

HOT PURSUIT

A Tunnels & Trolls GM Adventure



By Ken St. Andre



Pozas'08

HOT PURSUIT

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WRITER'S INTRODUCTION

Playing an adventure scenario should be at least as challenging and as much fun for the Game Master as for the players. The following adventure is for humans, elves, dwarves, and maybe even uruks of 5th level or lower. It is meant for play with 7th edition rules, but you could easily adapt it to any other edition of the game. *Be warned, it is a difficult adventure, and the players will have to think and be pretty damned tricky if they want to succeed.* It is up to you as Game Master to convey that challenge.

I have planned and written this adventure to be played in around 3 hours, making it ideally suited to a single evening's play or a tournament event. There are many adventure ideas that can be built upon if you wish to develop this scenario or to incorporate it into a longer-running game or campaign, but of course what you do with the adventure now is up to you and your devious mind. I have given you the bare bones of the adventure; it's yours now to do with it what you will.

As the writer, I can't think up every situation that could come up in a face-to-face game. It just isn't possible or practical, and it wouldn't be in the spirit of T&T if I tried, so I have laid out a general track for the adventure to follow; it's up to you to keep it on that track. If you let the players lead you too far astray, you're on your own. When that happens I have one piece of advice for you — MAKE IT UP! Whatever happens, it shouldn't be too hard to get the players back on track within the scenario. If they really do go off on a wild tangent, I'm sure you'll know what to do.

GETTING STARTED:

A FEW NOTES FOR THE GAME MASTER

Your players are a bunch of delvers on their way from Khosht to some destination in the mountains southeast of the city. Where are they bound? I don't know and it doesn't matter... because they won't get there. If they insist on knowing, tell them they're on their way to find a lost dwarven gold mine or something. Make it up. Unless you are slotting this scenario into a larger campaign or long-running adventure, it simply doesn't really matter where they are headed or why. If you are using this as part of a wider plot or campaign, then it shouldn't be difficult for you to fit this adventure in along the way.

As events proceed, you speak the Common Tongue.) You are under no obligation to suggest they capture one, but it might be

wise to give them a hint to help move things along. However, in my experience they shouldn't need much in the way of encouragement.

I haven't named any scorpion men in this adventure, but you may have to role-play them, so feel free to make something up. It could be Irving the scorpion man. It could be Ik Puk, which has a Mayan sound to it. Calling him Ik Puk will add heroic flavor to the game; calling him Irving will add humor. T&T is big on humor. It's your call. When in doubt, make it up. But more importantly, make it fun.

However, I do recommend that if you find that demanding players are causing you to make up a lot of details on the fly, you should write down what you made up so you can be consistent later. Plot developments and adventure hooks will probably arise as the adventure unravels, so jot these ideas down as they arise or as you

think of them. You might want to use them later or introduce them if play slows-down or goes in a different direction from what you had planned.

I also suggest that you keep play moving quickly. At the end of the adventure, the players should feel like they have had a roller-coaster ride. There are lots of other ideas and details I could have included in this adventure, but the idea is to keep it simple and fast-flowing, ideal for a single game session. If my tactic is a success (and I

am relying on *you* to tell me...!), you may see a sequel in the not too distant future!

Once your PCs have introduced themselves to each other and you have set the scene, it's time to get started! The adventure kicks-off with a bang, and should draw your players into the scenario easily, providing good strong rationale for their involvement.

Progress to Scene One and get the show on the road!

SCENE ONE: MIDNIGHT RAID

Our adventure begins when the players enter the small farming village of Farthest, on the southern bank of the Khosht River. Farthest is so named because it is the farthest east of all the human villages in this area. A small, nameless stream joins the Khosht at the edge of the village, and the whole is surrounded by fields of vegetables and grain. There are a few fruit trees close to the stream.

Read the following shaded text aloud to the players, or paraphrase:

The tiny village doesn't even have a street. There are maybe twenty huts made of mud bricks and timber in a rough circle around a central plaza. The village elder ("chief" is too important a word for him) has cleared out one hut and offered it to you, his honored guests for the evening. Wine and beer have been brought out, and the whole town has gathered to hear your tales from the outside world. You carouse late into the night, and then finally you all go to sleep in your hut.

You are awakened a few hours later by shouts and screams, and then someone or something rips the door off your hut.

All delvers should make L2-SRs on Intelligence and Speed at this point. If a character makes both, he or she may take an action at this point.

Particularly if there are one or more women in the hut, the raiders break in and make every effort to capture her/them. If not, they toss a torch inside and slam the door shut, hoping to start a fire inside.

