



Judges Guild



Return to the Caverns of Thracia

*A GenCon 2002 Tournament Adventure
by Necromancer Games and Judges Guild*

Players' Background

Sweat beads on your brow as you chop away the reeds and foul plants that grow throughout this accursed swamp, looking for a ruined city that you aren't even sure exists. As you trudge through the muck in search of your goal, you can't help but reflect on the strange chain of events that led to your current predicament.

Just a few days ago you and your comrades found yourselves in chains, sitting in a dank cell in the dungeons of the local king of a city on the coast near the southern jungles. You had been captured attempting to loot the king's treasure vaults.

Sure, looting the treasure vaults seemed like a good idea at the time, when Welby the halfling pitched it to you: gold, jewels, magic, low risk, high reward. But Welby's map proved to be less than accurate, at least where certain magical traps and alarms were concerned.

But just as the guards came to whisk you off to certain doom, Welby started into his fast talk routine. And before you knew it you had all been brought before the king so that Welby could make good on his promises to bring the king everlasting and unquestioned rule of all the surrounding lands. Typical Welby. Just as likely to talk you out of a jam as talk you into one.

You had to hand it to the little guy. He was good. Within 30 minutes Welby had convinced the egotistical king that you could provide exactly what the king wanted. You, Welby promised, could find the ring of a fabled king of Thracia—the legendary civilization that rumors tell once thrived in the area that is now this miserable swamp. Welby produced a map, claiming that it showed the location of just such a ring within the caverns and ruins of a long lost Thracian city. Each of you winced as the halfling produced the map, still a bit sensitive about such items given the recent events. With this ring, Welby promised, the king could claim lineage from those ancient rulers and solidify his authority for all time. He could even crown himself the Thracian Emperor! It was a masterful performance. Each of you could see the machinations of the petty ruler and the greed in his eyes as Welby described the majesty of the new empire. Soon, your shackles were removed.

But the king was cunning. He was not about to let you all depart so easily. The king asked why he should not simply kill you all, take the map and send his own men to retrieve the ring. Welby had a ready response: though the map showed the inside of the ruins, the exact location of the ruins within the swamp was known only to him. Besides, Welby reasoned, your party of adventurers had suc-



ceeded in bypassing all but the final wards of the king's own treasure vault. Certainly the king's men—though competent at standing at attention and clearing the streets of malcontents—were not possessed of your skills of delving into ancient tombs.

So a bargain was struck. Two of you were to stay with the king, as insurance for your return. In addition, the king kept most of your magic items; allowing you to take only one such item each—thus providing you a chance at success on your mission yet securing your return. He also ordered your execution by royal writ. But he stayed that order for 10 days. If you were not back with the ring within 10 days, you were to be killed on sight.

That was four days ago.

And just as you were all about to give up on your quest and wring the halfling's neck for his harebrained plan, one of your group lets out an excited shout. There, between the trees and vines, is a clearing. In the muck and reeds of the swamp you can see ancient flagstones and the ruined foundations of ancient buildings. You have found the ruined city at

