



Explorers find a golden locket inside an abandoned cave.

THE TROUBLE WITH IN-LAWS

BY WILLIAM KENOWER

Treachery is relative

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Bill writes: "I would like to thank my father who had the forethought twenty years ago to buy me a little white box with three brown books in it, which has since allowed me to waste all that in life's worth wasting."

"The Trouble With In-Laws" is an AD&D® adventure for 3–8 characters of levels 1–3 (about 8 total levels). It is helpful if one of the higher-level characters is a fighter.

The adventure takes place in and around Pembrose, a medium-sized port city that thrives on trade and the rich natural resources surrounding it. One principal character in the adventure is Lord Donovan Grange, a prominent and politically powerful noble living in Pembrose.

For the DM

Not long ago, Warden Grange, the only child of Lord Grange, fell in love with and married Dolores Bankhead, the daughter of a moderately successful wine merchant in the city. Lord Grange forbade the marriage, but Warden went ahead with it anyway and lived with Dolores in a small home behind her father's wine shop.

Lord Grange was outraged. He had planned to marry his son to the daughter of another local noble, further consolidating his power. Three weeks before the start of the adventure, he commanded the captain of his guard, Rekken Filsner, to kidnap Dolores and intimidate her into leaving Warden.

The kidnapping was successful, but Rekken—who was himself a scoundrel and who had grown to despise Lord Grange—had his own ideas. He quickly rounded up a crew of thugs, kidnapped Dolores, and took her to Fillmore Keep, a ruined stronghold about a day's journey from Pembrose. He then sent a blackmail note to Lord Grange, saying that if he wanted his part of this business kept secret he should send along 1,000 gp. Rekken sent another note to Warden, demanding 2,000 gp for the return of his bride. When Warden—who could muster only half the ransom—was not forthcoming with the gold, Rekken sent one of his accomplices, Widen Boll, to Pembrose with Dolores' wedding locket and a grisly note about the precarious state of the neck around which the gold locket

once hung. Things went awry when Widen, before delivering the necklace, stopped off at the Pot-Bellied Ale House and met two old friends named Freddie Pinritter and Denton Hought, who were off to explore some nearby caves that they believed contained an orcish burial chamber. The three never returned.

For the Players

What follows is one scenario by which the DM can begin the adventure. Since all that is required is for the PCs to explore a small cave complex outside of Pembrose, the DM may have the PCs come across a map in another adventure or hear a rumor about the orcish burial caves.

You are on your way to the port city of Pembrose, lured by the promise of adventure or employment. Still several hours north of the city, you decide to stop for the evening and set up camp in a cozy hillside cave that seems an ideal shelter.

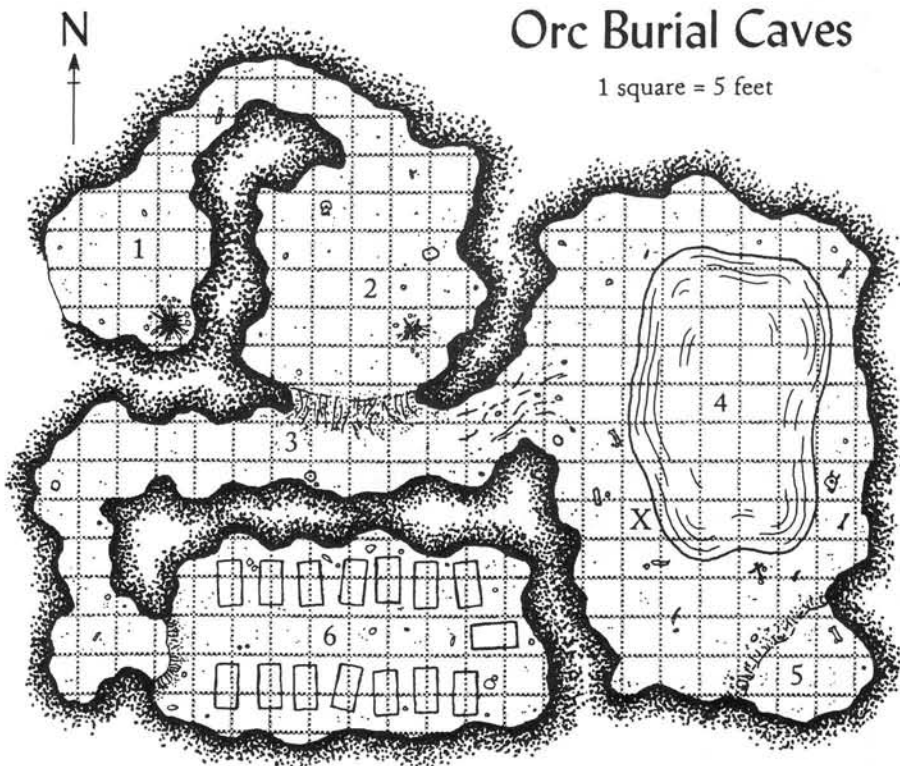
Before setting about the business of bedding down for the night, you notice that the darkened corner in the northeast part of the cave is actually a narrow opening just wide enough for a man to pass through. It occurs to you that you might want to explore this passage before using the cave as a refuge.

The Caves

1. Entrance Cave. There are signs that this small cave (7' ceiling) has been used before as shelter: an old fire pit toward the southeast, small animal bones, broken armor bindings, and the like. There is also an abundance of cobwebs.

If the PCs decide to remain in the cave but do not to investigate the opening to the northeast, the huge spiders from areas 4 and 5 attack them in the middle of the night, springing at whatever unfortunate PC is on watch and imposing a -2 penalty to surprise.

2. Cavern With Drop-Off. The narrow tunnel opens into a larger cave that also appears to have been used as a campsite in the past. There are more chicken and rabbit bones strewn about, as well as an orc's



skull. (The DM might require PCs to make a tracking proficiency roll to identify these bones.)

The southern wall drops away sharply—a 60-degree decline sloping 15 feet down to area 3. The ramp is slick and relatively smooth, so those without the Climb Walls ability, mountaineering proficiency, or jumping proficiency need a secured rope to help them down.

3. Intersection Cave. The noises of anyone falling or tumbling into this cave from area 2 echo loudly and alert the huge spiders in area 5 that dinner is on the way. The passage leading east slopes down noticeably to area 4, while the tunnel leading west remains fairly even.

4. Cavern With Pool. The floor of this large cavern slopes down gradually to a pool of water in the center. The ceiling arches into the darkness 15 feet to 20 feet above. The pool's water is quite drinkable, and the pool itself is 4' deep in the center.

As the PCs enter this cavern, their torch or lantern light (assuming they do not all possess infravision) reflects off the pool, revealing an absolute clutter of bones and animal hides on its shore.