The raiders are big men dressed in strange brownish-red armor. They carry shovel-like warblades and rope. The armor is decorated with strange twisting designs. There are roughly two hundred raiders with about twenty wizards among them notable for the jewel-headed staves that they carry.

Typical Raider:

STR 15, CON 16, DEX 16, SPD 12, INT 10, LK 14, WIZ 8, CHR 9.

Combat Adds: +9

Weapons: Desert sword (3D6+3), dagger (2D6), weighted rope (1D6).

Armor: Scorpion armor (takes 8 hits from each weapon-wielding foe).

Typical Raider Wizard:

**STR 12, CON 13, DEX 14, SPD 10,
INT 15, LK 12, WIZ 15, CHR 12**

Combat Adds: +2

Weapons: Jeweled staff (2D6+2),
dagger (2D6).

Spells: TTYF, Sleep, HTP. Others at
GM's discretion.

Everyone who gets out of the hut is engaged by one or more raiders. There are so many of them that, even if one is knocked down, another immediately takes his place. They rescue their wounded, and they seem to be trying not to kill the farmers in the village. Any who resist and are knocked down (and stay down) are thereafter ignored. Anyone who is not fighting or trying to escape is quickly bound and dragged away; the raiders have ropes with slipknots in them, ready to tighten them down on hands or feet. If a player runs into any of the raider wizards, they try to either slay with TTYF or put their foe to sleep.

The only effective resistance in the village is the player characters. The farmers cannot fight very well at all. The raiders seem to be searching for women, primarily, although they are interested in able slaves of all kinds; some also carry off pigs, calves, and goats.

When 10 or more villagers have been captured, the raiders withdraw into the night, mount their giant scorpions (each the size of a small barge and capable of carrying 20 men), and scuttle off into the darkness of the night. When it is all over, the village is a chaos of injured and dying, panicked animals, crying women and children, and burning huts.

The elder, Heep Pokkt, soon comes to the delvers and asks for help. He explains that the raiders are known to his people as the "scorpion men"; once every few years, they attack without warning and carry off as many as they can, and no one ever sees those people again. They make a point of not wiping out the village, although they easily could. The delvers' resistance is the first time anyone has ever stood up to the raiders, and now Elder Pokkt wants to ask a great favor...

He begs the characters to follow the raiders and bring back the captured villagers. The people of Farthest don't have much to offer as a reward, but that doesn't keep them from all begging for help.

If this scene wasn't sufficient to get the characters' blood boiling and to fire them into action, then they must be a sorry bunch of heroes indeed! If they refuse, maybe they can be shamed into action? Or simply have one of the village's little toddlers waddle up to them, tug on a trouser leg, and ask, "Please, will you bring my mommy back, mister?" with eyes red from tears, clutching a worn toy in grubby hands. If they still refuse, to hell with them.

If the delvers decide to follow the raiders, move on to Scene Two. If not, the adventure is over.

SCENE TWO: DESERT PURSUIT

The raiders are gone, leaving only some torn-up earth and many strange tracks, larger than hoof prints or bear tracks, leading off in a southerly direction.

The delvers still have the mounts they brought with them, one horse for each member of the party, plus one pack mule for every 3 members. But they will need a plan for the pursuit. Do they race as quickly as they can and hope to overtake the raiders, or do they follow more cautiously and just hope to track the raiders to their lair? What will they take for provisions in the desert? A good plan here could make all the difference later on.

More importantly, did they think to take a captive during the fight? If so, perhaps they can “persuade” him to lead the way to his desert camp or stronghold. If not, they will have to find some way to track the raiders.

Finally, players might come up with the idea of sending someone back to Khosht, which is only about 50 miles away, to get help from the city guard. Let them do so — this

choice may have an impact on their success later in the adventure. (See Scene 5.)

Leaving the village, the tracks of the raiders are fairly clear, but as they go further south, the land grows harder and rockier, and the giant scorpion tracks get harder and harder to find. This would be a good time for players to use any Talents of their characters that would help with following the trail.



Note to the GM

Make the pursuit into the desert like a challenge, but don't let the players lose the trail completely. If they go off track, have someone spot a gathering of vultures off in another direction: They are hovering over the body of a dead or dying villager who was left to rot — perhaps too weak to be worth keeping, or maybe one of the slaves tried to escape and was killed and left behind.

By noon, the hot desert sun is relentless: Require L2-SRs on CON for those not wearing armor, and L3-SRs for those wearing armor. Missing this roll indicates heatstroke, with attendant nausea and weakness — treat this as lost CON points equal to double the amount by which a character missed the SR. Taking off one's armor alleviates the symptoms (i.e., it reduces the difficulty of the saving rolls).

