

MEETINGS AT THE MANOR

This is the second adventure in the four-part “Dravan Parishes” series, following immediately upon DP-1 The Accursed Templom of Gyepu and leading to DP-3 Muster at Kharn Turuhm. The series is set in the Lost Kingdom of Gardzyka (zarasea.com) but can be adapted for any setting. Similarly, with some changes, the adventure herein can be played as a stand-alone over several sessions.

Characters should be at level 3 at the start of the adventure. Milestone levelling is recommended, with character reaching level 4 before descending into the cavern in Part Four, and level 5 upon completing the mission.

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Having cleansed the Accursed Templom, it has become clear that something sinister is taking place in Zircs. All signs appear to point to Zircs, and any party worth its salt will be setting forth for in that direction to see what might be happening. If your party is not worth its salt, you'll just need to drag them by their noses in some other fashion.

The Movement of the Free Spirit has been quietly orchestrating an alliance of evil, encouraging humanoids from throughout the lands of the Zara Sea to work together to rock the established order on either side of its shores. The Movement is not interested in the victory of evil, but in the chaos which will ensue should a mass assault on the existing states occur. The penultimate stage of this orchestration is set to occur at a manor house outside of Zircs, in a congress of evil creatures from throughout the known world.

Before leaving Kiscigyepu, Lector Zoltan will have offered the party letters of introduction to the Archvicar of Zircs, as will messengers from the Patriarch (Testverak bless his name). The party should be persuaded to accept these (and use them!), as it will make it much easier to set the stage once the party reaches Zircs.

The journey from Kiscigyepu to Zircs will take about four days on foot. The party may elect to hire passage on a riverboat — which would take half the time - either hailing one from the north trail or journeying back to Tokol to hire passage (in the latter case, servants of the Patriarch can assist in arranging passage). However, the boat will run aground on an unexpected snag while passing through Gyonk, and the party will be forced back onto the road.

PART ONE: THE ROAD THROUGH GYONK

The abandoned Parish of Gyonk is the site of the Final Stand of the Gyonklar during the Guta Wars, when the free folk of Gyonk held the guta hordes for five full days before being overwhelmed. This stand bought enough time for armies led by the Patriarch to muster; the muster was not in time to save Gyonk but succeeded in halting the guta. Signs of combat remain easily visible from the road: cairns of helmets; burials mounds; the occasional heap of bleached guta skulls. Bones, fragments of armour, and broken weapons can easily be found if the party ventures off the road.

While camped on a misty, rainy night, the party will hear a noise approaching from the direction of Tokol: a rider, but not on a shod beast, coming their way at a gallop. The party will have about three minutes between detecting the rider and its arrival, an **orc scout mounted on a hell pig**. If the scout is attacked or spots the party, it will engage in combat until it has take 50% damage, at which point it will attempt to disengage and it will turn back the way it originally came. If it originally passes unmolested, they will hear it returning 10 minutes later; it will behave in the same manner as above.

The orc is an outrider for a troop of **8 orcs** and **7 hobgoblins** coming up the road; they will reach the party 30 minutes after the outrider first passes the party's camp. If the party attempts to hide from the troop, they will be spotted by the final rank.



Orc scout on a hell pig / Hernán Valera

ORC SCOUT (Medium humanoid) CR1 (XP 200)

AC 14 (wolf spider carapace) HP 31 Speed 30'

ST 15(+2) DE 15(+2) CO 14(+2) IN 9(-1) WI 10(+0) CH 8(-1)

Skills: Intimidation +3

Senses: Darkvision 60', passive perception 10

Languages: Common, Orc

Melee/ranged: scimitar + 4 (1d8+4 slashing damage) / short bow +5; range 80/320' (1d6+2 piercing damage)

Orc scouts riding hell pigs are rarely used, since most hell pigs are raised to be much larger heavy cavalry mounts. Scouts will usually defy their instincts and seek to report back to their troop, rather than fighting to the death.

