

The Dragon's DEMISE

A Fantasy Solo Adventure

by J.C. Connors

The Vast Vermin Swamp is a mud-ridden, stench-drenched area that is of little interest to either of the two fiefdoms that share its border. Inhabited by black serpent dragons, screaming eyes, primitive cults, and inscrutable lizard-folk, the swamp is largely avoided by civilized folk. And while old veterans whisper tales of sunken cities and hidden hoards, even the most foolish of would-be heroes avoid this stinking bog. No hidden treasure can outweigh the threat of poisonous fog, being drowned in mud, or getting impaled by a fish spear thrown by one of the swamp's denizens. No, my friend, no. There is no need to talk more of this place...

About the Adventure

The Dragon's Demise is an introductory solo adventure for **GURPS Fantasy** or the **Dungeon Fantasy RPG**. While you need to have some passing knowledge of **GURPS** to play this adventure, it is fairly beginner friendly, and can be played with nothing but the free [GURPS Lite](#) rules. A **D&D 5E** version is also available on [1shotadventures.com](#)

If you already have a 150-point character ready to go, you can use that character for this adventure. Otherwise, there are two pregenerated characters to pick from at the end of the adventure, including a more advanced, spellcasting character that uses spells from **GURPS Magic**. Only pick this character if you are looking for a challenge!

If you've never played a "Choose Your Path" adventure before, it's easy. Just start with paragraph #1. Read it, and choose from one of the options that the text gives you, and go to the specified numbered paragraph. Just don't read the entries in order! As you find any items you'd like to keep (which are **bold-faced**), jot them down on your character sheet.

The Vast Vermin Swamp

No one has a good reason to explore the Vast Vermin Swamp. No one except for you.

The treacherous swamp claimed the life of your grandfather a few weeks ago. His lifelong elven friend Aonn Tesk was reluctant to give you the whole story at first, but it didn't take much more than two strong ales to loosen his tongue.

Aonn and your grandfather had dug up the mysterious Celestial Emerald from a sunken temple in the swamp. Aonn believed that the gemstone held magical secrets from the age before the Banestorm. Your grandfather wanted it for the riches he would trade it for. The two friends never concluded what to do with the gem once they found it, but they knew others would want it.

The men wisely sealed the Celestial Emerald in a special, spherical safe designed to keep the gem from being magically detected from afar. After all, the greedy wizards from Montbatten Academy were always looking for new items to add to their collections.

However, they *unwisely* forgot to keep watch the night they found the gem. Knowing your grandfather, you were sure there was strong "celebration drink" involved as well. Horribly, the two men were ambushed in the swamp by a black serpent dragon. Aonn's arm was melted away, and your poor grandfather was devoured whole. Aonn said he could still hear your grandfather screaming inside the creature's belly as he fled from the swamp. You wish he left that detail out.

Aonn swears the safe was devoured with your grandfather, since he was carrying it in his pack when the dragon attacked.

This should have been the end to the story... but the bumbblings of a first year apprentice at Montbatten Academy inserted a sudden and strange twist. The morning after the dragon attack, a hundred miles away, an arrogant teenaged apprentice stole his master's spellbook, tried his hand at a forbidden teleportation spell, and accidentally ended up in the Vermin Swamp, *staring at the same dragon who ate your grandfather.*

The apprentice should have died on the spot, but parents pay a lot of tuition money to the Montbatten school. The accidental teleportation set off an alarm and alerted the mage on duty whose job it was to handle mischief makers. To that apprentice's great fortune, the mage on call was Riversturm Malreaver.

Riversturm Malreaver. *The Riversturm Malreaver.* Just a year before the dashing wizard had become famous for going hand-to-hand with a war demon while he *casually* proposed to his royal paramour via a long-distance communication spell. The lucky princess never noticed the war demon. And that was the least preposterous of the tales surrounding Riversturm Malreaver.

Long story short, Riversturm Malreaver turned the dragon's heart into stone, grabbed the apprentice by the ear, and teleported back to the academy.

"And our treasure..." sighs Aonn Tesk, tapping on a hastily-drawn map on the table. "Is undoubtedly still inside the belly of that fallen dragon."

"It's not mine to go after," he says, sliding the map towards you. He stands to his feet, wishes you luck, and paints the air with the traditional elven sign of farewell.

Your grandfather in your thoughts, you head out towards the Vast Vermin Swamp. Go to 1.



#1

You find yourself staring at the marshy edge of the Vast Vermin Swamp. A fetid mist surrounds the bog. You can't identify the odor, but it smells of some horrible concoction of fish, sulfur, and peat. Through the mist you can barely make out a narrow trail that cuts through the bog's twisted and sickly-gray trees. This is the trail where your grandfather and Aonn Tesk entered the swamp... and hopefully the trail that will lead you to the lost Celestial Emerald.

A skinny and wrinkled lizard creature – or is it a wart goblin? – has set up a small wooden hovel at the start of this path that leads into the swamp. He sits on a wobbly stool outside his door, rocking back and forth contentedly, ignoring you. A wooden plaque hangs from his neck. "Good guide. 10 silvers," it says.

If you decide to converse with the unusual lizard creature, go to 19.

If you decide to ignore the creature and head down the path, go to 29.

#2

The path narrows, and you find yourself weaving between long, hanging vines that are laced with sharp thorns.

Suddenly, you hear a gurgling shriek from nearby. You turn to see that a swamp rodent had emerged from some brush, only to get itself tangled in the sharp vines. You are shocked to see the vines slowly lift the rodent upwards into the canopy. As you lose sight of it, the shrieking abruptly ends. You move faster through the vines, careful not to touch them.

The path ends at a freshwater stream. The water spews from some nearby rocks, and is hot to the touch. You refill your waterskin. Aonn Tesk told you that such springs were clean.

Examining your surroundings, you see what looks to be black paint on a massive stump located off the side of the path. Looking more closely, you see that it's not paint at all – but a hollow carved into the stump. Is it the lair of some creature? Or might it make a good place to rest. You are unsure.

If you investigate the stump, go to 62.

If you ignore the stump and continue onwards, go to 60.



#3

Examining the twisted bundle on the ground, you see a leather pouch embedded in its middle. Using your knife, you carefully pry the thing out. Inside the pouch you find a small vial, some finger bones, and a dead flower. Looking at the vial, you see that it is labeled “Assassin’s Brew”. You pocket it, and kick the bundle of thorns and rocks into the water.

At any time, you may drink this elixir and receive +1d to your Stealth and Climbing skill (roll separately). This effect lasts until the end of the adventure.

You continue on. Go to 17.

#4

The writing on the altar is clear to you. The glyphs show that the altar is on fire, and from that fire comes the spirit of some long-dead, mask-wearing conjuror.

You realize that setting the dry vines atop the altar on fire may, indeed, summon this dangerous spirit. You’ve heard stories of spirits being helpful to strangers of the swamp. But you also know that the stories of such wraiths killing the foolish men who summon them would never have found your ears. Such tales are secrets only dead men know.

As you consider your options, a glint catches your eye. Half-buried in the dirt around the stone is a vicious-looking

sacrificial knife. Weirdly, the silver blade is not rusty and is still sharp. It looks as if it was forged and polished just minutes ago.

If you decide to test your luck and set fire to the altar, go to 48.

Otherwise, you decide to head back towards the fly-ridden clearing. Go to 53.

#5

You decide to pass the night in the cottage, taking shelter from the cold swamp. Make a HT roll. On a success, you regain 1 hp from your warm night.

As the dawn rises, you hear a whistling sound outside the cottage. Peeking through a small window, you see an old woman walking towards the cottage. Two black fish flop on the end of the spear she carries.

You back off into the gloom when you notice the woman stops suddenly and stares at the hovel. She squints her eyes and calls out in a cracking voice.

“Josper? Is that you? Back so soon?”

If you come out of the hovel and reveal yourself to the woman, go to 12.

If you stay quiet inside the house, go to 43.

#6

You take a few steps closer to observe your prey. The snuffling rodent seems to be ignoring you. Snakebait looks up at you optimistically.

To hunt the scarred rodent, either make a ranged weapon roll or a SURVIVAL (SWAMPLAND) roll. If you don't have that particular skill, you can roll PER-5 or another SURVIVAL skill at -3.

If you succeed, you snare the creature easily. Snakebait hoists the **rodent carcass** into his pack, and promises to cook you its liver later.

If you fail, not only do you scare the rodent away, it startles you with a horrible wailing noise as it tears through the brush. You trip and tear your leg against a thorny vine. Take 1d-3 damage and write down **STARTLED**.

Go to 33.