A *Poor Baby* spell is an effective cure for heatstroke.

If a player specifically asks to find a place out of the sun to lie up during the heat of the day, have the characters make a L3-SR on Luck to find a desert spring where they might rest during the heat of the day (and thus avoid the rolls against heatstroke). If they find an oasis, they don't reach the badlands until early evening.

Otherwise, by mid-afternoon, the party enters a badlands of twisted stone spires, blind box canyons, and rough lava flows — hot red and black stone in all directions.

The ground in these badlands is very treacherous, consisting of millions of hand-sized chunks of lava and broken stone, many with sharp edges. To fall down in this stuff is to get all cut up. Delvers should be

dismounted, leading their horses, perhaps clearing a path for them.

And then the group runs into an ambush — one giant scorpion and 20 men left behind to be certain that no one follows them.

Suddenly, a huge, reddish-brown scorpion attacks, accompanied by a barrage of rocks thrown down from above (from the raiders on the scorpion's back). The scorpion is about 10 feet wide and 60 feet long, and is being controlled by one of the wizards. Its pincers are big enough to cut a horse in half. (Demonstrate this for a delver who is near the front.)

Giant Scorpion (1):

Monster Rating 200

Combat Dice+Adds: 21D6+100

Armor (carapace): Absorbs 8 hits per turn

WIZ: 20 (Spells cast against it by anyone with a lower WIZ rating fizzle.)

Poison sting: Everyone must make a L2-SR on Speed each combat turn. Only one player can be hit per turn, so if more than one character misses, the sting strikes the one that missed by the most: That character takes 3D6 poison damage. (A *Too Bad Toxin* spell nullifies this damage.) If the sting doesn't kill the victim, he is still in excruciating pain — reduce combat adds by half for 1d6+4 hours.

Raiders (20):

STR 15, CON 16, DEX 16, SPD 12, INT 10, LK 14, WIZ 8, CHR 9.

Weapons: Desert sword (3D6+3), dagger (2D6), weighted rope (1D6).

Combat Adds: +9

Armor: Scorpion armor (takes 8 hits from each weapon-wielding foe).

Thrown Rocks: Divide 20 by the number of delvers present to determine how many L1-SRs on Luck each party member must make to avoid being hit by rocks each turn. Each missed saving roll results in damage equal to 3 + the amount by which that character failed the roll. (Armor absorbs hits from rocks normally, but remember that some will have removed their armor to avoid heatstroke earlier.)

Raider Wizard (1):

STR 12, CON 13, DEX 14, SPD 10, INT 15, LK 12, WIZ 15, CHR 12

Combat Adds: +2

Weapons: Jeweled staff (2D6+2), dagger (2D6).

Spells: TTYF, Sleep, HTP. Others at GM's discretion.

If the wizard rider is somehow slain (most likely with ranged attacks), the scorpion retreats the next time it takes damage, pulling the raiders on its back along with it. If it looks like the party is dying, the raiders jump down and attempt to capture them; if the party looks particularly strong, the raiders instead try to run off into the badlands. (It would be really good if someone could capture that wizard.)

If the scorpion loses CON points during any two turns in a row, it attempts to run away. If it is slain, its wizard rider can be captured, although he will try to fight his way free.

Two possibilities arise from the ambush:

1. The scorpion is defeated. If it runs off, it may lead the delvers back to its hive, which also hosts the scorpion men's village. If captured, the wizard rider may be persuaded to lead the delvers to the hive. Go to Scene Three.

2. The party is defeated. Anyone not slain outright (at less than -10 hits) is captured and taken to the raiders' hive. Go to Scene Four.

SCENE THREE: ENTERING THE SCORPION HIVE

Near the southern end of the badlands is the scorpion hive, which houses the scorpion men's village. It is entered via a huge tunnel, 40 feet wide by 30 feet tall, slanting down into the earth beneath a huge pile of tumbled boulders. (The entrance is labeled **E** on the Game Master's map.) There are guards in front, and periodically a giant scorpion goes in or comes out, usually ridden by 10 to 20 men, always guided by a wizard.

The only obvious way into the hive is through this tunnel, but how to do so when it is guarded by 4 men at all times, and in heavy use by the dwellers in the hive, could be tricky.

Alternately, the delvers could search for other entrances, each marked as **Y** on the GM's map. A successful L3-SR on Luck or an appropriate Talent locates one of the several "side doors" to the hive. These are small, camouflaged tunnels from various locations around the rock pile above the hive. Roll 1D6x100 — that's how many feet below the surface at which the small tunnel rejoins the large one.

