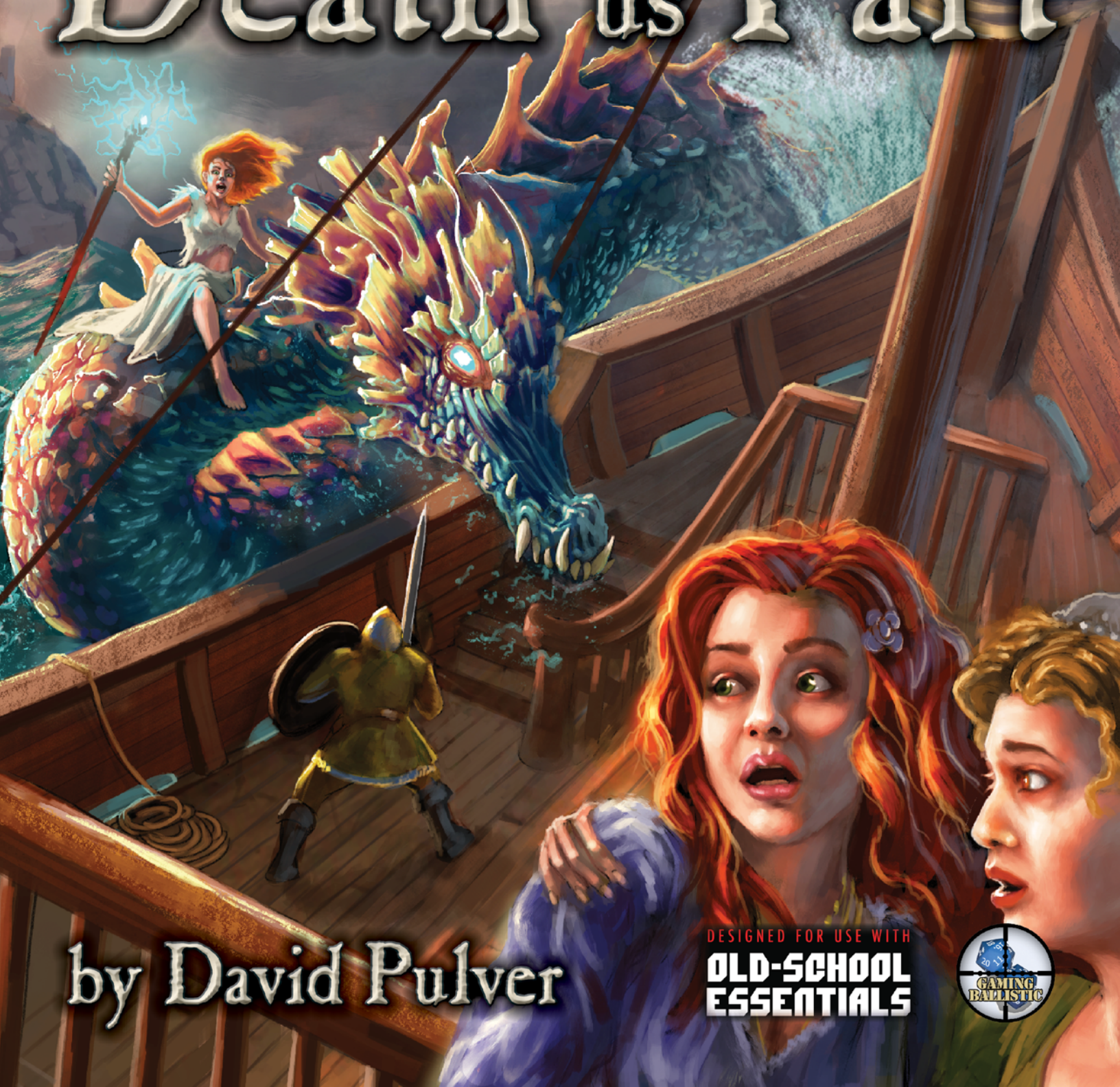


Till Death do us Part



by David Pulver

DESIGNED FOR USE WITH
**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**



Map I

1 square = 5 feet

A

D

B

C

K

J

X

F

G

H

E

North



Till Death Do Us Part



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Till Death Do Us Part

Lorne and Prufax have long had border disputes, but the growing number of orcish raids and the threat of full-scale invasion persuaded them to forge an alliance, lest their lands be gobbled up by Ezdrighul. Last year, to seal the agreement, Lorne's eighteen-year-old daughter Shirin was betrothed to the young Lord Dorian Prufax. Their marriage ceremony is set for three weeks from now.

Your mission is to escort Lady Shirin to Castle Prufax. To avoid weakening the barony's defenses and alerting orcish agents (who might launch a preemptive attack if they learn of the alliance), your party is small. You'll travel on horseback; Shirin is a skilled rider. The Count trusts you to keep her safe.

Count Lorne is the ruler of a landlocked border fief. A week's ride east, on the shores of the sea, lies the smaller rival barony of young lord Dorian Prufax. Northwest is the mountain realm of the orc-lord Ezdrighul; south is trackless swamp. Both are threatened by Ezdrighul's rising power.

There are three routes to Prufax. You might head east down the Great Road or take a north-east route using secondary roads through the northern highlands, or a south-east route through forest trails and marshes. Once you reach Prufax lands (the border is the Titan River) it's a few days to Port Skarn, the barony's largest town, where a ship should await to take you to Baron Prufax's island castle for the ceremony. You might instead rent a boat from a fishing village.

After delivering the bride you expect a rich reward, provided Shirin arrives happy and in one piece.

Common Knowledge

Count Lorne, age 50, is a grizzled red-headed veteran. His wife Countess Hedra, 37, elegant and dark-haired, is a woman of ambition. Hedra's kinfolk held land in the western highlands (including a gold mine) until it was lost to the orcish onslaught. She hopes the coming alliance will lead to the recovery of her family's territory. Hedra

had hoped to accompany her daughter to Prufax, but after several childless years after Shirin's birth is pregnant again and close enough to her due date that she cannot travel.

Shirin, age 18, is a kind young woman with her father's hair and mother's sparkling green eyes. She is fond of tales of chivalry and romance and loves animals. Shirin is nervous about marrying Dorian Prufax, a man she's never met, but is devoted to her family and promises to do her duty. She's excited to travel, considering it her first real adventure!

Besides being father to Shirin, the lusty Count Lorne is rumored to have had a few children born out of wedlock, from amorous encounters with pretty commoners before he married Hedra.

You know little of Lord Dorian Prufax, Shirin's husband-to-be, save that he inherited the barony from his father who fell in battle with orcs. He is 22 years old, apparently a skilled warrior and sea captain, and said to be handsome and as sole heir to Prufax, rich.

With Count Lorne preparing to defend his lands against the orcs, Hedra pregnant, Lady Shirin must rely on you, her father's loyal retainers, to get her safe to Castle Prufax. Are you up to the challenge?

How to Play

TILL DEATH DO US PART is a programmed adventure intended for 3rd- or 4th-level fighter characters. It is played using the **OLD SCHOOL ESSENTIALS** rules (but is compatible with most OSR rule sets). You won't need a referee.

Branching paragraphs direct you from encounter to encounter as you make choices. Resolve combat using game rules, using the maps for reference.

Feel free to substitute any other lawful religious order with female clergy for the Holy Sisterhood. Likewise, feel free to alter the names of rulers, baronies, etc. to fit an existing world.

THE PARTY

Your party consists of up to three PCs (the retainers) plus two NPCs, Lady Shirin and her maid Derya (record their stats). Either use the Typical Retainers below or existing characters, or create 2–3 3rd-level characters, or 1–2 4th level characters. This adventure isn't geared for arcane spellcasters: PCs should be fighters, dwarves, halflings, or thieves rather than magic-users.

Don't divide this party unless allowed by paragraph instructions. If party members are incapacitated, you can leave them behind or carry them. You may *not* abandon Lady Shirin.

Shirin and her maid have horses; Lorne provides riding horses for other party members if they need them. You may dismount before combat if you cannot fight while mounted. Lorne expects their healthy return. If some PCs would rather not ride, it's possible for them to walk afoot while others ride; over long distances, speed is similar. Be sure to calculate encumbrance for the horse (including the rider's weight, saddle, and gear) as it halves speed if you exceed 4,000 coins weight.

Group Equipment: The party leader gets 100gp from Count Lorne for travel expenses (you may keep unspent money). *Each* character's horse also bears a saddle and bridle, full waterskin, spare clothing, and two day's rations. Riding Horses are:

AC 7 [12], **HD** 2 (9hp), **Att** 2× hoof (1d4), **THACO** 18 [+1],
MV 240' (80'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), **ML** 7, **AL** Neutral. Carry load: Up to 3,000 coins unencumbered; up to 6,000 at half speed.

Lady Shirin

1st level fighter.

STR 10, **DEX** 11, **INT** 13, **WIS** 13 [+1], **CON** 11, **CHA** 15 [+1].
AC 9 [10], **HD** 1 (8hp), **Att** 1× dagger (1d4), **THACO** 19 [0],
MV 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 8, **AL** Lawful

A kindly and adventurous young woman, Shirin follows your directions until safely at Castle Prufax. Nonetheless, you should treat her with every respect. It wouldn't do to have Shirin complain to her new husband or write to her father that she was ill-treated by her guards! Instead of rewards, you might end up in a dungeon ... and not the kind filled with monsters and treasure! She has a purse with 20gp and a riding horse.

Derya

Normal human.

STR 10, **DEX** 11, **INT** 13, **WIS** 13 [+1], **CON** 11, **CHA** 12.
AC 9 [10], **HD** ½ (2hp), **Att** 1× dagger (1d4), **THACO** 20 [-1],
MV 120' (40'), **SV** D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (NH), **ML** 6, **AL** Lawful.

A devoted maid, Derya is a serious young woman who has been with Shirin for many years; her medical training may prove helpful. She has a lantern and oil, purse with 5gp, also leads a spare riding horse carrying Shirin's luggage (extra clothes, etc.); the horse won't fight.



TYPICAL RETAINERS

Use these characters or make your own! If any stat block is missing an entry, assume the creature doesn't have them!

Sir Rostam

3rd level fighter.

STR 13 [+1], **DEX** 13 [+1], **INT** 9, **WIS** 8, **CON** 12, **CHA** 13 [+1].

AC 3 [16], **HD** 3 (16hp), **Att** 1× sword (1d8+1) or lance (1d6+1, 2d6+2 charge on horseback) **THACO** 17 [+2], **MV** 60' (20'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3), **AL** Lawful.

A knight (age 21) in Count Lorne's service. Wears chain-mail and shield, carries a sword and dagger; when mounted has a lance. Has a purse with 10gp.



Taran

Human soldier, age 21

3rd level fighter.

STR 16 [+2], **DEX** 11, **INT** 9, **WIS** 10, **CON** 15 [+1], **CHA** 16 [+1].

AC 7 [12], **HD** 3 (18hp), **Att** 1× pole arm (1d10+2) or hand axe (1d6+2) **THACO** 17 [+2], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3), **AL** Neutral.

A mercenary (age 21) in the count's guard, muscular, with rugged good looks. Wears leather armor, carries an axe long enough to be considered a pole-arm. Has a purse with 10gp, plus 50' rope, tinder box, hand axe, and torches (6).



Arashina

3rd level fighter.

STR 10, **DEX** 14 [+1], **INT** 11, **WIS** 14 [+1], **CON** 11, **CHA** 11.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 3 (16hp), **Att** 1× sword (1d8) or long bow (1d6)

THACO 17 [+2], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3), **AL** Lawful.

A forester in count Lorne's service. Wears leather armor. Has a purse with 10gp, plus dagger, 50' rope, tinder box, hand axe, and torches (6).



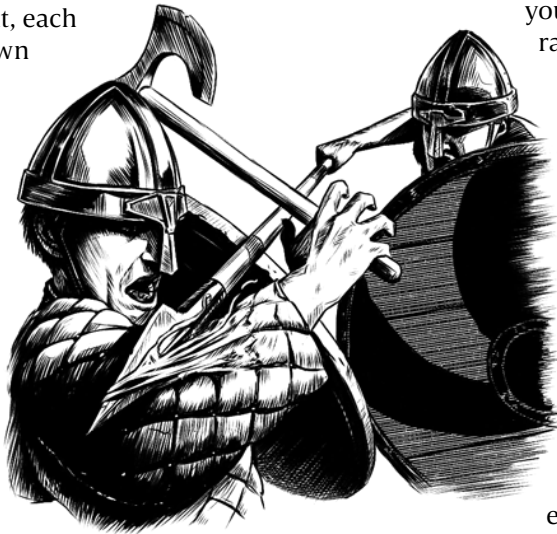
WAYS TO PLAY

Solitaire: A single player controls the entire party and runs them through the adventure. When combat occurs, follow the instructions regarding the foes in each location and play both sides of any encounter. Feel free to give enemies simple strategies while you use better tactics for the party!

Two-Player: One player plays the party. Upon encountering enemies, the other player acts as referee, controlling the opposition during each fight. If the referee is more experienced, they can help the player with the *OSE* rules or adjudicate situations not covered in the instructions.

Multi-Player: 2–4 players each take one character within the party. Choose one player to act as referee as above, and one as the leader. The leader makes decisions or dice rolls whenever as called for by paragraphs but should consult other player characters first. During combat, each

player plays their own party member as “their” character. Shirin, her maid, and any acquired allies are run in combat by the leader’s player (or a different player, if desired). If a leader’s character is killed/incapacitated, pick another leader.



STARTING PLAY

TILL DEATH DO US PART is organized into a series of numbered instructions or “paragraphs” (although many instructions are several paragraphs long). To begin, go to instruction [001] and read it. These set the scene for what your party experiences, much like a referee describing the situation. Instructions say what your character encounters and, sometimes, calls for a decision between multiple options. Choose which one to take before reading the next instruction. Don’t read instructions to which you haven’t been directed!

DESTINATIONS

Some paragraphs are *destinations*, representing a place reached after a day’s travel. Destinations have a **Lodging** entry that says where you rest, and a **Travel** entry, where you can go next, for example:

222 Bastion, a quiet mountain village.

Lodging: Tower Inn.

Travel: Go south to Blackwell [202] or east to Snakewood [279].

Here’s how it works:

Lodging: Upon reaching a destination decide how to spend the night. In the countryside, you’re camping outdoors. Assume water is available in this region, but any time you leave a destination after camping you should either consume a day’s rations or take two days rather than one day to travel between each destination (as you’re hunting or foraging for food). At inns, lodging (per night) is 2sp per person and 1sp per mount; if there’s no inn, or you can’t afford one, camp outdoors. If an entry specifies lodging you must stay at the inn or other lodging noted, or camp at least one night. You can rest for extra nights if you desire, e.g., to recover from injuries, but this might make you late, use up rations, and cost money. Inns sell travel rations (iron rations) at 15gp per 7 person-days.

Travel: After at least one night’s rest, you may travel. Choose one of the indicated directions. Taking a travel option means the party spends *one day* traveling to that destination. Keep track of time!

FIGHTING

Paragraphs may say to set up a map according to a particular diagram in the adventure and begin combat. *All* maps—even the outdoor ones—are scaled at 5’ grid and use letters or shading to mark starting points of characters or obstacles.

