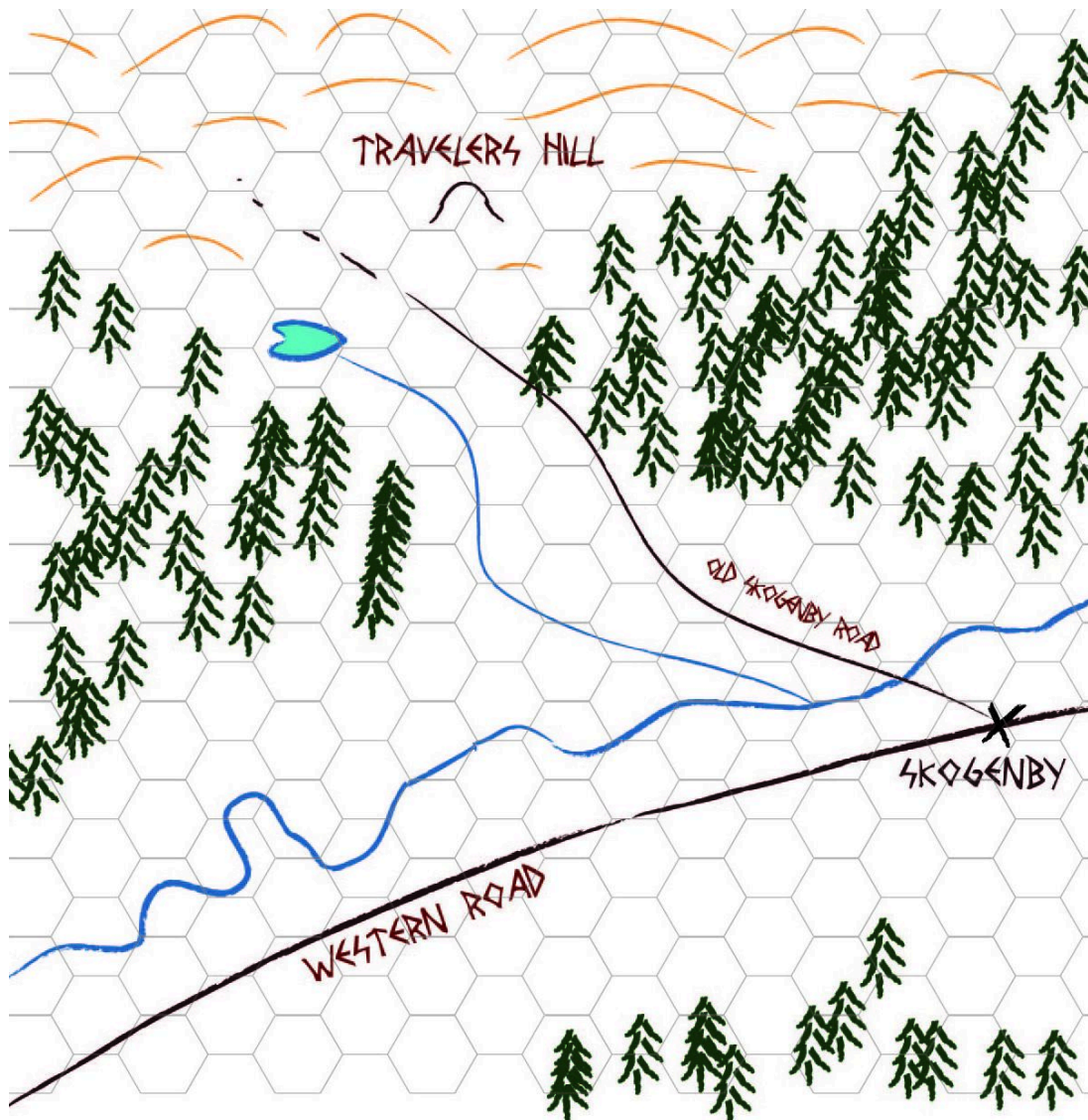