These side tunnels are barely big enough for one or two men to walk in at the same time, and they all lead down to the main tunnel (which is labeled **1** on the GM's map). Have the delver with the lowest Luck rating try for a L1-SR on Luck to see if they meet a guard in the tunnel.

If the tunnels on the map do not correspond to where you would like them to enter the hive, feel free to add more tunnels to suit your requirements. The map is a guide and the details are not set in stone; change it as you see fit now that this is your adventure.

The cavern and the tunnels are lighted by magical signs that look like twisted, glowing runes carved into the walls. These runes glow with red light, as if there were fire behind them, although there is only rock. There are many of these signs, so during daytime hours the whole cavern has a fiery, hellish glow to it.

When the sun goes down outside, though, the runes dim until only a weak, pale blue light comes out of them. At such times, the number of people walking about the cavern also diminishes greatly — a mere L1-SR on Luck would suffice to walk around without being detected.

Roughly 500 feet down, there is a gigantic scorpion holding pen, as seen on the map. All the giant scorpions are kept here. This vast cavern features a few small pools of natural water. Additional details are left up to the individual GM. There should be about 50 giant scorpions in this cavern at any given time. Scorpion men are continually bringing them food, usually in the form of huge insects, mostly ants and beetles, or oversize rodents.

Beyond the holding pen are a number of smaller tunnels leading away, but one is clearly the main tunnel; it is twice as large as any other and painted with strange red signs. The GM may detail the smaller tunnels as appropriate.

Going into the side tunnels may lead to encounters with scorpion men or into storerooms for various items. The side tunnels labeled X on the GM map lead to deeper areas and storage caverns. The GM is encouraged to elaborate upon these if the

need arises. (Again, if you feel the need to extend or further detail the side tunnels, make it up, but remember to keep notes of everything you add to the map or to the adventure to maintain consistency throughout the game, especially if you plan for the players to return at a later date or if you wish to re-use the adventure or the hive.)

The Scorpion Village

Going another hundred feet down the main tunnel, one arrives at the main village/fortress of the scorpion men. This permanent encampment is located in a huge excavated cavern around a small underground lake. (This massive cavern could lead to subterranean tunnels if you wish to extend the adventure.)

There are perhaps 500 men and women living here, living in caves in the sides of the cavern and in small huts or makeshift rock dwellings. There is a central market place with a slave ring in the direct center, which has been detailed on a separate map that you may use if you feel it becomes necessary (see Map B).

Around the ring are many posts, and chained to the posts are the ten villagers who were taken at the beginning of the adventure. They are the only slaves not currently owned by anyone.

There are three stone guardposts in this area, but the only one that is usually occupied is the one nearest to the slave ring: There are normally 1D3 gate guards (see stats below) there at all times. The other two guardposts are occupied by one gate guard each only if the GM rolls a 1 or a 6 on 1D6 when the players first enter the area; otherwise they are empty.

A man and a woman are tending the slaves, feeding them and telling them about their

new lives and duties as slaves in the hive. One thing you notice is that every person in the place, including the new slaves, wears at least some small piece of scorpion armor about his or her body. This armor gives off a "hive odor," marking people so that they will not be attacked by any scorpions they meet.

Dozens of people are walking around the cavern at all times, fetching water from the pool, going off into side tunnels or coming out, talking to each other, working or relaxing in small huts, and hurrying from destination to destination. Along with them are dozens of relatively small (young) giant scorpions, each no bigger than a wolf. Some are even on leashes and seem to function as pets.

Off to the north of the slave ring, there are 7 circular red pads in a line upon the floor (as shown on the map). Above each pad is a coruscating beam of energy that dances between the floor pad and a mirror in the ceiling far above. As the delvers watch, men sometimes step into or out of the beams. They generally look like wizards, often carrying caskets of rare valuables; when they depart, they usually carry large red jewels. Each one is met by one of the scorpion wizards and escorted into one of the caves at the side of the cavern. There is a guard hut nearby, but this is rarely used.

Wizards in the party may make a L3-SR on INT. Success indicates the character remembers that his or her old master in the wizard's guild used to hint that there was a better way to get around the world than by riding beasts or sailing ships. When they tried to ask, they were always told that they would learn about it when they were worthy.

Note: If anyone could simply jump into a beam, he would be teleported away from the hive to a wizard's guild office somewhere else in the world. These seven teleport

gateways lead to Khazan, Frostgate, Gull, Khosht, Gristlegrim Dungeon, Ss'lla (a Naga city), and Barakarathar, respectively. Of course, the pads are well guarded. One huge scorpion man (a gate guard, see below) stands beside each one, and they don't allow anyone but wizards carrying rubies to approach.

