

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

## THOSE FIRST STEPS

By Jason Vey

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### Adventure Scenario CZV1

A group of young adventurers shares their first quest after stopping a group of bandits, a quest that will lead them into the very heart of the domain of the greatest Archmage in history.

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## INTRODUCTION

This adventure is designed for use in First Edition Fantasy games, but makes reference to the original *Castle Greyhawk* and *Greyhawk* setting, combining it with the *Yggsburgh* and *Castle Zagyg* campaign setting and information published by Troll Lord Games. In this setting, as recommended by Gary Gygax, the Free Town of Yggsburgh is seated at the confluence of the Neen and Ery Rivers, about 52 miles south-southwest of the Free City of Greyhawk. Castle Greyhawk has been moved so as to be situated directly between Yggsburgh and the Free City.

In addition, this module is intended to introduce new players to the setting by serving as a “lead-in” of sorts to *CZA1: Dark Chateau*, by Robert J. Kuntz, published by Troll Lord Games. For those wishing to use this module with Troll Lord’s *Castles & Crusades* fantasy role playing game, please see the Appendix.

As a final note, all artwork herein is in the public domain and was gathered at the Karen’s Whimsy website. For a treasure trove of wonderful public domain clipart, please visit that site at <http://karenswhimsy.com>

## SO IT BEGINS

Read the Following Aloud:

*Every young lad and lass knows that if there’s one place on Oerth to go to begin a life of adventure and heroics, it’s the Free City of Greyhawk. Sure, there are plenty of opportunities for adventure all the world over, but none has quite the fame and mystique of Greyhawk. It’s where the Greats go. Bigby, Mordenkanien, Rary, Tenser, Robillard, Gord, and other great and legendary heroes and villains all got their start wandering the streets and alleys of the Free City. Now, you hope, you’ll be the next ones to put your stamp in the annals of history.*

*After leaving your respective homes to answer the call to adventure, you have spent months traveling the roads, plains, and forests of the Flanaess, gradually learning that while everyone knows of Greyhawk, not everyone knows just where it is! So at some point during your weeks of vague directions such as “Somewhere to the northwest, by the Duchy of Urnst,” you encountered one another and decided there was safety in numbers, it being late summer and prime season for bandits and highwaymen.*

*Now, at last, you are sure you’re on the right track, having confirmed you are following the Neen river along River High Road. Very far in the distance, you can see an unnatural speck of magical fog peeking over the hills, the mysterious, cursed mist that for 200 years has shrouded Castle Greyhawk from prowlers and visitors. You’d guess the castle is still a good 40 miles from your position, which would put you around 20 miles from the trading hub of Yggsburgh, which will be the first major bastion of civilization you’ve seen in quite some time. With any luck, you’ll be there tomorrow. Your only complaint is that thus far your journeys have been what seasoned adventurers call “free from incident,” but you call “boring.”*

*That all changes quickly, however. Suddenly, around the corner in the distance you see three people, who you at first take for two children of perhaps nine or ten, and two toddlers, but soon come to recognize as gnomes—a man, a woman, and two children—hobbling towards you. The sounds of crying reach your ears from the woman and children. As they draw closer, you notice that their clothing, once the finery of the merchant class, hangs from them in tatters. They have clearly been*

*beaten; the man is walking with a severe limp, leaning heavily on his wife and son, his daughter clutching her mother's hand, as the father tries to comfort them all.*

### ENCOUNTER ONE

The four "refugees" are the Gimbels, a family of gnomish merchants who were robbed and brutalized by a band of highwaymen about a mile up the road. They can describe the area in detail, including how the highwaymen ambushed them and took their wagon and all their possessions. If the characters are adventurers, they say, they beg their aid. This family is at the end of their rope, even down to trusting strangers to help them. The father offers a reward of 100 gp if the PCs will get their possessions back.

About a mile up the road is an "S" curve with boulders to either side and a tree line to the right (the river is to the left). As the family traversed this curve, the bandits leapt out from the boulders and trees, surrounding the family. When Master Gimbel tried to be brave, the bandits assaulted him, then beat him and his wife and took everything they had before chasing them off up the road. The area described is as shown on Map One.