(Some markings or letters aren’t used in every encounter.) Resolve fights normally. You may need to place markers, draw on the map, or otherwise indicate features such as rough going or walls. Your starting point and the locations of allied and enemy figures are specified by letters on the map.

Resolve fights with *OSE* rules. Win or lose, the instructions indicate what happens next, perhaps allowing you to search for loot, rescue a captive, or, if your party is eliminated, end the adventure.

In a few encounters, an option to retreat is explicit. Otherwise, for simplicity, stay on the tactical map. If anyone “runs off the map” you *could* position additional map tiles and decide what that terrain is. To keep things playable and contained to the scenario, fight to the finish.

SHIRIN AND HER MAID

If Shirin dies, the adventure is effectively over! Neither she nor her maid are fighters, so consider keeping them at the rear of any combats, to only fight in desperate circumstances, e.g., if everyone else would be wiped out. As long as they are staying out of the fighting, opponents should target the other characters rather than either of them.

RECORD KEEPING

If acting as your own referee, track your party's status and that of any companions you accumulate. Also record statistics of foes you're about to fight. Keep notes on possessions, provisions, coin, current hit points, etc. Record paragraph numbers you have been to, so if you go to the wrong one by accident or stop playing and resume later, you can remember the last paragraph you reached.

PLAYING ENEMIES SOLO

If playing solitaire, you play both sides. Play opposing figures in a logical fashion based on the instructions. Where no specific instructions are given, assume the following:

- ▶ Foes fight to the death without retreating or surrendering.
- ▶ Foes attack your party or your allies/companions, whomever is closest. They engage with their best ready weapon or attack.
- ▶ Wizards usually use their first turn casting one or more protection or creation spells, if they have any, then use whatever staff attacks, offensive thrown or missile spells they possess.
- ▶ Missile-armed foes shoot from a distance as long as possible, then change weapons and switch to melee attacks once engaged.
- ▶ If you can't decide between two sensible tactics, roll a die.

TIME, HEALING, AND RECOVERY

Keeping track of time is important: you're expected to deliver Shirin within 21 days! Your reward may be reduced if you arrive late, but better late than never!

Traveling from one destination to the next takes a day (sometimes more if you get lost or encounter bad weather).

Resting one day recovers 1d3hp if at a castle or inn, 1d3-1 if camping. If Derya is present, add +1 to these numbers, as she's an expert healer, and can apply poltices and other ministrations to promote recovery. You can abandon

injured party members if they become a burden (hopefully by a settlement); they leave the adventure unless you return for them. You can't abandon Shirin.

Characters must additionally take an extra full day's rest for one day per six days of travel or suffer a penalty of -1 to hit and damage rolls until rested for one full day.

PLOT WORDS

A paragraph may say to record (or erase) a "plot word" (written in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS). You may encounter a situation where, if you have that PLOT WORD, something happens or doesn't happen. Some PLOT WORDS also determine experience. If a plot word linked to a main character dies or leaves, erase it; if incapacitated, the plot word is absent until the character recovers.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

TILL DEATH DO US PART ends if "end game" events are triggered for good or ill, or your party is eliminated.

If a "bad end" happens, the adventure is over, the land likely doomed to war. One can replay the adventure with a new group of characters hoping for a better outcome or see the result of different choices.

Experience Awards

PCs who survive earn experience points from monsters defeated and treasure accumulated during the adventure; all monsters list their experience point value. If the party is granted a reward for completing their mission, they also receive experience points equal to its gp value. Optionally, they may receive additional experience points for finishing with certain plot words:

150 XP each: CROAK, FAVOR, FEATHER, HEART, HORN, HOWL, LETTER, PACK, PURE, SISTER, SONG, SWAN.

300 XP each: FREE, LOVE, LOYAL, NUN, RED, SAFE, STOMP, TIMELY, TRUST, VICTRIX.



Paragraphs

001 The morning dawns cool and bright. Lady Shirin, only a little late, waits by the gate, dressed in her best travel clothes. “I am in your care, good warriors,” she says, with a shy smile.

“Look after my daughter,” says gruff old Count Lorne. “She must reach Prufax in 21 days.” Record plot word **TRUST**.

Go to [054].

002 You recognize the hunting call of a griffon, a winged hybrid of eagle and lion. They love horses but also eat people! There’s no way you can outrun it on the open plain, but maybe it’s not hungry? Go to [035].

003 Pearl is a fishing village, part of the Barony of Prufax. A salt-laden breeze carries the sound of gulls; you spot many fishing boats in the harbor, but the villagers seem unhappy.

Lodging: Sea Horse inn.

Rumors: A huge sea serpent, at least 30 feet long, was sighted by fishermen last week. The fisherfolk are frightened: no sea serpents have been seen here in 50 years, since Saint Agatha the Monster-Tamer, a mighty priestess of the Holy Sisterhood, banished them with her prayers and the Holy Rod she wielded! With sea serpents on the loose and recent bad weather, the villagers fear sailing; few boats are going out. They hope Lord Prufax handles the problem soon!

Travel: Go north to the highland village of Grimgarth [157], east to Port Skarn [110], south down the coast road to the village of Oyster Bay [044], or west to Quill village [143].

004 Shirin seems upset at your callousness. If you have the plot word **TRUST**, erase it. Continue on to Port Skarn [079] or head back to Pearl village [003].

005 You are in the Covenant Hills near the northern border of Lorne.

Lodging: Nunnery of the Holy Sisters (up to one week, then must camp).

Travel: Go west to the Puzzle Hills [009], south to the village of Moorguard [162], or east on a trail through the Green Hills [112].

006 “Perhaps I misjudged Dorian,” Shirin remarks. “No one is perfect.” Erase the plot word **DOUBT** or replace the plot word **SCORN** with **DOUBT**. Go to [020].

007 Shirin’s experience with equines allows her to tame the magical creature. She is delighted by it, taking it as her steed.

Record plot word **PURE**, and, if you don’t have it, plot word **TRUST**. She will lavish it with affection and use it as a mount (treat a unicorn as a war horse for carry load: 4,000 coins at full speed, 8,000 at half speed). Come up with a name for it! (Go to [093] to get its stats but return here instead of fighting.)

The unicorn helps guide you out of the woods. You may go north to Quill village [143], or east down a road to the village of Oyster Bay [044], or west to Wargsnout village [020].

008 In his chest, you find sacks of coins (you count 830sp and 700gp), some human-sized **Boots of Speed**, and up to a week’s worth of standard rations. Record plot word **STOMP**. Go to [153] unless Shirin was killed; then go to [140].

009 You are traveling through the Puzzle Hills, a broken maze of canyons, boulder fields, and dried creek beds. If you possess plot word **BLUR** go to [105]. Otherwise, record plot word **BLUR** and go to [048].

010 You slip out of Castle Prufax through a postern gate and reach the docks. Using a combination of bribes (Shirin offers her wedding ring) and threats, you persuade a local fisherman, disaffected by the baron’s high taxes, to take you out onto a fishing boat for a voyage to freedom.

As Prufax Island fades into the sunset, and you keep a sharp eye peeled for pursuit, Shirin lets out a sigh of relief. “Free at last! But where shall we journey next?”

The answer is up to you. But wherever you go, it should be far from here, for should they survive the orcish invasion, neither the baron nor the count will forget who was responsible for dashing their plans. The End? Go to [185]

011 After a horde of servants and female relatives whisk away his bride off to prepare her for the ceremony, Baron Prufax vents his anger. “I can see why you need help against the orcs, if this is the best Lorne’s retainers can do! My father was right to distrust him!” He calms himself with visible effort. “Even so, I understand you had a perilous journey. You delivered Shirin alive if somewhat the worse for wear. I am thankful, but I shall look to her safety myself hereafter!” Go to [090].

012 You defeated the knight and squire. Removing his helm, you do not recognize him. You may take the **black pearl ring** from the knight (400gp). He also has a trophy bag containing with three swords (one magic +1), two short swords, and one two-handed sword (the knight tossed any weapons but swords into the gorge).

If one of the PCs gallantly defeated the knight in a one-on-one duel, Shirin is very pleased with that hero! Record plot word **FAVOR** plus that PC's name. If it took two or more duels to take the knight down, Shirin is less impressed but not displeased.

However, if the party won by ganging up on the knight, or attacking him with missile weapons or magic, Shirin is displeased with the lack of chivalry displayed in your victory. If you had plot word **TRUST**, erase it.

Record plot word **SWAN** and go to [156].

013 "This can't be!" She looks at you. "That is my half-sister Shamara's writing, I am sure of it," Shirin says. The bride-to-be shakes her head sadly. "She must really hate me!" Go to [045].

014 Sorrowthorn Wood is a poor hamlet on the edge of a gloomy forest.

Lodging: Elderberry Inn.

Travel: East to Eldenbog village [032] or northwest to the village of Endelyn [096].

015 Witherstomp is grateful. He roots around in his chest and presents the party with a gift: a pair of **Boots of Speed**. He is characteristically gruff even in gratitude, declaiming "Took it from a dead burglar; too small for me!" If the person that finally retrieved the cat was a PC, Shirin seems very impressed with them: record plot word **FAVOR** (that PC's name). Go to [092].

016 A sudden gale creates heavy seas, threatening to swamp the fishing boat. "We should turn back," warns the captain. To return as the captain requests, go to [044].

To insist he press on, **roll 1d6**. On a 1–3, go to [097]; on a 4+, go to [079]; add +2 for characters who might have experience with boats from their background.

017 Hopefully you gave them indigestion.
Bad End.

018 Heqet Swamp is a soggy mosquito-infested lowland haunted by the ceaseless croaking of frogs.

Lodging: Camping. If you do not have the plot word **CROAK** go to [073].

Travel: North to Lionsbeak Moor [030], east to Wargsnout village [020], or west to the hamlet of Eldenbog [032].

019 You reach the low hill. In the roots of a great tree that grows from the hill's center is a cave. Dismounting, you find a large door, fully 15 feet high and 8 feet wide. The door is ajar.

If you'd rather not enter, go to [153] if you have plot word **FEATHER** or [074] otherwise.

To enter, go to [125] if you knock or announce yourselves first, to [076] if you just shove it open.

020 Wargsnout is a hamlet in the barony of Prufax, sitting right on the border with Lorne.

Lodging: The Ogre's Skull inn.

Rumors: The inn's name comes from an ogre skull used as a chandelier. A unicorn was sighted in Tantivy Wood. A minstrel offers to sing a ballad for a 1gp tip. If you pay (and haven't heard it already) go to [115].

Travel: Follow the Titan River north to Titan's Ford village [038], go east to Tantivy Wood [158], or slog west into Heqet Swamp [018].

021 Any captives won't talk, but searching the highwaymen, you find a sack of 100gp and a letter, written in Common with a flowing hand in silver ink. (Shirin and her maid are literate, even if no one else is.)

The letter reads:

Our target has left the castle with a small escort. Her precise route is unknown, but odds favor her taking the Great Road. Take her alive and bring her to Oyster Bay on the east coast, and there will be more gold.

The letter is unsigned. If you show it to Shirin, go to [013] if you have plot word **TALE** or [175] if you don't.

If you don't show it her, or did so and then returned to this paragraph, go to [045] when you are ready to resume travel.



022 “Little sister, you chose your protectors well,” she gasps. “Who’d guess you were more ruthless than me?” She collapses. Record plot word **VICTRIX**.

If you slew her, go to [065].

If you just incapacitated Shamara, you take her captive. To interrogate or negotiate with her after she surrenders or is incapacitated, go to [178] if you have plot word **TALK** or [144] if you don’t. To just hold her captive, go to [180].

023 You died fighting. **Bad End**.

024 “I don’t think so,” he says, leering at Shirin. “Say, that’s a high-class lady you lot go with you,” he observes. The slaver offers to buy her, adding a few vulgar remarks.

“Scum,” says Shirin. “The world would be a better place without you in it!”

She looks at you, and with a shockingly cold expression in her usually kind face, flatly states “They will apologize, or they will die. See to it.”

To take her suggestion and attack the slavers, who’ve also insulted your lady, go to [155].

To demand they apologize, go to [148].

To leave them to their business, go to [004].

025 The character interacting with Shirin rolls a **CHA** ability check, made easier (–4 modifier) if the plot word **PURE** exists. If successful go to [163]; failure goes to [120].

026 Finding the children’s homes delays you a day. They came from nearby farms. The farmers didn’t want to sell their kids, but it was that or debtor’s prison.

“How could my husband-to-be allow such practices?” Shirin frets. “I must have words with him.” But she is grateful to the party for risking their lives to assist the children. If any of you are injured, you may rest at the children’s grateful parents’ houses for up to a week at no cost (and bury any dead there).

Record the plot word **TRUST** (unless you already have it) and **SAFE**.

Also, if you have the plot word **NOBLE**, erase it. Otherwise, note plot word **DOUBT**, or if already noted, erase it and replace it with **SCORN**.

Continue your interrupted journey to Port Skarn [079] or return to Pearl [003].

027 Shamara guides the *Swordfish* to a small island a half day’s sail away. In a sheltered cove, you find a smaller cog waiting: the *Sea Witch*, commanded by one Captain Tamos, who Shamara says is a trusty smuggler friend of her mother’s.

Captain Tamos is bound for the port of Morvoren, across the sea. It’s a bustling coastal town, where a wealthy adventurer can find a ship or caravan going anywhere. He will take Shirin and any who wish to accompany her there.

“And now,” says Shamara, “I must be away, for I’ve a wedding to attend. Would any of you care to accompany me?”

You have a decision to make.

If you wish to go with Shamara to pose as her retainers—and possibly collect a reward from Lord Prufax or later return to Lorne, she will be glad to have you. Most of the *Swordfish*’s master and crew agree to do this, receiving a substantial bribe from Shamara to keep their silence. Record plot word **SISTER**, erase plot words **DOUBT**, **FURY**, **TRUST**, and **SCORN** (if you have them) and go to [065].

If you wish to follow Shirin into exile aboard the *Sea Witch*, the adventure is over for those who do. Shamara gives each character a reward of 500gp in gold and pearls, plus a similar amount to Shirin. Record plot word **SISTER**. If all characters chose this path, the adventure ends: go to [185].

It’s possible for some of the party to go with Shirin (ending the adventure for them) and others to continue with Shamara; if so, go to [065] as detailed above (with those PCs) instead of [185].

028 Shirin looks at you with her heart in her eyes and says “I cannot marry him! Please, help me leave this place!”

You need a cunning plan, but there is no time for anything complicated. While Prufax is distracted speaking to an important guest, Shirin bumps into an unfortunate guest and contrives to spill a glass of wine onto her gown. A fuss is raised, but as her trusted retainers, no one questions your story of escorting the bride to her chambers for an emergency change of clothes. Instead, you spirit her out through the servant’s quarters and toward a postern gate that leads out of the castle.

Every PC should roll an **INT** or **DEX** ability check. If there are two or more of you in the party, only one needs to succeed. If successful, record plot word **FREE** and go to [010]. If you all fail, go to [129].

029 Eating at the giant's huge table requires some gymnastics, which Witherstomp finds hilarious. He offers giant-sized portions of roast griffon steak.

Witherstomp listens to the story tale of your adventurers with evident interest and regales you with several blood-curdling tales of his youth. It's clear he's slain monsters, humans, orcs, and elves with equal enthusiasm.