Gate Guard:

STR 24, **CON** 30, **DEX** 20, **SPD** 10,
INT 15, **LK** 25, **WIZ** 16, **CHR** 17.

Combat Adds: +33

Weapons: *Double sword* (4D6 plus special – see below), dagger (2D6).

Armor: Scorpion armor (takes 8 hits from each weapon-wielding foe).

Double Sword (enchanted weapon): Base damage 4D6. Whenever it rolls a 6 in combat, another blade appears and it gets another die that lasts until the end of that combat encounter; when it isn't in combat for a turn, it reverts to its normal size, appearance, and stats. To wield it requires STR 20, DEX 18, and WIZ 15.

Typical Young Giant Scorpion:

Monster Rating 40

Combat Dice+Adds: 5D6+20

Armor (carapace): Absorbs 6 hits per turn

WIZ: 4 (Spells cast against it by anyone with a lower WIZ rating fizzle.)

Poison sting: All adjacent foes roll L2-SR on Speed each turn. The sting strikes the one that missed by the most: That character takes 1D6 poison damage.

Strategies: The delvers would find it useful to be able to walk around the caverns without being attacked by the many guards. If they could get scorpion armor and suit up, they wouldn't have much trouble. Of course, they'd have to carry the raiders' desert swords instead of their own weapons, as well, but they might be able to hide or disguise their own possessions as loot.

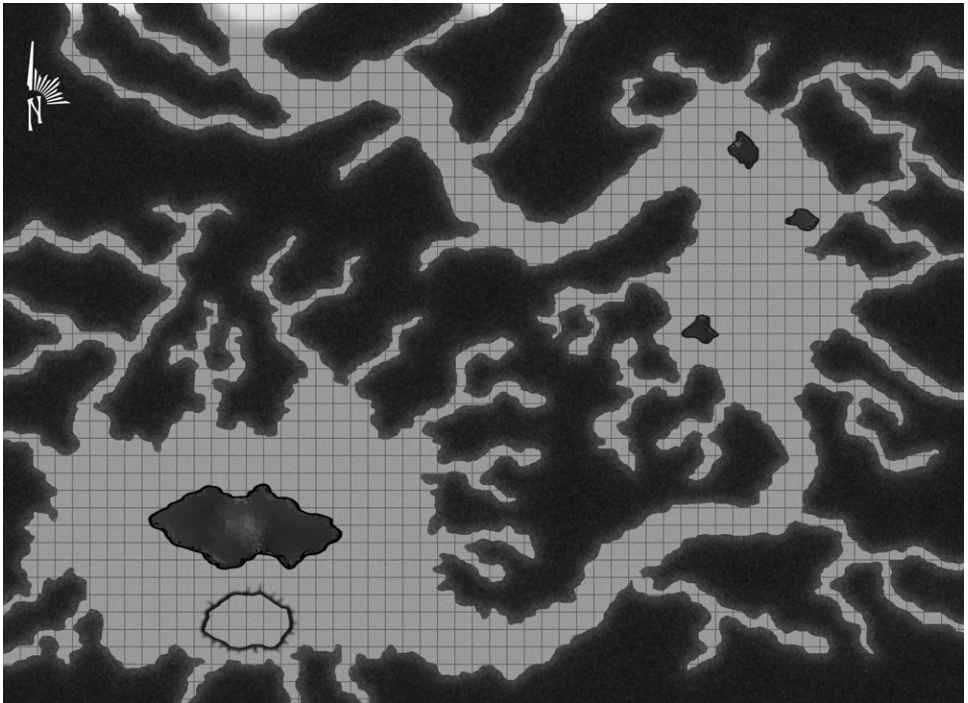
If they enter the caverns without wearing at least some piece of scorpion armor, they will smell wrong be attacked — first by some of the wolf-sized young scorpions, and then by regular scorpion men. If they are discovered and attacked, keep piling on scorpions and guards until they either do something brilliant to escape, or are slain or captured.

Scorpion men always try to capture their enemies.

