

Food + Briefing

[You are staying in the manor house of King Baldred of Leptus, who has offered room and board for your expedition's company as Angvard prepares to strike against the centaur king Tyrfing. The rooms are modest, consisting of a simple bed, a window into the central courtyard, a table and a footlocker. Nevertheless, you are privy to a rare luxury: clean sheets and warm blankets. Last night was the first time for many months in which you slept peacefully and secure, without any fears of ambush or apprehension. Accordingly, you awake refreshed and rejuvenated, the many knots and aches in your strained bodies straightened out.]

[In the morning you enter the hall of Baldred to find a feast of pheasant, salted pork, potatoes, leeks, grains and cheese. Mead runs freely in open casks. The king has obviously spared no expense: such lavishness in winter is potentially dangerous. A roaring hearth warms the room in the back of the room, casting a gold light across the hall and onto the mosaic covered walls. At the table are Angvard, Helfdane, Egil, Eadwine, Bestla, Nertha and Aethelwulf as well as a company of Baldred's most senior house guards and kin. The others must be elsewhere.]

[Baldred enters with his retainers and sits at the head of the table:

"High King, your battle weary men have been provisioned within the town and are now resting. They are being treated by our healers. I believe, by the blessings of Aurvandil, they will make it out. Now, if it pleases your majesty, to the task at hand, the murder of the centaur Tyrfing."

"It will not be an easy task. You will not be able to strike out with a large expedition as you have come to us with, for the centaurs will spot you with their keen vision, and pick your men off until there is nothing left. No, were I a wise man I would go forth with a small company of no more than ten, and stick to the deeps of the hills, minding always the horizon."

"His camp is located a week north of this city, at a high point in the hills. The scouts dispatched by my son Eahlmund report that it is guarded by two patrols, one at a distance of about a mile, and one much closer to the centaur's hall. You will need to slip through both of these patrol lines. Once you are past, Tyrfing will be in the hall, a great domed hut made entirely of vines and thatch. He will most likely be readying for war, planning, massing, scheming with his lieutenants, and will be heavily guarded. They will be unlike the war patrol which ambushed you on the way here, but instead will be the strongest champions that wretched race can offer. Beware the ones who speak in the tongue of the druids, for they will turn you into unnatural things before you can raise your blade to cut them down. Branalf, the high priest of the Leptian plain, is said to be amongst his retainers, and he is a dangerous foe indeed."

"The camp itself is said to hold fifteen families or so, and is surrounded by a ring of spikes and other obstacles, so that others of their race will stiffen against it. They will most likely have their animals in stockades outside the camp perimeter, as they hate the sight of other races. The inner patrol ring should be keeping watch there."

“My knights will escort you to the first patrol line, and from there, may the luck of Aurvandil shield you.”

[Q&A etc]

Setting Out

[You depart from the north gate of Leptus with a troop of some fifty mounted knights commanded by Baldred’s son and eorl of the realm, Eahlmund. You are offered spots as passengers. The snow has been falling more heavily in recent days, and in many spots there are drifts three or four feet in height, causing the horses to tumble and lose their footing. The wind is blasting against your skin, burning it to rough patches. You make progress, although slowly. After two days of arduous marching across the frozen, rolling plain Eahlmund calls for the line to halt and rides to Angvard.

“High King, beyond this hill the centaurs will be able to spot us. It is best to dismount from here and go forth in stealth rather than in force. May the gods bless you.”

[bullshit etc]

[The cavalry remains at guard, watching you depart. When you are a ways away they quickly ride atop the hill and banners are unfurled and swung through the air. Eahlmund calls for the regiment to ride back to Leptus at great haste. Suddenly, you hear chanting in the tongue of the centaurs on the air and the wind picks up, whipping your faces and knocking you to and fro. Several of you fall over and become stuck waist high in the snow, a numbness afflicting the limbs.]

[Look over hill: Far ahead hundreds of feet you can make out the image of a patrol of centaurs. One of them is in front, chanting into the wind with outstretched arms. He appears to be screaming to heaven, looking wildly up at the gray sky. Snow begins to fall and forms into sweeping wings of white which batter against you. Suddenly a terrible sight comes into view. Far to the east a mountain is moving toward you at tremendous speed, a colossal wall of ice and snow. The ground trembles as if in an earthquake. It grows almost upon you within a few moments and as it draws near you notice that it is a wave of snow, hundreds of feet high, rushing in from the mountains. You have about thirty seconds to brace yourselves]

[DO something etc?]