#7

Leaning your back against a large willow tree, you take a few minutes to rest. If you have the FIRST AID skill, and are wounded from your battle with the swamp lion, make a roll to restore 1d-3 hp. Otherwise, you bandage yourself up for 1 hp of healing.

You remembered that **swamp lion hide** is valuable to master leatherworkers. You spend an hour stripping the lion of its thick hide before returning to the trail.

If you have HOPELESSLY LOST written down, go to 59.

Otherwise, go to 50.

#8

You watch as the nimble savages leap into the trees. They are expert climbers and swiftly make their way over branches and vines to the carcass of the dragon. Using their hatchets, they chop and saw for at least fifteen minutes. Fanghelm shouts advice to them as they work.

Suddenly, with a loud groan and crash, the dragon carcass falls from the canopy. It lands on the ground with a wet thud. Acid sprays in all directions, burning brown spots into leaves and hissing as it hits the puddles in the clearing.

Shouting in delight, Fanghelm races forward and slices into the belly of the dragon. He reaches inward with his gauntleted hands and pulls out a squirming intestine. Cursing, he yanks it away and reaches in again.

Finally, he finds what he's looking for. Calling up to his men, he holds up a spherical, stone container. His men cheer him on as they rappel down from the canopy, congratulating him on his great find.

If you decide to attack Fanghelm while he is celebrating, go to 34.

If you continue to watch, go to 61.

#9

Foggy whispers swirl in your mind. Your senses grow dull. But still, you feel content and happy. The swamp's chill turns to warmth, and it feels good.

Soon you realize you could understand the whispers all along. It wasn't a strange, dead language, it was a *special* language that only you and Anurus share. And you love Anurus. You can't wait to lead Anurus from the swamp, and show him all your favorite places. He tells you he needs more friends like you. And you have so many ideas to help him.

Your next few weeks are spent magically enslaved to Anurus, the reawakened Sorcerer Lord of the Third Darkfell. Eventually, he is killed in a fierce magical duel with Riversturm Malreaver, hero of Montbatten Academy. Although you are freed from your charm, the town council finds you guilty of willfully assisting a demon. The punishment is the gallows. Alas, your journey is ended.



#10

You are in combat with a young swamp lion. The swamp lion is tired and hungry, but also an experienced and clever killer. He's hunted many weapon-wielding humans in his time, and he prefers warm-blooded meals over the cold flesh of reptilians.

Use the tactical map at the end of the adventure. Place the lion on the blood stain in the middle of the map. Place yourself within five hexes of the predator.

If you kill the swamp lion, go to 7.

If you are slain by the swamp lion, there is still good news. The predator far prefers you as a meal over the lizard-like Snakebait. As the lion is devouring your corpse, Snakebait manages to crawl away and escape from the swamp. He carves a primitive picture of you outside his hovel to remember your bravery.

#11

The Blacklake is aptly named. The still water of the lake is dark as night. Weirdly, pink jellyfish-like creatures litter the shore, dead from some natural event you will never understand.

Occasionally, you see a fish break the lake's surface, giving you hope that you might find a prized fish. Make a FISHING or SURVIVAL (SWAMPLAND) roll. If you don't have either of those skills skill, you can make a PER-4 roll, or another type of SURVIVAL skill roll at -2.

If you succeed, you spear one of the strange, three-eyed **ebony fish**. Smashing its head against the rocks, you fold it into some spare cloth and store it in your bag to salt later.

As you turn to leave, you hear the sound of branches cracking in the underbrush nearby. You duck behind some foliage and listen. Make a STEALTH roll.

If you succeed, you manage to get behind cover before you are spotted. Go to 41.

If you fail, go to 20.

Swamp Lion

ST	13	HP: 13
DX	13	Will: 10
IQ	4	Per: 13
HT	10	FP: 10

Basic Speed: 5.75 SM: 0 (2 hexes, 190 lbs.)
Move: 9 Bite: 1d cut, Reach C
Dodge: 8 Claw: 1d cut, Reach C

Traits: Night Vision 5; Quadruped; Sharp Claws; Sharp Teeth; Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-15; Stealth-14; Tracking-14.

Tactics: Each turn, roll a die, on 4+, the cat tries to swipe at whatever weapon you are fighting with. Treat this attack as trying to knock a weapon away (p.B401). If the cat succeeds in hitting (at -2), roll a Quick Contest of his ST vs. your ST or DX-based weapon skill (+2 if you have a two-handed weapon). On a success, he knocks your weapon 1d yards away! He'll immediately follow this up with an All-Out Attack!

#12

Knowing that there is no easy way out of this awkward situation, you crack the door open and slowly walk out of the hovel.

"You're not Josper," says the woman, one hand of hers reaching under her shabby coat.

You hastily explain your presence to the woman, hoping that you have not stumbled across the home of some swamp witch who lures travelers to a horrible, pox-filled end.

If you want to apologize and carefully explain the situation, make a DIPLOMACY roll vs. the woman's Will 13. If you succeed, go to 35. If you fail, go to 15.

If you don't have the DIPLOMACY skill, and still want to apologize, make a Reaction Roll by rolling 3d and adding appropriate modifiers. The roll is at an additional -1 since you are standing in the woman's house, uninvited! On a good reaction or better (13 or more), go to 35. On a bad reaction or worse (6 or less), go to 22. With any other result, go to 15.

Or, if you want to try to be clever with the woman, perhaps cracking a joke or flirting with her, make a FAST-TALK OR SEX APPEAL roll vs. the woman's Will 13. If you succeed, go to 35. If you fail, go to 22.

#13

This part of the swamp is actually quiet beautiful. Fist-sized red and purple flowers grow on the side of the trail, sprouting from thick reeds which are lined with barbs that remind you of arrow heads.

If you have **NATURALIST** skill, you can make a roll to gather some **redvange arrowheads** – something you’ve heard fletchers value a great deal, due to the ease by which they are enchanted.

Eventually, the flowers fade into the distance, and the trail forks. Consulting your map is not much use. Aonn Tesk didn’t bother detailing out specific trail paths, it seems.

If you continue east, go to 2.

If you take the trail that goes south-east, go to 57.

#14

You cautiously approach the hovel, listening to see if anyone is inside. All is quiet.

You push open the door to the place, and are surprised to find the inside dry and warm. For a cottage in the middle of the Vast Vermin Swamp, it is oddly well-furnished. A cot is against the wall, with a warm blanket neatly folded on top of it. In another corner is a rough hewn table, surrounded by three chairs.

A heavy iron kettle sits in the middle of the room, giving off an aura of warmth and comfort. There is no sign of a fire, and you know with certainty that this is some kind of magical thing.

If you take rest in the cottage, go to 5.

Or, if you decide these places are best left alone, you continue onwards. Go to 32.

#15

The witch narrows her eyes at you.

“If I weren’t in a good mood, I would fling you into the lake. And let me tell you, the Gumperfish is especially hungry today.”

Her eyes flick towards the lake, where you see a large, scaly hump emerge for moment, then vanish underneath the black waters. You don’t know what a Gumperfish is, exactly, but you have little care to find out today.

You apologize profusely for your trespass, but the woman just glares at you silently, not interested in conversation.

You slowly back your way into the swamp, then sprint away from the woman before she changes her mind at using you as fishing bait. Go to 32.

#16

The way to the north looks less treacherous to you, so you carefully make your way through the reed-covered path that circles around the murky lake.

If you have STARTLED written down, go to 58.

Otherwise, go to 31.

#17

You continue into the swamp. The path heads downhill, until you find yourself in knee-deep, brackish water. You try not to think of the venomous snakes and sharp-toothed fish that live in this part of the swamp.

Trudging through the water saps your strength. Each step requires you pull your wet boot from sticky, gray silt. Occasionally, you feel some wriggling creature bump into your leg under the water.

Make a **SURVIVAL (SWAMPLAND)** roll. If you don’t have **SURVIVAL (SWAMPLAND)**, you can roll **PER-5** or another **SURVIVAL** skill at -3.

If you succeed the roll, you spot a dark, debris-filled ahead that is no doubt home to a swamp coiler – an aggressive constrictor that hunts the large swamp vermin. You steer around the nest, moving as quietly as you can through the area.

If you fail, your ignorance leads you right into the nest of the swamp coiler. The serpent bites your leg for 1d-2 cr damage, and then frantically flees through the water. Fortunately, such snake s are not venomous.

Ahead, you glimpse tall stones jutting from the water. Approaching cautiously, you find a ring of massive boulders. Inside the ring of boulders is a pile of rubble made from a shiny, black stone. Perhaps this was one of the altars the Redbelly savages made to their dead sorcerer gods.