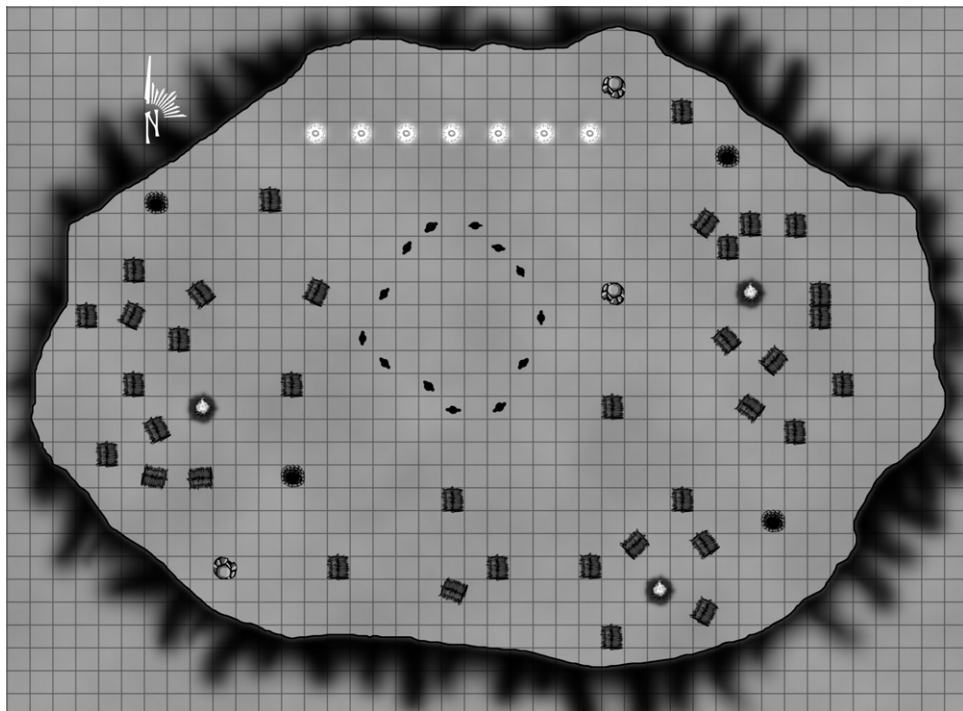
As long as the players are undetected, there are various strategies they could employ to free the slaves and escape. They might simply flee back through the tunnels to where they left their horses, perhaps fighting all the way out; or they might go to the scorpion pen, steal a giant scorpion, and ride it out; or they could enter one of the teleport beams.

However, it is likely that at some point the players will slip up, be discovered, and be overwhelmed by scorpion men and then captured. If this happens, go to Scene 4.

MAP A: THE SCORPION VILLAGE



MAP B: MARKET & SLAVE AREA



SCENE FOUR: CAPTIVITY

If a player is captured, he spends some time unconscious and then wakes to find himself chained to a slave post near the slave ring in the raiders' village. His weapons and purse have been removed, but anything well-hidden in boots or clothing may still remain.

The captive finds that he has been fitted with a headband of scorpion chitin, along with wrist- and ankle-bands of the same substance. The handlers quickly explain that these items are enchanted to protect their wearers from the scorpions that roam the caverns. The manacle is a simple lock, and the key for it is quite huge; the keys are numbered and kept on a big iron ring on the other side of the slave auction ring. With any kind of a lockpick, a simple L2-SR on DEX or any applicable Talent (Thievery, Roguery,

Locksmith) opens the manacle. A hard knock against the slave post along with a L3-SR on Luck would also spring it open, as would a Level 3 *Knock*, *Knock* spell.

Being chained by the slave ring close to the teleport pads would give the captive the opportunity to observe arriving and departing wizards. (Describe a wizard from Khazan arriving bearing a jade casket — then departing perhaps 20 minutes later with a ruby the size of his fist.)

Their only chance to escape is the first night of captivity. On the next day, they are to be auctioned off to inhabitants of the hive.

Awaking in chains, the captives see a man and a woman walking among them with bowls of food and a pitcher of wine. They notice a small stone bowl and cup attached



to their post, and note that the earlier captives seem rather dazed and sleepy: It requires only a L1-SR on INT for someone to realize that they are probably drugged or enchanted.

At some point, they notice a group of unarmed men enter a large cave mouth not

too far away, to emerge again a few minutes later in scorpion armor and armed with desert swords. (If necessary, have players make a L1-SR on INT to realize that the cave must be an armory.) The armory is usually unguarded, although there is a custodian inside to keep things neat. The delvers' weapons are stored inside the armory.

At night, even the gate guards relax, and often sleep at their posts; they rely on the scorpions to deal with any trouble. However, these men have perfected the art of leaning on their swords and sleeping with their eyes open. Fortunately, they haven't perfected the art of not snoring, so that gives away the fact that they're sleeping.