Afterward, he offers you sleeping quarters in his storage room. ("Used to belong to the missus," he says). You notice the giant's lioness cub stays alert while he sleeps; there's no chance to surprise him even if you had treachery in mind.

You can keep watch, but nothing untoward occurs at night, and dawn eventually comes, leaving you well fed and safe from griffons; you've had a night of rest. The giant offers you some breakfast and hints you be on your way.

If you thank him for his hospitality and take your leave, go to [098].

If you plan to attack him, Shirin wonders aloud if such actions are consistent with the ideals of chivalry. If you do so anyway, go to [147].

030 You are on misty Lionsbeak Moor, a flat, mostly treeless plain that stretches for miles, broken only by the occasional low hill.

Lodging: Camping.

Travel: East to Titan's Ford [153], north to the Green Hills [112], south to Heqet Swamp [018], or west to the village of Moorguard [162].

031 The evening reverberates with bloodthirsty howls. The wolves are on the prowl! As frightened villagers huddle in their huts, you face four marauding wolves. Refer to **MAP 1**. Each wolf is at E, F, G, and H, facing north. The party starts within 15' of C, facing south.

Wolves

AC 7 [12], **HD** 2+2 (9hp), **Att** 1× bite (1d6), **THACO** 17 [+2],
MV 180' (60'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1).
ML 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 25

If you defeat the wolves, go to [116] unless Shirin was slain. If Shirin is killed, go to [140]. If the wolves kill you, go to you [017].

032 Elderbog is a miserable hamlet next to a swamp. The inhabitants hunt frogs and dig peat from the bog.

Lodging: The village elder's house. If you stay, **roll 1d6** to see if you hear any gossip or rumors; on a **4+** go to [114].

Travel: Go east into Heqet Swamp [018], north to village of Moorguard [123], or west to Sorrowthorn Wood [075].

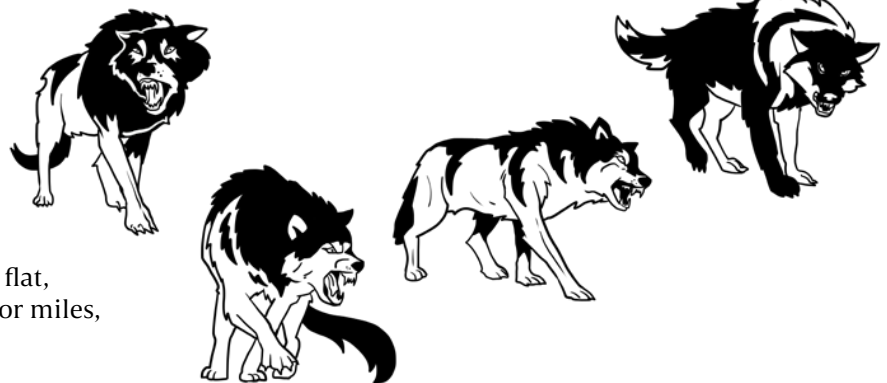
033 On the road you overtake a laden wagon driven by a rough-looking fellow; two armed men in padded jerkins escort it, riding horses charitably described as nags. In the open bed of the wagon sits a cage containing four sad-looking children, three girls and a boy, aged 14–15, dressed in peasant clothing. Record plot word **CART**.

To ignore them, go to [004].

To stop and question these slavers, go to [119].

034 The mountain road ends in a steep cliff that falls hundreds of yards to a rushing river. The only way across is a single narrow bridge. If you have plot word **SWAN** go to [156]. If you have the plot word **GUARD**, renew hostilities at [170] or retreat to [072].

Otherwise, go to [039].



035 To ride on, go to [074]. To take shelter in the hill cave, go to [019].

036 Next morning there is a furtive knock on your chambers. A "maid" enters, then pulls down her hood, revealing the face of Shamara—now in her guise as Lady Prufax. "Well, that was an eventful night. My new husband is sleeping, but the nuns taught me to rise early." Shamara says "I suppose I may be giving my husband an heir soon, but barons have such dangerous lives, and he might eat something disagreeable, drown, or die in battle. Either way, I fear I may become a young widow." She gives you a glance that is both coy and measuring. "If that should happen, I shall need strong right hands, to protect the barony and my child, and lead our forces against the orcs. After that, who knows?" She gives a wicked laugh. "Perhaps we can take our ships and my pets over the sea, and pay the rich towns of Gwalathar a visit!"

"So, I shall need bold warriors in my service, loyal to me. Will you swear to serve me?"

If you agree, go to [102]. If not, the false baroness shrugs and presents you each a reward of 250gp each in exchange for your silence. Record plot word **GOLD** and go to [136] if you have plot word **LOYAL** or [051] otherwise.

037 “In my hour of need, grant me the holy power to defend this sacred place and the innocents within!” the priestess prays.

The orcs jeer the priestess in rough-accented Common: “Your god ain’t listening!” taunts their leader, a nasty fellow with a bloody saber. “Time to die!”

The priestess glances beyond the orcs, noticing your advance.

“You think so? My prayers are answered!” she exalts.

The orc’s leader follows the priestess’s gaze and curses. Some of the orcs turn to face your party; the others continue fighting her.

From one of the upper windows, you see the frightened faces of young girls. At your approach, they begin crying out joy and praying for your victory!

Refer to **MAP 1**. Your party faces four orcs. Two are at A and B, facing north, two are C and K, facing south. It’s overcast; the orcs aren’t impaired by sunlight. The wounded priestess, your ally, is at D, facing south, guarding a door north of D. Plot word **LATE** means she’s at **2hp**, otherwise **5hp**. The party starts within 20’ of E, afoot or mounted, facing north.



Priestess Masrak

2nd-level cleric
STR 13 [+1], **DEX** 16 [+2], **INT** 9, **WIS** 16 [+2], **CON** 9, **CHA** 11
AC 2 [17], **HD** 2 (7hp max, 4hp remaining), **Att** 1× mace (1d6+1),
THACO 19 [0], **MV** 60’ (20’), **SV** D11 W12 P14 B16 S15 (2).
ML 7, **AL** Lawful

► **Note:** Has used up her spell.

► **Equipment:** Chainmail, shield, mace.

If you defeat the orcs and Shirin lived, go to [173]; if you won but Shirin died, go to [140]. If the orcs win, go to [023].

Orc Raiders

AC 6 [13], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1× short sword (1d6) or 1× short bow (1d6), **THACO** 19 [0],
MV 120’ (40’), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1).
ML 6 (8 with leader), **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 10

Orc Leader

AC 6 [13], **HD** 1 (8hp), **Att** 1× sword (1d8), **THACO** 19 [0],
MV 120’ (40’), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1).
ML 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 10



038 Titan’s Ford is a village on the Titan River, a swift watercourse that runs from the Karlanstar Gorge through verdant valleys before draining into the southern lowlands. The village sprawls on both sides of the river.

Lodging: The Frog & Lion inn.

Travel: Go east to Quill village [143], go south through the Titan River valley to Wargsnout village [020], or west onto Lionsbeak Moor [030].

039 Karlanstar Gorge is on the east side of the Karlanstar Mountains. The winding mountain road ends on a steep cliff overlooking the rushing Titan River hundreds of feet below. The only way across is a single narrow bridge; beyond that the road continues through the mountain pass.

If you have the plot word **SWAN** you may cross the bridge and go to [156]. If you have the plot word **GUARD**, go to [034]. If not, go to [101]. Alternatively, to retreat and head west through the Karlanstar Mountains, go to [072].

040 You are fighting the exiled mage Shamara and her pet sea monster. The monster's long neck lets it reach up onto the ship. Refer to [MAP 4](#).

Set up Shamara at S1 riding on her monster facing the ship; the serpent's head at MH, its body at M, tail at MT. Party members (and Shirin, if present) are afoot on deck at any location. The ship's deck is shown on the map. The circled mast square is impassible. Off the ship is a 6' drop into 120 foot-deep water. Sailors and mounts are below decks (under a battened hatch at A).

Shamara

3rd level NPC magic-user.

STR 8, **DEX** 16 [+2], **INT** 17, **WIS** 14 [+1], **CON** 10, **CHA** 18 [+2]

AC 7 [12], **HD** 3** (11hp), **Att** 1× rod (2d6), **THACO** 19 [0],

MV 120' (40'), **SV** D13 W14 P13 B16 S15 (3).

ML 9, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 65

► **Spells:** 1st Magic missile, shield 2nd mirror image.

► **Rod of St. Agatha.** Usable by arcane spell casters only; 8 charges left.

- » *Agatha's Wrath:* Expending one charge in melee inflicts **2d6** damage on a successful hit.
- » *Charm Monster:* Expending two charges, wielder can cast the *charm monster* spell



Sea Serpent

30' long.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 6 (27hp), **Att** 1× bite (2d6) or squeeze (1d10 hull damage), **THACO** 14 [+5], **MV** 150' (50'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3). **ML** 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 275

► **Lunge:** Up to 20' out of water to use bite attack.

► **Squeeze:** Coil around and crush a vessel (of equal size or smaller).

Shamara attempts to kill the party (and her monster continues to do so if Shamara is killed or incapacitated).

If Shirin dies while the rest of the party is still fighting Shamara, go to [\[069\]](#). If you defeat Shamara, and Shirin survived, go to [\[022\]](#). Go to [\[077\]](#) if Shamara is killed but Shirin is also slain. If the party (excluding Shirin, if below decks) is defeated go to [\[023\]](#).

041 You defeated the monster! Record plot word **FEATHER**. It's almost evening, but the fog seems to be lifting. To camp under the open stars and then resume traveling, go to [\[153\]](#). To circle back and explore the hill cave go to [\[019\]](#).

042 That night as you cook dinner around the campfire, you spot a lovely white horse with a horn peeking through the branches at you: a unicorn. Shirin is entranced!

If you permit Shirin to try and lure it toward her, go to [\[007\]](#).

If you don't trust it and refuse to allow Shirin to approach or want to scare it off go to [\[064\]](#).

If you want to let Shirin lure it in, only to attack it hoping to take its valuable horn, go to [\[093\]](#).

043 The minstrel, a lithe young man, steps out of the kitchen and approaches you. "Is that the lady Shirin? Lovely lady, I have composed a song in your honor to celebrate your upcoming marriage to the Baron. Would you like to hear it?"

"I suppose," Shirin says. "May I hear it, then?"

"Aye! It's a dirge for your death!" A dagger, glowing red, seem to appear in his hand by magic so quickly is it drawn out. He rushes forward, attacking almost before his discarded lute strikes the floor. The other customers and staff flee.

Check for **surprise: the party is surprised on a 1-2 on 1d6**. If they aren't surprised, and can be standing with weapons ready. If no one is ready, the assassin gets initiative on the first turn and the party is seated with weapons sheathed.

The assassin tries to kill Shirin but attacks other characters if they are in his way.

Set up on [MAP 2](#). The assassin is at F, facing west. The party's table is the shaded squares; Shirin is at A, her maid, if present, at B, other party members, afoot, occupy squares adjacent to the table.

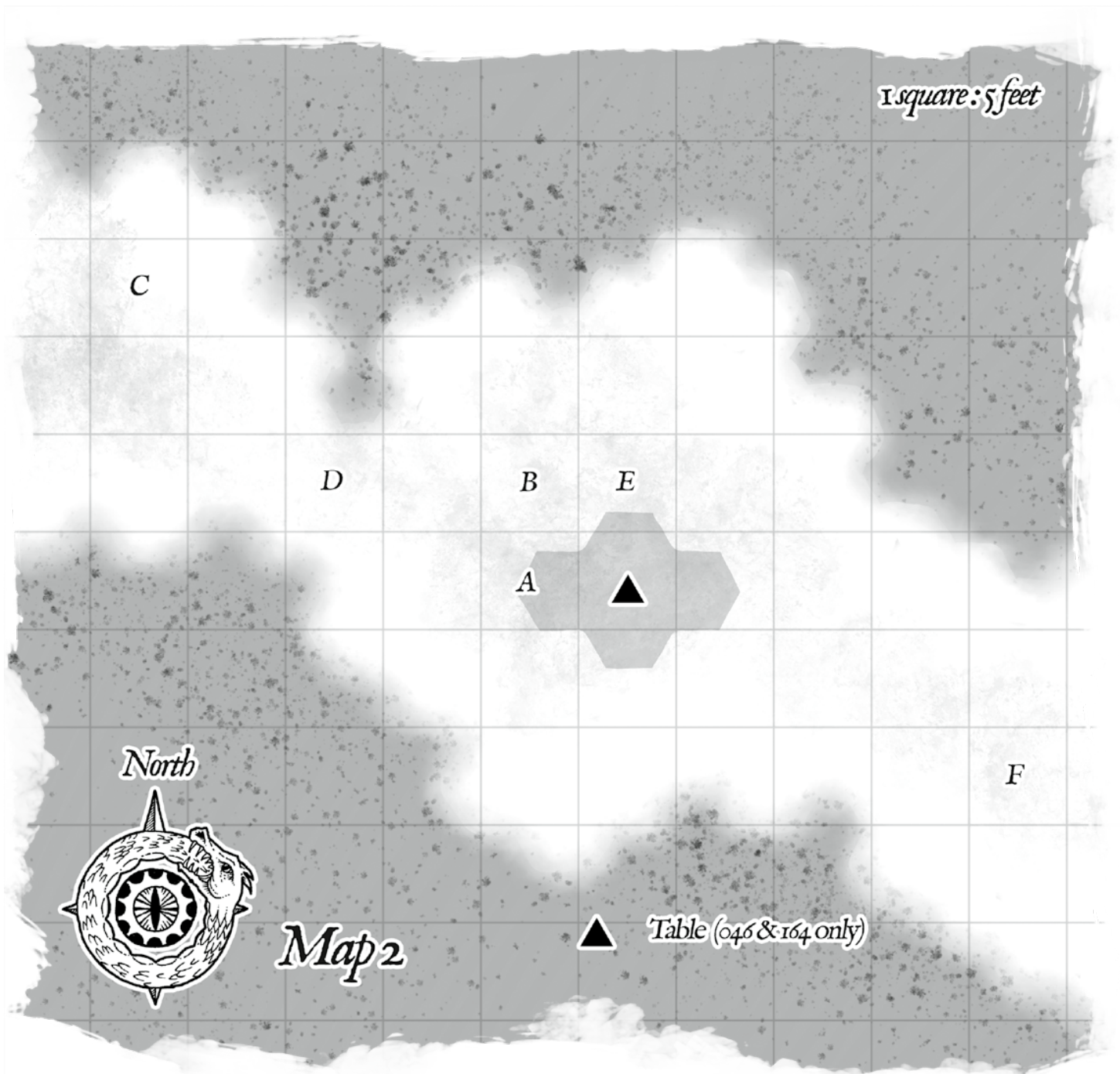
Assassin

AC 8 [11], **HD** 2 (7hp), **Att** 1× dagger +1 (1d4+1), **THACO** 18 [+1],

MV 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2).

ML 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 20

If you defeat him go to [\[161\]](#), or [\[140\]](#) if Shirin is also slain. If you're all slain, go to [\[023\]](#).



044 Oyster Bay is a fishing village on the southeast coast, in the barony of Prufax. You can see the blue waters of the great sea to the south and east. Some hundred miles northeast is Prufax Island, your final destination. None of the local sailors want to sail that far!