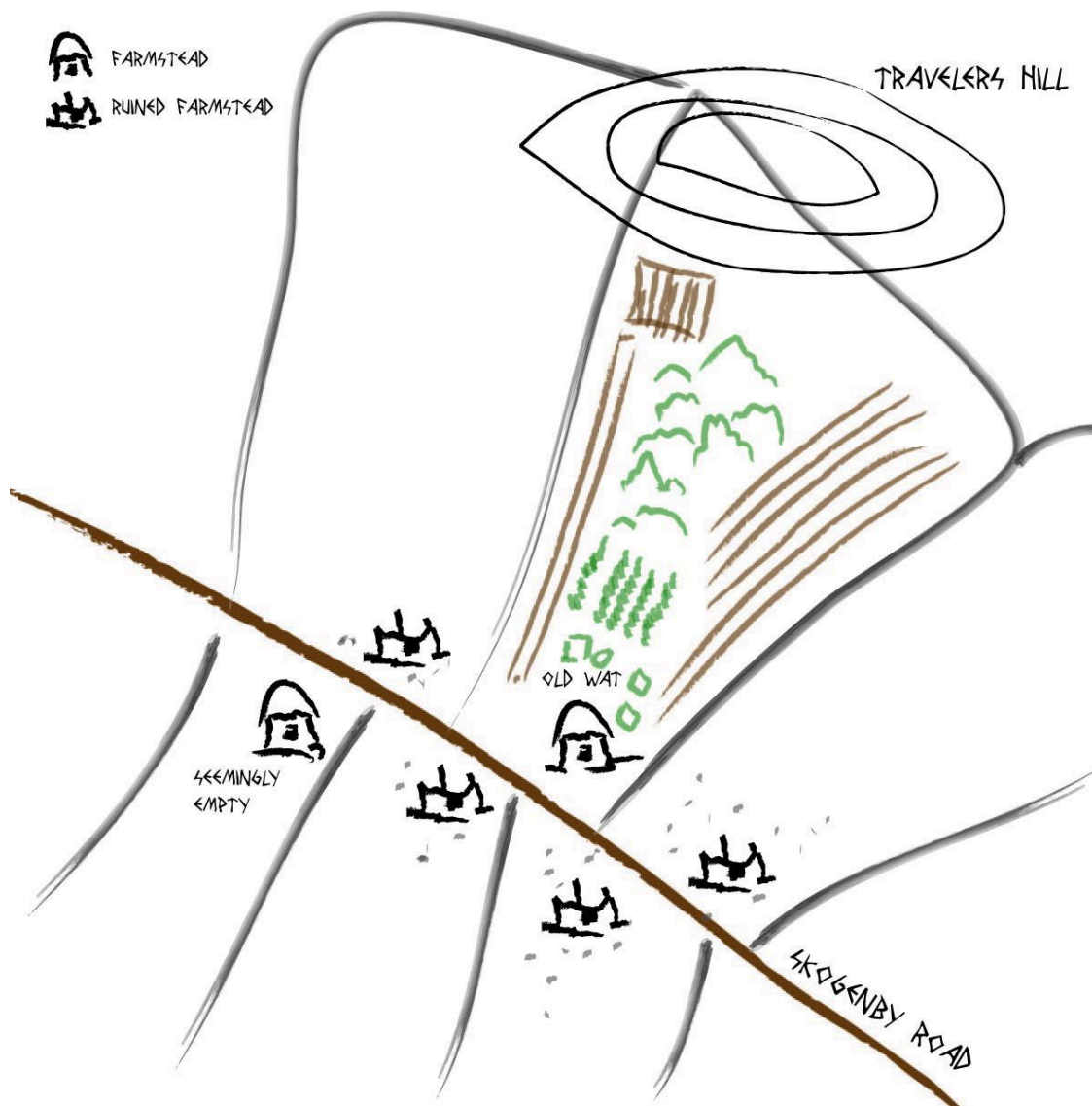