Allow the players to come up with a plan before engaging. There should be one bandit per PC, plus a leader and two lieutenants, though the latter will not be with the bandits. When the bandits are first encountered, there will be one bandit per PC, plus a lieutenant. The other lieutenant and leader will have taken the Merchant's wares back to their hideout, a cave perhaps 15 minutes' walk into the woods. A ranger should have no problem picking up the trail (+30% to track); if no ranger is available, or fails his tracking roll, an elf may attempt to pick up the trail as though spotting a secret door.

At the camp, the PCs will find a shallow cave with a campsite in front of it, containing 1d6 more bandits, plus the lieutenant and leader. The Merchant's cart, wares, and horses are plainly visible. A large campfire burns with what appears to be a side of venison on a spit.

## Map One: Ambush Site



### Bandit Cave



The Bandits' stats are as follows:

**Bandits Human Th1:** AC 7 (*Leather armor + buckler*), HD 1, HP 5, Attack 1d6 (*Short Sword*), Fav Str, Dex, Con, AL NE, XP 9

**Bandit Lieutenants Human Ftr2:** AC 6 (*Studded leather + Buckler*), HD 2, HP 10, Attack 1d8 (*Long Sword*), Fav Str, Dex, Con, AL NE, XP 20

**Bandit Leader Human Ftr3:** AC 5 (*Chainmail + Shield*), HD 3, HP 14, Attack 1d8 (*War Hammer*), Fav Str, Dex, Wis (+2), AL NE, XP 62

If the PCs defeat the bandits (who will retreat rather than fight to the death if outclassed), they may return Master Gimbel's wares to him; he will, as agreed upon, give the PCs 100 gp in reward, and will in fact up the reward to 150 gp. If pressed, he will offer them two good light riding horses (he has spares).

The Gimbels will decide, given the state of affairs, to return to the Outs (the suburbs of Yggsburgh) to recover before going on their way and will ask the PCs if they can ride along with them. Master Gimbel may even be able to use some contacts to expedite the PCs entry paperwork—travel visas and such—to get into the town.

**Jae Gimbel, Gnome Th2:** AC 6 (*Padded & Dex*), HD 2, HP 10, Attack 1d4/1d4, 0/-3 hit (2 daggers) or 1d6 (*light crossbow*), Fav Dex, Cha, AL CG, XP 30

## ENCOUNTER TWO

The next encounter with scum and villainy comes the next day, when the PCs are actually in sight of the city walls. The mist concealing the spires of Greyhawk Castle (which Gimbel may have explained by know is known as Castle Zagyg to the locals in Yggsburgh; “Those hoity-toity Greyhawk folk, they want to lay claim to everythin’,” he says, “So ‘course they named the castle after their city! But Zagyg’s the wizard who built it. Seems to me—and to most of the folk ‘round here—that ‘Castle Zagyg’ is more apropos, don’t you think?”) is now visible, forming a dark gray free-standing cloud on the horizon, even twenty miles distant.



The party has entered the Outs, and is nearing the Outs Inn, which Gimbel says is the *only* place to stay in these parts, even after you get your travel visa to get inside the walls. They notice a group of riders, coming hard down River High Road towards them. In the distance, anyone who makes a Wisdom check notes a group of armed men in heraldry chasing the riders on foot and hears them shouting, “STOP! STOP THOSE MEN! IN THE NAME OF THE CITY GUARD OF YGGSBURGH, STOP THOSE THIEVES AND MURDERERS!”

The riders, upon seeing the PCs, pull up sharply and turn down Nemo Street. The PCs are quite close enough to give chase.

The bandits are forced to abandon their horses soon after making the mistake of turning down the narrow streets of the Outs, and it won’t be long before the PCs can corner them. These particular bandits will put up a nasty fight (there are three; treat as Lieutenants, above) as they know they’re going to hang if caught.

By the time the battle is ended, the town guard will have caught up (if you want to make them seem less worthless, allow them to catch up before the last of the bandits fall). They will thank the PCs profusely and inform them they’ve done a great service to Yggsburgh; these bandits murdered the son of a local diplomat, the Honorable Count Peter Elbereth, who is the Yggsburgh representative to the Free City of Greyhawk. If there are any bandits left alive, they will be brought to justice. The town guards are of the opinion that Lord Elbereth will want to thank the PCs personally, and encourage them to stay at the Outs Inn;

the guards will do what they can to expedite the travel visa applications of the party, given their service to the town.

Allow the party to settle down and get the lay of the land here, perhaps meet a few NPCs and get embroiled in some minor local politics, guided by Gimbel, who knows the ropes.