Lodging: The Mermaid's Dream.

Rumors: The locals grumble about high taxes. A bartender does a double-take on seeing Shirin; she resembles a traveling wizard who rented a boat here last week. He doesn't recall a name.

Travel: North to the village of Pearl [003], west to Tantivy Wood [158], or rent a fishing boat to sail to Port Skarn. If you take a boat, you'll have to leave mounts behind (arranging to send a messenger to Lorne to arrange them to be retrieved). If so, go to [087].

045 You are on the Great Road a few miles from Moorguard, near the site of the highway-men's ambush.

Lodging: Camping.

Travel: Go east on the Great Road to Moorguard [162], or northeast to the Green Hills (beyond which lies the Nunnery of the Holy Sisters) [112], or southeast to the village of Eldenbog [032], or west on the Great Road to the Endelyn Village [096].

046 The warp beast hisses angrily, then gives a high, whistling growl. Its eyes glow with a feral amber light.

You're fighting the warp beast; the blink dog is your ally. (The puppy stays out of the fight.)

Set up on **MAP 2**. The blink dog is at D, the warp beast at BE facing the dog, the puppy at C, a fallen blink dog body at A. Party members may start within 5' of F or G, mounted or afoot.

If the warp beast kills everyone, go to **[023]**. If you win but Shirin dies go to **[140]**.

Otherwise, if you won, record plot word **PACK**. If the adult blink dog survived and was not incapacitated go to **[063]**. If you won, but the adult dog is killed or incapacitated go to **[107]**.

Blink Dog

AC 5 [14], **HD** 4* (9hp), **Att** 1× bite (1d6), **THACO** 16 [+3],
MV 120' (40'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (4).
ML 6, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 125

► **Note:** down to **5hp** if you came from **[108]**.

► **Blink:** In combat, teleport close to an enemy, attack, then reappear 1d4 × 10' away. If they have **initiative**, can blink away without the opponent being able to counter-attack.

Warp Beast

AC 4 [15], **HD** 6* (20hp), **Att** 2× tentacle (2d4), **THACO** 14 [+5],
MV 150' (50'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (6).
ML 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 500

► **Displacement:** Appear 3' from actual location; attackers suffer -2 to hit.

► **Save Bonus:** +2 on all saves.

047 **Roll 1d6.** On a 1–3 go to **[060]**; on a 4–6, go to **[124]**.

048 You are following a winding trail through the hills when an dingo-sized canine materializes out of thin air next to lady Shirin!

Shirin easily controls her startled mount. The dog has oddly pointed ears, and bleeds from a vicious gash on its left side.

It barks once, then vanishes again, reappearing 20 feet away by a side trail that leads off from the main road.

You have heard rumors of blink dogs: intelligent hounds of elvish origin. It looks back, then gestures with its head as if asking for you to follow, barks, then vanishes again!

“Should we follow?” asks Shirin. “I think that dog wants us to...”

A moment later you hear loud barks, and a high-pitched growling roar up ahead.

To go see what's happening, go to **[121]**.

To ignore strange dogs and continue on your way, go to **[105]**.

049 Shamara keeps her distance.

“I am Shamara, half-sister of Shirin,” she says. “I seek my birthright as the firstborn daughter of count Lorne! I know Shirin is with you and would speak with her! I will give you gold—and send you on your way. Scorn me, and I'll feed you to my sea serpent!” Her beast hisses like a kettle.

To agree to a parlay, record plot word **TALK** and go to **[144]**. Otherwise, go to **[040]**.

050 The next morning, you are summoned before Baron and Lady Prufax in their antechamber. They both appear surprised to be as happy as they find themselves, exchanging smoldering looks when they think no one is looking. They thank you for your brave and loyal service and offer you honored positions in their household guard. If you accept, go to **[102]**. If you'd prefer to return to Lorne, you bid your farewells after which they send you to see the steward: go to **[136]**.

051 While the Prufaxes are too busy to see you off, his steward, Sir Tamar, brusquely thanks each of you for your services, and presents each of you with a reward of 200gp plus paid passage by ship back to Port Skarn or Oyster Bay (your choice), from which you may return to Lorne or travel elsewhere, as you desire. Go to **[085]**.

052 “Why aren't we helping?” Shirin demands. “My sister might be there!”

If you change your mind and intervene, go to **[037]** with plot word **LATE**.

If you drag Shirin away from the fight, go to **[151]**.

053 You are traveling on a poorly maintained stretch of the Great Highway, passing through an area of rough boulder fields and undergrowth. Go to **[126]**.

054 You stand outside Castle Lorne. Prosperous farms and orchards line the road, and friendly villagers doff their caps upon recognizing Lady Shirin.

Travel: East by road to Endelyn village **[096]**. If you think your party is drawing too much attention on the main road, you can leave the roads and travel cross-country through the various woodlots and hunting trails. Go to **[066]**.

055 At the docks, you are met by the baron's men-at-arms and escorted up a steep path of 300 steps into the great hall. It is hung with bright banners and decorated with many tapestries, shields, suits of armor, and the prows of several ships taken in battle. Awaiting you is Baron Dorian Prufax, a lean young man with a neat beard and mustache.

“Lady Shirin, we meet at last,” Dorian exclaims. They speak quietly for a few moments.

Then he turns to the party.



If you have plot word **FURY**, go to [184]. Otherwise, if you don't have plot word **TIMELY** or if the bride is significantly injured (3 or more hits) upon arrival, go to [011], or if neither apply, go to [131].

056 The seas are rough, but the winds are favorable, and the *Swordfish* cuts easily through the ocean. You spot a pod of playful humpback whales, and a school of colorful flying fish.

Shirin (and her maid, if still present) are below in her cabin, perhaps a bit seasick. Your mounts, if any, are below deck. The rest of you are on deck. The ship's captain tells you of foreign ports he has visited: besides Prufax Island, there are countless smaller isles nearby. He's also been across the sea, carrying cargoes of wine, tin, and pearls to the port of Mavoren, part of the barony of Gwalathar. Their folk are distantly related to both the Prufaxes and the Lornes.

Suddenly the ship's lookout interrupts the captain's tale: "Sea serpent off the port bow!" Go to [089].

057 You inform the peasants that you're on a vital mission for Count Lorne and can't be distracted. But perhaps Lady Shirin could write a message urging her father to handle this problem?

Shirin pens a quick missive, which she marks with her seal and hands to the village elder. "Get this to Castle Lorne. I hope my parents takes action," she says.

The villagers thank her, but from their tone, are skeptical as whether aid will come. They know all too well that the Count's forces are overstretched. Shirin is clearly bothered by the party's decision not to fight: if you have plot word **TRUST**, erase it. Go to [014].

058 If you're in Grimgarth, return to [157]; if in Port Skarn, go to [071]; if in Oyster Bay, return to

[044].

059 You are back at Castle Lorne. The count eagerly awaits news of his daughter's marriage.

Lodging: If you returned to recuperate, you may rest here, but the count warns you that the wedding is getting ever closer.

Travel: East by road or woodland trails to Endelyn village [096].

060 Shirin tosses her hair, then fixes her half-sister with a steely gaze. "Go away, Shamara! I shall marry Dorian Prufax! Slither back to the abyss from which you and your pet emerged!" She glances back toward her retainers, expecting her retainers to back up her defiance.

If you support Shirin's bravado, go to [180] if you have plot word **VICTRIX** or [040] if you don't.

If you opt to betray her and accept her sister's offer of gold, go to [174].

061 It appears someone has stolen Shirin's unicorn, for next morning it is nowhere to be found. The stable door seems to have been kicked open from the inside. Go to [071] if you have plot word **HEART** or [070] otherwise.

062 The village elder offers you a word of advice. “Last week a tinker came through; said he’d heard rumors of brigands on the Great Road. He took a long way around, past Eldenbog through Heqet Swamp. Said he’d rather risk frogs or gators than be robbed again.” Go to [014].

063 The blink dog wags its tail, grateful for the rescue. It leads you up the trail to a foul-smelling cave entrance. Go to [135].

064 You remind Shirin that she’ll soon be a married woman and if the legends are true, the unicorn is unlikely to stay with her afterward: Chasing a unicorn can’t end well. Nodding her head with regret, she accepts that point. The unicorn tosses his mane and vanishes into the forest. Go to [127].

065 You sail into the wide harbor of Prufax Island, filled with fishing boats and cogs, one of which you guess is the *Sea Leopard*, the newly-built and exquisitely decorated flagship of Lord Prufax’s personal squadron. On the cliffs above the harbor are the gray towers of a mighty castle.

You were supposed to deliver the bride by the 21st day of the month. If you did, record plot word **TIMELY**. Go to [055].

066 As you exit the woods, you notice Shirin appears melancholy. “It just struck me,” she says. “I am going away for good. Shall I ever see these lands again?” she says. Go to [096].

067 Shirin heeds your words and returns alone to bed. If you wish, either remove the plot word **DOUBT**, or erase the plot word **SCORN** and replace it with mere **DOUBT**. Go to [058].

068 “It was a minor family scandal,” Shirin explains bitterly. “I am sure you have heard the rumors? Shamara is my illegitimate older sister, daughter of a commoner, an early indiscretion of Father’s. We played together as children, but Mother couldn’t stand to have her around court, and sent her away to a nunnery. Oh, she must hate me!” For the next few hours of travel, Shirin lapses into an uncharacteristic melancholy. Go to [045].

069 “Your mistress and my sister are dead,” Shamara gasps. “Your lord’s alliance is doomed ... and the orcs shall conquer the land. Unless ... I take my sister’s place and marry Prufax in her stead. What say you?”

If you accept her offer, record plot word **SISTER** and go to [065].

If you refuse and opt to fight her to the death, continue the combat; you have the initiative on the next turn. Go to [077] if you slay Shamara, or [023] if she (and her giant serpent, if still alive) defeats you all.

070 Shirin gathers everyone together, for she has a confession to make. “I could not marry Baron Prufax, for he is not the person I thought he was. My heart belongs to another, a warrior whose strength and valor I

have come to love.”

Shirin puts her arm around the character she favors. “We plan to elope and seek a new life in a distant land.”

(If the maid is still with the group, Derya supports her mistress ... reluctantly.)

The rest of the party members, if any, may support these crazy love birds and go into exile with them, or return to Lorne, with the truth, or a faked story of Shirin’s death. Or declare the lovers insane for having risked the wrath of the Count of Lorne for the favor of his daughter and heir (“might as well pour boiling oil on us and light the fire, because the end is certain either way!”). Perhaps the Count’s need for warriors will override any punishment for the mission’s failure.

Record plot word **LOVE**. **The End** ... or the beginning? Go to [185].

071 The mayor arranges passage aboard the merchant cog *Swordfish*, under one captain Pigres, with a crew of nine sailors. There is a private cabin for Shirin (and her maid) and room for any mounts below decks. (If you would rather leave your mounts for fear of losing them at sea if the party is forced to abandon ship, the mayor will look after them until you return.) Go to [056].

072 You are in the Karlanstar Mountains, following a narrow mountain road, barely wide enough for a single man or horse. As night falls, a chill wind has you shivering. You find a sheltered overhang where you can camp.

Lodging: Camping.

Travel: Go east through the mountains toward Karlanstar Gorge [039] or turn west into the Green Hills [112].

073 Divide the party into a first and a second watch; go to [111].

074 You journey another mile, but then the screeching cry sounds again, much louder! With a high-pitched scream, a majestic eagle-headed winged lion dives down out of the fog. A griffon!

You’re in featureless open terrain. Place Shirin in the center of any open map and put the rest of the party within 30’ of her. The griffon comes from the east, 140’ away and 20’ up, facing the party. Fog limits visibility to 150’.

It likes horse meat but is smart enough to attack riders first.

Griffon

AC 5 [14], **HD** 7* (31hp), **Att** 2x claw (1d4), 1 x bite (2d8), **THACO** 13 [+6],

MV 120' (40') / 360' (120') flying, **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (4).

ML 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 850

► **Attack horses:** Unless passes morale check, will focus attacks on horses first.

Go to [041] if the party defeats the griffon without losing Shirin, or to [140] if you win or flee but she is slain. Go to [017] if the entire party dies or are incapacitated.

075 You're approaching Sorrowthorn Wood, a hamlet near the southern border of Lorne. If you have never visited before, go to [117]. Otherwise, go to [014].

076 The door opens and you find yourselves confronted by a giant! He is 10 feet tall, with an old, wrinkled face and a long scraggly gray beard that reaches to his waist. He leans on a great gnarled walking stick and wears simple clothes.

Behind him is a cavernous room furnished with a giant-sized table and stools, an unlit fireplace at one end and a large chest at the other.

To parlay with the giant, go to [134]. If you attack, go to [164]. If you flee, go to [153] if you have plot word FEATHER, or otherwise roll 1d6. On a 1-4 go to [118]; on a 5-6, to [153].

077 With no bride, the marriage is left without a critical component. The hopes for a united front against the coming orc invasion are dashed.

Neither Lord Lorne nor Lord Prufax is likely to accept excuses, either. In fact, you'll be lucky if you're merely thrown in a dungeon for the rest of your lives.

However, unless it fell overboard, you have Shamara's Rod of St. Agatha, a valuable magic item (worth at least 1,000gp to the holy sisterhood's mother church or any rich wizards).

And you have a ship, the *Swordfish*. Her captain fears losing his own head for being present in this disaster! Maybe you could turn privateer, if you sail far, far away ... no, farther than that. Even farther.

It's **The End**. Record plot word **FREE** and **WAR**; go to [185].

078 The innkeeper says many blame the taxes on the expense of the upcoming marriage. Others claim Lord Prufax is recruiting soldiers to deal with the orcish threat, as he should be, and facing trouble at sea, monsters attacking his ships."

Record plot word **TAX**. That night, Lady Shirin looks pensive. "I did not expect him to beggar the people with a great wedding," she says to herself, looking at her ring finger. "I did not ask for this! What is my husband-to-be thinking?"

If you agree with that assessment or make no comment, go to [106]. If you try to reassure Shirin that big weddings are important for affairs of state, select a PC as spokesperson and have them roll a Charisma ability check, made easier (-4 modifier) if you have plot word **TRUST**. If successful, she is reassured; return to [157]; if you fail, go to [106].

079 Port Skarn is a bustling seaside town in the barony of Prufax. Its harbor is full of fishing boats, but few ships.

Lodging: The Golden Anchor.