[The wall comes upon you, crushing the wind out of you and turning the light of the day to black. Entombed under snow. Nertha: you come to. You are covered in snow but gasp for air, you are not covered in icy death. The air enters your lungs, stinging and biting. Your winter furs are filled on the inside with snow and you are soaked through entirely.]

[Stumbling to your feet, you realize that you are on top of a massive mountain of snow hundreds of feet high. None of your companions are in sight and to the north west you see a patrol of centaurs riding toward a camp on the horizon. Protruding from the snow is your cart, although you do not see the mule nor the boy.]

[Do something?]

Andvari/Cruniac + co.

You have escaped the grey waste and Fulmaegen is bounding through the air away from the mountains surrounding the portal. Soon you come onto the Leptian plain. Fulmaegen's light causes the snow to twinkle all around. It has been 5 days since you departed Leptus to descend into the underworld. Where do you go?

[DM them heading toward centaur camp, finding giant snow mound etc]

[One by one you begin to come across survivors. The first is Helfdane and his dog Marmaduke. Helfdane is not moving and his skin has turned a sickly white. When you dig through the snow you find his faithful dog is snuggled up to him and whimpering. When the snow is removed, he struggles to his feet and licks Helfdane's face rigorously. The skald appears unconscious, or worse.]

[Resuscitate somehow]

[Everyone roll constitution checks. If fail they are found to be in Helfdane condition, and if fail again, lose 1 con permanently]

[In this fashion you find X Y Z, the others you find conscious but weakened and dazed, all soaked through from the snow and at various degrees of frostbite.]

[Collect everyone]

[Taking stock of the situation you notice that most of the supplies you were carrying were destroyed. Food is frozen solid and mashed together, containers are broken and materials shattered.]

Centaur patrol:

10 lancers

HP 25, THAC0 16, 2d6 x2 damage (charge), 1d6, 1d6 (hooves). AC 5. 420 xp

Circular, spiked helmets, lamellated leather armor woven with vines, rusted, long iron lances, javelins, long, tangled hair, olive skin, beady black eyes

15 archers

Great, broad elm bows, bare, scarred chests, clubs

HP 25, THAC0 16, 1d8+4 (arrow), 1d6, 1d6 (hooves). AC 7. 420 xp

2 priests

Charm Person or Mammal, Summon Insects (2/4 damage, -2 attack, +2 AC, 5 rounds), Spike Growth (50 sq feet, 2d4 damage), Hold Person (10 rounds)

HP 25, THAC0 16, 1d8 (club), 1d6, 1d6 (hooves). AC 7. 900 xp

1 leader

HP 40, THAC0 13, 2d6+4 x 2 (charge), 1d6, 1d6 (hooves). AC 5. 2000 xp

To The Centaur Camp

[Scouting the horizon in the direction where the centaurs moved to, you see white plumes and the barely visible outline of a camp grounds, a few days march away]

[describe camp, buildings, features etc, vine huts, totems, stockades, etc

[first encounter outer patrol]

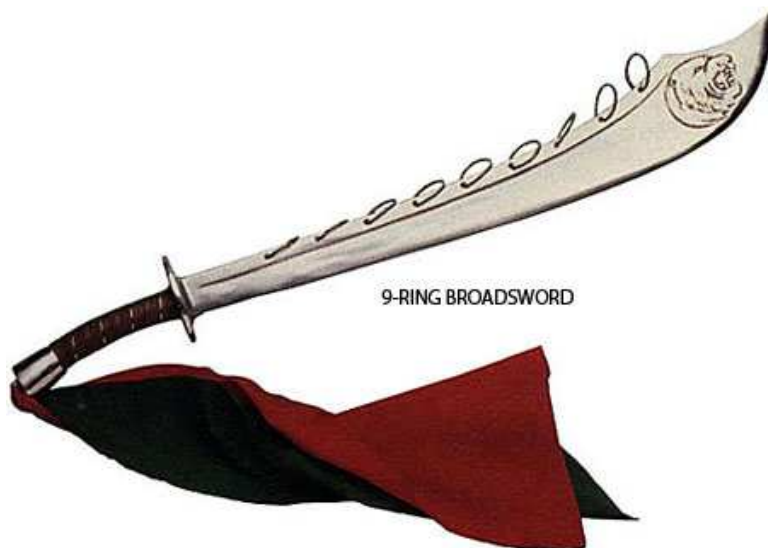
[1st stockade: Six wooden stakes, connected with barbed chicken wire. Filled with huddling, half naked human prisoners. They appear to be Baldred's men]

[2nd stockade: filled with wild boars]

[Hut: sleeping pads, bins of provisions, 1d4 juveniles, 1 mother, adult males outside in the patrol]

[Hall: The house of the centaur Tyrfin is a dark, moist hut, a wide open space with a dirt floor. There is a dirt ramp on the north wall leading upward to a second floor. Dirty feather mattresses lie strewn at the base of support beams, along with simple pillows and mats. In the center of the hall is a round table, surrounded by a half dozen prominent looking centaurs clad in their battle kit, cuirasses of bronze and steel, with lavish plumed parade helmets and broad metal shields.