A peasant farmer digs an old piece of bronze out of the ground and takes it to the smith, who recognizes it as a ship-fitting, mounted with silver. Buried treasure! The smith talked to his friends, who blabbed to their friends, who excitedly told *your* friends, because hey, your friends are friends with adventurers! Don't they like buried treasure and that kind of thing? So here you are, the first ones to Old Wat's farm and the first ones to clap eyes on Traveler's Hill.

At the back of Wat's 40 acres rises a strange little hill - strange, because the terrain since Skogenby has been rolling and open: hilly, but gentle swells, not this weird outcrop. The hilltop is tufted with coppices, where the hamlet's residents came to cut wood for tool handles, baskets, and charcoal. The south face of the hill is torn with some half-assed terracing and the ugly gouges of ripped-out stumps. The hill is perhaps 350 feet in length and most of a hundred feet high, roughly elliptical with the long axis running more or less east-west.





## Dramatis Personae

**Old Wat:** Mean, shiftless, lazy, and possibly deranged, this is the only farm left in this nameless, squalid little hamlet. The whole mess started when Old Wat decided he was going to plant grapevines on the south side of Traveler's Hill - and he was the one who grubbed up the ship-fitting and toted it to Skogenby to trade for liquor. His livestock includes a couple rickety oxen, a flock of listless chickens, and a savage pack of brindled mutts. Among his goods are a battered crossbow and an iron-shod shillelagh. Old Wat will let adventurers camp on his ground, if they choose to withdraw from Traveler's Hill to camp (I would!) but really this is only to make them easy targets. He forbids them the use of the barn for camping, and tries to make them pay for well-water. Camping here (as is camping most anywhere, short of walking overnight all the way back to Skogenby) should be considered Unsafe Wilderness. Consider involving Old Wat in any twists or conditions imposed while camping at his farm - fail a Cooking

test? His dogs have stolen or befouled the provisions. Someone's Angry because the dogs bark all night. Gear is missing because Old Wat stole an easy-to-grab piece or two.

## Places

**Old Wat's Farm:** A run-down, seedy remnant of a once-thriving agricultural hamlet. The wattle fences are rotten and crazy-skewed, the thatch on the cottage and barn is rotten, and the hedgerows are all overgrown with brambles. To anyone with even Peasant 1 this place is so poorly managed as to cause offense.

**Other Farms:** Old Wat's looted the other farms, almost as soon as the occupants left. A couple of them have been burned down to get at the nails. One of the ones still standing Wat thinks of as his "honeypot," luring in the foolish and permitting the crazy old bastard to indulge in a bit of brigandry. There's a deadfall rigged over a poorly-concealed pit by the hearth: it's an Ob 3 Scout test to find the pit without triggering the trap. Buried under loose stones is a leather pouch of worn and clipped coppers worth 1D to a not-very-choosy merchant, tucked inside a battered (broken, that is, and nonfunctional) human-sized helm. Suggested twists: the deadfall breaks something in a pack, a piece of armor is ruined, the noise attracts Wat's half-feral dogpack. Suggested conditions: Angry at the scam, Injured by the deadfall.

**Traveler's Hill:** Surprise! It's a burial mound raised over a massive ship. Inside the funeral ship it's dank, pitch black, and it stinks of rot, earth, moldering bones, and decaying flesh - underlain with something sharp and musky. The ceiling is uncomfortably low for human-sized individuals, averaging five and a half feet in height with plenty of structural cross-beams hanging down. It's a factor for anyone who's regular human height. Halflings will likely find it comfortable, apart from the noisome stench. As suits a funeral ship, it was grandly decorated when it was rolled up here from the sea - an Ob 3 Scout test or Ob 4 Scavenger test will yield 2D in loot from pried-off ship fittings and decorative bits. The lot will be pack/3 or carried/2.

**Skogenby:** It's the nearest thing to a town - it has a dirty and ill-kept inn, a barber-surgeon, a small temple to the Immortals, and a smith - and it's a half-day's walk down the remnants of the Skogenby road to reach it. Ob 3 Pathfinder test, but +1D if they follow the faint impression of the road.

## Monsters

**Ankheg:** Might 4, Nature 5. Burrowing, Sensing Vibrations, Devouring

A huge, segmented, chitinous nightmare partaking of the appearances of earwig, mantis, and ant, the ankheg is a burrower, scavenger, and opportunistic ambush predator. Those caught in the grasp of its mandibles must struggle to escape, lest they end up stuffed into a fetid hole in the ground to rot up nicely before being devoured.