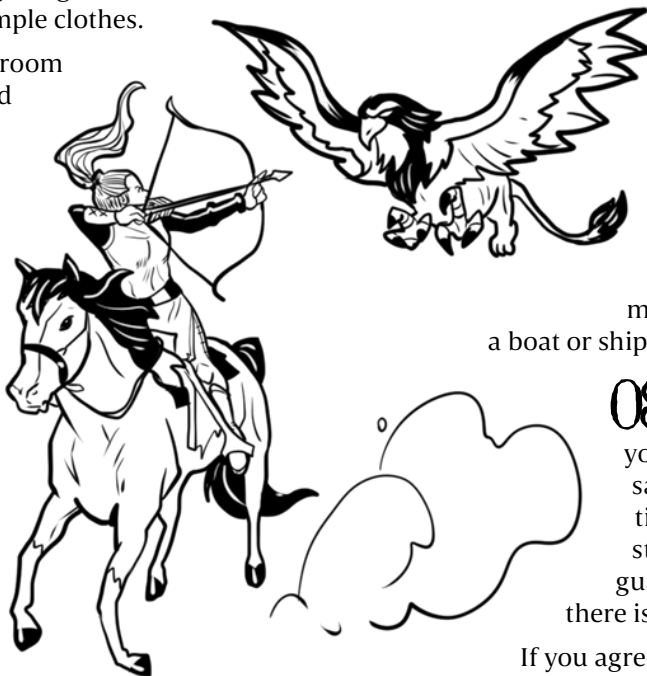
Rumor: A couple of merchant ships were lately lost at sea; no one knows why. Baron Prufax has promised to deal with this after his wedding.

Travel: West to Pearl village [003], or meet with the authorities to arrange for a boat or ship to sail to Prufax Island [159].

080 Next morning, the new Baroness Prufax summons you. "Thank you for everything," Shirin says. "I already owe you my life many times over, but would you consider staying with me, as my personal guard? In these times, far from my kin, there is no one I trust more."

If you agree, Shirin favors you with a warm smile. Go to [102].

If you refuse, Shirin nods slowly. She tells you to see her husband's steward for your pay and dismisses you, then turns and briskly walks away, her mind now focused on the urgent business of making allies in this new land. Go to [136].



081 Shirin is uncertain, and looks back at the party, face full of doubt. “What should I do?” she whispers. “The alliance of Prufax and Lorne is our best hope against the orc invasion, but from what I have learned on this journey, Prufax may not be the leader that our realms need.”

If you urge Shirin to reject her sister’s offer, go to [180] if you have plot word **VICTRIX** or [040] if you don’t.

If you recommend Shirin accept the offer of rich exile, go to [124].

If you tell Shirin to make up her own mind, or the party is undecided, **roll 1d6**. On a 1–3 go to [180] if you have plot word **VICTRIX** or [060] if you don’t; on a 4–6, go to [124].

082 “Shame!” scolds the Black Swan knight. “Squire Valin, attend me!” The dwarf joins the duel, supporting with his crossbow against any missile users in the party, or using his axe if they get close. The pair fight to the death against all characters! Record the dwarf’s stats (see below) then return to [170].

Valin

AC 5 [13], **HD** 1 (6hp), **Att** 1× crossbow (1d6) or 1× hand axe (1d6), **THACO** 19 [0],
MV 60’ (20’), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B13 S12 (1).
ML 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 10

083 No luck. Go to [160] and fight; they have initiative.

084 Shirin is appalled. But you saved her heartbreak, right? After all, the unicorn won’t stay with her after she’s married...

For slaying the unicorn, record the plot word **HORN**.

Unicorn horns are worth 1,000gp to local alchemists. Keep it, or sell it at a town or castle. If you currently have plot words **TRUST** and/or **FAVOR**, erase them. Record plot word **FURY**. As long as you have **FURY**, if you ever find a situation where you might gain **FAVOR** or **TRUST** again *ignore* that gain; instead erase **FURY** (she’s calmed down).

Go to [127].

085 Shirin’s journey may not have been without incident—to say the least—but in the end, mission accomplished! Their union forged an alliance between two great houses. You are confident the orcs are unlikely to try anything now, and if they do, they’ll be crushed. **The End** ... or is it? Record plot word **HOPE** and go to [185].

086 The nunnery of the Holy Sisterhood is a stone church nestled in a wooded glade, surrounded by pastures. But instead of blessed shepherdesses tending their flocks, you’re greeted by harsh cries and the clash of arms. A band of orcs is besieging the convent!

The church door is broken, but guarded by a stern priestess in chainmail, armed with mace and shield.

But she is one against four, bleeding from several cuts. Record plot word **MASRAK**.

To rush to her rescue, go to [037]. If you prefer not to get involved and retreat, go to [052].

087 You sail along the coast via a chartered fishing boat, bound for Port Skarn. **Roll 1d6**. On a 1–2, go to [016]. On a 3–6, go to [079].

088 “Who’s next?” the knight asks, after retrieving the fallen warrior’s weapon. If it’s a sword, he hands it to his dwarf squire as a trophy. All other weapons are flung irretrievably into the gorge.

If no one else will fight the knight, and you wish to retreat go to [133]. If you decide to gang up on him or use magic or missile weapons, go to [082].

To continue fighting one-on-one, return to [170] and follow the instructions there.

089 A gigantic sea serpent, at least 30 feet long, rises out of the waves. On its back is a young woman, her legs wrapped about the monster’s neck. She is beautiful, with red hair, green eyes, and features that resemble Lady Shirin, but a predatory gleam in her eyes. Her damp dress clings to her body. She’s holding a staff tipped with a black pearl.

Faced with a giant sea serpent, the crew panics and scurries for safety, save for the captain who dutifully mans the tiller.

“Heave to!” the woman cries. “I am Shamara of Lorne, and I will have words with my sister Shirin! Fetch her forth ... or face my serpent’s wrath!”

If you want to stand on guard, while sending someone below deck to ask Shirin if she wishes to parlay, record plot word **TALK** and go to [144].

If you wish to negotiate yourself with Shamara, or demand to know what she’s after, go to [049].

If you threaten Shamara or attack her, go to [040].



090 At long last, the marriage ceremony is at hand. It is a modest affair as Shirin's relatives could not attend, but the baron's own family is in attendance, along with several household knights and many local merchants, gentry, and sea captains. As Shirin's retainers, you have a prominent place in the wedding procession, which winds its way from Prufax Keep to the island church. Lord and Lady pass through an arch made by the drawn swords of the knights and guards and enter the church, where the local high priest presides.

If you have the plot word **DOUBT** or **SCORN** go to [109], otherwise, go to [104].

091 If you have the plot word **SCORN** go to [124]. If you have both the plot word **DOUBT** and plot word **TRUST** go to [081]. If you have the plot word **DOUBT** without **TRUST** go to [047]. If none of these conditions apply *exactly*, go to [060].

092 "Well, whatever," the giant grumbles. "Be off with ye, then. I'll walk ye to the borders of my land. No griffons be bothering you while old Witherstomp's here." Go to [153].

093 You are fighting an angry unicorn! Refer to **MAP 1**. The unicorn is at CD, facing south. The campfire is at X (fire square). The party, afoot, set up anywhere within 20' of X. Shirin and her maid won't fight the unicorn, nor will it attack them.

Unicorn

AC 2 [17], **HD** 4* (18hp), **Att** [2× hoof (1d8), 1× horn (1d8)]
THACO 16 [+3], **MV** 240' (80'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (8).
ML 7, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 125

- **Empathy with maidens:** A pure-hearted maiden can communicate with and ride a unicorn
- **Teleport:** Once per day up to 360' (but it used this ability to avoid other hunters earlier, so can't reuse it today)

If you slay it go to [084]. If slain, go to [023].

094 You are traveling through the forest of Tantivy Wood when suddenly a bowstring twangs! An arrow speeds past, buzzing like an angry hornet until it embeds itself in a nearby tree. A dozen yards away you see a group of three rough-looking archers dressed in mottled green and brown cloth. That was a warning shot!

"Well, well, looks like a patrol," says one rough voice. "Can't let them take us, can we?"

"Hey, they've got a lady," says another. "If she's a maiden, let's use her as unicorn bait! If not, we can sell her to the slavers."

"You there," the third Bowman shouts. "The lady for your lives!"

Looks like they're poachers or outlaws, blocking the road, and you can't easily outrun their arrows.

To fight them or ride through them go to [160]. To negotiate, go to [083].

095 "Tell lady Shirin of her sister's fate," you growl, giving the nuns a threatening glare. "No secrets! We saved your lives. You owe her that."

"As you wish," says Farima. "But I assure you, it was not our order's fault! When she was brought to us, Shamara was a clever but troubled girl. She read the sacred mysteries, but she did not have true faith, nor take well to discipline, fasting, or correction."

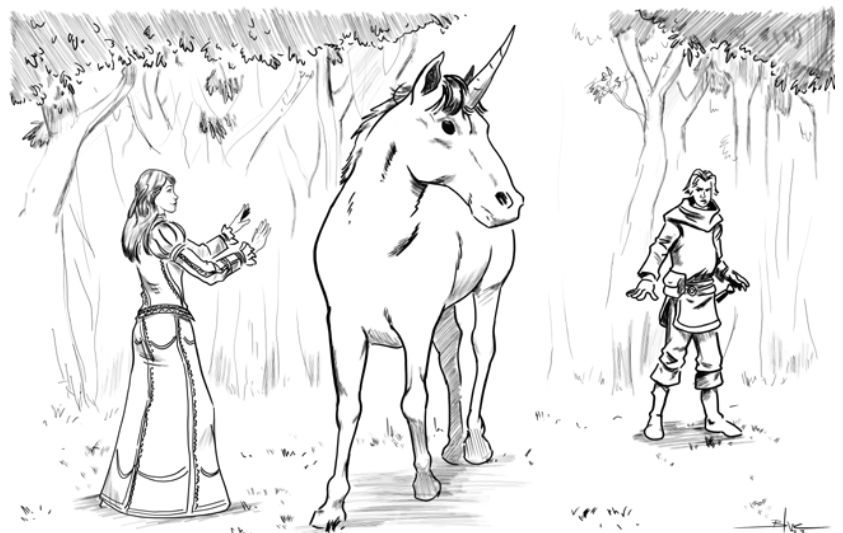
"Three years ago, she ran away, after her 17th birthday," Farima frowns. "What's more, she tied and gagged Sister Mia, her roommate, stole coins from the donation box, and took a healing potion and two books of occult lore from our library! Worst of all, she absconded with a sacred object, the pearl-tipped Holy Rod of Saint Agatha, a mighty priestess who once protected this land from rampaging beasts! Oh, I would not speak ill of your kin my lady, but I rue the day we accepted that viper into our holy sanctum."

"I am sorry for my half-sisters' transgressions," Shirin says patiently, "but also sorry she was kept here against her will. But you say Shamara ran three years ago. Did you not think to tell my parents?"

"Of course we did!" Farima snaps. "Sister Masrak sent a letter to your mother. Perhaps she did not wish to trouble you?"

"No," Shirin says. "I suppose she didn't. I never suspected any of this."

Record plot words **TALE** and (if you don't have it) **TRUST**. Go to [171].



096 Endelyn is a prosperous village surrounded by many fields, a day's ride from Castle Lorne.

Lodging: Hungry Basilisk Inn.

Travel: Northeast to the Puzzle Hills [009], or east along the Great Road to the village of Moorguard [123], or southeast to Sorrowthorn Wood [075], or west to Castle Lorne [059].

097 A powerful wave swamps the fishing boat, and it capsizes!

Shirin is a good swimmer and makes it to shore. Anyone else should save vs. death (unless they can breathe water): Failure means they drown. Those who survive struggle ashore. Each character may keep one item of equipment each, besides their clothes or jewelry, and that item may not include armor.

Luckily, you arrive ashore near a fishing village. Go to [003].

098 Outside, there is no sign of griffons but a dreadful yowling is coming from the branches of the tall oak tree atop the hill. The lioness cub climbed halfway up the tree, doubtless chasing a squirrel or bird, and got stuck on a branch 40 feet up. It's too nervous to climb down!

"Bones and bother," Witherstomp curses, as he follows you out. "Those frail twigs can't support my weight, and my puss is too high for me to reach." He eyes the party speculatively. "Seeing my cave provided you shelter and all, would one of you lads or lasses be kind enough to stand up on my shoulders and then climb up to grab my cat?"

The lioness cub weighs about 75 pounds. Someone can try it—if they don't slip and the cub doesn't panic.

If any party member will climb, go to [138]. If you refuse, go to [169].

099 The ring is a **Ring of Protection (+1)**. Return where you came from.

100 "I think the Nunnery of the Holy Sisters may be where my half-sister went to," says Shirin. "After Father sent her away, Mother forbade me to write or visit, but I'm not a little girl now! May we go there and see how she's doing? She may be a priestess now. Perhaps the Holy Sisters will grant lodging? I have also heard they also make healing potions..."

To agree to visit the nunnery, a few miles away, go to [086].

To dissuade Shirin from visiting and instead stay at a nearby farm, go to [132].

101 As you approach the bridge, you spot a figure on horseback at the other side of the bridge. It is a man in armor, with his helm down. He bears lance, sword, and shield, the latter bearing the device of a black swan. Light glitters from a pearl ring he wears. Beside him stands a dwarf in a cowled robe, holding a crossbow.

As the party reaches an appropriate distance, the knight bellows out in a strong voice:

"Travelers! I am the Knight of the Black Swan. Some whispered that I was craven, for I was the lone survivor when a sea-serpent sank the ship I commanded, and I alone swam ashore! To prove my courage, I have vowed to challenge all comers from the west until I have taken 20 swords. I challenge you—duel me, one at a time, for love and honor! If you defeat me, you may have my axe, Blood Foam, for I would be no longer be worthy of it. Send forth your best fighter! We meet in the center of the bridge, on horseback, or afoot!"

Lady Shirin seems excited by this bit of chivalry. "Oh! I have heard of such challenges in the storybooks my sister and I read," she says. "Will you accept this swan-knight's challenge?"

To fight him, either solo or as a group, go to [170]. To retreat back down the pass, go to [072].

102 You now have positions in the Prufax household with a 20gp/month wage plus a one-time allowance of 250gp to purchase new equipment (e.g., armor, weapons, or horses) from the Prufax armory. You can expect future adventures in Prufax's service: The lady is already talking about a trip next spring to visit her new kinswoman, the famous Baroness Gwalathar. Go to [085].



103 If anyone was killed or incapacitated during the rescue, go to [092]. Otherwise, go to [169].

104 The marriage ceremony is a joyous occasion. The bride seems happy, and she and Dorian smile at each other as they exchange their vows. Dorian is clearly pleased to have a beautiful and radiant bride, while she appears to find him a charming man. She blushes prettily and when he places the ring on her finger and they kiss, her joyous expression illuminates the church. You overhear the satisfied murmurs of many guests, relieved that Lorne and Prufax, united at last, can now combine their strength to withstand the orc invasion. Go to [113] unless you have the plot word **SISTER**; then go to [036].

105 The Puzzle Hills is a maze of canyons, boulder fields, and dried creek beds near the orcs' border. Once there were people here, but their villages were razed in fighting years ago.

Lodging: Camping.

Travel: Go east through the Green Hills [112], or south to the Moorguard village [162].

106 If you have the plot word **NOBLE**, erase it. Otherwise, note plot word **DOUBT**, or if already noted, erase it and replace it with **SCORN**. Go to [157].

107 The group can adopt the blink dog puppy if desired. If so, Shirin takes great joy in befriending it. If so, record the plot word **TRUST** (if not present), and add the puppy as an allied party member:

Blink Dog Puppy

AC 5 [14], **HD** 2* (7hp), **Att** 1× bite (1d4), **THACO** 18 [+1],
MV 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1). **ML** 6, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 25

► **Blink:** In combat, teleport close to an enemy, attack, then reappear 1d4× 10' away. If they have initiative, can blink away without the opponent being able to counter-attack.

Go to [150].