HELL PIG (Entelodont) (Large beast) CR2 (XP 450)

AC 13 (natural armour) HP 50 Speed 50'

ST 18(+4) DE 12(+1) CO 16(+3) IN 3(-4) WI 12(+1) CH 3(-4)

Senses: Passive perception 12

Languages: n/a

Pig-headed: advantage on saves for any mind-affecting spells

Keen smell: advantage on smell-based perception checks

Trample: When charging 20' and hitting with a slam attack, the target must make a DC13 STR save or be knocked to the ground. The hell pig may then make a hoof attack as a bonus action

Slam: +5 (2d8+3 bludgeoning damage)

Multi attack: bite plus hoof attack

Melee: Bite +5 (1d10+5 piercing damage); hooves: +5 (2d6+3 bludgeoning damage)

Hell pigs are wild megafauna somehow pressed into service ("domesticated" is not the correct term) to serve as mounts for orcish cavalry. The ones used as scouts are smaller than the usual heavy cavalry breed.

HOBGOBLIN TROOPER (Medium Humanoid) CR1/2 (XP 100)

AC 16 (metal lamellar) HP 14 Speed 30'

ST 13(+1) DE 12(+1) CO 12(+1) IN 10(+0) WI 10(+1) CH 9(-1)

Senses: Darkvision 60', passive perception 10

Languages: Goblin

Martial advantage: 1d6 additional damage if target is within 5' of the hobgoblin's ally

Melee/Ranged: Voulge+ 3 (1d10+1 slashing damage) or short sword +3 (1d6+3 damage) / composite bow +3; range 120/400' (1d8+1 piercing damage)

Troopers are the basic sinews of the hobgoblin war machine and understand the chain of command down to the last hobgoblin standing. One in five will function primarily as an archer.

ORC (Medium humanoid) CR1/2 (XP 100)

AC 13 (hide armour) HP 15 Speed 30'

ST 16(+3) DE 12(+1) CO 16(+3) IN 7(-2) WI 11(+0) CH 7(-2)

Skills: Intimidation +2

Senses: Darkvision 60', passive perception 10

Languages: Orcish

Eagerness: Can move up to speed as bonus action towards enemy

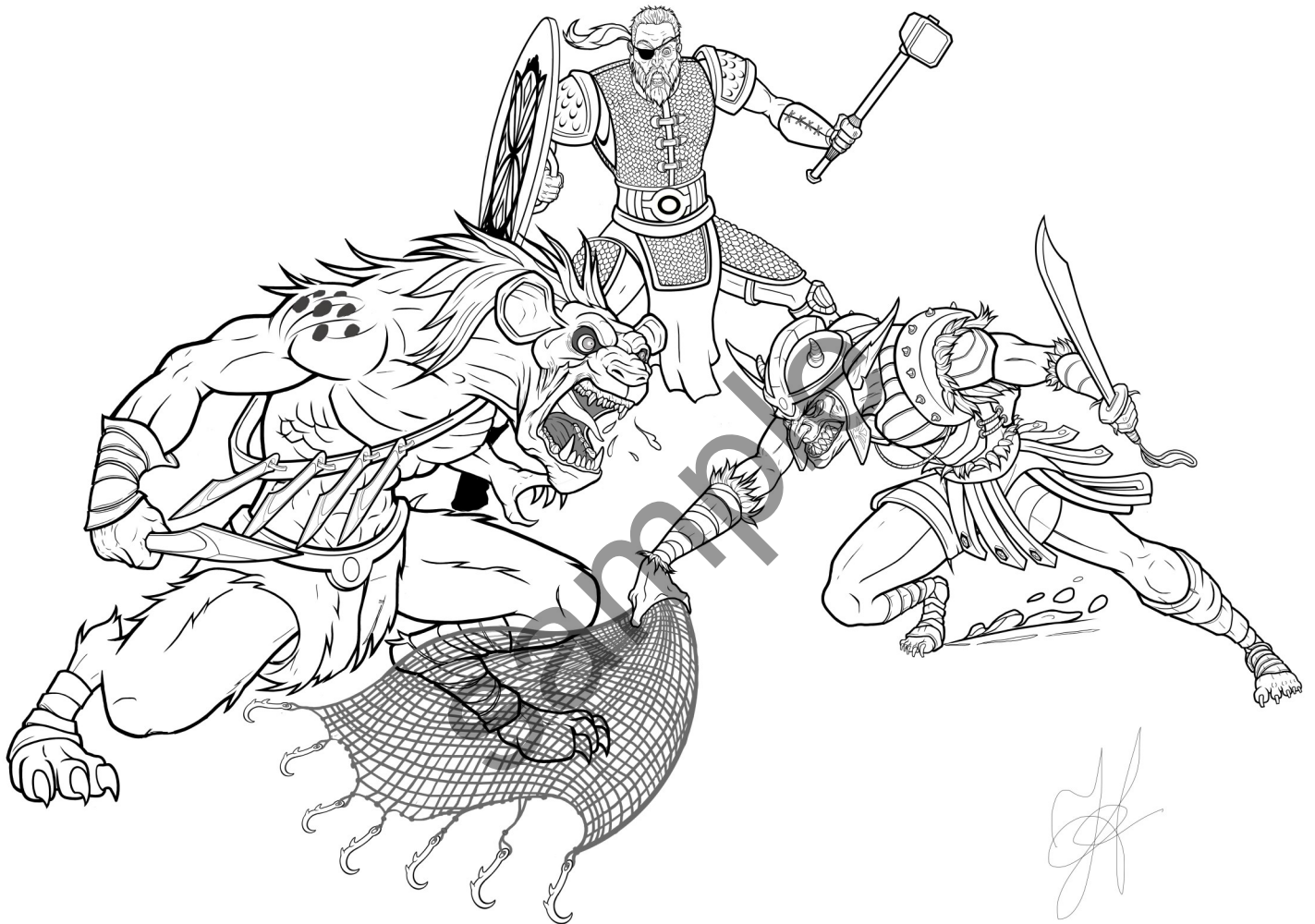
Melee/Ranged: Scimitar +4 (1d8+3 slashing damage) / javelin +3; range 30/120' (1d6+3 piercing damage)