You’ve heard the Redbellies often leave their victims’ valuables on these altars. But you’ve also heard the savages leave traps, so that they might capture more victims to sacrifice to their gods...

If you search the ruin, looking for valuables, go to 28.

Otherwise, you continue on. Go to 54.

#18

You crash through the underbrush. Nettles and thorns bite at your skin, but you are determined to try saving your friend. Make a quick contest of DX or RUNNING vs. the swamp lion's modified DX 11 (he's moving more clumsily since he's carrying poor, struggling Snakebait in his jaws).

If you lose the contest by 5+, or critically fail, the swamp cat escapes with his prey. You sadly return to the trail. Write down LOST SNAKEBAIT, and go to 31.

If you win the contest by 5+, or critically succeed, you catch up to the creature before it's too late for your friend. Go to 10.

If neither result happens, the chase continues. Reroll the contest. If after three rerolls there is no resolution, you finally manage to catch up to the exhausted cat. Write down HOPELESSLY LOST on your character sheet, and go to 10.

#19

The scrawny creature stares up at you with beady eyes, seemingly confused at your presence. Suddenly, a remembering look forms on his scaly face and in one twisted motion, contorts his reptilian body to stand on the wobbly stool he was just sitting on.

He points a thumb at his sign and introduces himself as "Snakebait". He then shakes his head and gestures towards the swamp.

"Bad season, many swamp lions. Gumperfish is hungry, too," he says in a clicky voice. "No guide today."

While you are not exactly sure what a gumperfish is, Snakebait seems unwilling to take work today.

If you decide to try to convince Snakebait to change his mind, make a DIPLOMACY or FAST-TALK roll vs. his Will 11. If you succeed, he agrees to be your guide today. If you don't have those skills, you can smile broadly and roll 3d to make Reaction Roll. Because Snakebait is an unusual species, your Appearance bonuses or penalties do not add to this attempt. On a 13+, you get a Good reaction and have a new guide. If you succeed, pay \$10 and take the Snakebait NPC sheet on p.17 to remember he's your guide. Go to 25.

If you fail to convince Snakebait, or decide to leave him be, you head into the swamp. Go to 29.

#20

You narrowly duck a spear as the savages try to surround you. You have no choice but to fight your way out of this situation.

Redbellies

ST	11	HP: 11
DX	11	Will: 10
IQ	9	Per: 10
HT	11	FP: 11



Basic Speed: 5.5	SM: 0
Move: 8	Hatchet: 1d+1 cut, Reach 1, Parry 9
Dodge: 8	Spear: 1d+1 imp, Reach 1,2, Parry 9

Traits: Fit; Social Stigma (Barbarian). The hatchet-wielding fighter has Combat Reflexes, giving him +1 to his active defenses.

Skills: Axe/Mace-13; Brawling-12; Knife-12; Spear-12; Survival-12; Thrown Weapon (Spear)-12.

Gear: Hide armor (DR 1); stone hatchet and knives; spears.

Tactics: The savages fight with untrained fury. On their turn they will rush into melee range. Two fight with spears, the third fights with his hatchet. The hatchet-wielding fighter will always All-Out Attack (Strong) every turn, for +2 damage.

If you have written AMBUSH on your character sheet, you have startled the savages. Each savage must make an IQ roll each turn to be able to act. While stunned, they defend at -4.

Use the tactical map at the end of the adventure. The savages start near the rocks on the map. You start adjacent to the middle copse of trees. Or, if you succeed at a TACTICS roll, you can reposition yourself wherever you want before combat begins.

If you survive the battle, you have two choices. You can travel south around the lake and go to 23.

Or, you can travel north around the lake, go to 16.

If Snakebait is your guide, he knows a path. Go to 31.

#21

Anurus' ancient body is wracked with spasms. He crumbles to his knees, and even through his mask you see his face contort with pain. A horrible, black smell of brimstone fills your nostrils as you see the conjuror start to melt into ichor in front of you. You stand back and watch as he painfully loses his form. Soon, there is nothing but a puddle of ooze and ash on the ground on front of you. Only his **bizarre bronze mask** remains.

You take a moment to rest, and then decide it is best you abandon this place. You consult your map and then follow a narrow deer trail to the south.

Go to 33.

#22

The woman narrows her eyes, not believing a word of your story. Suddenly, you feel invisible hands grabbing at you. At first, you are pulled off your feet, then you are face down, a force the weight of an anvil crushing the breath of you.

The witch's face is in yours, and you feel her hot, fishy breath in your face. Through sharp teeth, she hisses.

"You are unwelcome here."

With that, you are thrown from the shanty. Your body sails hundreds of feet through the air. You come crashing down into the black waters of the lake. Gasping for air, you struggle to the surface.

Take 1d-1 cr damage and make a SWIMMING roll. The roll is at -2 for each level of encumbrance you have!

If you succeed, you catch your breath, and paddle back to shore, staying far away from the witch's abode. You're a bit disoriented by the time you get to land. Go to 16.

If you fail the roll, you inhale water and start to choke. You fight to reach the surface, but your energy is nearly gone. Make another SWIMMING roll. If you succeed, you take 2 hp damage, but you've narrowly avoided drowning. Go to 16.

If you fail the second roll, your flailing has caught the attention of some prehistoric creature of the Blacklake. You suddenly feel teeth bite around your waist. You fight feebly, grabbing for your knife, but as the jaws tighten, you realize that your journey in the Vast Vermin Swamp is at an end.

#23

You head south around the Blacklake. At one point, you see a two-tailed swamp rodent lapping water from the lake. Suddenly, a massive reptile crashes out from the water, devours the creature in one bone-crunching bite, and then slowly settles back into the lake. Before it disappears from view, you see the thing flick a curious glance at you.

You decide to walk as far away from the shore as possible.

As you follow the curve of the lake, you see a small cottage ahead of you. The hovel is made from logs, twigs, and has a messy thatched roof. A ramshackle dock juts out into the water. From this distance, you cannot tell if the hovel is occupied, or if its been long-deserted.

If you approach the hovel, go to 14.

Or, you can avoid the hut and continue south. Go to 31.

#24

You realize that it was not a tree you knocked your head against. It was a large stone pillar jutting from the ground. Several similar pillars form a circle around a stone altar. The rubble of a collapsed roof is scattered around you. You wonder if this is the ruin of a serpent temple – a similar one, perhaps, to your grandfather's discovery weeks ago.

You can see ancient glyphs on the altar. You squint your eyes, wondering if they will make any sense to you. Make a THAUMATOLOGY or OCCULTISM roll (or IQ-5).

If you succeed, or if you have Snakebait as your guide, you can make out the writing. Go to 4.

If you fail, you can still approach the altar. Go to 44.

Or, you can decide these things are best left alone, and try to make your way back to the clearing. Go to 53.

#25

Snakebait leads you into the swamp. Within a few minutes, all the color from the world vanishes. You find yourself in a drab world of twisting gray tree trunks, scabby vines, and murky puddles which give off a strong odor of brackish sulfur.

Snakebait suddenly stops and points through the dense underbrush. You see an ugly pig-sized rodent snuffling its nose into the mud. A long scar runs down its back.

"Vermin from Vermin Swamp," Snakebait chuckles as he points to his stomach, and then to your weapon. "Tasty tasty!"

If you want to try to hunt the vermin, go to 6.

If you ignore the hunting opportunity, preferring to make good time to your destination, go to 33.

#26

You feel the warm pulse of magic emanating from this colored rod. You close your eyes and press your fingers over the markings on the wand, hoping that the magical artifact will reveal itself to you. This doesn't always work, but—

Suddenly, the rod's history flashes through your head. This belonged to a witch who attended the Montbatten Academy. From the image of her you see in your mind, she lived decades ago. You see her walking down this trail with her cloaked friends. They are not happy. You can tell their conversation is angry and intense. But then a black shadow passes over them.

The woman pulls this wand out of her pocket, and a bolt of

lightning emanates from it. The shadow passes over her again, there is a flurry of violence, and your vision ends.

You have found **Domitia's Rod**. This slender, 2-foot rod is enchanted with Power 2, Speed 1. It is only usable by a mage, and is enchanted with the following spells: Night Vision, Lightning, Rain, Identify Plant, Resist Acid, Resist Fire, and Extinguish Fire. However, casting a spell from this rod confers the Unluckiness disadvantage on the caster for 48 hours.

Pleased with your discovery, you continue on. Go to 50.

#27

Figuring you have nothing to lose, you take one of your blades and smear the thick liquid on it, and rub it with a oil-slicked cloth you find another shelf. You are delighted to see all the weapon's grime and scale vanish. Within a minute, your blade shines like a mirror.