108 "Must we retreat?" implores Shirin. "I cannot bear to think of that awful monster devouring them!"

To change your mind and attack, go to [046], but your moment of hesitation costs the blink dog another 2hp injury.

To drag Shirin away from the doggies and retreat go to [176].

109 As minstrels play a traditional wedding march, the best man, a hulking knight who is Lord Prufax's cousin, leads Shirin to the waiting priest and groom. As the bride passes you, her eyes briefly meet yours, and you sense both tension and unvoiced regret. At the altar, she shares a perfunctory kiss with her husband and says her vows with a fixed smile.

In the reception that follows, Lady Shirin appears embarrassed by the expensive entertainments the baron has supplied, wary of his minstrels, and doesn't laugh at the manic capering of his prootwaddle jesters. Some guests murmur of the travails the bride endured during the perilous journey, looking sideways at you, her guards. Others speculate the lord and lady quarreled yesterday. Baron Prufax calls for more wine and spends more time speaking with his cousins and an attractive merchant's daughter than with his pensive bride, who says little, her brow furrowed as if in deep thought.

Go to [166] unless you have plot word **HEART**. If so, roll **1d6**, adding +2 if you have plot word **SCORN**. On a 1–4, go to [166]; on a 5+, go to [141].

110 If you have the plot word **CART** go to [079]. Otherwise, go to [033].

111 That night your camp has uninvited guests. Roll **1d6** to see whether the first (1–3) or second (4–6) watch is awake.

Use **MAP 3**. Shaded areas are 2' deep marsh water on either side of the trail (move at half speed unless amphibious).. Set up the party within 15' of their campfire at J. All are afoot, but mounts should be placed on the map. The intruders **surprise the party** on a 1–2. If not surprised, the party hears something splashing through the pools, alerting them: Everyone may begin standing up. If they are surprised, only those party members on watch are awake; others are prone without weapons or shields ready (and only cloth or leather armor on). Go to [146].

112 You are traveling in the Green Hills, on the border between Lorne and the orc lands. North and east are a range of high peaks marking the border. The road runs east through the mountains and south and west through the hills.

Lodging: Camping.

Travel: Go west to the Covenant Hills and the Nunnery of the Holy Sisters [168], south to Lionsbeak Moor [030], or east through the Karlanstar Mountains [072].

113 If you have both the plot words **LOYAL** and **TRUST** go to [050]. If you have **LOYAL** only, go to [136]. If you have **TRUST** only, go to [080]. If you have neither plot word, go to [051].

114 You are served the local delicacy of snake hotpot and boiled frogs' legs, the latter harvested from cannibal frogmen that haunt the interior of Heqet swamp to the west.

"They eat us, we eat them," responds the laconic cook. "The circle of life. Only fair, eh?" Go back to [032].

115 The minstrel sings a ballad called "Squire Dorian and the Ogre" relating how Lord Dorian Prufax, then a young squire, took up the arms of a fallen knight to slay an ogre from Heqet Swamp that was terrorizing the villagers.

Several regulars at the tavern chime in, bearing witness to the deeds. "My brother's youngest was headed for the ogre's cookpot before Lord Prufax got there," one man adds.

"Oh, that was a worthy deed," Shirin exclaims.

If you have plot word **DOUBT** or **SCORN**, go to [006]. Otherwise, record plot word **NOBLE** and go to [020].

116 Examining the wolf bodies, you notice iron collars around their necks. Perhaps these were raised by orcs or goblins as guards, then escaped, or were released

to ravage Lorne villages? In any event, Sorrowthorn's villagers are grateful: their lupine nightmare is at an end! They treat you to a tasty feast. Record plot word **HOWL**. If any PCs were slain fighting the wolves, go to [145]; otherwise go to [062].

117 As you approach the hamlet, a delegation of peasants recognizes Count Lorne's livery and pleads for help. Their village is beset by fierce wolves. So many chickens and sheep have been taken that some families may lack food come winter. The beasts are too cunning to fall for traps, and last week the village's best hunter was torn apart whilst defending a shepherdess.

Shirin is touched by their suffering. "You are my father's men," Shirin says. "And these good peasants are still our people. It would be honorable to help them!"

To fight the wolfpack, go to [031]. If you insist on not wasting your strength doing so, go to [057].

118 You retreat from the hill, but within half an hour, you hear another screeching cry. Go to [035].

119 "We bought them, nice and legal," the men say. They're slavers out of Oyster Bay. "Times are

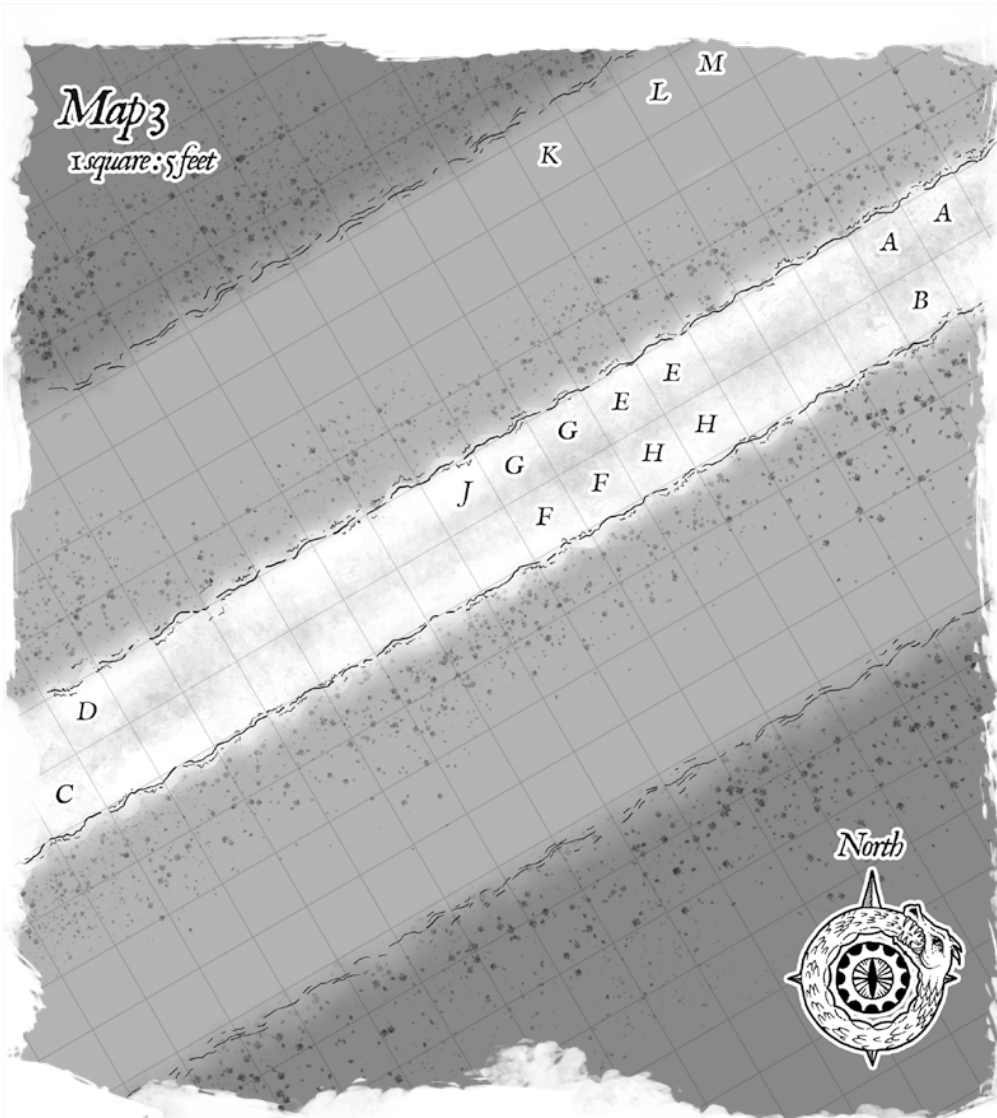
tough, and some families sell their surplus brats. You want these girls or the boy? Bit of water and they'll clean up pretty. We'll taking 'em to Port Skarn to ship overseas. The parents gave permission, all nice and legal." He grins. "They usually do, if it a choice between that or the whole family ending up in debtor's prison."

Shirin looks nauseated. From what you know of the law, this is a legal gray area. Parents sometimes sell their children into apprenticeships or indentureship, but outright slavery is illegal.

If you wish to buy the children, perhaps to return them to their parents, pay 125 silver each. If you do so, go to [026].

If you think scum who buy and sell children deserve punishment and demand they turn over the kids or face the consequences, go to [024].

120 "No, we cannot," Shirin says, pulling away. She kisses you fondly, with just a hint of mischief, and gives you a sad smile. "You are wonderful, and I wish we had met before I was engaged, but my troth is pledged to another, and we must think of our duty to the realm. Now go, before others find us!" Go to [058].



121 You follow the trail up the hill to a clearing beside a cave. A fierce battle rages! A black panther with barbed tentacles growing out of its shoulders is battling the blink dogs! The panther's form seems to shift and blur, while the dog occasionally dodges its strikes by teleporting out of the way, then leaping in to attack. Unfortunately, the panther-creature seems to be winning: two dogs already lie dead, and a third is wounded; a fourth, sheltering in the cave, is a mere puppy.

"A warp beast!" observes Shirin. "My father slew one years ago! Oh, the poor dogs! Shall we aid these fey hounds against the monster?"

Warp beasts are fierce man-eating extraplanar creatures who can displace themselves into and out of this dimension.

To enter the fray, go to [046]. To retreat, leaving the dogs and warp beast to work out their differences, go to [108].



122 Prufax has fallen, but the castle is full of vengeful kin, guests, and guards. Time to run! Record plot word FALL and go to [010].

123 If you have the plot word LETTER go to [162]. Otherwise, record plot word LETTER and go to [053].

124 "Very well," Shirin tells her sister. "If you want to marry Prufax so much, you can have him! My retainers have risked their lives enough on this venture. You spoke of treasure and a new life?"

"Aye! You make the right choice, Shirin," Shamara says. "Or shall I trade you my own name, and start calling you Shamara? For it is I who will be Shirin now! I would invite you to my upcoming wedding, but that would be awkward."

"Follow me, then! We have a rendezvous to keep, a payment to make, and then our traded lives begin anew!"

Erase plot words DOUBT or SCORN (if you have them) and go to [027].

125 "Well, come in, come in," booms a great male voice. Go to [134].

126 With shouted war cries, a band of armed men, mounted and afoot, emerge from concealment behind boulders and trees on either side of the road. Ambush!

The brigands **surprise the party** on a 1–2. Their leader wears a black silk mask and faded finery and rides a good horse. The other three brigands are afoot, with bows ready, wearing cloth armor with hatchets at their sides. They look like deserters from the orcish wars.

The masked rider shouts: "This must be them! Take the lady alive; slay her escorts!"

Set up on **MAP 3**. The party starts mounted on the road (clear squares), facing northeast; Shirin is at FF; other party members are anywhere on the road within 20 feet of her. Place the masked highwayman at AA and one brigand each at B, C and D, all facing the party.

Shaded squares are boulder fields and undergrowth, offering **-2 partial cover** but halving movement speed. The fight can run off the map; just extend it in either direction.

Masked Highwayman

AC 6 [13], **HD** 2 (7hp), **Att** 1× sword (1d8), **THACO** 18 [+1],
MV 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2).
ML 9, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 20. Mounted on riding horse.

Brigands

AC 7 [12], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1× hand axe (1d6) or short bow (1d6),
THACO 19 [0], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1).
ML 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 10.

You may not retreat off the map unless Shirin does (or is slain). If you retreat, everyone must leave the battle via the same map edge Shirin leaves. If you escaped without defeating the highwaymen go to [162] if you fled east, [096] if you fled west, [168] if you fled north, or [032] if you fled south.

If the party is slain go to [023]. If you defeat the highwaymen, go to [021] unless Shirin is slain; if so, go to [140].

127 Tantivy Wood is an ancient forest that marks the southern border of the Barony of Prufax.

Lodging: Camping.

Travel: Go north to Quill village [143], or east down a road to the village of Oyster Bay [044], or west to Wargsnout village [020].

128 You're now frog food. **Bad End.**

129 As you attempt to leave, Lord Prufax and two guards bar your way.

“Inconceivable!” Prufax says. “You would betray me and your father both? This land needs a strong ruler. One ruler. *Me!*”

“It could have been *us*,” she retorts. “But I will not follow a man who lacks judgment, whose own people despise him!”

“You heed the grumbles of commoners over their own lord?” Then Baron Prufax’s eyes move from Shirin to the party members ranged beside her, and his face contorts with jealous rage. “I see what this is! You have been led astray. All know how Count Lorne was tempted into sin by a mercenary! Like father, like daughter, eh? Your mother will thank me, Shirin, if remove that temptation—permanently.”

Prufax glares at the party. “Traitors!” he shouts. “I’ll hang your heads from my flagship’s yardarms!” He and his men attack. Their goal is to slay the party (rather than Shirin).

Set up on [MAP 1](#). Baron Prufax is at C; his guards at A and B, all facing south. Shirin is at X facing north; other party members start within 10’ of Shirin; you face north, afoot with no mounts. The door out is at D.

You may not exit the map. If you defeat or slay Prufax within 12 rounds go to [\[122\]](#) (unless Shirin is killed, then go to [\[140\]](#)). If you’re defeated go to [\[023\]](#). If you’re still fighting on the 13th turn of battle, go to [\[167\]](#).

Baron Dorian Prufax

AC 7 [12], **HD** 3 (13hp), **Att** 1× sword (1d8+2), **THACO** 15 [+4]
MV 90’ (30’), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3)
ML 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 35.

► Magic Sword +2; runes on blade name it “Ogre Cleaver.” Bonus included in THACO and damage.

Two Prufax Guards

AC 6 [13], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1× spear (1d6), **THACO** 19 [0],
MV 90’ (30’), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1).
ML 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 10

130 “No, I cannot betray my vows nor my family’s honor any more than I already have,” she says. “The alliance, and the future of Lorne, must come first. I shall do my duty, and we must try to forget what happened between us. Perhaps, in time, I can change his policies and make him a better man.”

You watch her walk away, returning to her husband’s side. If you have it, erase plot word **HEART**. Go to [\[080\]](#).

131 A smiling Lord Dorian Prufax welcomes his bride to her new home. “At last, we meet,” he tells her. “Your arrival brings new hope for our future.” He favors her with a boyish smile. “And you are lovelier than I had dreamed.”

He thanks each of you for keeping her safe. The wedding is scheduled for two days from now; you are invited to attend and may sit at his table.

Record plot word **LOYAL**. If any character has lost hits, the baron provides up to 4 doses of healing potion each so that they are somewhat healed up, along with new clothes (a set of Upper-Class Clothing). Meanwhile, Shirin is whisked off by a swarm of Prufax lady relatives and maids, to make adjustments to her wedding dress and a million other details.

If you have both the plot words **SCORN** and **TRUST** go to [\[183\]](#). Otherwise, go to [\[090\]](#).



132 You approach a cluster of farmers’ cottages, but all seem recently abandoned. You can bed down for the night and draw water from the well, but there’s no food here.

To visit the nunnery, a mile away, go to [\[086\]](#). To shelter for the night, and then continue your journey, go to [\[005\]](#).

