Sleep* or *Charm* 30,

Possessions: Leather Armour, Short Bow (50 ft), Twelve Arrows (1d6), Short Sword (1d6), Dagger (1d4), Lock Picks, Spell Book,

Spells: *Charm Person* (1),

A woman of many talents, both magical and mundane. Sunara has elvish ancestors and, some think as a result, a great aptitude for stealth and sorcery. She prefers the methods of trickery and deception to open conflict, but is not unaccustomed to drawing blood. Sunara finds the wild borders well suited to her needs, though her preference is for the familiar comforts of civilisation over the hardships of the unknown.

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## Monsters

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**Orc Captain:** HD 1, MV 90, AC 4, HP 15, SV 16/17/14/15/17, AL Lawful Evil, XP 50,  
Possessions: Spear (1d6+1), *Battle Axe* +1 (1d8+2), Dagger (1d4+1),  
Abilities: Add +1 to hit when using *Battle Axe*.

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7

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**Orc Sergeant:** HD 1, MV 90, AC 4, HP 10, SV 16/17/14/15/17, AL Lawful Evil, XP 30,  
Possessions: Spear (1d6+1) or Long Bow (70 ft/1d6+1), Scimitar (1d8+1), Dagger (1d4+1),

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8

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**Orc:** HD 1, MV 90, AC 6, HP 5, SV 16/17/14/15/17, AL Lawful Evil, XP 20,  
Possessions: Spear (1d6) or Long Bow (70 ft/1d6), Scimitar (1d8), Dagger (1d4),

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9

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**Goblin:** HD 1-1, MV 60, AC 6, HP 4, SV 18/20/16/17/19, AL, Lawful Evil, XP 15,  
Possessions: Spear (1d6) or Short Bow (50 ft/1d6), Short Sword (1d6), Dagger (1d4)

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10

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**Elf Ranger:** HD 1+1, MV 120, AC 7, HP 8, SV 16/17/14/15/17, AL Neutral Good,  
Possessions: Leather Armour, Long Bow (70 ft/1d6+1), Dagger (1d4),  
Abilities: Add +1 to hit when using Long Bow, Resist *Sleep* or *Charm* 90, surprises enemies 5  
in 6, only surprised on a 1; add 1 to chance to discover secret and concealed doors.

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10

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**Human Slave:** HD 1-1, MV 90, AC 10, HP 4, SV 18/20/16/17/19, AL Neutral,

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11

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**Note:** The game master should feel free to substitute weapons as he feels appropriate, such as an axe for a sword, or a mace, pick or hammer; for the purposes of this fast play module, they function as the weapon substituted.

## Monsters

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**Drake:** HD 8, MV 90, AC 3, HP 40, SV 12/12/10/11/13, AL Neutral Evil, XP 2,000, Abilities: Attacks three times per round; Claw (1d6+2)/Claw (1d6+2)/Bite (2d8). Can breathe a 10ft stream of fire for 2d6 damage up to a range of 150 ft. Those who succeed on making a saving throw versus Breath Weapons (b) reduce damage by half.

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2

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**Troll:** HD 6+6, MV 120, AC 4, SV 12/12/10/11/13, AL, Chaotic Evil, XP 800, Abilities: Attacks three times per round; Claw (1d6)/Claw (1d6)/Bite (1d4). Begins to Regenerate three hit points per round after three rounds of combat; only fire or acid to be truly destroyed.

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3

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**Wounded Owlbear:** HD 5+2, MV 120, AC 5, HP 10, SV 13/13/11/12/14, AL Neutral, XP 300, Abilities: Attacks three times per round; Claw (1d6)/Claw (1d6)/Bite (1d4); a character hit by an 18+ from a claw attack is caught up in a bear hug for 2d8 damage per round.

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4

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**Ogre:** HD 4+1, MV 90, AC 5, HP21, SV 13/13/11/12/14, AL Chaotic Evil, XP 150, Possessions: Iron Shod Club (1d10+2)

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5

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**Giant Spider:** HD 2+2, MV 150, AC 6, HP 10, SV 15/16/13/14/16, AL Neutral, XP 180, Abilities: Attacks for 1d6 damage, injecting a poison that immobilises after a number of rounds equal to the victim's constitution, if not saved (c) against with a +3 bonus.

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7

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**Wolf:** HD 2+2, MV 180, AC 7, HP 10, SV 15/16/13/14/16, AL Neutral, XP 60, Abilities: Attacks with a Bite (1d4+1).