Amid all this clutter, at the position marked "X" on the map, the PCs notice a gold glimmer. If they investigate, they find a gold locket lying among the refuse. (See "About the Locket" below.)

Unfortunately, the locket is also lying at a perfect leaping distance for the huge spiders in area 5. As soon as a character reaches the "X", the spiders pounce. Characters suffer a -6 penalty to their surprise rolls when attacked in this fashion.

Searching the debris around the pool uncovers a dagger, a short sword, and a belt pouch containing 35 cp. Neither the dagger nor the short sword are extraordinary in any way.

5. Spider Ledge. A 4' high ledge stretches back to the east, forming a small chamber. Cobwebs obscure the ledge from a distance greater than

ten feet. The ledge serves as the spiders' nest and launching pad, the water below attracting ample prey.

Presently, the spiders' nest contains the bodies of their three most recent victims: Widen Boll, Freddy Pinritter, and Denton Hought. All three wear leather armor, and two of them carry short swords—still sheathed. (Denton dropped his short sword by the pool in area 4.) The threesome were killed only yesterday and would have been the spiders' meal this evening.

Freddy is short and chubby, Denton is tall and thin, and Widen has a medium build but is bald and wears a leather patch over his left eye. Scattered about the nest are 120 sp, 38 gp, and a small topaz gem worth 75 gp.

Huge spiders (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 14, 12; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA poison (Type A; save at +1), leap; SZ M (6' diameter); ML 8; XP 270; MM/326.

6. Orcish Burial Chamber. This was Freddy, Denton and Widen's true destination, but they took an unfortunate wrong turn. The tunnel ends in a small ledge that drops 20 feet to the chamber below.

Years ago, an orc tribe buried their chieftain and his bodyguards here. The tribe was wiped out, but the tomb remains. Spaced evenly along the cave perimeter are 15 sarcophagi, their lids inscribed with crude orcish poetry.

It will quickly become clear to the PCs that they are not the first to have stumbled onto this sacred ground. Every lid has been pushed aside, and the sarcophagi contain nothing but dust and cobwebs.

About the Locket

When the PCs decide to examine the gold locket (found in area 4), read the following:

On closer examination, you see the locket is a beautifully-crafted gold heart suspended from a delicate gold chain, the clasp of which remains intact.

Then, should they decide to open the locket:

Inside, there is an inscription: *For Dolores: My life; my love.* Warden Grange. You recognize the jewelry you are holding as a wedding locket. It is local custom among the upper class that the groom, on the wedding night, should give his new bride such a token of his undying love.

As you close the locket, you realize that the name Grange sounds familiar, but you can't quite place where you've heard it ...

PCs with the local history proficiency can roll a proficiency check at +2 to determine whether or not they recognize the name Grange. Or, if you want to ensure the adventure moves along quickly, simply say that it comes to the PCs after a moment of reflection.

Things As They Are

Dolores has been missing for three weeks. Lord Grange is worried that word of his involvement will leak. He has already sent the blackmail money to Rekken, but he knows through his son that Dolores still has not returned. The stress is beginning to show around the Grange manor.

Warden is deranged with grief and, not having 2,000 gp himself, has gone to his father for the money. Still furious over his son's unsolicited marriage, Lord Grange refused to bow to the kidnapers' demands, instead saying he would use his influence with the governor to hunt down the kidnapers. (Lord Grange has made no such motion. He is concerned that if Dolores is returned, she will have learned of his involvement through her captors.)

Rekken and his band are growing impatient and wondering what has happened to Widen.

Off to Pembrose

Most likely, the next destination is Pembrose. It is a walled city, the gates to which are closed come nightfall. Otherwise, people come and go as they please. If you wish to hasten the adventure, you can state that the PCs are familiar with Pembrose already, having visited the city during their non-adventuring lives.

If the PCs are not interested in

returning the locket to its rightful owner, there is no adventure. The locket could fetch 100 gp, but no pawn dealer in the city is willing to accept a wedding locket given by the son of Lord Grange, and they say as much. These pawn brokers are aware that Lord Grange's son was married earlier this year, but they do not know anything about Dolores' kidnapping or how her wedding locket ended up in the possession of strangers. Knowing this, PCs of good alignment should be discouraged from selling the locket.

Eventually, the PCs get around to the business of finding out exactly who Warden and Dolores Grange are and why the locket was in the caves. What follows is a list of the people whom the PCs might meet over the course of their investigation. Should the PCs seek help or information from a source not listed here, use your best judgment; remember, Pembrose is a good-sized city, and it is unlikely that anyone not listed below knows anything about Warden and Dolores Grange other than they are members of the city's lower aristocracy, thanks largely to the influence of Warden's father.

The PCs' search eventually takes them to the rougher sections of the city wherein they might have an encounter or two. (Refer to the "Encounters in Pembrose" sidebar.)

Who Knows What

Lord Grange. Donovan Grange lives in a well-protected manor in the wealthiest part of the city. The guard at the gate is unwilling to fetch the Lord until the PCs show him the necklace and locket.

If the PCs are belligerent or threatening, the gate guard signals two more guards atop the manor roof. These guards are armed with light crossbows and attack only if PCs try to force their way inside. All guards are 1st-level fighters wearing chain mail and carrying long swords.

Lord Grange is in his fifties. Although not a big man, he carries an air of authority and power. He is garbed in the finest clothes and wears a handsome maroon cape. If the PCs show him the locket and mention where they found it, read or paraphrase the following:

Lord Grange shakes his head gravely. "As I feared. The poor girl. Dolores disappeared three weeks ago. The local authorities were notified immediately, but they were unable to find her. You say you found this north of the city? It seems the kidnappers were not planning to wait around for the ransom. I fear now we may have lost her. What a tragedy. Perhaps I am wrong—hopefully, I am. But ... well, this does not bode well."

If questioned, he informs the PCs that his son is living behind Bankhead Wine & Spirits. If pressed, Lord Grange provides brief directions. Lord Grange is not interested, however, in any kind of investigation and offers very little information beyond what is described above. If the PCs pester him, he will say, "I'm afraid I really cannot help you. If I were you, I would leave this matter to the authorities." If they persist in querying him, he directs them to the City Jail where Armen Foster, the head constable and loyal ally of the Lord, attempts to take the investigation out of the PCs' hands. (See Armen below.)

If the PCs ask Lord Grange about Rekken Filsner at any time, he grimaces and explains that his once-loyal Captain of the Guard was dismissed for belligerence. He is certain that Rekken no longer resides in Pembrose.

Lord Donovan Grange: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; XP 15; dagger.