133 You beat an ignominious retreat. (If you come back at a later date, the Swan Knight heals at a normal rate.) Record plot word **GUARD** and go to [\[034\]](#).

134 “They call me Witherstomp,” the giant rumbles. “Travelers on the plain, ye be? Tell me your tale, and you may share my fire tonight. Keep your horses in my pigpen.” From behind him you hear a low, growl. A lioness cub emerges from the gloom behind him and rubs herself against his leg. “Me and my puss here haven’t had no company in many a moon, and that’s a fact. Wouldn’t mind hearing some travelers’ tales over supper.”

To accept Witherstomp's hospitality, go to [029]. To fight him, go to [164]. To refuse his invitation and take your chances on the moors, **roll 1d6**: On a 1–3 go to [118]; on a 4–6, to [153].

135 Not far from the battle, you find a stinking cave—perhaps the lair of the dead warp beast? It's full of bones, both animal and human. On one fingerbone you discover a gold ring with a topaz gem, glowing with a warm amber light: obviously valuable and magical!

If someone tries on the ring, go to [099]. If offered to her or her maid, Shirin declines: "my future husband alone may give me a ring." (If the ring is saved for later, record [099] to check if someone tries it or uses *Detect Magic*. You can also get it checked in any castle or town for 2gp.)

Go to [105].

136 The baron's steward, Sir Tamar, warmly thanks each of you for your services, and presents each of you with a bulging purse holding 1,000 gold pieces, plus paid passage by ship back to Port Skarn. From there you may return to Lorne or travel elsewhere, as you choose. Go to [085].

137 If you have plot words **DOUBT** or **SCORN** and both **FAVOR** and **TRUST** go to [172]. Otherwise, go to [058].

138 Decide who is climbing. Any thief or someone who can fly you reach the top automatically. Otherwise, you must climb. Roll a **DEX** ability check to reach the cat safely. If you fail, take 2d6 damage from the fall, however, there is a 50% chance Witherstomp may catch you, negating damage (roll 1–3 on 1d6).

If you reach the lioness, roll against .

STR, **WIS**, or **CHA** ability check (whichever is better). If playing an optional ranger or druid class, it succeeds automatically, as they can befriend animals. Otherwise, failure means you take one claw hit (1d4); if you survive, you can carry the cub down. Use the same rules as going up but if you fall, Witherstomp catches his cat instead of you!

If a party member fails or dies, you can try again with the same character (if still alive), a different character, or give up.

If a party member retrieves the cub (or Witherstomp catches it) go to [015].

If everyone dies in the attempt, go to [165]. If the party gives up, go to [103].

139 Encouraged by your steadfast support, Shirin confronts Lord Prufax. It doesn't go well.

"What foolish notion is this?" Prufax demands. "Everything was arranged!"

"I cannot marry you, Dorian," Shirin answers. "Not even if it costs me my inheritance. You are not the man my father hoped for."

"You ungrateful fool! I should have known better than to trust a Lorne! Your ancestors, your cursed sister, and now you? When the orcs come, it will be a cold day in hell before we answer your call!"

Shirin looks at each of the party members, drawing strength from them. "Your words show you little better than an orc yourself, Prufax," She retorts "Better Lorne trusts to our own strength than take a devil's bargain. Get your own house in order, lest the orcs scent weakness and strike you first!"

You accompany your lady as she turns on her heel, leaving Prufax without another word. Perhaps you give the fuming baron a warning glance. Perhaps not.

Roll 1d6; add +2 if plot word **HEART** and –1 if plot word **LOYAL**. On a 3 or less, go to [182]. On a 4+ go to [129].

140 Shirin is dead; your mission has failed. If other party members survive, you may bear Shirin's remains back to Lorne. After staying for her funeral, you might expect to be sent to guard the frontier to atone for your failure, for all warriors are needed to resist the orcish invasion that seems imminent now that a marriage alliance with Prufax has failed. Go to [185] with plot word **WAR**.

141 While Dorian Prufax is distracted by a delegation of foreign merchants, Shirin slips away from him and casually approaches her secret lover: whoever is linked to plot word **HEART**.

"My love," Shirin whispers to you. "Duty calls me to the altar, yet love and guilt gnaw me like my sister's serpent. How can we continue this charade?"

To quietly reassure Shirin that their secret affair is the only right choice under these circumstances, go to [181].

To convince her that breaking off the affair is the honorable choice, go to [130].

If certain your fellow party members have your back, you can urge Shirin to elope with you and sneak away before the marriage is consummated. If so, roll a **CHA** ability check. If successful go to [028]. If you fail, go to [130].

142 "You fought valiantly" he gasps. "Pass, if you wish." Go to [088] to keep fighting or [156] to pass.

143 Quill is a woodland village in Lord Prufax's barony. Villagers recall the old border feud between Prufax and Lorne, and the kin they lost. Some glare at folk from Lorne; others pray for peace.

Rumors: A unicorn was sighted in nearby Tantivy Wood. Several hunters are after it, seeking its valuable horn, even though such killings are considered poaching, punishable by pain and death. Unless you are camping or have plot word **SONG**, roll **1d6**. On a **1–3**, nothing happens. On a **4+** go to [043].

Lodging: The Hedgehog Inn.

Travel: East to the village of Pearl [003], south to Tantivy Wood [158], or west to Titan's Ford [038].

144 "Sister, why are you fighting me?" asks Shirin.

"Sister, you say? I could have been your true sister, loyal and true," Shamara replies. "Instead, your mother treated me like a dog and packed me off to that nunnery, where I endured years of humiliation. But they had a good library, and I taught myself the rudiments of magic. When I was ready, I helped myself to their treasury—scant payment for unpaid drudgery in their kitchens—and escaped, borrowing books of magical lore and a mystic rod they'd forgotten how to use. They let me tame this sea serpent and raid ships to amass treasure!

"Yet I yearned for greater things. I still have a few friends among servants in father's castle, and after they told me of the marriage, I vowed to regain what was mine. I hired bandits to capture you on the road and bring you to me. Thanks to your stubborn escort, that didn't work as planned, but now we meet again."

"Do you seek my death?" says Shirin.

"No! I want your *life!* Save for your retainers, none at Prufax could tell us apart. Tell me, sister, do you *really* want to marry Prufax? Your groom has seen neither of us in the flesh! I will give you your life and your retainers a fistful of gold and a ship if you let me take your place in the sun! Let me pose as you and marry Dorian Prufax in your place!"

Shirin is taken aback by her sister's demand, and hesitates, unsure how to respond.

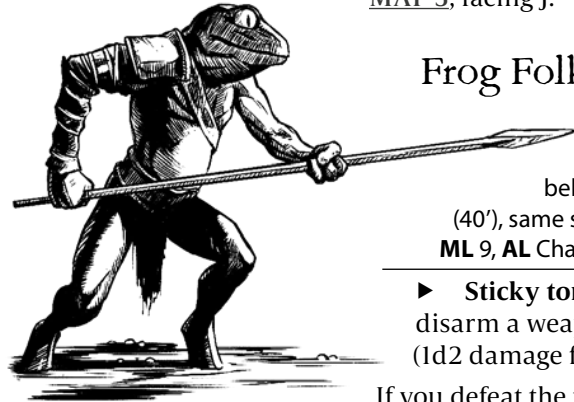
If you have plot word **VICTRIX** go to [091].

Otherwise, to take the decision out of her hands and preemptively attack Shamara or her serpent, go to [040], or to wait to see what Lady Shirin decides, go to [091].

145 The villagers are grateful for your sacrifice. Your dead comrades are buried in the village grave-

yard. The village priest delivers a touching poetic eulogy and promises regular prayers in their memories. Shirin sheds a few tears but is proud of your party's bravery. Go to [062].

146 A trio of hideous beings emerge from the marsh, bounding toward you with hoarse, croaking cries! They are bulbous creatures with slimy green humanoid bodies, frog-like heads and feet, wide glowing eyes, and long sticky tongues. Place one each at K, L, and M on **MAP 3**, facing J.



Frog Folk

AC 7 [12], **HD** 2* (9hp), **Att** 1× club (1d4) or spear (1d6) and sticky tongue (see below) or bite (1d4+1), **THACO** 18 [+1], **MV** 120' (40'), same swimming, **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2).
ML 9, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 25

► **Sticky tongue:** Attack up to 15' away; a hit can disarm a weapon, or pull a rider from their mount (1d2 damage fall).

If you defeat the frogmen record the plot word **CROAK** and go to [018] and pick a travel option. If you survive but Shirin dies go to [140]. If you all die, go to [128].

147 If you have plot word **TRUST** erase it. Go to [164].

148 "Kiss my backside," the slaver says. They draw weapons and prepare to fight. Go to [155].

149 "Thank you," Shirin says. "The courage you showed in bringing me here through peril and danger must be my lodestone as I take my place as baroness. I shall marry Prufax; maybe love will follow, but regardless, the alliance against the orcs is too important. My duty lies with my people." Go to [080].

150 Pick one party member, who rolls a **WIS** ability check. If successful, go to [135]. Otherwise, go to [105].

151 You can ride off east to the Green Hills [112], south to Moorguard village [162], or west to the Puzzle Hills [009]. Shirin is livid, protesting the entire time before lapsing into sullen silence. If you have the plot word **TRUST**, erase it.

152 Your road winds through the misty moors. Visibility is poor due to thick fog, but you can see that just south of the road the flatness of the terrain is broken by a lone hill with a single tree on it. You can barely make out a cave mouth gaping in the hillside.

As you pass the hill, you hear a harsh, shrieking cry, somewhere distant, high in the sky above you! It reverberates louder than any normal-sized bird! Moments later, the cry is repeated again. You can't see much through the mist, but it seems to be getting closer.

Record plot word **MIST**.

If anyone has experience or skills with wild creatures (say, a druid), or makes an **Intelligence** check at -3, go to [002]. Otherwise, go to [035].

153 You are traveling east out of Lionsbeak Moors. Go to [152] unless you have plot word **MIST**; then go to [038].

154 You sail along the coast via a chartered fishing boat, bound for Oyster Bay. **Roll 1d6**. On a 1-2, go to [016]. On a 3-6, go to [081].

155 You're fighting the three slavers, with Shirin cheering you on. Consult **MAP 3**. On the road (non-shaded area) are the draft horse (EE), slave wagon holding four children (FF), and two mounted slavers (GG and HH); the slaver driving the wagon is dismounted at J to fight. The party are on the road within 15' of C or D. Off-road (shaded area) is open ground.

Slavers

AC 6 [13], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1× shortsword (1d6), **THACO** 19 [0], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 7, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 10.

Two are mounted on riding horses.

If you defeat them, go to [026] unless Shirin dies; then go to [140]. If you retreat without the children go to [004]. If you lose, go to [023].

156 Crossing the narrow bridge over Karlanstar Gorge, you follow a trail part-way down the mountainside before it becomes too dark to travel further.

Lodging: Camping.

Travel: Follow the trail east down from the mountains toward the highland village of Grimgarth [157], or go back west across the bridge into the mountains [072].

157 Grimgarth is a mountain village in the barony of Prufax, known for its hardy miners and goat herders. The village is built on a cliff overlooking the sea, hundreds of feet below. High snow-capped peaks loom above it to the north.

Lodging: The Nugget inn.

Rumor: The crowd in the inn's common room appears sullen, and many order watered wine or cheap beer. Some grumble and glare at you. There are mutterings about high taxes. If you have plot word **TAX**, travel (or rest) as usual; otherwise, go to [078].

Travel: Go south to Pearl village [003] or take a mountain trail west through Karlanstar Gorge [072].

158 If you have the plot word **VIRTUE** go to [127]. Otherwise go to [094].

159 The mayor of Skarn is excited. "We have been eagerly awaiting your arrival! Lord Prufax has instructed us to arrange for a ship to carry your party and their mounts across the waters to Prufax Island. A ship is ready to sail tomorrow.

The mayor says many dignitaries of Skarn would like to pay their respects to Shirin, soon to be their lady.

Throughout the day, while the mayor arranges passage for you, Shirin is visited by a parade of merchants and town dignitaries, who ply her with small but valuable gifts and local delicacies. All of them eager to win the patronage of their baroness-to-be.

If any characters or their mounts are injured, the local apothecaries donate healing potions, restoring the party to full strength.

That night, the mayor pays for the whole party's stay at the inn. Shirin retires early. Go to [137].

160 You're fighting unicorn poachers in a clearing in the woods. Set up on **MAP 1**. The poachers are each at F, G, and H facing north. The party, mounted or afoot, set up within 20' of J, facing south. The area around and beyond the map is denser woods (-2 **partial cover**, halve mounted movement). Record plot word **VIRTUE**, and fight!

Three Poachers

AC 7 [12], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1× long bow (1d6) or shortsword (1d6), **THACO** 19 [+0], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 7, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 10

If you defeat them go to [177] unless Shirin dies; then go to [140]. If you lose, go to [023].

If you retreat, they keep pursuing, shooting whenever they can: Extend the map as needed (assume it's all wooded, as noted above). If a turn ends with the sides over 150' apart, they lose sight of you; end the fight and go to [042].

161 The bard's dagger has orcish death runes carved on the blade; you also find a rough diamond (worth 500gp) in his purse. Did the orc-lord learn of the pending marriage? Record plot word **SONG** and go to [143].



162 Moorguard is a walled village on the Great Road between Lorne and Prufax, defended by local militia.

Lodging: Golden Griffon Inn.

Rumors: Business is bad; many merchants are afraid to travel north and east for fear of highwaymen and orcish raiders.

Travel: Northeast to the Nunnery of the Holy Sisters [168], east on the Great Road over dreary Lionsbeak Moor [030], or southeast to the village of Eldenbog [032], or west on the Great Road to the village of Endelyn near Castle Lorne [096].



163 Shirin lets her heart have its way, as you do. She forgets her promise to unite Lorne and Prufax, and you forget your oath to the Count and Lady Hedra, as you consummate your love.

Afterward, Shirin turns serious. “My love, it is wonderful to know where one’s heart truly lies, yet I fear for both our lives and the fate of our lands should my father or Lord Prufax learn of our tryst. What shall we do?”

Cuddling with Shirin, you talk it over and come to a mutual decision:

If you agree your newfound love means her arranged marriage to Lord Prufax is impossible, there is nothing to do but elope! Go to [061] if you have the plot word **PURE**, or [070] otherwise.

If you agree your affair should continue in secret while the marriage plans go forward for the good of the realm, record plot word **HEART** linked to the name of the PC who is Shirin’s lover. (Should they or Shirin later die, erase it!) Then go to [061] if you have plot word **PURE**, or [071] otherwise.

164 “A fight, is it?” he booms. “You maggots think to challenge old Witherstomp, do you? Well, I’ll smash your skulls and grind your bones into jelly! I’ll squash you into a blood pudding and turn you into cat food!”

The giant and his pet lion fight you. Go to **MAP 2**. The giant occupies ABE facing west, the lion cub at F. The shaded area is a raised table, 6 feet off the ground. PCs start afoot within 5’ of D, the open door; Shirin and maid start within 10’ of G, holding mounts. If you fight mounted, the footing inside is very poor for riding: -3 on attack rolls for both horse and rider!