One of your bladed weapons is now *very fine* quality! Delighted that you found such a treasure, you take time to relock the stump's door, and continue onwards.

Go to 60.

#28

You carefully pick through the rubble, hoping to find something that was left behind here. You toss some of the shiny, polished rocks aside, careful not to move too quickly.

Make a PER-based TRAPS roll, or PERCEPTION-5 roll if you do not have the skill.

If you succeed, go to 37.

If you fail, go to 41.

#29

The Vast Vermin Swamp is far noisier than you anticipated. A cacophony of frog calls, bird caws, and buzzing insects compete for the attention of your senses. A loud splash and groaning scream of some mammal is heard in the distance. You proceed with caution, keeping an eye both on the trail and off of it.

After a few minutes you come to a dry clearing. It smells like something recently died in this spot, and a spray of thick blood on the trees nearby confirm it. You think you should hurry on.

Consulting Aonn Tesk's map, you think the dragon's carcass lies to the west of your position. Unfortunately, the most direct route would force you to leave the path.

If you decide to take the direct route and leave the path, go to 36.

If you decide to continue on the path, and hope it heads in the right direction, go to 51.

#30

Shrieking that his spell failed, Anurus' fingers lengthen and form into fiery tendrils. He pounces down on you, whipping and lashing with his flaming hands.

You are now in battle with Anurus, a long-dead conjuror. He attacks you mercilessly with fury and magic alike. Use the battle map at the end of the adventure. Place Anurus on the blood stain in the middle of the map. You start on the rock hex in the southwest corner of the map.

If you survive the battle, go to 21.

If you fall unconscious, Anurus once again casts his enslaving spell upon you. This time, you are too weak to resist his dark magic. Go to 9.

Otherwise, Anurus kicks your dying body, sighs with disappointment, and purposefully sets off into the swamp... your journey is ended.

Great Anurus

ST	11	HP:	11
DX	12	Will:	13
IQ	12	Per:	12
HT	11	FP:	11 (7)

Basic Speed: 5.75

Move: 8

Dodge: 9

SM: 0

Fiery lash: 1d+3 burn, Reach 1



Traits: Combat Reflexes; Magery 3; Injury Tolerance (No Vitals).

Skills: Brawling-14; Innate Attack-14. If you're using *GURPS Magic*, he also has access to Flame Jet, Mental Stun, and Shield spells at skill 15.

Equipment: His mask provides DR 2 to his face and skull.

Tactics: After he takes damage, Anurus grows more cautious and tries to cast an ancient protection spell on himself. Treat this as the Shield spell which gives him +3 to his active defenses, which he casts with skill 15.



#31

You continue your way around the lake, cautious to avoid the snakes that slither lazily along its shore. At one point, you see a bloated constrictor basking in a ray of sunlight. The carcass of a giant swamp rodent seems to be settling in its stomach. You shiver, grateful the snake found the rodent before it found you.

Soon, you find a trail littered with bones. Consulting your map, you see this area marked with hastily-written elvish script. This is the way to the clearing where the serpent dragon fell.

Go to 50.

#32

You trek onward through the swamp, wondering how much distance you've really covered since you started this journey. Have you barely traveled a mile, just walking in circles? Or have you covered more ground than you realized?

You consult Aonn Tesk's map. In hastily written elvish script, it shows that you should be near the "Path of Bones" – a trail that leads to the place where the serpent dragon fell. Sure enough, you soon see the path you're on littered with the bones of vermin, Redbellies, giant constrictors, and strange reptilians you can't recognize.

You take a few moments to kick at some of the piles of bones. Make a PERCEPTION (VISION)-3 or SEARCH-3 roll.

If you succeed, go to 38.

Otherwise, you continue down the Path of Bones. Go to 50.

#33

You continue on in the swamp. You pass by a ghost-white willow tree that has rough-hewn sigils carved into its pale bark.

If you have the HERB LORE or NATURALIST skill, make a roll. (If you don't have the skill, you can try IQ-6.) If you succeed, you know to gather a pouchful of **ghost willow bark** from this tree. The bark gives +2 to a FIRST AID roll, which you can use to recover 1d-3 hp. You can gather one dose for every point by which you made your roll.

About an hour later, you check your map again. You seem to be near one of the landmarks on the map – the blacklake. The ebony fish in this lake, when dried and salted, are prized delicacies to the noble families of West Megalos. You consider making a stop to fetch some of the fish.

If you decide to go fishing at Blacklake, go to 11.

Otherwise, you can circle the large lake by going south. Go to 23.

Or, you can circle the lake by heading north. Go to 16.

#34

You scream a battle cry and charge at Fanghelm, hoping to surprise him before he can continue his work.

Fanghelm spins around. He laughs in delight as he sees you approaching and readies his great axe. He arrogantly pull his helmet off, revealing himself to you.

You are horrified by the man's visage. His face is brutally scarred off by what can only be acid. A small piece of his jawbone is exposed. Worse, a cracked dragon incisor juts out from the top of his white-haired skull at an odd angle. How this man survived the jaws of dragon serpent, you will never know.

Fanghelm advances on you, brandishing his great axe eagerly. It is time to fight for your life. Use the battle map at the end of the adventure. Place Fanghelm on the blood stain in the middle of the map. You start at the right edge of the map.

Also, unless you wrote down the word TREE CLIMBERS, Fanghelm is joined by his two Redbelly servants. Place them on any two separate edges of the map. They are stunned by your appearance and must roll IQ each turn to snap out of it and act. If Fanghelm is struck down, they will retreat into the swamp.

If you survive the battle with Fanghelm and have TREE CLIMBERS written down, go to 64.

Otherwise, if you survive, go to 46.

If you fall in battle, Fanghelm kicks your fallen body, grins, and replaces the helm on his head. He orders his men to strip you of your valuables, then leaves your bare body in one of the clearing's acidic pools.

Fanghelm

ST	14	HP:	14
DX	12	Will:	13
IQ	12	Per:	12
HT	12	FP:	12

Basic Speed: 6.0 SM: 0
Move: 6 Axe: 2d+3 cut, Reach 1,2, Parry 11U
Dodge: 10 Punch: 1d-1 cr

Traits: Acute Vision +2; Appearance (Hideous); Bloodlust; Combat Reflexes; Fit; High Pain Threshold; Social Stigma (Barbarian). Doesn't like helmets in combat.

Skills: Brawling-15; Intimidation-14; Knife-14; Leadership-13; Survival-13; Two-handed Axe/Mace-15.

Gear: Two-handed great axe; hide armor (DR 1); large knife. His hardened leather helmet, when worn, provides DR 3.

Redbelly Climbers

ST	11	HP:	11
DX	12	Will:	10
IQ	10	Per:	10
HT	11	FP:	11

Basic Speed: 5.75 SM: 0
Move: 8 Hatchet: 1d+1 cut, Reach 1, Parry 9
Dodge: 8 Punch: 1d-2 cr

Traits: Fit; Social Stigma (Barbarian).

Skills: Axe/Mace-13; Brawling-13; Climbing-14; Knife-12; Spear-12.

Gear: Hide armor (DR 1); stone knives; hatchets.

Tactics: Fanghelm fights intelligently, using the range of his axe to his advantage, and All-Out Attacking if you are ever in shock from the pain of blow. For advanced players, he should use brutal, cheap tricks (e.g., attacking unarmored body parts). Fanghelm's savages fight more cautiously, preferring to let Fanghelm draw blood first.

#35

"I haven't seen had someone make me laugh this hard in a decade!" laughs the witch, as you relax at her table.

"You know, I saw that Riversturm Malreaver defeat that serpent," she explains. "I really hate saying anything good about Montbatten Academy, but they did do a good job on him!"

She pours you some more of her private batch of mead. It's your fourth glass, and your head feels as if it has bees buzzing inside it.

"I'm so glad you found my house. It's really too dangerous out there for people like you!" she continues. You aren't sure you've gotten much of a word in since she invited you into her cottage two hours ago.

You thank the witch for her hospitality, insisting you must go. She sighs theatrically and refills your glass.

"Oh, I understand. Well, you've really brightened my day all the same."

She stands up, catches her balance, and then walks to the corner of the room. She reaches through the wall and rummages around a bit. At first you thought the mead had affected your senses, but then you realize it was an illusionary wall!

She returns to the table and hands you a **green-bladed short-sword**.

"Now, if you're going to be slicing open dragon bellies you're going to need something sharper than, well whatever it is you're carrying," she exclaims. "Take it! Don't say no... I have no use for it anyway!"

The witch smiles, then hiccups. Then kisses you warmly on both cheeks.

"Now go before I decide you keep you here... forever!"