Monty Delwart. Once second in command, now Captain of Lord Grange's small guard, Monty overheard enough to put together that Rekken and perhaps Lord Grange himself are somehow involved in Dolores' recent abduction.

While the PCs are talking to Lord Grange, they see Monty standing around, watching the proceedings with interest. When they are done with the Lord, he follows them at a discreet distance. He will not speak to them inside the walls of the manor, instead waiting until they are outside the manor where he addresses them in a hushed voice. At this point, read or paraphrase the following:

"Something's funny, I tell you. I know m'Lord was none too pleased with Warden going and marrying Dolores. Not pleased at all. Then one night he's talking to Rekken Filsner—the Captain of the Manor Guard before me—and I hear m'Lord say something like "find her." Or something like that. Next thing I know, Rekken and Dolores are both gone. Then, m'Lord says Rekken was belligerent, demanding higher pay, and that I'm the new head of the guard. I don't understand it, but that's what I know. If anyone asks, you didn't hear it from me. I like my head where it is—right on top of my neck."

Monty says that Lord Grange has been very anxious of late, even more abrupt with the help than usual. If the PCs revisit Monty a day or more after having spoken with Lord Grange, he adds that Grange has been noticeably more agreeable since their first visit. (The return of Dolores' wedding locket has led Lord Grange to think that neither Dolores nor Rekken will trouble him any longer, and that Warden might be free once again to wed a lady of Lord Grange's choosing.)

If the PCs describe Widen Boll to Monty, he recalls seeing a bald man with an eye patch talking to Rekken just outside the manor several weeks ago. He adds that Widen looked like a ruffian and suggests that the PCs make some inquiries down in the low-rent district.

Monty Delwart: AL LG; AC 5; MV 9; F3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 14; chain mail, long sword.

Warden Grange: Behind Bankhead Wine & Spirits is a modest dwelling. If the PCs knock on the door, a pale young man answers.

The man is Warden Grange. He is visibly distraught over the loss of his wife. If they show him the gold locket, he, like his father, assumes the worst. He pulls at his hair and cries, "Oh, why didn't I just give them what I had? Why did I let my father talk me out of that?"

Warden does not suspect his father of perpetrating her kidnapping. Despite their differences, Warden admires and respects his father and

is appalled at the suggestion that Lord Grange might in some way be involved. Warden is not so sure about Rekken, on the other hand. Rekken might have met Dolores once or twice, and at least once Warden recalls the strange way Rekken looked at her (as if he knew something about Dolores that no one else knew).

Warden offers to give the PCs 750 gp (his entire savings) if they find his missing wife.

Warden Grange: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; unarmed.

Jezzel Bankhead: Dolores' father can be found in the store and is equally despondent over Dolores' disappearance. Unlike Warden, he has no respect for Lord Grange. He is furious that Lord Grange convinced Warden not to pay the ransom immediately. Jezzel offered to donate 250 gp (his savings) toward Dolores' ransom, but knowing this won't suffice, he's at his wit's end. He gives the 250 gp to PCs if they find his daughter and return her alive, but for the sake of his business, he's counting on a bit more charity.

Jezzel Bankhead: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; unarmed.

Armen Foster: Armen is the Head Constable in Pembrose and operates out of his office at the City Jail. Armen is a rough-looking character, his face having never fully recovered from the brawls of his youth. If the PCs ask him about Rekken, he says Rekken is wanted for robbery. Armen declines to elaborate. (In fact, Rekken has not committed any crime other than the kidnapping of Dolores and the blackmail of Lord Grange. It is for the latter crime that Armen wants Rekken's head.)

If the PCs describe Widen Boll to Armen, he says Widen is a notorious thug who spends too much time at the Pot-Bellied Ale House.

If, on the other hand, the PCs show him the locket or let it be known they are investigating Dolores' disappearance, he takes the locket, thanks them, and shows them the door. He never speaks to the PCs

Encounters in Pembrose (Roll 1d4)

1. Thugs. If it is evening, "The Handsome Blades" (as they call themselves) will step out of an alley, surround the PCs, and demand their money. They have no interest in fighting to the death and flee as soon as they are outnumbered two-to-one.

Thugs (6): AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; T2; hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab (x2); SD move silently (15%), hide in shadows (15%); ML 11; XP 65; leather armor, short sword, 2d4 sp each.

2. Constable. Fatty Duggan (as rotund as his name suggests) stops the PCs to question them. He considers adventuring a dishonorable profession and harasses the PCs, saying, "How have ya paid a fair tax on all the booty you've been pilfering from the King's forests and caves? Or are ya just pocketing it without any thanks to the King for providing you with constables like myself and high walls around the cities to keep you safe at night?"

Fatty is looking for 5–10 gp per PC. If they flatly refuse to pay, he backs off with a stern warning about the perils of the life they have chosen.

Fatty Duggan: AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; F3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 65; chain mail, footman's mace, 2d6 gp.

3. The Sting. As the PCs pass a dark alley, they hear a "Psst!" Turning, they see a man wearing a dark cloak. This is Jasper Parneky, a small-time thief and mugger. Jasper tries to lure the PCs into the alley to sell them what he claims is a magical dagger. Meanwhile, his two companions, the half-ogres Thon and Otto, are lurking in a doorway and spring out as soon as the PCs are in the shadows.

If the PCs ask why the sale must be made in a dark alley, Jasper impatiently explains that sales of such items are illegal in Pembrose (a lie). Needless to say, the dagger is not magical.

Jasper Parneky: AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; T3; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab (x2); SD hide in shadows (25%), move silently (25%); ML 11; XP 120; leather armor, short sword, dagger, belt pouch with 75 sp and 52 gp.

Thon and Otto (half-ogres): INT low (7); AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 2+6; hp 17, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +2; ML 12; SZ L; XP 270; MM/274; club.

4. Shady Peddler. Fitzer Rice, a slimy little fellow, has a strongbox of goods he carries under his arm. He claims to possess many magical items. The strongbox holds three daggers, a short sword, a bracelet, an amulet, a necklace, herbs, a tiara, and many earrings. Fitzer tries to get between 10–25 gp for any item. Everything is basically worthless—the weapons are dull, the jewelry fake—except the herbs which, unknown to Fitzer, are actually quite rare and, if mixed properly with other ingredients, produce a mild healing potion (treat as *potion of healing*). Knowing no better, Fitzer claims that the herbs grant terrific strength to whoever consumes them, and he's charging 15 gp for the bunch.

A PC with the herbalism proficiency is entitled to a proficiency check to recognize the herbs; if the first roll is successful, another proficiency check should be made to see whether the PC knows how to prepare the healing potion properly.