As a captive, the player's only viable option is to escape. Rescuing and dragging along some of the captured villagers would be a plus. If the captives manage to escape their chains during the night, they really have only three options: (1) go through a side tunnel to the surface, and then try to escape overland; (2) go up the main tunnel, take a giant scorpion, and make a break for it on that mighty steed; or (3) go into a teleport beam.

If any of these escape attempts seems to be succeeding, see Scene 5.

SCENE FIVE: BETTER RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

Escape Plan 1: Overland Flight

The delvers return through a side tunnel, find the mounts they left behind when they went down, and gallop off through the desert, retracing their path through the desert. They are pursued by two giant

scorpions and 40 men (36 raiders and 4 wizards).

To return to the village of Farthest ahead of pursuit, each delver must make six successful SRs on Luck: L1-SRs if the mount has only a single rider, L2-SRs if it is carrying two. Each saving roll represents about 2 hours of riding. If the saving roll is failed, the horse weakens and falls back, and the

pursuers catch up with it. Of course, the party might elect to stop and fight if this happens.

On a SR result of 3, the horse breaks its leg and crashes to the dry, hard-packed earth. The player takes double the difference (between what was needed and what was rolled) in CON damage. The horse is in agony, and the merciful thing to do would be to kill it.

If all saving rolls are made, the scorpion men still catch up with the players, but not until they reach the very outskirts of Farthest. A battle ensues, and if the players lose, they are (re-)captured, if not slain, and returned to the hive.

If the players win this final battle, they have completed their escape. Anyone who completes the escape and returns is awarded 5,000 adventure points, plus another 2,000 for each villager they managed to rescue.

Note: Remember back in Scene 2, when the players were urged to make a plan? If that plan included the idea of sending anyone back to Khosht to get help from the city guard, then the player who came up with the idea can attempt a L3-SR on Luck to see if a troop of the guard, along with a seasoned combat wizard, appears fortuitously at this point and comes to the rescue.

Should this happen, the scorpion men quickly break off the battle and flee: They do not want a war with Khosht.

Escape Plan 2: Steal a Scorpion

For this plan to work, the escapees must first have a captive scorpion wizard to control the beast, and they must overpower 4 guards at the scorpion pen (use typical stats from page 7). The captive wizard is a coward, frequently saying things like, "Please, please... I'm cooperating. Don't hurt me." Only he knows the mental commands that keep the giant scorpion docile; a player wizard cannot manage this task without at least several months of training. The captive wizard shows no sign of resistance as long as there is a weapon pointed at him, but may be secretly working against the party.



During the ride across the desert, all players must make six L1-SRs on DEX — riding on a giant scorpion isn't as easy as it looks. (Scorpions both scuttle and leap, and often unexpectedly.) Any rescued slave women spend most of the time holding onto one of their rescuers; rescued male slaves are thus more likely to fall off than the women. If a player falls, any slaves holding onto him also fall. Anyone falling takes damage equal to double the amount by which the SR was missed; on a fumble roll of 3, take 10 points of damage instead.

The wizard controlling the scorpion is an experienced rider and never falls unless he is deliberately thrown or knocked off. He also has the best seat, right behind the scorpion's head.

Two scorpions are in pursuit, along with 40 men (18 warriors and 2 wizards per scorpion). Because the wizard driving the players' scorpion has been imperceptibly slowing their mount down for the last half of the journey, the pursuers catch up with the escapees at the edge of the Farthest fields.

There should be a final battle as described in Plan 1 above (including the possibility of a timely rescue by Khoshti forces).

Escape Plan 3: Take the Teleport

Jumping into a teleport beam is not as easy as it looks. Somehow, one must first get past the gate guard(s).

These elite guards are very proud; each one thinks himself the equal of two ordinary men, so if only one or two delvers attack him, the other guards simply watch and call encouragement. If more than two attack, the nearest gate guard runs to join the fight. If anyone tries to hang back and use magic, a guard attacks him one-on-one (there's no honor in such an attack, so the guards feel

no compunction); additionally, one of the guards takes out a whistle and blows a screeching blast. This soon brings forth a Level 10 scorpion man wizard, who will surely make short work of the delvers if he arrives before they have fled.

Gate Guard:

**STR 24, CON 30, DEX 20, SPD 10,
INT 15, LK 25, WIZ 16, CHR 17.**

Combat Adds: +33

Weapons: *Double sword* (4D6 plus special – see below), dagger (2D6).

Armor: Scorpion armor (takes 8 hits from each weapon-wielding foe).

Double Sword (enchanted weapon): Base damage 4D6. Whenever it rolls a 6 in combat, another blade appears and it gets another die that lasts until the end of that combat encounter; when it isn't in combat for a turn, it reverts to its normal size, appearance, and stats. To wield it requires STR 20, DEX 18, and WIZ 15.