<b>Kill</b>	11	Kill Weapons: Mandibles, +1D Attack Multilegged, +1D Maneuver	
<b>Drive Off</b>	3	Drive Off Weapons: Burrowing, +1s Defend Antenna-sense, +1D Maneuver	
<b>Flee</b>	7	Flee Weapons: Big but Skittery: +1D Attack Bug-Reek: +1D Feint	

<b>Instinct:</b>	Drag it back to the lair to eat later.
<b>Specials:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The ankheg is covered in chitinous plates, equivalent to leather armor.</li> <li>2. On a successful bite Attack, the ankheg gains an Impede effect as its target is trapped by the mandibles.</li> <li>3. Once per adventure phase, the ankheg may spit a vile jet of digestive acid, making its Attack ranged (versus test against any weapon other than bow, sling, or crossbow). -1 to Armor roll, should players use one.</li> <li>4. The ankheg is vicious but unintelligent and will accept no conflict types other than those listed.</li> </ol>

**Tomb Guardian (4):** Might 2, Nature 3 (Guarding, Watching, Pursuing)  
Kill 5, Drive Off 8, Flee 4 (page 157)

**Risen Corpse of King Gylf the Traveler:** Might 3, Nature/Undead 4 (Avenging, Pursuing, Cursing) King Gylf must have offended *something* powerful - his cursed corpse, howling with agony, rises to defend its final resting place when any approach.  
Kill 7, Drive Off 9, Flee 4

Kill Weapons:

Attack +1D, royal sword

Defend +1D, mouldering armor

Drive Off Weapons:

Attack +1D, relentless assault

Maneuver +1s, endless stream of frightful curses

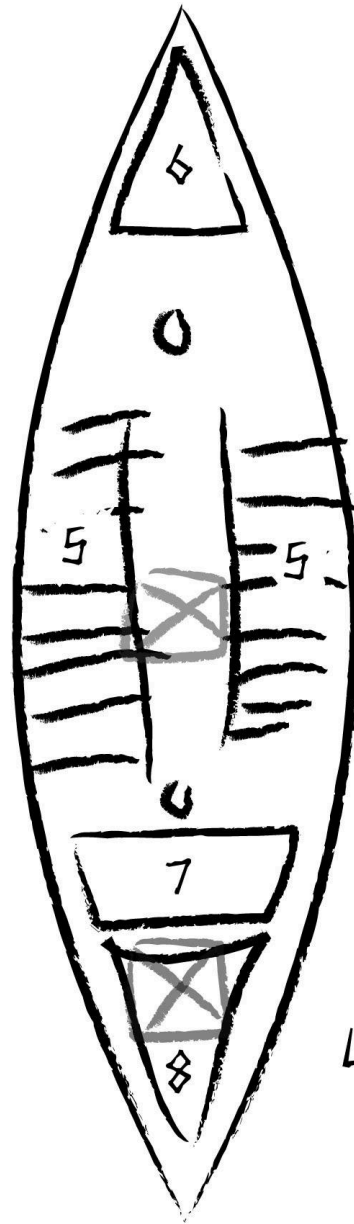
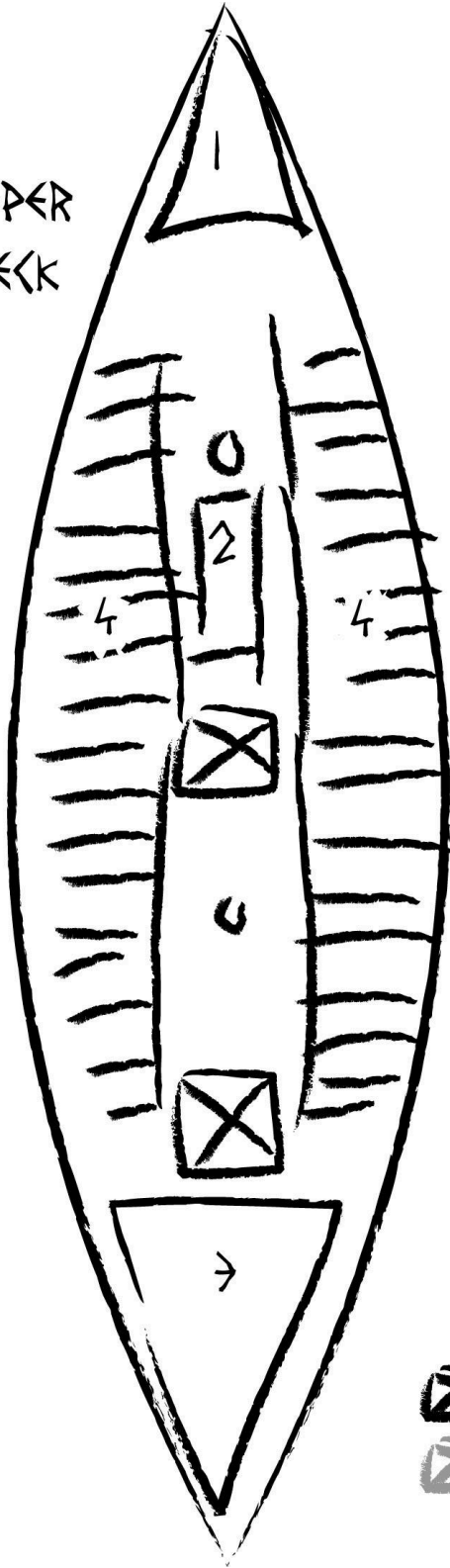
Flee Weapons:

Attack +1D, staggering run

Feint +1D, cloaked in flickering shadow

Specials: The corpse of King Gylf accepts no other conflict types than those listed. The royal sword borne by the king's cadaver acts as a mace with regard to armor.

UPPER  
DECK



LOWER  
DECK

 HATCH • FLOOR

 HATCH • CEILING

## Map Areas

**1. Gear Locker/Ankheg Lair:** The planks in this area are heavily gnawed, and fresh dirt is spread around. The stench is appalling, equal parts rotten flesh and the acrid reek of bug. A half-eaten dog carcass is wedged into a corner, and scraps of clothing and tufts of hair are scattered everywhere. This is where the ankheg is! If the party's incautious the beast will be ready for them - perhaps, on a twist, it's burrowed loosely in and ready to ambush! The ankheg's prey has mostly been animals, a couple travelers or bandits too.

**2. Bier:** Here is where King Gylf the Traveler lies interred. The bier is of dark, heavy, oily wood, minimally damaged, with metal inlays. Someone with time to kill could pick out the metal with a prybar or stout knife (Ob 2 Scavenger: suggested twist, they break a tool; suggested condition, Hungry/Thirsty from working intently). Removing the whole bier is an Ob 4 Laborer test. Of course, you need to defeat the risen corpse of King Gylf first! The bier is worth 3D whole, 1D for just the gold value of the inlay (pack/1). If someone bothers to ask what the inlay is, it's all scenes from adventures or something - ships, screaming heads with wings, twining dragons, eyeless horses. An Ob 3 Lore Master reveals that these are scenes from the otherworldly journey of the cursed King Gylf the Traveler. There are also two small bronze funeral effigies (pack/1 or carried/1 each) worth 1D apiece. Suggested conditions for removing the bier are Exhausted from moving the damned thing, Angry at the time it takes, or Injured lifting such a heavy and awkward load. Suggested twists are ants pouring down from a broken timber, or the Chute to Hell dropping someone into the lower deck.

King Gylf's cursed corpse has its own set of treasures. Though his steel maille is rusted basically into a solid mass, his sword and crown are both magically unblemished! The sword is a single-edged heavy blade in a style out of fashion for generations. Nielloed runes inlaid along the spine name the weapon Heart Opener, and the blade behaves like both a mace and a sword in a Kill, Capture, or Drive Off conflict. The crown is simple, hardly more than a gold circlet set about with points, inlaid in garnet and ivory. It's open in the back, tying with a length of silken cord to fit over a helm or a bare head alike. Wearing the Crown of the Traveler King gives +1s on any Feint or Maneuver in a Convince Crowd conflict - powerful stuff! But the crown also partakes of the Traveler King's curse: once worn, the crown can only be removed with an Ob 4 Will test. Each night the wearer sleeps in the same place wearing the crown she must make a Will test with an obstacle equal to the number of nights spent there - suggested conditions are Angry from restless sleep or Exhausted from strange dreams of the Otherworld. A suggested twist is that the wearer is taxed a point of Will. When his last point of Will disappears he dies: his cursed corpse will defend his final resting place until slain. Heart Opener is worth 5D, and the crown worth 6D at least until news of its curse gets around.