Fitzer is an acquaintance of Widen Boll's. He knows that Widen left the city with two other men, passing through the north gate, but has seen neither Widen nor his friends since. He does not recall the names of the other two individuals.

Fitzer Rice: AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 6; XP 15; dagger.



Encounters on the Way to Twain (Roll 1d4)

1. Hobgoblin Ambush. A band of eight hobgoblins are waiting in the trees in ambush unsuspecting travelers. Half of them are armed with short bows and fire as many volleys as possible before the entire group closes on the PCs. The hobgoblins retreat when half their numbers are slain.

Hobgoblins (8): INT average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 11; XP 35; MM/191; scimitar, short bow, four arrows each.

2. Rain. A miserable pouring rain begins that slows movement by a third and cuts visibility in half. If possible, the rain should begin shortly after the PCs leave Pembrose; this can be coupled with other encounters.

3. Loggers. Four loggers are on their way to Pembrose. They are riding three horse-drawn carts stacked with cut wood to be sold in the city. The men are friendly and wave amiably to the PCs as they pass.

If the PCs want to ask questions, the loggers stop a moment and, if it's lunch time, share a meal. They have never heard of Dolores Grange, Widen Boll, or Rekken Filsner, though they are familiar with Lord Grange by name only. If asked about Fillmore Keep, they say it's a "beat-up old stronghold that's been empty as long as anyone can remember." If pressed, one of the loggers reports a woodsman's claim that men have been seen wandering around the keep as recently as a week ago.

4. Wild Boars. This pair of hungry boars comes charging through the forest toward the PCs. The boars continue to fight until reduced to –7 hp.

Wild boars (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 16, 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; ML 9; SZ M; XP 175; MM/241.

after this. He offers no information. Armen is in league with Lord Grange and has no intention of letting the Lord's name be dragged into the affair.

Should the PCs threaten or attack Armen, they will certainly have their hands full. Armen is specialized with the short sword and has two guards

stationed outside his office at all times. They can join combat in one round; ten more guards arrive the round after that from the adjacent barracks.

Even if the PCs are lucky enough to defeat Armen and his men, they must leave the jail covered in blood. At this point, finding Dolores will

probably take a back seat to avoiding arrest and execution.

Armen Foster: AL NE; AC 3; MV 9; F4; hp 30; THAC0 17 (15 with short sword); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17 (+1/+1), D 16, C 15, I 13, W 9, Ch 9; ML 13; XP 270; chain mail, short sword (specialized; +1 to hit, +2 dmg).

City guards (12): AL N; AC 5; MV 9; F2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 35; chain mail, halberd, short sword.

Any Constable, Scoundrel or Low-Rent District Inhabitant: To gain information about Widen Boll, the PCs must work their way down to the southern part of Pembrose, where criminals, thugs, and adventurers spend most of their time. Here, any of the aforementioned NPCs has a 40% chance of having seen Widen, his bald pate and eyepatch making him very recognizable. For a small bribe (10 gp), the PCs can learn that Widen was a frequent patron at the Pot-Bellied Ale House. Those who know Widen inform PCs that he was always in trouble with the law and up to no good.

If the PCs look for Widen at the Pot-Bellied Ale House, they encounter Raskin, Fenky, and Harold (detailed below).

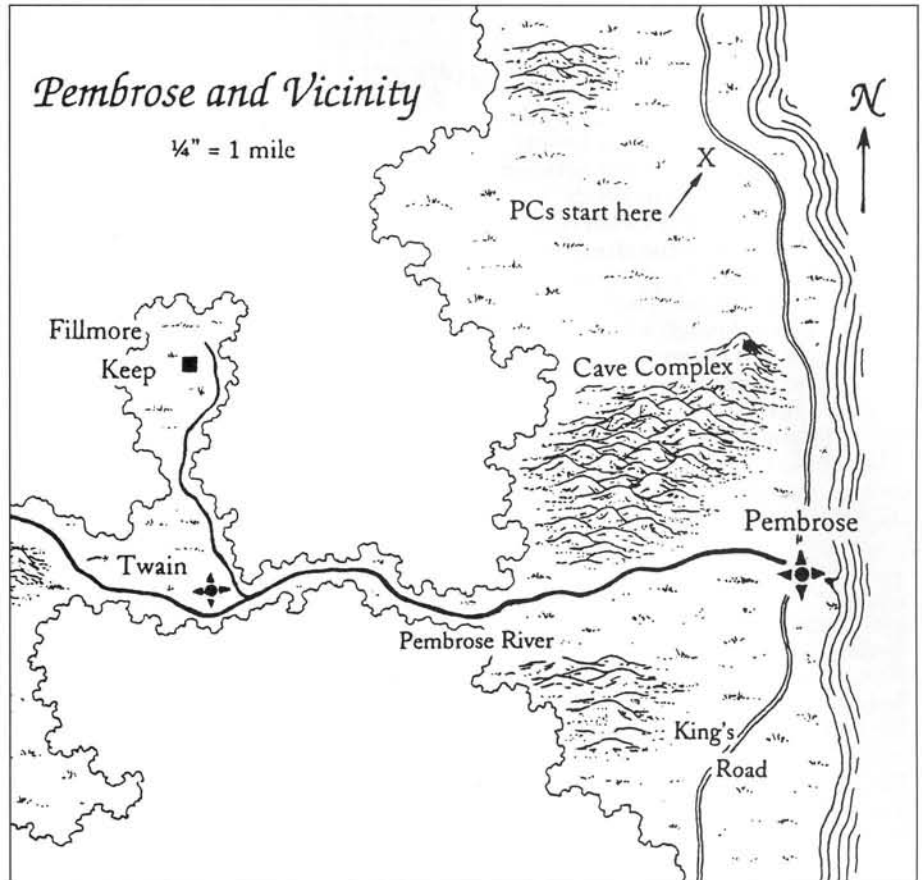
Raskin Freed: Raskin is a regular at the Pot-Bellied Ale House. He saw Widen earlier with Freddy and Denton (whom Raskin knows). Raskin overheard the mangy three-some taking about an orcish burial ground located somewhere north of the city.

Raskin Freed: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; ML 7; dagger,

Harold Hargrave, Bartender at the Pot-Bellied Ale House: Harold witnessed the conversation between Widen and Rekken. If asked, he tells the PCs that Rekken was an unusual presence at the Ale House. He also heard Widen asking Fenton Bottom, a popular bard at the Ale House, if he had ever visited Fillmore Keep in his travels. If the PCs express any desire to speak with the bard, Harold knows that Fenton receives regular business at Grezzel's Ale House and the Lonesome Soldier Inn.