Many wield long, able spears, and broadswords of a make you have never seen before, covered in runes. A few of their number have the horse parts of their bodies clad in mail. These are centaur princes, venerable warriors who had claim to the title of chieftain by virtue of their strength and courage. While most of them are well groomed, of a majestic and muscular bearing, one of them looks wild and squirrely. His lamellar armor is tattered, and his hair is knotted and in dreadlocks, his eyes bulge and are emotionless. He has the look of a mad man. At the north side of the table, facing the entrance, and prominent from the others, is a large centaur clad in a striking red lamellar, overlaid with layers of beadwork and wraps of silk. He has dark rings around his piercing eyes. They are looming over a map sprawled out on the table and discussing in their dark tongue.]



Encounter:

4 princes

HP 45, THACO 12, 2d6+5 x2 damage (charge), 1d6, 1d6 (hooves). AC 1. 3000 xp.

1 priest – Branalf (10th level druid)

Dispel Magic on Carwylm, 1d4 rounds if successful

Cloak of Fear on Tyrfing, all around him must roll save vs spell or run in fear for 2d8 rounds

Sticks to Snakes (on wall behind/atop party):

11 2 Hit Dice, Armor Class 6, a movement rate of 9, and either constricts for 1d4+1 points of damage per round or bites for 1 point plus poison (if any).

Animal Summoning II – wild boars

12 boars, AC 7, 15 HP, THACO 17, 3d4 damage, 175 xp/each

Flame Strike

6d8 damage, sv spell ½

Quest – angvard

Sv vs spell or Kill Egil/Cruniac

HP 40, THACO 14, 1d8 (club), 1d6, 1d6 (hooves). AC 7. 5000 xp

1 leader - Tyrfing

HP 80, THACO 8, 2d8+8 x 2 (charge) , 2d8+8 x 2 (charge) , 2d8+8 x 2 (charge) , 1d6, 1d6 (hooves).
AC -1. 12000 xp

Loot:

Knights: +1 lances, plate mail, helmets of power (immunity to fear), 1 composite long bow +1, 20 fire arrows, medium shields +1

Tyrfing: +2 lamellar armor (AC 2), Nothgling “The steel of slaughter” (two handed axe, always hits non-magical armors except on a roll of 1, considered +1 but not +1)

Upstairs: [describe etc, as per previous maps]

Hoard: 3000 gold in finery, precious vessels, ornaments and coins, 3 healing potions (20 health each), jumbles of equipment from knights and housemen from Leptus.

Letter:

Tyrfing,

I send you my greetings. I hope the diplomatic convoy we abandoned in your territory was well worth the effort of chasing down? Some say they carried a large tribute in silver and gold to Alesia. Some coin to turn the final clans to your favor.

- E

Tyrfing,

So it is agreed, the last clan has pledged allegiance? March after they are taken care of, I will kill the old man when your hoard comes within sight of the north towers. With no one to lead the defense, I will station what men I have on the south wall. Attack from the north, the gate will be open, I have paid the guards there well. When you are inside, my brothers will heroically die in the defense of the city. I am holding you to your vow centaur: two kings of the south, not one.

- E

Return

[Escape somehow]

[Describe return journey]

[Return to Leptus at dusk]

[If come through north gate or visible from north gate, Eahlmund is gone, informed by guards that they were returning, king is dead with a slit throat in his bed chamber]

[If come in concealed some how: Return by nightfall, the manor is quiet, Eahlmund is quietly talking with with the king in the great hall, the two of them are alone. "I will need you to remember your duties my son, for the road ahead will be rough, and you will be lord of this realm soon enough. The High King has returned, but we must prepare for war against the ancient enemy. These are the times that try men's souls..."

Baldred says "these matters weigh heavily on me, I must rest"

"Let the child in me hold the sword of Oswine once more, to steel myself with courage."

"Of course my child, to my cha