<b>Armour Class</b>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>To Hit Roll</b>	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7

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### **Bless** (Reversible)

*Clerical Conjuration/Summoning*  
Level: *Cleric 1*  
Range: *60 ft*  
Duration: *6 rounds*

Area of Effect: *50 x 50 ft*  
Components: *V,S,M*  
Casting Time: *1 round*  
Saving Throw: *None*

This minor benison raises the morale and attack rolls of any creatures allied with the casting cleric by +1 or +5% as appropriate. Any creatures already engaged in melee combat will not gain the spell's benefits. The spell is reversible, allowing the cleric to curse his or her enemies with—5% morale and -1 to hit. The spell's area of effect is a circular area centred at the target point, which cannot be more than 60 ft from the cleric. Holy water is required to cast the spell (unholy water for the reverse).

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### **Cure Light Wounds** (Reversible)

*Clerical Necromancy*  
Level: *Cleric 1*  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: *Instantaneous (Permanent)*

Area of Effect: *Creature touched*  
Components: *V,S*  
Casting Time: *5 segments*  
Saving Throw: *None (Neg.)*

*Cure light wounds* allows the cleric to lay hands upon a wounded creature, restoring 1d8 hit points to the spell's beneficiary. The reverse of the spell operates in the same manner (although requiring a to hit roll), but inflicts 1d8 hit points rather than healing. If the cleric fails to hit while casting *cause light wounds*, the spell is lost. This spell does not heal disease, reattach limbs, or bring back the dead, nor can it add hit points beyond a character's normal number. Non-corporeal creatures are not affected by this spell, nor are undead, nor are creatures that are harmed only by iron, silver, or magical weapons.

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### **Charm Person**

*Arcane Enchantment/Charm*  
Level: *Magic user 1*  
Range: *120 ft*  
Duration: *See below*

Area of Effect: *One person*  
Components: *V,S*  
Casting Time: *1 segment*  
Saving Throw: *Negates*

The powerful enchantment woven by this spell will affect any "person," meaning character races (but note that elves are 90% resistant), and other small to man-sized bipeds analogous to persons (orcs, goblins, etc.) up to a ceiling of one hit die of charmed creatures per character level at any one time. If the target creature fails a saving throw, it will view the magic user as a trusted friend, interpreting his or her every word in its most positive light. Charmed creatures will place themselves into moderate danger, including combat, on the caster's behalf, but will not undertake risks beyond those the creature might ordinarily take. The magic user must be able to talk to the charmed creature if he or she is to give it any sort of complex "request." Charmed creatures are allowed periodic saving throws to break the charm, based on intelligence. The charm will be broken automatically if the magic user obviously tries to harm the charmed creature.

## Spells

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### Invisibility

*Arcane Illusion/Phantasm*  
Level: *Magic user 2*  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: *See below*

Area of Effect: *One creature*  
Components: *V,S,M*  
Casting Time: *2 segments*  
Saving Throw: *None*

When the words of this spell are completed, the recipient and all he or she carries fade from sight, becoming invisible. Even infravision cannot detect an invisible creature. The spell remains in effect until the invisible creature attacks someone, the caster ends the spell, or the magic is dispelled. Note that the spell does not make the recipient any more quiet than normal, nor does it eliminate scents. The invisible person can see him- or herself, but the caster (unless they are one and the same) cannot. The spell cannot be cast upon an unwilling subject.

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### Knock

*Arcane Transmutation/ Alteration*  
Level: *Magic user 2*  
Range: *60 ft*  
Duration: *See below*

Area of Effect: *10 square ft/ level*  
Components: *V*  
Casting Time: *1 segment*  
Saving Throw: *None*

The powerful magic words of a *knock* spell open doors that are stuck, barred, locked, or even *wizard locked*. Chains (even those that are welded) and chests will also spring open under this spell. Doors that operate by gravity, such as portcullises, will not be opened by means of the spell. If a door is secured by a number of devices, only two will be opened by the spell; a triple-locked door is proof against a single casting of the enchantment.

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### Sleep

*Arcane Enchantment/ Charm*  
Level: *Magic user 1*  
Range: *30 ft + 10 ft/ level*  
Duration: *5 rounds/ level*

Area of Effect: *See below*  
Components: *V,S,M*  
Casting Time: *1 segment*  
Saving Throw: *None*

This spell affects a circular area with a 15 ft radius. A number of creatures within this radius (determined by their HD) fall into a deep magical slumber with no saving throw allowed. Magically sleeping creatures may be killed or tied up at a rate of one per round by a single person, or can be attacked at twice the normal rate with an automatic hit for maximum damage, if the attacker chooses not to kill or bind them. A sleeping creature requires a full round to waken and must be shaken or slapped to bring it to consciousness; mere noise, however loud, will not disturb the enchanted slumber of a *sleep* spell's victim. The number of enemies affected by the spell is a function of their hit dice (4d4 HD in total, partials counting as 2 HD). If there are creatures of different hit dice in the area, the weaker ones will be affected first. Creatures with hit dice over 4+4 are not affected by the spell.

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