Should the players manage to get into one of the teleport beams, they find sanctuary in five of the seven destinations (see page 10 for the list of cities). However, arriving in Ss'lla or Barakarathar should be disastrous: All humans in the Ss'lla, as in any of the cities of the Naga, are slaves and servants (the player will have exchanged one form of slavery for another); and Barakarathar is a demon city on a world that might as well be Hell itself. The fate of any human arriving there unannounced is too horrible to be described, best left to the twisted imaginations of the reader. Imagine the worst thing that could possibly happen. Multiply that by ten. It's worse than that.

APPENDIX: TREASURES OF THE SCORPION MEN

There is not a lot of treasure to be won in this scenario, but there are a few choice items that delvers might enjoy.

Scorpion hive blood ruby: These luscious red stones are the primary wealth of the scorpion men, who use them for most of their trading. For example, slaves are purchased with rubies, and people carry pouches of ruby dust to pay for small purchases. Each has, on average, a value of 2D6x100 gp (doubles add and roll over).

Of more importance, perhaps, is the ability of these stones to accept and hold magic energies. The rubies make excellent receptacles for enchantments: Any spell placed on a scorpion ruby has double the normal duration.

If the delvers search any fallen scorpion man, there is a chance that he will have either ruby dust or small rubies on his person. Let the searcher make a SR on Luck and see what level he attained: If he made L3, for example, there would be 3 rubies, or the equivalent amount of ruby dust, in the pouch.

Scorpion man "desert sword": These fine weapons all have a scorpion hive blood ruby in the hilt, the stone alone worth 400 gp minimum. The rubies pass along their magical abilities to the weapons: Any spell placed on such a blade has double the normal duration.

Desert swords deal 3D6+3 damage normally, before combat adds. The blades are of blackened steel, and the hilt is wrapped with lizard skin.

Scorpion man armor: This odd-looking plate armor is made from the cast off chitin of giant scorpions. The various pieces are held on with straps and usually require a second person's help to fully equip. The armor has the unique property of warding off 8 points of damage from every individual weapon that strikes it.

Thus, a person in scorpion armor fighting against two foes would ward off the first 16 points of damage; of course, if one foe did 10 points and the other did only 6, the armor would take 2 points of damage from the first foe and 0 from the second.

Scorpion man wizard's staff: This weapon is about 4 to 5 feet long and made from ironwood. The wood itself is as hard as steel, but the weapon is a bit short

for use as a quarterstaff, and is used more like a cudgel. Each staff has a large ruby attached to the head of the staff, each worth at least 2000 gp. The ruby is the true magical focus of the staff, and can be used as a power battery to effectively double the wizard's WIZ rating (but only for the purpose of storing *kremm*).

When using the staff as a weapon, the wizard holds it by the ruby end and strikes with the base of the staff, which is shod in iron. It is a 2D6 weapon, but counts as being an enchanted weapon where such things are needed.

Gate guardian's double sword: Each *double sword* is a fabulous weapon, and is likely to be sought after by the scorpion men if it is lost to a foe. Every such blade has a very long hilt (to allow for the second blade to appear — see below) and has a stunning ruby embedded at both quillion and pommel (each stone worth at least 1500 gp).

The *double sword* deals base 4D6 damage. Whenever its wielder rolls a 6 in combat, however, it gains another die; as soon as it gains at least one die of damage, a second blade appears, extending downward from the sword's hilt. There is no limit to the number of additional dice the sword may gain in this way, though it never gains more than two blades. When a *double sword* isn't in combat for a turn, it reverts to its normal size, appearance, and stats.

To wield a *double sword*, one must have at least STR 20, DEX 18, and WIZ 15. When it isn't in combat for a turn, it reverts to its normal size, appearance and stats. The *Double Sword* is a fabulous weapon and if someone can take one from a Gate Guardian, he will have a weapon that gets stronger as any battle progresses. In addition, there is a very nice ruby worth 500 g.p. embedded at the base of each of the two blades.

Rubies from the Scorpion Hive—rubies are the primary wealth of the Scorpion Men and they use them for most of their trading. For example, slaves are purchased with rubies, and people carry pouches of ruby dust to pay for small purchases. If there is time to search any defeated Scorpion Man, there is a chance that the person will have either ruby dust or small gem rubies in their personal pouch. Let the searcher make a saving roll on Luck and see what level he attained. If he made L3, for example, there would be 3 rubies in the pouch, and each would have a value of 2D6 times 100 in g.p. Doubles add and roll over for this.