**3. Captain's Quarters:** The beam over the captain's quarters has sagged, bringing the decking down to maybe a couple feet from the floor - a crazy human could worm into the space without armor, or a halfling could do it with minimal trouble. It's an Ob 3 Carpenter test to shore up the

beam enough to get a person in there. Inside is a gilt-bronze chest, its pine panels warped and sprung from the wet. The lock is rusted nearly solid and of a quality worthy of the Traveler King - an Ob 5 Criminal test to pick, or they can just smash the chest apart. If they smash *carefully* it's an Ob 3 Health test to do so without wrecking the contents, because the contents are fragile. Within is the captain's rudder - a record of Gylf the Traveler's journey into the Otherworld! Incised on a sheet of gold foil (the original wood base long since eaten away by insects), it's priceless in and of itself, for if deciphered (an Ob 4 Lore Master test) it gives pretty explicit directions for sailing from Stormport west into the Otherworld. Alternatively, it's worth 5D to someone of a more heroic bent than the selling player/s. If they break or ruin it, tough luck. 1D for the metal if you're feeling generous. Pack/2 or hand/carried 1. Suggested conditions: Injured for a miss on the Criminal test - there's an ancient but effective blade trap. Suggested twists: a good place for a wandering monster.

**4. Oar benches:** Here lie the bones of the rowers that accompanied Gylf the Traveler on his journey to the Otherworld. Each one is - or was - interred with an oar fitted with silvered bronze hardware, clad in cuirboulli and armed with good steel. Time and the damp earth have conspired to turn the cuirasses into festering mold, the steel into billets of rust, and the bodies into crumbling skeletons. Something has been munching on the remaining organics - most of the oarsmen's corpses have been scattered, bits of bone crunching underfoot. The four closest to the bier are in pretty good shape - they're the surviving Tomb Guardians. The ankheg has learned not to get *too* close to Gylf's bier.

**5. Oar benches, lower deck:** The lower deck is even more cramped and stenchy than the one above. The air is poor, and the footing is terrible - the oar benches have been smashed to bits, and bones and splintered, rotting planks lie strewn about in heaps of loose earth and stones. The ankheg commutes from its larder to its eggs through this stinking, claustrophobic space.

**6. Head:** King Gylf the Traveler was not expected to do anything so fleshly as shit in a hole in the afterlife, so the head is currently storing all the domestic goods a king might need - tableware and the like. 4D in gold chalices, table-knives, finger-bowls, etc. 1 lot of pack/2 at 2D and two lots of pack/1 at 1D each. There's a chest with royal medicaments in there as well! It's not locked, and time and wet have popped most of the seams. Inside are pots of unguent and packets of powder, now spoiled - as well as three lead-stoppered blown-glass flasks. The glass is dark green and flecked with bubbles, and peering through to determine appearance is fruitless. Roll 1d6: 1 = Liquor of Courage, 2 = Soothing Tincture, 3-4 = Poison (spoiled potion), 5 = Giant's Blood, 6 = Soldier's Friend.

**7. Gear locker:** Much of the stern here has collapsed. The only entry to the gear locker is a sharply curved tunnel threaded through rotting timbers and chair-sized boulders - it's an Ob 3 Dungeoneer test to traverse this squeeze. Home to spiders, ants, termites, and heaps of rotting cordage. Nestled in the filth are six head-sized, pearly, pallid spheres - ankheg eggs! Worth a total of 3D to an alchemist, or each counts as fresh rations for two (strong-stomached or open-minded) people. The eggs are heavy and fragile, hands/carried 2 or pack/2 each.



Suggested conditions: Injured as a boulder shifts and hurts someone, Exhausted if they get stuck for an hour in an awkward corner. Suggested twists: the ankheg shows up to protect its eggs - or if the beast is dead, its mate!

**8. Storage:** No burial is complete without a sacrifice - from the simple chicken of the peasant, to the city-dweller's rat, to the war-slaves of a cursed king. And that's what was in here. The hatch is chained shut, the rusting chains draped in a peculiar pattern. A Theologian test (Ob2, Obscure Doctrine) indicates that this pattern is meant to contain angry ghosts. But the ghosts have long since faded - all that's left is a thick carpet of vile mold, just burstin' with spore bodies. Bashing the door apart is an Ob3 Health test. Suggested twists: the coughing, swearing, and cursing brings the ankheg to investigate; the dense cloud extinguishes all light sources, all rations are ruined with spore infestation, or see the Evil GM Sidebar. Suggested conditions: Sick from inhaling the mold spores, Afraid as the psychotropic poisons enter the bloodstream. Inside, under the mold-carpet, are the corpses of the war-slaves, all decked out in golden manacles and with gilded and jeweled domestic items - ewers, pots and pans, chamberpots, fans, and brooms. The whole haul, once de-molded and sifted from the bones of the unfortunate slaves buried alive with their lord, is worth a stunning 8D, and can reasonably be split into 4 lots of pack/3 and 2D each. Taking the time to pick out the gems and best bits will give 4 lots of pack/1 and 1D each.