Eventually, after a day or two, an extremely well-dressed man in his 30's enters the Inn. He is slightly portly with his hair bound under a curled red-blond wig. He is clean-shaven and wears a square-crowned hat, with one corner forward, the brim curled up on the sides and back, with two tall, slender red feathers bursting from the band near the back of the hat. His brown cloak is velvet and worn toga-style, fastened over one shoulder leaving the right side of his body open. Beneath, he wears a well-tailored frock coat and doublet with lace at the collar and cuffs, both of deep green, and gray breeches. About his neck he wears several gold chains, inset with rubies and emeralds. He has with him two familiar-looking members of the city guard. A brown sash at his waist, held in place by a sword belt and a slender short sword completes the ensemble.

Upon seeing him, Gimbel remarks, "From his dress, I'd say that's a nobleman, if one of lower station. From the two guards with him, I'd say that's your Lord Elbereth."

The two guards scan the room, spot the PCs and move to gather them together, while the noble speaks to the bartender in hushed tones, then gestures to the guards, who lead the characters (if they are willing to go; they do not force them) down a hall to a private salon (the "Blue Salon", room K, *Yggsburgh* p. 97) where a full banquet has been laid out, with mutton, venison, mead, ale, wine, spiced potatoes, bread, mushrooms and fresh greens. Once there he bids them all be seated and eat. As he speaks, he keeps a strong posture, but the party can clearly hear the shaking from anguish in his voice.

*"My friends," he begins, "As you have probably divined, I am Count Peter Elbereth, Yggsburgh Ambassador to the Free City of Greyhawk. I do apologize for making you wait as I have. You understand, there were funeral arrangements to be made, but that is no excuse for a lapse in decorum, particularly for a man such as myself. Please accept my humblest apologies.*

*"I have asked you all here, not only to express my thanks for bringing my son's killers to justice, but to offer you in gratitude, work that could prove lucrative in both a monetary and status sense."*

*He then produces a scroll tube from his belt, from which he removes a parchment map, hand-drawn. This he lays out before the party.*

*"My son, Luke, St. Cuthbert rest him, was not a fighter, nor was he particularly dexterous, stealthy, or adept in the mystic arts. A charismatic boy he was, full of good looks and charm, and I'd have been happy to see him follow in my own footsteps. Still, he had little interest in diplomacy and felt the call of the adventurer. Despite my protests he chose to gather a group of friends to go off seeking his fortune. He didn't have to go far, as it turns out.*

*"Recently there have been an increasing number of orc and goblin incursions from the north, harrying travelers along the Greyhawk Pike and the waterways between Yggsburgh and Greyhawk. These goblins seem to be traveling along the Old Castle Track between the two cities which leads to*

Castle Greyhawk<sup>1</sup>, a road largely shunned by civilized folk, as it goes nowhere but into the accursed mist.

*“Luke and his companions decided to investigate the source of these attacks. As his companions and he were exploring the Old Castle Track they discovered an overgrown, nearly invisible trail—a road that had not been in service for some years. This they followed, as indicated here,” he points to a spot on the map, “and worked their way through foliage until the road became clearer. At the end of this road, they discovered an old mansion. A mansion we believe was originally the home of the Wizard Zagyg, before he became the Mad Archmage and built the grand castle so long cloaked in cursed mist. Unfortunately, there they met their end at the hands of the goblins and orcs infesting the area, and only Luke returned, with this map drawn by his companion, childhood friend, and betrothed, the young sorceress Gabriella. Gabriella, he told me, was captured by orcs and they were separated. Alone there was nothing he could do to save her.*

*“Luke returned three days ago, and it was during our foolishly public efforts to round up a party of adventurers to investigate and hopefully rescue Gabby that a group of knaves sought to steal the map for themselves. Those were the men who killed my boy. I now come to you to investigate this manse, determine if it is, in fact, the former home of Zagyg, and if possible, find and rescue Gabriella. This last part is the most vital, as Gabby is like a daughter to me. But secondary I charge you to discover the identity of the original owner and if you can, get a feel for the nature and disposition of the orc forces. I intend to wipe out these humanoid scum and—if we can—claim that manse, not for myself, but for the people, to be restored as a museum to one of the greatest figures in our long history.*