Witherstomp the Giant

Hill Giant.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 8 (36hp), **Att** 1× club (2d8), **THACO** 12 [+7], **MV** 120’ (40’), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (8).

ML 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 650

Lion Cub

AC 6 [13], **HD** 2+1 (10hp), **Att** [2× claw (1d3), 1× bite (1d4)], **THACO** 17 [+2], **MV** 150’ (50’), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1). **ML** 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 25

If you win go to [008] unless Shirin dies; then go to [140]. If you lose, go to [023].

165 You met a tragic fate! **Bad End.**

166 The wedding banquet begins, filled with exotic delicacies from foreign ports. You notice Shirin seems uncomfortable enjoying the many extravagant courses and the baron’s praises of her beauty. Instead, she attempts to turn the table’s conversation to-

ward the alliance with Lorne, directing probing questions regarding the tax base and the barony’s present legal code, which Prufax struggles to answer, relying on his steward Tabor.

However, when Shirin maneuvers their conversation turns toward matters military and the alliance with Lorne, the young baron perks up, and clears a table. Soon military maps replace the third course, and the reception turns into a planning session with several nobles and officers joining in; you are even invited to participate. Shirin appears to surprise the baron with her grasp of the strategic situation, and her husband’s newfound appreciation of her ideas improves her mood. They share a dance together, that does not seem too stilted.

Shirin and her husband retire early. Later you hear servants gossiping that they returned to separate chambers before midnight. Still, at least they seem to respect and listen to one another, so perhaps the alliance is safe! Go to [113].

167 Dozens of Prufax relatives and guards cut off your retreat! Faced with over a hundred enemies, you are dragged down and slain. Your last sight is Lady Shirin, her wedding dress covered in the party’s blood—whisked away by the baron’s men-at-arms, to face an unknown future. **Bad End.**

168 The Covenant Hills are rugged highlands on the edge of the Green Hills, on the borderlands of the orc kingdom. A few sheep farms are scattered through the hills. The Nunnery of the Holy Sisterhood a small convent, stands on one hill.

Go to [005] if you have the plot word **MASRAK**; otherwise, go to [100].

169 Irritated at your ingratitude, Witherstomp works himself into a frothing rage and attacks!

Go to [164] for his stats and record them, but ignore the instructions and come back here. The cub won't fight (it's still up the tree). You're fighting the giant on MAP 1. He's at CBK facing south; arrange the party afoot within 15' of G facing north (mounts are still stabled). X is an impassable tree trunk. If you defeat Witherstomp, go to [008] unless Shirin dies; then go to [140]. If you lose, go to [023].

170 You can fight him mounted or afoot. If the latter, he'll chivalrously dismount.

Consult MAP 3. The mounted knight is at AA facing southwest, the dwarf at B. The party begins mounted within 15' of D facing the knight; if a PC agrees to challenge him, they're at C. The shaded area is the bridge; off the bridge is a 300-foot fatal drop.

Black Swan Knight

3rd level fighter.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 3* (16hp), **Att** 1× battle axe (1d8+2) or 1× lance (2d6 charge), **THACO** 17 [+2], **MV** 60' (20'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3), **ML** 12, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 50

► **Magic weapon: battle axe +2**, "Blood-foam"

If at any time several party members fight him at once, rather than the one-on-one duel he asked for, or anyone uses magic, missile weapons, or poison, go to [082]. The knight or dwarf won't attack Shirin, and she won't fight them.

If the Swan Knight defeats a party member in single combat, go to [142] if the swan-knight is at **4hp** or fewer, or [088] otherwise. If you win, in a fair fight or otherwise, go to [012].

171 "You have the blessings of our holy sisterhood in gratitude for your timely rescue," Farima says. "Please stay at the nunnery for several days if you wish more rest." Record plot word **NUN**. Go to [005].

172 That night, Shirin sneaks out to meet whichever party member has her favor, while they are awake on guard duty. Explaining she could not sleep, Shirin confides her growing doubts about how Baron Prufax treats his own people, and her fears that he may not be the good leader and partner she seeks in the coming struggle against the orcish invasion. She shyly expresses her admiration for your steadfast bravery. Her tone and the look in her eyes suggest she is attracted to you.

To reassure Shirin, and chastely remind her of her duty and the importance of the marriage alliance, go to [067].

To return her romantic affection, go to [025].

173 You defeated the orcs! They were a raiding party—all too common on the border of late. You find 160sp and 40gp on their corpses.

The warrior-priestess is Sister Masrak. Inside the nunnery are seven nuns. All but one are novices aged 13 to 17, frightened but unhurt thanks to your help. Their leader is Sister Farima, age 21, a 2nd level cleric. If Masrak was killed, she now leads the nunnery. If the party needs healing, they'll cast one Cure Light Wounds/day the PCs rest here, or two Cures if Masrak also lived.

She thanks you for your assistance and bids you welcome if you wish to rest in their guest house. If any party members (or Masrak) are dead, she leads the nuns in prayer for their souls and offers internment in their crypts.

The nuns restock any needed travel rations, and also offer the party leader a 5-dose healing potion brewed at the nunnery. You can use it now or take it with you. "Is there anything else we can do?" the holy sister asks.

"My sister!" interrupts Shirin. "I have not seen her here. Do you know of a novice nun, two years older than me? Her name is Shamara. I think my parents sent her here. Oh, I pray she was not slain by Sister orcs!"

The nuns look at one another, visibly embarrassed. "Ah," says Farima. "Shamara is no longer with us. I am sorry; I would not willingly speak of this." She crosses her arms. "There are some things you may not wish to know."

Shirin looks conflicted, for the priestess has an intimidating gaze. Uncertain, she glances at you for support.

To stand up to the priestess and demand answers go to [095].

To urge Shirin not to press the matter, go to [171].

174 Shirin curses your treachery, but surrenders. Erase plot word **TRUST** and **FAVOR** if you have it. Go to [027].

175 Shirin turns pale when she reads the letter. "It can't be..." She turns to you. "That handwriting. It is very familiar. If I didn't know better, I would swear it is my half-sister Shamara's hand. But she is a nun now, a holy woman!"

You're aware the Holy Sisterhood is a religious order known for its healing arts, learning, and charity. They are supported by all the local lords, including both Prufax and Lorne. Their nearest nunnery lies somewhere to the north, in the Covenant Hills.

Shirin lapses into a pensive silence. If you want to press Shirin regarding her sister, go to [068]. Otherwise, go to [045].

176 Shirin is upset; if you have plot word **TRUST**, erase it. Go to [105].

177 You find a nearby campsite, with a skinned deer (four days of standard rations) plus 20sp. Go to [042].

178 Once again, Shamara attempts to win over Lady Shirin. Go to [144].

179 “My father may not forgive me,” muses Shirin. “But I hope he may someday understand. Should we return to Lorne to face my father, or perhaps we might find another way?” She laughs, as if fey. “A desperate attempt to assassinate the orcish king? A diplomatic mission to Baroness Gwalathar, in the lands across the sea?” Record plot words **WAR** and **FREE**. Go to [185].

180 You bring the captive back with you to Prufax Island to face justice. Record plot word **RED**. Go to [065].

181 “I understand,” whispers Shirin. “I must go to my new husband. Despite his flaws, we must work together to save our people. Yet my secret heart belongs to you alone! Farewell – for now.” She hurries off. Go to [166].

182 As the Prufaxes grapple with the fallout of canceling the wedding, you arrange a hasty passage off Prufax Island. If you have plot word **HEART** erase it and go to [070]. Otherwise, go to [179].

183 The evening before the ceremony, Shirin shares a dinner with her husband-to-be. As trusted retainers, you are among the guards standing nearby. It is an awkward, stilted occasion. Occasionally their voices are raised in argument: you catch the baron speaking in a condescending tone, Shirin’s angry rejoinder – and then Lord Prufax finishes his drink and abruptly takes his leave to inspect his ships.

Returning with you to her own chambers, a seething Shirin sends her maids away on the pretext of an urgent mission to repair a dress she “accidentally” tore, winning a few private moments with you.

“It’s hopeless! Whenever I try having a serious conversation about my concerns, he laughs or changes the subject. He’s spent thousands of gold on this wedding and decorating his fancy flagship when the orcs don’t even have a navy! I’ve heard stories that people groan under high taxes or sell their children to pay them. We could have a peasant revolt behind the lines when everyone should be coming together against the orcs! My duty is to marry him to unite Lorne and Prufax, but I fear he lacks the qualities we need. He’s going to be a disaster, I know it!”

If you advise Shirin to proceed with tomorrow’s wedding, suggesting that after she becomes baroness, her strengths can counter Prufax’s weaknesses, go to [090].

If you agree Shirin should not marry someone unworthy, and urge her to confront Lord Prufax and call off or postpone the marriage, go to [139].

If you argue Shirin shouldn’t risk a confrontation and should secretly leave Prufax tonight, if there’s a thief in the party, they may make a Move Silently check, and stealthily lead the party to safety on a success. If that fails *every* PC (including the thief!) should roll a **INT** or **CHA** check to bluff or con your way out. If *any* character’s roll is successful, record plot word **FREE** and go to [010]. If you all fail, go to [129].

184 Men-at-arms surround you and you’re seized and thrown in a dungeon for poaching! Record plot word **ROT**. Go to [085].

185 The adventure is over! But if your surviving characters continue within an ongoing campaign, certain plot words might suggest additional adventures, at the referee’s discretion. If you have multiple plot words check each of them!

HOPE. The marriage ends the feud between Lorne and Prufaxes, bringing peace to the border. If Hedra begets a suitable heir and Count Lorne lives a dozen more years the two realms may remain separate but allied; otherwise, Lorne may come under Prufax rule.

WAR: The nascent alliance between Lorne and Prufax has crumbled. A successful orcish invasion of isolated Lorne (and should it fall, Prufax) appears likely.

FALL: If Prufax died, a younger cousin struggles to consolidate power. The orcs decide to invade Prufax first, instead of Lorne!

RED: Prufax would execute Shamara, but her sister pleaded for mercy. **HOPE** means she is instead imprisoned, possible execution if she makes trouble. **FALL** means she may escape in the confusion; in **FREE** or **LOVE**, a jilted Prufax find a use for her...

ROT: Lose all money and gear. If you have plot word **SCORN** or **DOUBT** rot in prison until you escape (get plot word **FREE**). Otherwise, weeks later, mellowed by a happy marriage, the Prufaxes free you. Regain your honor as a common soldier, or leave.

LOVE, FREE, GOLD: Powerful figures may seek to punish you – or silence you. Unless you go far, far away from Lorne or Prufax, or successfully conceal your identity, beware assassins!

LOVE: You begin a new life with your beloved ... but what price did the realm pay for true love?

SISTER: Ruthless Shamara is now baroness. Will her ambitions save or damn the realm?

HEART: One of you has a secret love affair. Let’s hope you stay discreet, or your head may roll.

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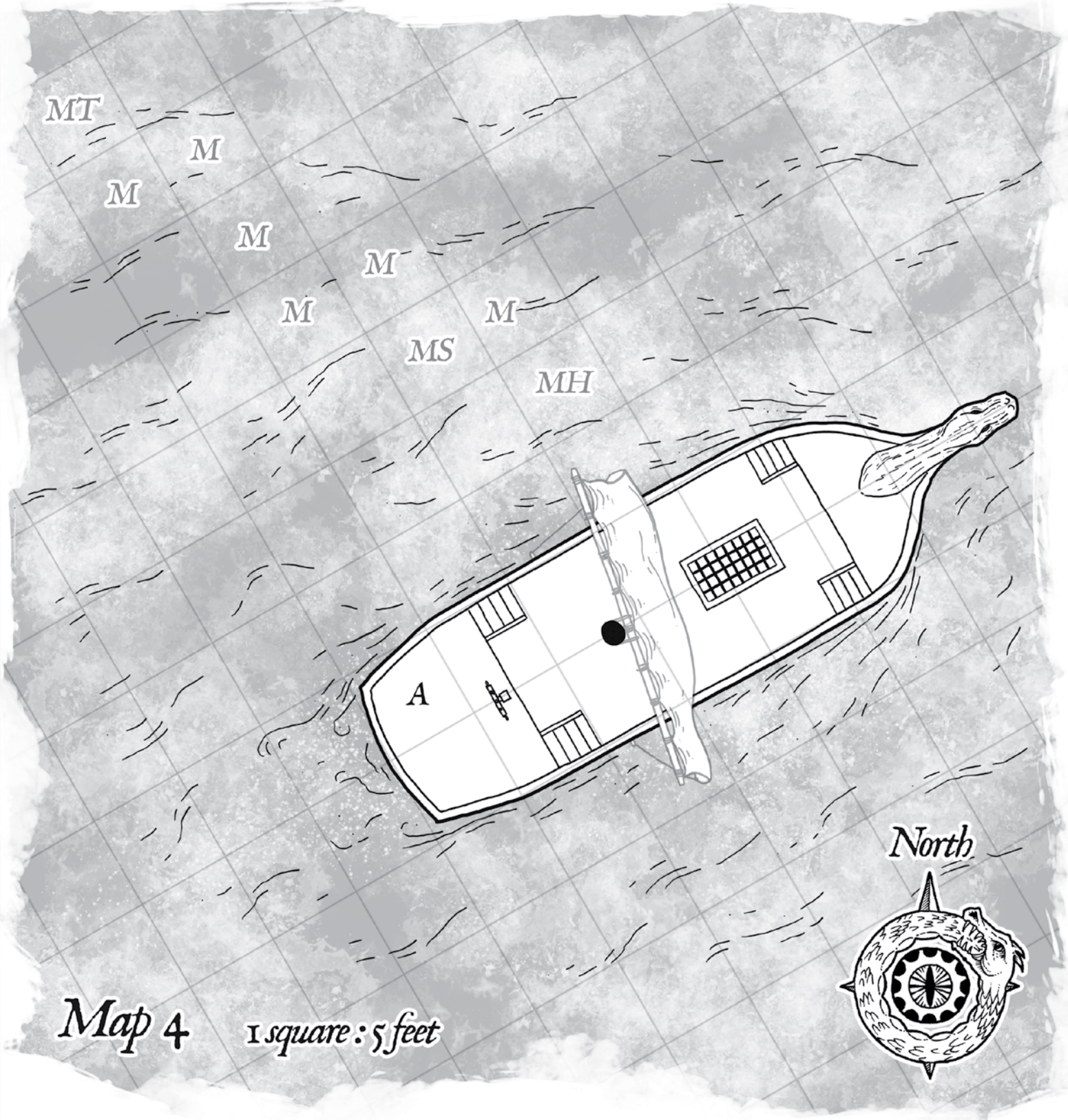
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Map 4 1 square: 5 feet



Rushing Bride

Politics makes strange bedfellows, and the current situation is no different.

Ugh. Escort missions. All of the grind of being a merchant guard, with a high-maintenance and often reluctant upper-class fellow traveler making life on the road go rather less smoothly than one would like.

Will the principal arrive in one piece? Or will they run off with one of the other members of the entourage ... or even a PC? Is this a romantic marriage made in heaven, or the beginning of lethal political intrigue?

Till Death Do Us Part is a branching-pathway solo adventure, asking the party to escort a two VIPs across a treacherous route to deliver the bride to the altar in time for the wedding.

DESIGNED FOR USE WITH

**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**



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