Never forget the holy creed of the orcs, given to them by the Great God Grotg: "That which does not kill me can kiss my ass."

Assassins in the Night

If the party is not staying with the Archvicar, modify this encounter to occur in an alley, on a wharf, or some other such situation where some rounds will pass before any intervention can occur.

On the party's second or third night in Zircs (depending how much time the GM or the party wishes to spend in the town), everyone in the residence (unless intoxicated, or in some other form of induced unconsciousness) will be awakened by human and inhuman screams and the clash of weapons.



Assassins in the night / Hernán Valera

In the entry hall, a battle is going on. Archvicar Zsolt is lying in a spreading pool of blood (HP 0; will be dead in 10 turns if not stabilized); one guard is dead at the doorway, the second near the Archvicar. A gnoll and two hobgoblins are on the floor, dead or dying. Each of two votarists in the residence will enter, one minute apart; they too will be dead if the party delays. **Three gnolls** and a **gnoll stalker** are battling **five hobgoblin snatchers** and a **hobgoblin zyliker**. The former have been sent by the Movement of the Free Spirit to eliminate the party, while the surviving hobgoblin(s) from the encounter in Gyonk alerted superiors, who sent their own kidnap squad .

PART THREE: THE OLD MANOR HOUSE

Two hours to the south of the town of Zircs, along a disused track, can be found the manor house of Janos Banfihunyades, the last scion of a noble family. The proximity to the town is such that the party may choose to return to the town between adventuring sessions; should they do this, be sure to consult “Part Five: The Manor after a Rest” for events at the manor while the party is away, or while they take a long rest in the manor house.

The manor house belonged to Janos Banfihunyades, who was by all appearance the latest head of a wealthy and erudite merchant family. This was true, but what very, very few realized was that Banfihunyades was also a warlock. Long fascinated by the forbidden arts (at least forbidden within with Gardzyka), Banfihunyades succeeded in making contact and pledging his allegiance to the mysterious being Aphoom-Zhah, the Cold One. Though he came late to the arcane arts, Banfihunyades progressed quickly in his studies, and had become a powerful magic user by the time of the Guta Wars. Realizing that even his magics would not be enough to turn back the hordes, Banfihunyades took a desperate gamble: he sought to draw in all the power possible from his patron, but instead absorbed so much negative energy that he destroyed his own mortal being, becoming a wraith. Though not the manner in which he intended, Banfihunyades destroyed any guta parties that entered the grounds. Hence his manor survived, while others in the neighbourhood were razed to the ground.

The survival of the manor house during a onslaught that levelled the entire town of Zircs has provoked a great deal of superstitious awe amongst the townsfolk, and the place is near universally avoided. On rare occasions – usually the result of a drunken dare – an individual or group will venture up to the



The Banfihunyades Manor House / László Pintér

APPENDIX B Maps

A) Zircs and region



F) Manor House: Second floor