Evil GM Sidebar: Here's an ugly twist. The mold spores immediately cause awful hallucinations: describe them as deadpan and matter-of-fact as you can. Walls of sweating human skin. Spiders pouring out of people's mouths. All the ancient blood Gylf spilled welling up through the rotten planks. Shitting out one's own intestines. I mean, get all *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* on this stuff. And after each, keep asking: "What do you do?" The visions last but one turn, which is to say until someone does something that warrants rolling dice. At the end, maybe they're separated, or they've torn off all their armor, or they come to with a mouthful of dirt and termite eggs - whatever.

## Wandering Monsters

- *Mangy, desperate wolfpack.* Anywhere outside - on the road to or from Skogenby, while camping on Wat's property, while scavenging through the abandoned hamlet - this pack of lean and hungry wolves can advance. Halflings look especially vulnerable and toothsome. 2d3 wolves. As Dire Wolf, with Might 1 and Nature 4 (Stalking, Bolting, Hamstringing). Adjust dispositions downward - the wolves will help one another to single out small or wounded characters.
- *Wat's dogs.* As Mangy, Desperate Wolfpack but noisier. Drive Off should be their lowest disposition. If involved in a conflict with Wat, they may help him.
- *Ants!* Inside the ship, the timbers are infested with ants and termites. Any plank, timber,

or beam that breaks can have a torrent of biting and/or stinging insects pour out onto the head of an offending character. It's an Ob 4 Health test to get your armor off before it fills up with angry ants - failure might leave someone Afraid, or perhaps the scramble to shed gear damages a random worn item as straps are snapped and sleeves are ripped. Whatever gets damaged is unusable until mended, natch.

- *Cave-in.* The funeral ship of King Gylf the Traveler has been underground for a couple hundred years now, and the timbers are getting pretty rotten. Any given beam could crack, dumping stones, logs, and earth down on the heads of one or more characters, or dropping them from the first to the second deck - a distance of only five feet or so, but enough to extinguish light sources and make a shit-ton of noise.
- *Bandits.* The stories of buried treasure attract unsavory types, including adventurers. 1d3+1 wretched scum with sceaxes and leathern tunics. Not in the funeral ship, of course, but wandering the countryside for sure.
- *Old Wat.* If the adventurers are checking over the abandoned farmsteads, Wat will stalk them with crossbow in hand. Maybe he gets curious about what's taking so long inside the Hill. Maybe he gets spooked and starts to fill in the tunnel!

## Flowchart, sorta

1. Pathfinder Ob 2 to get from Skogenby to Old Wat's farm. They can follow the remnants of the Skogenby road, though word is that bandits are lurking in the area. Suggested Conditions: they get lost and have to trek through woods and over downs - it's late when they get to Traveler's Hill, and the tester is Exhausted and the helpers are Angry. Suggested Twist: a mangy, desperate wolfpack attacks.

2. Laborer Ob 3 to sink a shaft to the funeral ship. Just show them the map of the hill and ask where they they propose to dig. Great place for a dwarf to substitute or tap Nature, because this is pretty much textbook Delving. Where they dig on the hill sort of determines which problem they run into first.

3. Depending on where they end up on the ship, encounter the ankheg, the Risen Corpse of King Gylf the Traveler + the Tomb Guardians. Otherwise, collapsed bulkheads and sagging timbers. One presumes they'll explore until the Grind pushes them to camp. The Problems here are 1) King Gylf and Company, 2) the ankheg, 3) the mold room, 4) Gylf's rudder, 5) the ankheg eggs. Considering the sort of single-room nature of the funeral ship, I don't see Cartography tests coming up - perhaps if you use the Evil GM Sidebar.

4. Things in camp they might do: consult memories or elf-legends to learn more about King Gylf.