She bursts out in a wheezing laugh. "I'm teeeasing!"

You decide that it is time to go, before you discover whether or not she is actually teasing. You bid her a fond farewell, awkwardly realizing that you had either forgotten her name, or never gotten it.

The green-bladed is a *fine* magical shortsword. It is enchanted with Puissance+1, Accuracy+1. Additionally, the emerald in its hilt is enchanted with the Create Acid spell.

Waving goodbye to your new friend, you continue around the lake, hoping to make good time to the site the dragon fell.

Go to 32.

#36

You crash into the underbrush. Within minutes, your trail is blocked by thick, thorny vines. The tendrils seem to move and squirm... but only when you are not looking at them. You realize that you're unsure the direction you came from, or which way you are heading.

Suddenly, you hear a loud squawking sound, and a deadly bundle of thorns, rocks, and branches plummets from the canopy above. You try to leap out of the way.

Make a Dodge roll! If you succeed, you avoid the attack. If you fail, you are hit for 1d+1 cr damage.

You have no idea what kind of creature launched the attack. Was this something innocent that fell from a nest? Or did some intelligent creature try to bombard you? You're unsure. Make a PERCEPTION (VISION) roll.

If you succeed, go to 3.

Otherwise, go to 17.

#37

As you pick up one of the large pieces of black rubble, you freeze. Underneath the rock you see a wet rope. Examining it more carefully, you realize that this rope is staked into the ground, and held in place by this rock. Had you lifted it up, you realize one of the larger hinges from the ring surrounding you would have likely crashed down upon you, killing you instantly.

Avoiding the trapped stone, you work around it. Suddenly, you see the glint of gold. You carefully reach down and pull out an ancient-looking helm. The style of the **magnificent bronze helm** is alien and unfamiliar, but the craftsmanship is excellent.

This Corinthian-style helm is enchanted with Fortify +2, for DR 6 on the skull, DR 5 on the face. It is also enchanted so the wearer has no hearing loss while wearing the helm. However, while worn, the wearer suffers the No Peripheral Vision disadvantage.

Satisfied with your finding, you continue onward. Go to 54.

#38

As you kick through a pile of bones, you see the a strange-colored branch clutched in bony hands. Looking closer, you can tell that the **colored rod** is twisted and hand-painted. You pry it loose from the skeletal hand, and are surprised to see etchings in the wood.

If you have the Magery advantage, go to 26.

Otherwise, you carefully put the colored rod in your pack and continue down the trail. Go to 50.

#39

You wander through a fog-filled section of the swamp for another hour. Suddenly, you hear voices from ahead. You cannot recognize the language. They must be members of the Redbellies, degenerate men who live here and worship the graves of long-dead sorcerers. They are known for raiding human settlements that exist near the swamp and bringing captives back for nightmarish sacrifices.

Suddenly, the men stop talking. Did they hear you?

Make a STEALTH or CAMOUFLAGE roll to avoid notice. If you succeed, you spend an hour in a game of cat and mouse, dodging the Redbellies' eyes and ears. Go to 32.

If you fail (or have no tolerance for such evil savages), you find yourself surrounded by the men, who are hungry to capture you and drag you to one of their ancient altars. Go to 20.

#40

The swamp cat's black claws narrow miss your throat. You fumble with your weapon, but the hilt is slick and covered in moisture.

A horrible scream followed by a gurgling sound causes you to pivot around in horror. Poor Snakebait. He never saw the swamp cat coming. As the massive cat drags him in the swamp, he feebly reaches out to you, his eyes wide with terror.

You doubt the poor fellow will survive more than a minute in the jaws of the predator. You also question you can take on a swamp cat by yourself...

If you scream in fury and chase after Snakebait, hoping to save your guide, go to 18.

If you leave the poor creature for dead, go to 31.

#41

Peering out from behind cover, you see three emaciated, primitive men lope towards the Blacklake. You've heard tales of these savages. They worship the dead sorcerers that used to call this swamp home, and are known to raid nearby villages to bring back sacrifices to their gods. They are called the Redbellies, since they paint their bellies red after each sacrifice.

This particular hunting party wear tattered hides and carry stone-tipped spears. The savages don't seem to have noticed you. They seem to be debating a good spot to spear fish, though you don't understand their language.

If you try to sneak away, make a STEALTH roll. If you succeed, you have no choice but to circle the lake to the south. Go to 23.

If you fail your roll, the savages hear you. With an angry scream, one throws a spear your way! Go to 20.

Or, if you have no patience for such savages, draw your weapon and go to 47!

#42

You lift away a piece of heavy rubble, and make a grunt of satisfaction as you see the glint of gold underneath the water.

Suddenly, however, you heard the sound of a tightening rope, a massive splash, and the groan of stone against stone. You look up and see one of the massive henges tilting and falling towards you!

Make a Dodge+1 roll as you frantically roll away from the crushing block. If you fail, you take 6d cr damage as the stone brutally crushes you.

If succeed the Dodge roll or survive the damage, you slip backwards, lose your footing in the water, and smash your head against a log. You black out, and your body gets caught in a current. You drifts lazily towards a large, black lake in the distance.

Fortunately, you are spared a watery grave. Your wool cloak gets caught in a tangle of debris, keeping your head above the water. A few minutes alter, the current deposits you on the gray sand shores of the Blacklake. You gasp and cough into the sand, unsure of whether you were unconscious for minutes or hours.

As you regain your bearings, you hear voices from up ahead. You duck behind some marsh reeds and peek out to identify the source of the voices.

Go to 41.

#43

You slink back into the shadows of the cottage, hoping that this woman is not one of the Fen Witches. The stories say they the witches were once ambitious students that were thrown out of Montbatten Academy a generation ago. Supposedly, they accidentally killed their herbology professor and tried to cover it up by replacing him with a demon. The ruse did not last long, and the women were exiled to the swamp as punishment.

"Oh it's all true!" says the woman, opening the door to the cottage. Did she read your mind?

Of course, she did. You curse yourself as you see the woman just a few yards away, pointing at you with a withered finger.

If you beg for your life, succeed with an ACTING roll or make a Reaction Roll. On a good reaction, 13+, go to 15.

Otherwise, go to 22.

#44

You cautiously approach the altar. It is made from a strange, polished black stone. While you don't know its exact purpose, you have heard stories of the vicious Redbellies, a tribe of savage men who worship at altars like these.

Indeed, as you look at the ground, you see that there are men's tracks in the soft dirt. It looks to be a combination of sandals and bare feet.

If you decide to follow the tracks, go to 49.

Otherwise, you return back to a familiar trail. Go to 13.

#45

You have caught up to the fierce swamp lion, and cornered him amongst some rocks. Snakebait weakly shakes in his jaws, silently pleading for help. The swamp cat drops his prey and roars at you, preparing to use the last of his energy to defend his meal..

Write down SAVED SNAKEBAIT, draw your weapon, and go to 10.

#46

You kneel down and take the emerald in your hand. So, you think, this is the Celestial Emerald that both your grandfather and this Fanghelm died for. How many other men died trying to retrieve this gem over the centuries?

The gem is indeed beautiful. Holding it up to the light, you see what looks like small planets orbiting in the middle of the stone. Is this just an illusion of the facets of the gemstone, or is there some grand magical secret that this stone holds. You're unsure.

Although you are in a hurry to leave the swamp, you find yourself walking slowly. Fatigue and the memories of your grandfather weigh you down. As a child, you were always delighted by his tales of adventure and treasure hunting. Your mother always told you that half the tales weren't true, and the other half were exaggerated. Now, you wonder if she'll believe what you accomplished today.

It doesn't matter, you think. You know your grandfather is smiling somewhere, proud that you recovered a treasure that he himself could not keep.

Satisfied that you have found what you came for, you return to civilization. Go to 65.

#47

You draw your weapon, scream a battle cry and attack. The savages are startled by your presence. Write the word *AMBUSH* on your character sheet.

Go to 20.

#48

You pour a few drops of lantern oil on the altar's vines. Holding your breath in anticipation, you spark a fire.

A fiery, sulfurous explosion knocks you backwards into a clump of debris and rubble. Make a Dodge roll or take 1d burn damage.

As you stumble to your feet, you find yourself staring up at a horrifying, green-skinned man. His reptile-skin cloak moves with a life on its own, at times wrapping itself tightly around him, other times snaking towards you threateningly. The man wears an angular, bronze mask, but you can clearly see unnerving, amphibious-looking eyes peering at you through its eye slits.

The man shouts angrily into the sky. Though you don't speak its language, you have no doubt that he yelled, "I am freed" in its dark tongue.