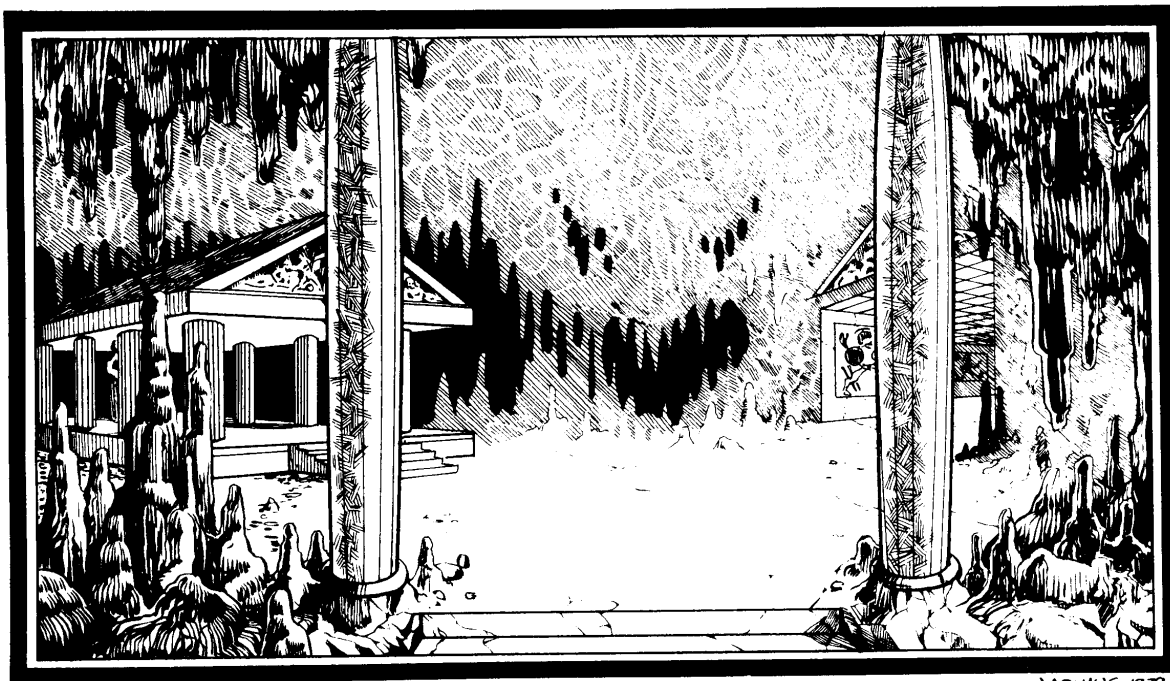
last! After a brief search, a means is found to descend into the labyrinth below.

You check your weapons and utter silent prayers to your respective gods. An ancient and palpable evil hangs over the place. Even the constantly chattering swamp insects seem to have fallen silent. Each of you wonder if you will be able to recover the ring and thus save your captive comrades or if this ancient and silent ruin will become your tomb.

The Caverns of Thracia await you!

Pregenerated Characters

Below is a list of characters. You may choose any character you wish, with the following restrictions: Character selection will be handled by rolling 1d20. Players can select their PC in order of highest to lowest roll of the d20 (sort of like PC selection Initiative). It is suggested—but not required—that someone play Welby the Rogue. If Welby is not selected, then he is one of the PCs held by the king as ransom against your return. In that case, he has given his map and imparted his knowledge of the location of the ruins to the first



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player to choose a PC.

Each character has several magic items listed on his or her character sheet. Unfortunately, as detailed above, you will not be able to bring all of them. In order to secure your return with the ring (yet still give you a chance at survival), the king has kept all your magic items except one (not including potions and scrolls). You must select which single magic item you wish to bring with you on this adventure. A group of items (such as 12 *+1 arrows*) is considered one item. You will be given a normal version of any magical item you do not choose to bring. For example, let's say you have a *+1 large shield*, *+1 chain shirt*, a *+2 mace*, a *+1 ring of protection* and 2 *potions of cure light wounds*. You decide to keep the *+1 armor*, leaving the mace, shield and ring behind. You are then given a non-magical replacement for each of these items. You can keep the potions. The king promises that all your items will be returned to you when you return with his ring.

You will be given 15 minutes to select spells, choose which magic item you are bringing with you, finalize equipment and make any amendments and notes you wish to make. With DM approval you can change the race of your character if you wish. The characters may be of any gender and you can modify the names of your character as you see fit. You are all presumed to be carrying standard equipment such as torches, food, flint and steel, backpacks, small sacks, and other such basic items. Characters are presumed to have the necessary equipment for their class—rogues have thieves' tools, wizards have spell components, bards have harps or lutes, etc. If you wish to use your listed money (though not gems) to buy additional equipment, you may do so though keeping in mind that you only have 15 minutes to prepare your character. Do not forget to also note on your character sheet your race and class abilities (such as rogue's backstab abilities, etc).