Harold Hargrave: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; club.

Fenton Bottom: Fenton is a well-known and well-liked personality in the ale houses and inns of Pembrose. The PCs can find him at the Lonesome Soldier Inn, telling stories and



singing songs to a group of 1d6+4 off-duty city guards. PCs wanted by Armen Foster (or accused of attacking the constable) are recognized by the city guards who are present unless the PCs take great pains to disguise their identities. Their other option is to remain outside the Inn until Fenton leaves and speak to him then.

Fenton is always forthcoming with information. Should the PCs ask him about Fillmore Keep and Widen in general, read or paraphrase the following:

"Sure I knew Widen, the louse. Went with him once looking for a cache of rubies misplaced by some bugbears, and I think the fool picked my pocket. No matter. He was curious about Fillmore Keep, so I told him it was a ruined stronghold north of Twain, its dungeon intact but probably plundered ages ago. Don't know why he was curious, he would not say. Very secretive. Well, that was a couple of

weeks ago. I don't trust him for a moment—neither him nor his so-called friends."

If asked, Fenton tells the PCs that Fillmore Keep is located just a few miles north of the village of Twain, which can be reached by following the Pembrose River west for a day or so. He does not know Rekken, Lord Grange, or Warden. He does know Armen, the Head Constable, and dislikes him profoundly. He cannot be enticed to accompany the PCs, as he has recently returned from another adventure and has not finished spending all the gold thereby acquired, as is his policy. He's also made commitments to perform at several of the local establishments.

Fenton Bottom: AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; B3; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD rogue abilities; S 12, D 16, C 12, I 13, W 12, Ch 16; ML 12; short sword, lute, pouch with 95 gp.

Spells memorized: *color spray*, *ventriloquism*.

On the Way to Twain

Following the Pembrose River, the village of Twain lies one day's walk or half a day's ride west of the city. The river is gently-flowing, about twenty yards wide (on average), and between 5' and 15' deep. The countryside between Pembrose and Twain is primarily hills (north of the river) and farmland (south of the river) until about 10 miles outside Twain where the river flows through a light forest. There is a 1 in 6 chance per hour of a random encounter occurring along the river. (See the "Encounters on the Way to Twain" sidebar on page 44.)

Regardless of whether the PCs have an encounter, read the following when they are about a mile outside of Twain:

As you rest a moment, you hear something crashing through the forest from the north. A moment later, a rough-looking man in studded leather armor appears, sweating and panting. He carries a sword in one hand, a shield in the other. He sees you, stops, thinks a moment, then hurries in your direction.

The man is Basil Stump. He is dressed in studded leather armor and carries a broad sword and small shield. If asked why he is hurrying, he claims that he's being chased by some orcs. When no orcs appear behind him, he will explain he must have lost them. He is skittish and eager to be on his way.

Basil is actually a defecting member of Rekken's gang. Basil, who had a weak stomach for kidnapping to begin with, suggested to Rekken that they take the 1,000 gp from Lord Grange, release Dolores, and be done with it. Rekken considered this tantamount to insubordination and before the entire band of men gave him three lashes with a whip and a stern lecture about solidarity. Basil snuck out the following night. Fearful that Rekken will find and kill him, Basil wants to leave the area and get far away from Pembrose.

Basil does not plan to stand long and chat. However, his dislike for Rekken is severe enough at this point that if questioned specifically about Dolores, Rekken, or Lord Grange, he

reveals what he knows:

- ❖ Dolores is being held in one of the few functional cells in the dungeon of the keep.

- ❖ The keep is enclosed by a stone wall that has collapsed in several places. Rekken has guards patrolling the courtyard at all times. Guards armed with crossbows typically watch the vicinity around the keep from the keep's many towers.

- ❖ There are about a dozen men guarding the keep.

- ❖ Rekken is a fierce, crafty fighter and not to be taken lightly.

Basil refuses to accompany the PCs to Twain or the keep. Nothing they say can convince him to join the party; however, a *charm person* spell makes him more receptive to the caster's wishes, but he receives a second saving throw if instructed to return to the keep. As soon as the PCs are finished with him, he heads west along the river.

Basil Stump: AL N; AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; studded leather armor, shield, broad sword.

Fillmore Keep

There is a brook that runs north from the Pembrose River out of Twain. If followed for three miles through the forest, it eventually flows through a large clearing. Fillmore Keep sits on top of a small rise in the middle of the clearing. It's about 200 yards from the edge of the forest to the keep. There are enough bushes, trees and high grass between the keep and the forest for the PCs, if they proceed with care, to approach the keep unseen.

Here is where the PCs have their strategic abilities tested. Rekken has devised a number of defensive precautions.

If the PCs are spotted outside the walls of the keep, and it is determined that they are hostile or curious, Rekken positions one guard with a crossbow in each of the four corner towers. Three more with crossbows are placed on the parapet walls with instructions to go where the fighting is heaviest. If the PCs are employing guerrilla tactics instead of rushing the keep outright, Rekken dispatches Rothgy and three guards to circle around and ambush the PCs. Rothgy

is no fool, and if an ambush seems impractical—if the PCs are hunkered down and keeping close watch—he returns to the keep. Rekken and the remaining guards patrol the courtyard, keeping an eye on the many gaps in the walls.

If the PCs penetrate the outer wall, Rekken and his men retreat to the keep itself. They push the cart from area 5 to block the entrance between areas 3 and 4. Three guards with crossbows are positioned here. Two more guards with crossbows go to area 6 to watch that opening. The remaining guards patrol the main floor with Rekken and Rothgy. If Rekken believes he knows the positions of all the PCs, he sends Rothgy with a few men to attempt an ambush.

The PCs may decide, depending on how much or how little they know about the men in the keep, to talk with Rekken and/or his men. The kidnapers claim that they have discovered a secret entrance that spirals down into the Underdark. They tell the PCs that they have been sent by the King to secure and close this entrance, for the greater good of the realm. If the PCs ask to see proof of this, Rothgy will be summoned. Rothgy produces a forged letter from the king instructing them of their mission. If the PCs study the letter closely, they might notice several inconsistencies. Any PC with the etiquette NWP, with a successful skill check, notices that the greeting employed in the letter is only used when one head-of-state addresses another head-of-state. Secondly, any PC with the heraldry NWP notices, again with a skill roll, that the King's seal was applied upside down, which is done only when the King wishes to insult the person with whom he is corresponding.

In any case, if the PCs become overly curious or belligerent with Rekken or his men, or they begin asking questions about Dolores or Warden, conversation ends and combat begins. At this point, however, all surprise has been lost, and the PCs must face Rekken's fully assembled gang.