He studies you now, a tendril of his cape winding upwards to whisper something into his ear. Suddenly, his hands ignite into angry, purplish flames. He reaches towards you, and you feel the horrible fire burning in your mind. The whispers of a long-dead language snake through your thoughts. They tell you that your master, Anurus, has come before you.

Roll a quick contest of your Will vs. Anurus' effective spell skill of 12. If Snakebait is with you, you get +1 to your roll as he frantically tugs on your hand and pleads with you to stay with him.

If you fail the contest, turn go to 9.

If you succeed, go to 30.

#49

You follow the tracks for a hundred yards or so. The soft dirt makes them easy to follow. But then the trail leads you across a murky stream, and you momentarily lose your bearings. Make a TRACKING+1 roll (or PER-4 if you do not have the skill).

If you succeed, you pick up the trail and follow it for another hour. Go to 39.

If you fail, you have lost the trail. Make a NAVIGATION (LAND) roll. If you succeed, you find your way back to where you originally found the prints. Go to 13.

If you fail the NAVIGATION roll, you have become lost. You curse yourself for having followed the tracks. Go to 59.

#50

You've arrived. You are in a massive clearing. The ground below you seems burned and scattered with ashes and green, acidic puddles. But there is no sign of the serpent dragon.

You angrily kick at a stone on the ground, wondering if you've come all this way for nothing. As you go to pull out your map,



you hear the trees above you rattle in the wind. You look up.

There, above you in the canopy, is the twisted corpse of the black serpent dragon. The thing hangs amidst the branches, at least a dozen yards above you. Its mouth is agape in shock, but its eyes are dull white and dead.

The size of the creature is stunning to you. This serpent dragon's long, lithe body is twice the length of a house. The jaws could devour a man in one bite. It seems to have wings, but they look to be torn off.

A splatter of acidic blood falls from its mouth and you see it sizzle on the ground next to you. Suddenly, you hear the sound of voices coming towards you. You duck behind a large tree and watch as two Redbelly savages lope from the swamp. All of them hold stone hatchets. But they are led by a larger man, who wears what looks like leather armor fashioned from the hide of some reptile. His face is hidden by a leathery helmet shaped like a fanged snake, and he carries a massive axe on his shoulders.

The men enter the clearing and point upwards at the dragon. Fanghelm laughs loudly, delighted by the find. In a language you don't understand, he orders his men up into the trees to cut the beast down.

If you continue to watch, go to 8.

Or, you can leap out and attack Fanghelm while his men are in the trees. Write down TREE CLIMBERS and go to 34.

#51

The soft ground of the swamp makes travel slow and tiring. Several times, your boot sinks deep into the mud, forcing you to pause and pull it out with a horrible squelching noise.

Soon, you come to a dry clearing. A thick cloud of flies buzz around you, likely drawn to the scent of your sweat. You wave them off unsuccessfully.

Two trails lie before you. One continues east, towards your destination. The other winds downhill, and you do not know where it leads.

If you continue to the east, go to 13.

If you take the downhill path, go to 56.

#52

You walk over to the dragon's carcass. Its jaws lie open on the ground, and you marvel at the thing's size and strength. You notice scorch marks all along the wyrm's neck, and wonder if those are the marks left by the great wizard Riversturm Malreaver's attacks.

Holding your breath, you take out your sharpest weapon and slice deep into the belly of the dragon. You hope that this whole story Aonn Tesk told about your grandfather was right.

Acid-pocked bones and slimy green dragon innards spill out from the carcass. Then you see the stone-textured, spherical container Aonn Tesk described. You pull it out of the dragon, pull out a knife, and pry the container open. Inside, you see the glittering prize that your grandfather died for – the Celestial Emerald.

Having found the treasure for which you came, you depart the swamp.

Go to 65.

#53

You slowly climb your way up the slick slope. It is slow going, but eventually find yourself back on a path, heading towards the fly-ridden clearing that you found just a little while ago.

Go to 51.

#54

Your soggy boots make awful squelching sounds as you trudge through the thick, black water. Soon, you realize that you have reached the shores of the Blacklake, the large body of water that lies between you and your goal – the carcass of the dragon serpent that slew your grandfather.

Go to 11.

#55

The hinges to the door make a rusty groan as you push it open. You stick your head inside, and marvel to see a what looks to be a small alchemy laboratory on the inside of the stump. The room inside is lined with shelves and open cabinets. A small table is set up a few paces inside the room, covered in strange-colored stains that smell sweet, like cherries and grapes. Notes are nailed to the walls of the room, but in language you do not understand.

Judging from the dust on the floor and shelves, the lab appears to have been abandoned for quite some time. You search the place and find a single vial of purplish liquid sitting on the shelf. Unlike everything else in the room, it is clearly labelled – “M. Batten’s Blade Polish”. You wonder if it has anything to do with Montbatten Academy, the esteemed wizard school nearby.

If you want to take your chances and smear the polish over one of your weapons, go to 27.

Otherwise, you can save the M. Batten’s Blade Polish for later, and continue onwards. Go to 60.

#56

The hill is steeper than you anticipated, and you find yourself stumbling and sliding in the slick mud. Make a DX-1 or ACRYBATICS roll.

If you succeed, go to 33.

If you fail, you fall off the path, tumble through thorny brush, and knock your head on a tree. Take 1d-2 cr damage. When you shake yourself off, you realize you’re in a strange location. Go to 24.

#57

You plod down the soft, muddy path that winds towards southward. Massive dragonflies hover in the air around you. Each is the size of a small dog, and you can feel the wind from their beating gossamer wings. You are as curious with them as they are with you. At one point, one of the dragonflies lands on your shoulder, scratches at your hair with a spindly leg, and then rapidly flees as you turn to look more closely at its face.

You seem to remember these creatures are used as magically familiars to some of the elder wizards of Montbatten Academy. You wonder if you can catch one and bring it back...

Make a TRAPS roll. If you succeed, you have snared a **gossamer dragonfly**. Tying it to your pack with a delicate fishing line, the intelligent insect learns to follow you around. Within an hour, you delight to have discovered it does not need its leash – the dragonfly seems content to trail you, hovering in the air just outside of reach.

You really should give it a name, you think.

Checking your bearings with your map, you see that you are approaching the Blacklake, the large body of water known for both its delicious fish, but also for the dangerous, primeval creatures that lurk within its depths.

If you decide to avoid the Blacklake and take a soggy deer trail that seems to head in the direction you want to go, go to 17.

Or, you can venture to the shores of the Blacklake. Go to 11.

#58

With a ferocious roar, a horse-sized, black-striped swamp cat hurls itself from the brush. You curse yourself as you realize this creature must have been stalking you for at least a mile.

If you have Snakebait with you, go to 40.

Otherwise, you roll out of the way and yank out your weapon. Go to 10.

#59

A sulfur-smelling fog rolls in, enveloping you in a mist that is so thick, it is difficult to even read your own map. Squinting at the parchment, you realize you have no idea where you are. You are far away from any known landmarks or trails. Your heart sinks in fear, and you curse yourself for crashing through the brush after something that was nowhere near your ultimate destination.

If you have Snakebait with you, you are in luck. He is vaguely familiar with this area. Go to 39.

Otherwise, you’ll just have to pick a direction and walk, hoping for the best. Make a NAVIGATION (LAND) roll at +2 because at least you have a map. If you don’t have the skill, roll IQ-3.

If you succeed, you think you know which direction to head. Go to 63.

Otherwise, you angrily jam the map back in your pack and wander off, hoping for the best. Go to 2.

#60

The wet trail winds downhill. Soon, a long stretch of acid-puddled bog lies before you. The entire place buzzes with mosquitos and smells like fresh blood. You swat at the insects as you pick your way across, knowing there is no way to fully protect yourself.

Unless you have some kind of magical spell (e.g., Repel Insects, Wind, or Armor), the insects sting and bite you as you make your way through this area of the swamp. Make a HT roll. If you fail, you are struck with a mild blood poisoning and you are *nauseated* for the rest of the adventure, suffering -2 to all attribute and skill rolls, and -1 to active defenses.

Leaving the insect swarm behind, you cross a cold and soggy marsh. Checking your map, you realize that you will soon be on the shores of the Blacklake, a large body of water that separates you from the dragon's carcass you seek.

Go to 11.

#61

You continue to watch as Fanghelm pries the container open with his axe. He laughs in delight as the spherical safe cracks open, spilling a fist-sized emerald on to the ground. He grabs it in his gauntlet and holds it high, victorious.