*“I would not, of course, dream of asking you to do this without payment. You may have your pick of any treasure you come upon and manage to reclaim, though I would ask that you bring it all back first, as some of it, at least, should be displayed as part of the history of the place. I keep little in the way of liquid assets, preferring to possess land and holdings, but I can offer you a bag of chits stamped with my seal, representing the use of my own line of credit with local merchants in the Free Town and the Free City, up to 1,000 gold pieces, to be used as you see fit, within the bounds of law, of course. What say you?”*

If the PCs say yes, you're off and running! See the adventure module *CZA1: Dark Chateau*, by Robert J. Kuntz, published by Troll Lord Games, for the details of the manse to be investigated. It's possible that the Mage's Guild in Greyhawk will send agents to try and buy off or blackmail the PCs as well, and even may hire assassins if it looks like the PCs are out to uncover the truth behind their “anthropological studies” of the goblins.

Gabriella should be held prisoner by Guigurken, who has kept her alive because she's pretty. Whether he's kept her *pure* is up to the individual DM to determine. Regardless, the poor girl will be feverish and suffering from multiple snake bites, as the goblin chieftain has taken perverse pleasure in torturing her when she refused to give in to his advances, by placing poisonous snakes in her cage with her. His shaman has kept her from dying of the poison, but still she suffers greatly and it is unlikely, even with expert healing, that she will ever recover completely and will always be sickly (her Con score has been permanently reduced).

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<sup>1</sup> If the PCs correct him (“Castle Zagyg,”) he'll apologize and explain that his speech patterns often cross to those of Greyhawk, as he spends so much time in the Free City.

Gabriella is a beautiful young woman with golden hair and crystal blue eyes, in her late teens, as well as a first-level magic user. Alas, the goblins have taken her spellbook and components, so she has no spells of any worth (though she still knows her cantrips). She will be quite grateful for her rescue, but will also be overcome with anguish at the news of Luke's demise (they were betrothed). In any case, she declares that her days of adventuring are over; she'll take up a quiet life as a diplomat or alchemist's assistant.



**Gabriella, Human MU1:** AC 8 (*Dex*), HD 1, HP 3, Attack 1d6 (*staff*) or 1d6 (*light crossbow*), Fav Int, Dex, Cha, AL NG, XP 20 (*Spells: Gabriella has no spellbook or components, and thus no first level spells, but should have knowledge of any cantrip deemed useful*)

Upon returning to Yggsburgh, Lord Elbereth will be overjoyed to see Gabriella, and will promise to take her to visit Luke's gravesite once she spends some time with a healer. He will give to the characters a pouch full of tumbled hematite stones, each stamped in red with his crest and a g.p. amount. The total sum in the pouch amounts to 1,000 gp, and it is good for use in Yggsburgh or Greyhawk.

Once the characters have completed their mission, they will discover over the next few days that the mists concealing Castle Greyhawk have inexplicably begun to pull back! Was it something they did? Regardless, they're like to get credit for it, as the race to explore the ancient ruins of the Mad Archmage begins...

## APPENDIX: CASTLES & CRUSADES CONVERSION NOTES

If using this scenario with *Castles & Crusades*, and the default setting of Yggsburgh as defined in *Castle Zagyg, Vol. 1: Yggsburgh*, a few minor changes need be made. Wherever the Free City of Greyhawk is mentioned, replace this with the Free City of Dunfalcon. All references to the naming convention of the castle (Greyhawk vs. Zagyg) should be ignored (in CZ1, there is no naming convention issue).

The introductory text will see the PCs heading for Dunfalcon rather than Greyhawk (as indicated earlier), and the first paragraph should read as follows:

*Every young lad and lass knows that if there's one place in the world to go to begin a life of adventure and heroics, it's the Free City of Dunfalcon. Sure, there are plenty of opportunities for adventure all the world over, but none has quite the fame and mystique of the Free City. It's where all the great and legendary heroes and villains all got their start, wandering the streets and alleys of the Free City. Now, you hope, you'll be the next ones to put your stamp in the annals of history.*

**Stat blocks** can be used as-is, mostly. Simply "reverse" the AC, finding the difference between the listed AC and 10, then adding that difference to 10. For example, a character with AC 6 in this module will have AC 14 in C&C (10-6=4, 10+4=14). "Favored" (Fav) abilities (a reference to the author's house rules for AD&D) become Primes in C&C.