The morale of Rekken's men is fair. While Basil was not particularly popular in the gang (he was a complainer), his whipping left the men

more afraid of than loyal to Rekken. What's more, the wait for the ransom money has gone far longer than Rekken had promised, and boredom and doubt have set in. Therefore, if any member of Rekken's gang is cut off from Rekken or Rothgy and is outnumbered, that guard's morale drops from 11 to 8, and morale checks must be made each round.

The keep is a two-story stone building surrounded by a 25' high wall with 30' high towers. It is an old, weather-beaten structure with large holes and crumbling masonry. (Climbing checks receive a +10% bonus to the roll.)

As the PCs near the keep, they see smoke rising from the northern and western chimneys.

Ground Floor

1a-h. Guard Towers. Like most other chambers in the keep, the doors to the towers were removed or destroyed long ago. Stone stairs spiral up against the interior wall. The tops of the towers, as well as the tops of the walls surrounding the keep, are crenelated. From the towers, there is a short flight of stone steps down to the parapet wall.

Tower 1d has a trap door in its base. A flagstone can be removed revealing hand-holds carved into the wall leading to a tunnel 15' below. The tunnel leads to area 20 and serves as Rothgy's last escape.

2. Courtyard. The courtyard is overgrown with wildflowers and high grass. In the northwest corner is a stone well from which water can still be drawn. A rope and bucket are tied to the well. Four horses, tied to posts near the well, munch happily on the tall grass.

Two guards patrol the grounds and walls of the keep. They pace around the courtyard lazily, occasionally winding their way up to the towers and parapet. The guards are indicated with a "G" on the map, but these needn't be their exact locations.

When the PCs approach the keep, roll 1d10 to determine where the guards are located: 1-3, in the courtyard; 4-5, talking by the well; 6-7, one patrolling the ground, the other on a tower (DM's choice); 8-9, both on a tower; 10, one on a tower, the other asleep against a wall of the keep.

If the guards hear a noise or see something suspicious, they investigate on their own first. If there is trouble, however, or if they see anyone, they immediately give a call that alerts the keep's other occupants.

Guards (2): AL NE; AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 6 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; XP 35; studded leather armor, shield, broad sword, light crossbow, six bolts.

3-4. Empty Chambers. These once served as audience chambers. It is not possible to tell when the last time the fireplaces were used. In the fireplace of area 3 are some recently-discarded chicken bones. (A guard had taken his lunch there.) Otherwise, the rooms are bare. As with all rooms of the keep, blankets and cloth have been hung over the windows.

5. Great Hall. Five guards are resting in front of a warm fire. There is a cart in the northeast corner that was used to bring provisions to the keep. There is also a pile of debris to the northwest—empty crates and boxes, bones, and rags. Eight bedrolls are laid out in the southwest.

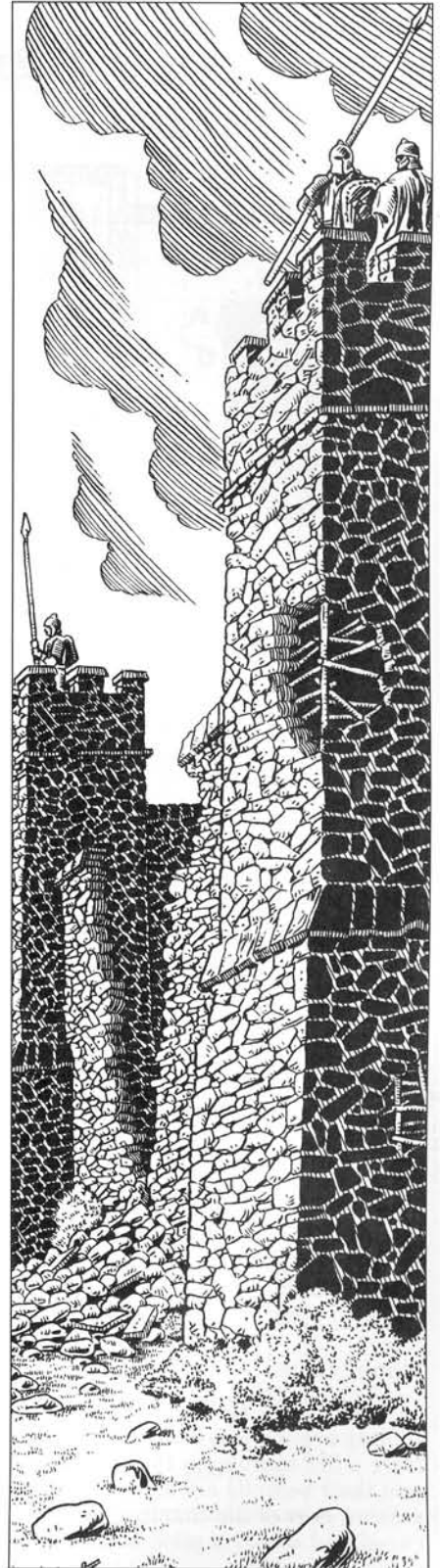
If the PCs make it to the great hall undetected, these guards call for help immediately. Once the alarm is sounded, the guard in area 7 arrive in one round; then, the following round, the two outside guards arrive (assuming they are still alive and mobile), as well as Rekken and the guards from upstairs and Rothgy and the guards from downstairs.

Guards (5): hp 6 each; see area 2 for complete statistics.

6. Old Kitchen. A barrel of ale stands near the northwest corner. There are also two blood-stained tree stumps sitting in the middle of the kitchen with a cleaver laid across one and a skinning knife across the other. A large pot has been suspended across the fireplace and shows signs of recent use.

7. Storage Room. One guard is lounging here. Stored here are most of the gang's provisions. In total, there is a deer carcass (bagged that morning), a barrel of flour, a large wedge of cheese, and a keg of ale.