Suddenly, a thunderous crack fills your ears. Standing before the shocked Fanghelm is a tall, handsome man. Flowing black hair falls to his shoulder, and a smile is fixed on his face. The man holds a staff in one hand, golden pommel sword in the other. As Fanghelm grabs for his axe, the newcomer flicks his staff towards the savage warlord. Purplish fire scorches forward, wrapping itself around Fanghelm, its energy shooting into his body.

Fanghelm's savage allies flee, screaming into the swamp, as the man's body thumps to the ground, like a rag doll tossed away by a child. The body hisses and smokes.

The newcomer sighs, reaches down, and picks the emerald off the ground. He turns around and looks in your direction. He winks.

"Almost forgot this!" he says in a polite, high Megalosian accent.

With another flash of light and earsplitting pop, the man is gone.

You mutter under your breath that you've had enough of the Vast Vermin Swamp. You leave the swamp by the way you came.

Go to 65.

#62

The stump is surprisingly large, easily the size of a small cottage. The top of it is scorched, though whether by a natural disaster or magical one, you are unsure.

Something has carved a small home out of the stump. Recessed into the wood is a small door, half as high as one meant for a man. You listen at the door, but hear nothing inside. Finally, you reach down and shake the handle to the door, but it is locked tight.

If you want to open the door, making a LOCKPICKING roll, or

a Quick Contest of FORCED ENTRY vs. the door's ST 13. Or, if you have a spell like LOCKMASTER, you can use that too.

If you defeat the lock, go to 55.

Otherwise, you decide to leave the stump home alone, and continue down the trail. Go to 60.

#63

You travel for an hour. A cold, stinking rain comes down. Despite the fact that the day is warm, the rain freezes you to your bones.

Make a SURVIVAL (SWAMPLAND) roll. If you don't have SURVIVAL (SWAMPLAND), you can roll PER-5 or another SURVIVAL skill at -3.

If you succeed, you find a huge, fallen log to take shelter, building a small fire to protect yourself from the unnatural rain.

If you fail, you cannot find adequate shelter, and end up shivering under the light cover of a mangrove tree. Take 1d-2 damage.

Soon, the rain lifts and you return to the soggy path. You hope you don't much distance left to cover.

Go to 39.

#64

Fanghelm lies dead at your feet. You hear his men warbling in fear, disappearing into the swamp. These Redbellies are too cowardly to attack you without his leadership. You take Fanghelm's **great axe** and **fanged leather helmet** as a prize.

You stare upwards at the dead dragon, still hanging awkwardly in the canopy. The Redbellies began to cut the creature down, but you'll have to do the rest yourself.

To cut the dragon down, you'll have to make a CLIMBING+2 roll (or DX-3 if you don't have the skill). Or, you must have some sort of ability to fly, perhaps by magic.

If you succeed at scaling the trees and cut the dragon down, go to 52.

Otherwise, you have no way of reaching this dragon. You wonder if you should have waited for the Redbellies to cut the creature down first. Realizing that surviving the swamp is reward enough, you decide to leave your grandfather's prize here. You quietly leave the swamp. Go to 65.

#65

After several days travel, you arrive back in the town of Ariminum. You head straight towards your sister's house, excited to see a familiar face. As if detecting your presence, your sister emerges from her home, shaking her head in disbelief.

"When Aonn told me you chased after grandfather's grave, I couldn't believe it," she says.

You shrug apologetically.

"So, tell me," she continues. "Are the vermin in the swamp as big as they say?"

You laugh as you walk over and embrace her.

"Grandfather was a brave fool, just as we always thought," you tell her. Suddenly, you catch a glimpse of Aonn Tesk in the door of her house. The old elf is holding up a glass and toasts you from afar.

"And just as I always told him!" he says, smirking.

Congratulations! You have bested the Vast Vermin Swamp, and you have quite the tale to tell your friends and family.

For completing the adventure, gain 2 character points, plus 1 if you defeated one or more monsters, and 1 more if you SAVED SNAKEBAIT (which you may put towards keeping him as an Ally).

However, if you LOST SNAKEBAIT, lose 1 character point from your reward. Poor Snakebait. He deserved better.

You can sell some of the items you gained from the swamp, or keep them for a future adventure! See the chart for the value of the various treasures of the swamp.

Treasures of the Swamp

Treasure	Section Reference	Value
Rodent carcass	#6	\$50
Ebony fish	#11	\$200
Bizarre bronze mask	#21	\$400
Swamp lion hide	#7	\$200
Redvange arrowheads	#13	\$250
Colored Rod / Domitia's Rod	#26	\$30,000
Ghost willow bark	#33	\$50
Fanghelm's great axe	#64	\$100
Fanghelm's leather helmet	#64	\$50
Magnificent bronze helm	#37	\$800
Green-bladed shortsword	#35	\$25,000
Sacrificial knife	#4	\$200
Gossamer dragonfly	#57	\$600
Assassin's brew	#3	\$500
Celestial Emerald	#52	\$3,000*

* The Celestial Emerald is a 10 point Powerstone. It contains a minor quirk – all spells cast with its energy give off a greenish light.

Special Thanks

Special thanks to Mtannor, JeffEpp, and Yetanothernerd from Reddit for their great feedback and editing skills.

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For more free one shot adventures, please visit 1shotadventures.com. If you enjoyed this adventure, all the author asks is that you give a shout out and let me know how it went. Post a note on 1shotadventures.com or tweet @SageThalcos on Twitter.

Disclaimer Stuff

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Snakebait

ST	9	HP:	9
DX	12	Will:	11
IQ	9	Per:	10
HT	12	FP:	12

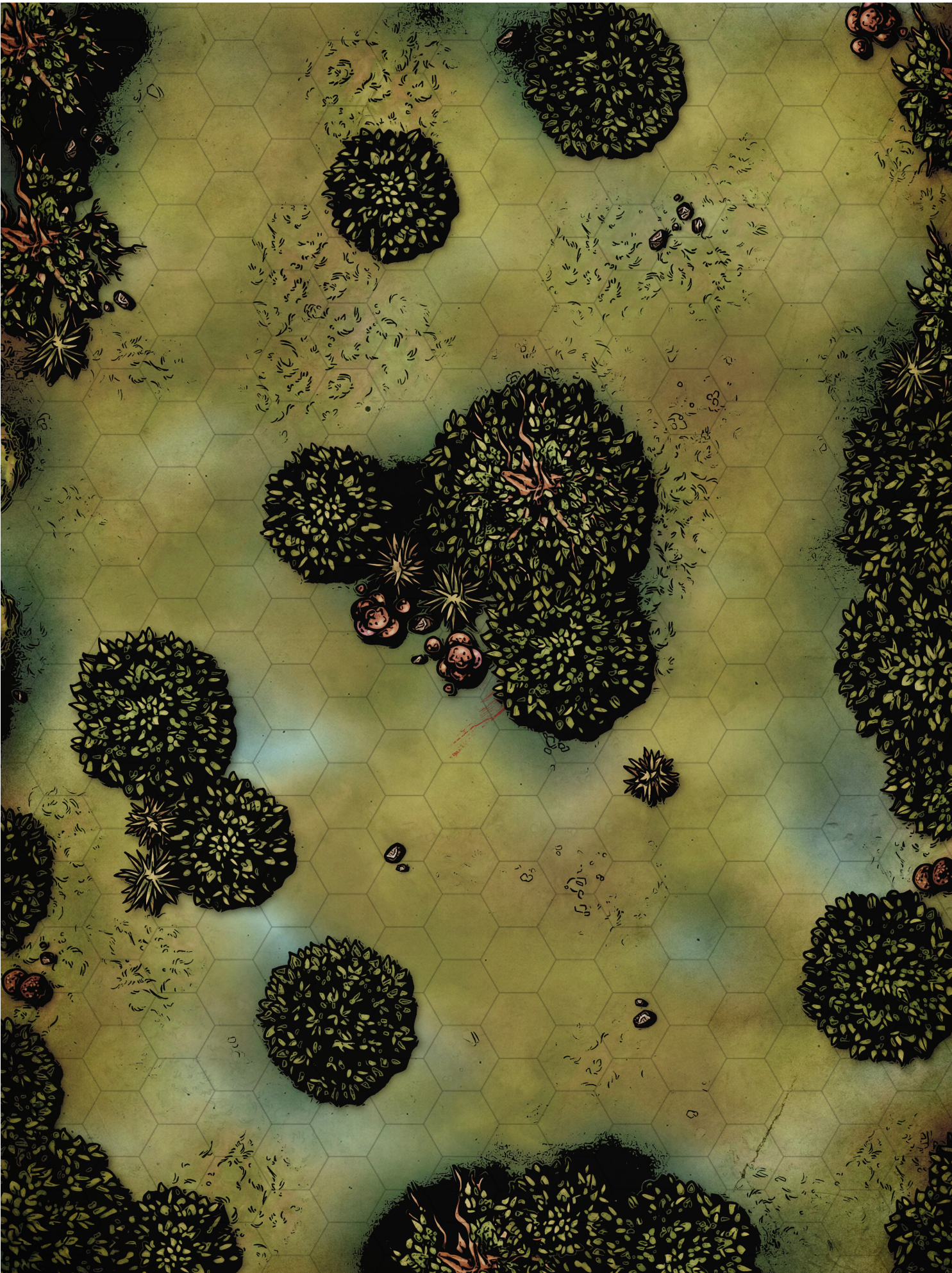
Basic Speed:	6.0	SM:	-1
Move:	6	Hatchet:	1d-1 cut, Reach 1, Parry 8
Dodge:	6		

Traits: Code of Honor (Professional Guide); DR 1 (tough skin); Fit; Social Stigma (Barbarian). Loves eating swamp vermin. Skittish in the face of magic.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Vast Vermin Swamp)-11; Axe/Mace-11; Cooking-9; Knife-12; Merchant-8; Spear-12; Stealth-12; Survival (Swampland)-12; Tracking-9.