Your character sheet is yours. You may share the information contained on it freely or you can keep it to yourself. It is presumed that all the characters are acquainted with each other and have adventured together before. Thus, each character knows the information in the blurbs below about every other character. Similarly, each character knows at least one rumor about the dungeon. You may share that rumor, modify that rumor or not share that rumor as you see fit. The rumors may or may not be true.

Also, when choosing from the list below, you should note that where a character has more than one class, the class listed first is either the highest level or the levels are equal. So if a person is described as a rogue and a wizard, that means they are a higher level rogue than wizard (or possibly the levels are equal). The average level of the characters is 5th level.

Welby: an affable rogue, this halfling has lightning quick hands and a dead eye. Bolts from his hand crossbow are as feared as are his skilled fingers—which would just as readily toss a deadly dagger as pilfer a valuable bauble.

Toblam: This human druid is a master of the wilds. His wonderous scimitar and his unerring sling make him a vital part of any expedition in the outdoors.

Dotar: a cynical half-elf fighter who wields a wondrous greatsword and longbow, Dotar is a fierce warrior. His interests run to the roguish as well, having a few skills more common to that class.

Quariust: a strange elven wizard who wields a two-bladed sword of impressive craftsmanship, Quariust is also known for his uncanny ability to pull a much needed scroll out of his pouch at just the right time.

Alanthus: a stranger to this land, Alanthus the paladin traveled far to heed the call of the goddess, Mitra. He wields his gleaming



longsword in her service.

Gilbon: whether this ferocious dwarf fighter/ranger is wielding his deadly dwarven urgosh or his combination of longsword and shortsword, the blood of his enemies flows freely, normally covering his enchanted chain shirt in gore. He takes a cruel pleasure in finishing his foes.

Rachid: what this half-orc barbarian lacks in brains, he makes up for in sheer size and strength. Oh, and that real big axe doesn't hurt either...No complexities here.

Tabirt: a human cleric of Anubis—the Judge of the Dead. His devotion to his god of law—and the mace he carries that dispenses justice—are an asset to any group.

Thorgest: though a human, this monk is obviously from a far off land. He is quiet, but there is little need for him to speak when he is wielding both of his razor sharp kama at the same time, his strange cloak swirling around him as he deals death to his foes.

Drusin: a half-elf bard, Drusin is a man of great lore and spells. His wickedly sharp rapier is nearly as sharp as his biting wit.

Belflin: an elf ranger, Belflin is a master with his powerful bow, able to fire many arrows in the blink of an eye. He is a quiet yet loyal companion.

Sigvar: a gnome sorcerer of great repute and master of strange languages, Sigvar wraps himself in his fine cloak and uses both his wondrous shortspear and his spells to great effect.

Belfar: this dwarf fighter and wizard has a grim demeanor and wields a wicked heavy flail which he relishes using in combat, commonly using the weapon to crush the shields of his opponents. A strange ring glitters on one of his fingers.

Ielesinu: an elf who is both wizard and warrior, Ielesinu wields a bastard sword and a strange crossbow. He is fleet of foot and pos-

sessed of a strange pearl which he wears on a fine chain.

Brottendd: a dwarf of many callings, Brot-tendd is a cleric of Thor, a rogue and a fighter—and he is well-suited to all his professions. He wears a suit of fine splint mail and carries a warhammer of unusual quality.

Meristral: this enigmatic human is a bard, a ranger and a sorcerer all at once! A master of shadows, Meristral strikes from afar with his wonderous javelins, or with his spells or songs. He seems to take a wicked pleasure in his actions. A shirt of chain links glitters from under his dark cloak and a plain gold ring rests on one hand.

Enjoy! And best of luck!

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