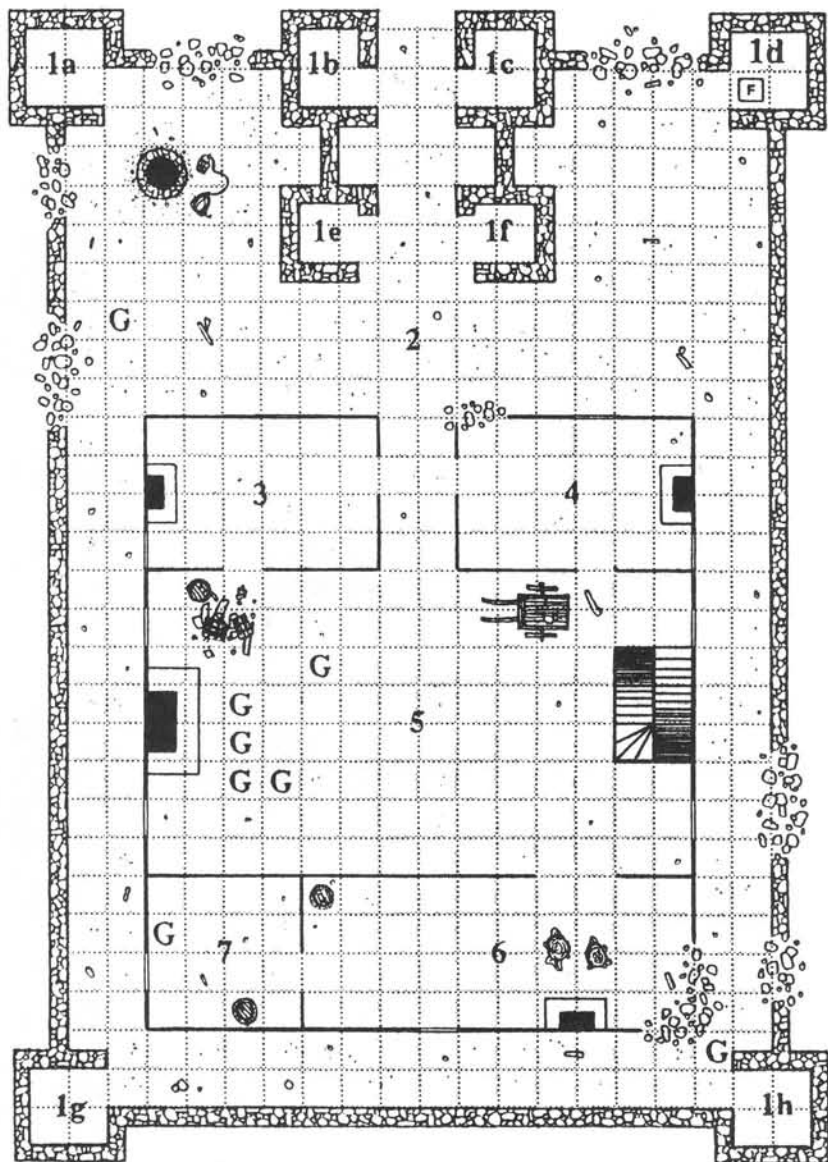
Guard: hp 6; see area 2 for complete statistics.



Guards stand watch over the ruins of Fillmore Keep.

Fillmore Keep

1 square = 5 feet



Upper Level

8. Upstairs Hall. Four guards are milling around this chamber. They have a fire burning in the hearth, and their bedrolls are arrayed in the eastern part of the chamber. Debris (wood and stone) is piled in the southwest corner.

Rekken and his men boarded up the opening in the south to keep out

the draft. There are eight boards in all, each requiring a successful Strength check to remove.

Guards (4): hp 6 each; see area 2 for complete statistics.

9–10. Abandoned Areas. These areas have never been used by Rekken or his gang. There are cobwebs and dirt, but little else.

11. Rothgy's Chamber. A heavy curtain hangs across the entrance to this chamber. This room belongs to Rothgy Frizzo, who is currently guarding Dolores in the dungeon. As Rekken's second-in-command, Rothgy has a cot to sleep on instead of just a bedroll. In the northeast corner is a small chest holding Rothgy's belongings: an extra set of boots, a cape, some gloves, a spare set of thieves' tools, and a bottle of red wine.

At the bottom of Rothgy's chest rests a smaller wooden coffer. It is locked (Rothgy has the key) and trapped with a *glyph of warding* that Rothgy paid an evil priest to cast before the gang embarked for the keep. Anyone opening the coffer without the proper key triggers the glyph and sustains a 5d4 hp electrical shock. Inside the coffer is Rothgy's treasure: 200 sp, 150 gp, and a brooch encrusted with emerald chips worth 250 gp.

12. Rekken's Chamber. Like Rothgy, Rekken has a heavy curtain across the entrance to his chamber. He also sleeps on a cot and has an oak chest against the south wall. The room is otherwise bare.

It is unlikely the PCs will reach this room without Rekken having been alerted, but if they do, and if they are numerous enough (more than three), Rekken tries to talk his way out of a fight. He explains that it was all Lord Grange's idea, that he was only following orders, and that he feared disobeying his Lord. He tells the PCs they are free to take Dolores provided they let him go free, to "escape Lord Grange's reach." (This is true to a certain extent; Rekken knows how much influence Lord Grange has with the city's Head Constable.) If the PCs don't buy this and seem determined to bring Rekken to justice, he tries to bribe them with the 1,000 gp Lord Grange has already sent; if that doesn't work, he fights for freedom.

Rekken also possesses a *figurine of wondrous power*. The figurine appears as a small jade lizard and becomes a live giant lizard upon command. Unlike most figurines, if the giant lizard is killed in combat, it does not revert to a figurine but remains a dead lizard. The command word, "Gilfoosin," is written on the

lizard figurine's belly. Rekken prefers to save the figurine for when he is alone or for when things look their bleakest.

If the PCs are spotted in the courtyard, Rekken picks up his long bow and, if he has a clear shot, does as much damage as possible from his window. Otherwise, he joins the fight and instructs his men as described above. He keeps a potion of *healing* with three doses and does not share its contents with anyone.

Rekken's oak chest is heavy (120 lbs.) and locked. It contains two pairs of trousers, three shirts, a short sword and scabbard, a book entitled *The Perfect General* (a treatise on combat tactics), ten candles, a set of rations for one week, and a sack containing 1,000 gp (the blackmail money from Lord Grange). The chest also has a false bottom containing a pouch with 25 pp.

Rekken Filsner: AL LE; AC 2; MV 9; F4; hp 32; THACO 17 (15 with *broad sword +1*); #AT 1 (3/2 with *broad sword*); Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength), +2 (specialization); S 16 (+0/+1), D 15, C 16, I 14, W 10, Ch 13; ML 13; XP 420; chain mail, *shield +1*, *broad sword +1* (specialized), long bow, 12 sheaf arrows, dagger, *potion of healing*, *figurine of wondrous power* (lizard), key (to oak chest).

Giant lizard: INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 17; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA swallow whole on roll of natural 20; SZ H (15' long); ML 10; XP 175; MM/226.