Gear: Cheap hatchet; 6-gallon pack.

Tactics: Snakebait is generally useless in combat, taking cautious swings with his hatchet only if he thinks that his employer is in serious danger. Otherwise, he stands in the back and All-Out Defends.



BANESTORM™

Name NAMEORA LITTLETON Player _____ Point Total 150
 Ht 5'7" Wt 145 Size Modifier 0 Age 29 Unspent Pts -
 Appearance A diligent and talented messenger - framed for being in league with the dark elves

		CURRENT			
ST	12 [20]	HP	12 [0]	MOVE	4
DX	13 [60]	Will	11 [0]	DR	3
IQ	11 [0]	Per	12 [5]	(leather)	
HT	12 [20]	FP	12 [0]		



BASIC LIFT (ST × ST)/5 29 lbs DAMAGE Thr 1d-1 Sw 1d+2
 BASIC SPEED 6.25 [0] BASIC MOVE 6 [0]

ENCUMBRANCE	
None (0) = BL	<u>29</u>
Light (1) = 2 × BL	<u>58</u>
Medium (2) = 3 × BL	<u>87</u>
Heavy (3) = 6 × BL	<u>174</u>
X-Heavy (4) = 10 × BL	<u>290</u>

ACTIVE DEFENSES		
Dodge	Parry	Block
8	11	10
	(Sword+Buckler)	(Buckler)

REACTION MODIFIERS
Appearance +1
Status
Reputation
+1 from Survivor (other outdoorsmen and survivors)
-4 from Reputation (if recognized)

ADVANTAGES & PERKS	
Absolute Direction	[5]
Appearance (Attractive)	[4]
High Manual Dexterity +1	[5]
Survivor I (Talent)	[5]
Half-Elf	[27]
Extended Lifespan (x2)	[2]
Magery 0	[5]
Elvish (Accented)	[4]
Anglish (Native)	[0]
DISADVANTAGES & QUIRKS	
Curious	[-5]
Impulsiveness	[-10]
Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents)	[-10]
Reputation -4 (Dark Elf Spy, 7 or less, almost everyone)	[-6]
Desperate to find the person who framed her	[-1]
Fond of her family	[-1]
Overly deferential to nobles	[-1]
Prefers walking to riding	[-1]
Terrified of mind control magic	[-1]

SKILLS	
Name	Level
Area Knowledge (local)	11 [1]
Armoury (Missile Weapons)	11 [1]
Bow	14 [4]
Broadsword	14 [4]
Climbing (includes -1 from encumbrance)	11 [1]
Fast-Draw (Arrow)	13 [1]
Fast-Talk	12 [4]
First-Aid (includes +1 from Survivor; heals 1d-3)	12 [1]
Fishing	12 [1]
Gambling	10 [1]
Hiking	11 [1]
Knife	13 [1]
Navigation (includes +3 from Absolute Direction)	13 [1]
Savoir-Faire (Servant)	11 [1]
Shield (Buckler)	13 [1]
Stealth (includes -1 from encumbrance)	13 [4]
Survival (Woodlands) (includes +1 from Survivor)	13 [2]
Swimming (includes -2 from encumbrance)	11 [2]

HAND WEAPONS						
Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Notes	Cost	Weight
Punch	1d-2 cr	C	9	Skill 13	-	-
Thr. broadsword	1d+3 cut	I	10	Skill 14	\$600	3 lbs.
	1d+1 imp					
Large knife	1d-1 imp	C	9	Skill 13	\$40	1 lb.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

For three years you have loyally served Lord Hamnos of Hyrnan. You were his most trusted messenger, running messages every week to the lord's cousins, uncles, mistresses, and any other person he thought to influence.

But one night, the lord was attacked in his bed chambers by dark elves. The "investigation" found a letter in your quarters where it looked like you were secretly helping the dark elves plan their assault. The lord lived, and forgave you... but exiled you. But it was all untrue! Someone set you up, but you have no idea who. Then, as you were figuring out what to do next, you found out that your grandfather was killed on one of his infamous treasure hunts. Grieving, you headed home to find out what happened.

[illegible]

BANESTORM™

HAND WEAPONS						
Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Notes	Cost	Weight
Punch	1d-2 cr	C	8	Skill 11	-	-
Fine runed club*	1d+2 cr	I	9	Skill 12	\$52	3 lbs.
	1d cr					
Dagger	1d-2 imp	C	5	Skill 7	\$20	-

[illegible]

SPEED/RANGE TABLE		
For complete table, see p. 550.		
Speed/ Range Modifier	Linear Measurement (range/speed)	
Close	0-5 yds	0*
Short	6-20 yds	-3
Medium	21-100 yds	-7
Long	101-500 yds	-11
Extreme	501+ yds	-15

* in melee combat, ranged attacks suffer a penalty equal to Bulk of the weapon

Modifier	Location
0	Torso
-2	Arm/Leg
-3	Groin
-4	Hand
-5	Face
-7	Skull

Imp or *Pi* attacks can target vitals at -3 (x3 dmg) or eyes at -9 (x4 dmg)

COINS
\$10

[illegible]

CHARACTER NOTES

*Your fine runed club has the Staff spell enchanted on it.

You've worked a contract for Montbat-
ten Academy for a year, trekking into
the dangerous Blackwoods to supply
the wizardry school with magical herbs
- mandrake, moondusk, blue orcas, etc.
You've made a good living, but you've spent
most of the money you've made on your
cottage and your hobbies.

Recently, you heard your grandfather died in the Vast Vermin Swamp. Seems he and his old friend Aonn Tesk went on another one of their crazy adventures, but this time, Grandpa Addi didn't make it. Your mother has asked you to return back to your village to prepare the funeral...

Totals:	\$ 1067	38 Lbs.
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Grimoire & Handbook of Magical Spells

Spell Name (Class)	Skill	Time	Duration	FP to Cast	FP to Maintain	Notes	Page
Clouds (Area)	I2	10 sec	10 min	1/20	same	Minimum 1 to cast	M194
Create Water (Reg)	I2	1 sec	Perm.	2/gal	-		M184
Frost (Area)	I2	1 sec	Indef.	1	-		M193
Hail (Area)	I2	1 sec	1 min	1/5	same	For 5x cost, hailstones do 1d-2 cr damage	M195
Heal Plant (Area)	I2	1 sec	Perm.	3	-		M161
Ice Dagger (Missile)	I3	1-3 sec	Instant	1-2	-	Does 1d-1 imp per energy.	M188
Ice Sphere (Missile)	I2	1-3 sec	Instant	1-2	-	Does 1d cr per energy.	M186
Identify Plant (Info)	I2	1 sec	Instant	2	-		M161
Lend Energy (Reg)	I2	1	Perm	varies	-		M89
Plant Growth (Area)	I2	10 sec	1 min	3	2		M162
Purify Water (Special)	I2	5-10	Perm	1/gal	-		M184
Rain of Ice Daggers (Area)	I3	1 sec.	1 min	1	2	Minimum 2 to cast. Does 1d-2 imp per second, or 1d imp for 2x cost	M192
Seek Plant	I3	1 sec	Instant	2	-		M161
Seek Water (Info)	I2	1 sec	Instant	2	same		M184
Shape Water (Reg)	I2	2 sec	1 min	1	1		M185
Snow (Area)	I2	1 sec	1 hour	1/15	same	Minimum 1 to cast	M195
Tangle Growth (Area)	I3	2 sec	1 min	1-2	half	Creates rough terrain (1/2 Move, -2 Dodge) or obstacles	M162