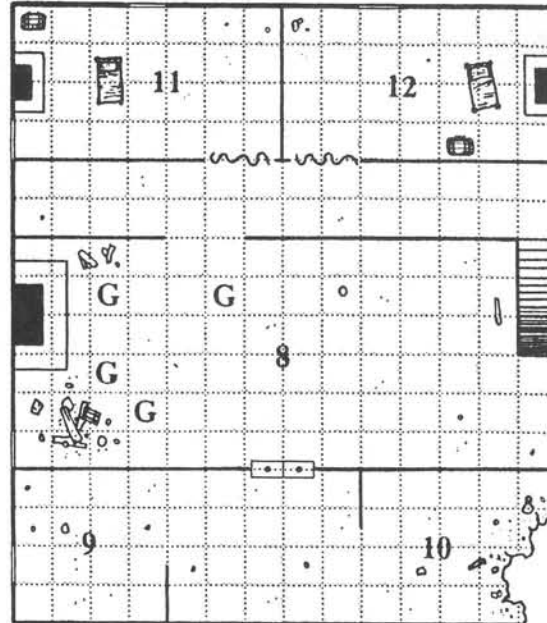
Dungeon Level

13. Dungeon. Rothgy Frizzo and two guards keep watch over Dolores. This would normally be Rothgy's job alone, but the guards have joined him for company. If there is trouble upstairs, all three run to investigate, though Rothgy has the guards lead the way. Should the PCs arrive in the dungeon unannounced, Rothgy hurls daggers then has the guards engage the PCs in melee. If Rothgy feels the guards have sufficiently weakened the PCs, he attacks anyone still standing. Otherwise, he quaffs his *potion of invisibility*, heads to the secret passage in area 20, and makes his escape. At the present time, only

continued on page 55

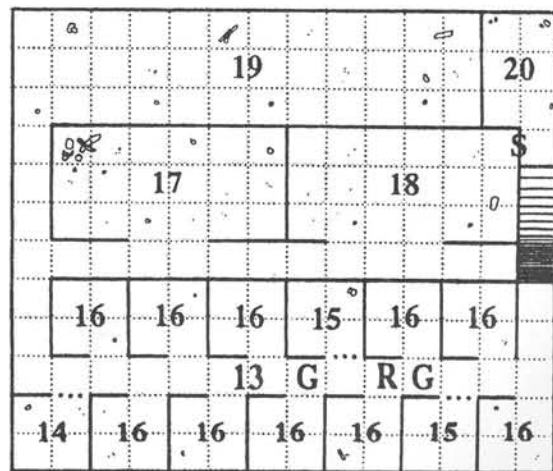
Fillmore Keep

1 square = 5 feet



Leads up to area 1d

Upper Level



Dungeon Level

Rothgy and Rekken know about the secret passage.

Rothgy Frizzo: AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; T4; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 2 (short sword and dagger); Dmg by weapon type; SA two-weapon style specialization, backstab (x2); SD move silently (50%), hide in shadows (35%); S 12, D 17, C 10, I 15, W 12, Ch 11; ML 10; XP 270; leather armor, short sword, six daggers (five for throwing, one for hand-to-hand combat), potion of *invisibility* (one dose), keys (to trapped coffer in area 11 and padlock in area 14).

Guards (2): hp 6 each; see area 2 for complete statistics.

14. Dolores' Cell. Dolores is being held in one of the three cells whose bars are still intact. The barred door is secured by a heavy chain and padlock. Rothgy carries the only key.

When found, Dolores is exhausted and weak. She wants to return to Pembrose immediately and will be extremely upset if the PCs suggest anything different. In fact, any hesitation results in a lecture on the proper treatment of a lady. This lecture is followed by other lectures on topics ranging from manners to politics to child rearing. (She believes her captors' abominable behavior is the result of overly-harsh parenting.) By the time the PCs deposit her in Warden's hands, they should be quite happy to say goodbye.

Dolores has heard her captors discussing Lord Grange, but she does not know why she was kidnapped. She does, however, suspect that a ransom note has been sent and is disturbed that Warden has thus far declined to pay it. If the PCs know of Warden's grief, and the reasons for his not paying the ransom, and if they choose to inform Dolores of what they know, she is be greatly relieved and appreciative. Otherwise, Warden will have some explaining to do when she gets home.

Dolores is unreliable in combat, but she's surprisingly feisty and won't let herself be captured a second time.

Dolores Grange: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; unarmed.

15. Usable Cells. Like the cell holding Dolores, these still have bars. There are chains and padlocks sitting in the cells. Should the PCs be captured, this is where they will be kept. A guard will be stationed outside the cells at all times to discourage escape attempts.

16. Empty Cells. These cells are useless now that they have no doors. Some contain orange peels, onion skins, moldy bread, and small animal bones.

17. Old Armory. Garbage is piled in one corner: bones, waste, wood, and ashes. There are empty stone shelves carved into all the walls.

18. Second Armory. Like area 17, this is an armory with large stone shelves carved out of the walls. Examination of the eastern wall reveals that the dust and dirt have been moved away from the floor in the northeast corner. A large stone block can be removed, revealing the secret room beyond (area 20).

19. Torture Chamber. Not much is left in this old chamber. Rusted shackles are still affixed to the north and south walls.

20. Secret Chamber. This chamber is full of debris and cobwebs. A tunnel leads to a secret trap door under tower 1d. There are handholds carved into the stone beneath the trap door for climbing. Rothgy uses this passage as his means of escape from the keep.

Concluding the Adventure

A grateful Warden gladly pays 750 gp for the safe return of Dolores, and PCs should receive 1,000 XP for returning her alive. What's more, the PCs have a friend in Pembrose from that day forward. However, if Warden rewards the PCs in front of Dolores, a domestic squabble ensues. Dolores does not feel the PCs should be given financial compensation for her safe return, insisting that her rescue is reward enough. Warden, on the other hand, feels guilty that he was unable to rescue her himself and wishes to pay the PCs to feel he contributed

more than tears to her recovery. (The DM can work out this domestic squabble any way he or she sees fit.)

If the PCs wish to see Lord Grange brought to justice, they have a steep hill to climb. If they go to Armen and inform him of what they know, he thanks them and promises to look into the matter (assuming he's on speaking terms with the party). PCs might attempt to gain an audience with the Governor of Pembrose; however, if they've gone public with their desire to see Lord Grange arrested, the Governor flatly refuses to see them, not wanting to become involved in such a sticky affair. If they do receive an audience, the alarmed Governor will simply defer the PCs to the local constabulary.

If the PCs inform Warden that his father was behind the caper, he is stunned by the accusation and visits his father, demanding to know the truth. Lord Grange fervently denies the accusations. Only the testimony of Rekken Filsner has any chance of convicting him. (Even then, it's Lord Grange's word against the word of a kidnapper and disgruntled ex-employee.)

In any event, distrust among the Granges and Bankheads persists until the matter is resolved. PCs who harass or help to imprison Lord Grange earn his eternal derision. Ω

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