Quickstart Adventure for the Quest RPG

What follows is a basic overview of the system for Quest, the initial adventure, A Shadow in the Sky, and several starting characters with which to play the game. The full rules for the game can be found in the main rulebook, which will be released in June 2018, and is presently on Kickstarter

When we built the Quest game system, we were looking for something that was fast and easy to pick up. We went through several different ideas, worked through the idea of using success numbers of dice, worked on target numbers for each die rolled, but then considered the possibility of using amalgamated rolls. The benefit of using an amalgamated roll was that each die added would make a difference to the roll, rather than possibly not making any difference (as can occur when using target numbers), the possible drawback was that having to add and subtract when making dice rolls would involve a little more headwork for the players in the game.

We've played most of the game systems out there, and there isn't one that doesn't involve a little headwork on the part of the players, so we went with amalgamated rolls. Quest uses six sided dice for all skill and attribute tests, with the number of dice being used depending on the test being rolled.

Skill and Attribute tests

When an Attribute is tested, a number of D6 equal to the attribute are rolled to generate the result.

When a skill is used, a number of D6 equal to the rank of the skill plus one are rolled. If someone has no ranks in the skill, they will still get a single die to roll. This is to represent that everyone has a chance to succeed at a very basic level with a task, but even someone with the most basic of training will have twice the chance of success that an untrained person will have.

Types of Test

There are two types of test, those with a static difficulty and those where the difficulty is determined by something with a variable skill to work against.

Static Difficulty

For skill tests against something with a fixed difficulty such as picking a lock, deciphering a book, or plotting a course, where there are no variables other than working something out, the GM sets the difficulty of the test and the player rolls their dice against it. If the roll is equal to or more than the static difficulty, then the roll is a success. Following are examples of difficulties for skills

If passed, a static test provides an amount of experience equal to the level of the test, minus the players skill level. This is to represent that the more skilled the character is, the less likely they are to learn from repeated easy tasks.

Example: Kicking open a thin wooden door is an easy (Difficulty 5) test, the skill used for this test would be Rend, or at the GM's discretion, the attribute Muscle could be used. If Kalin (Rend

skill 2) passed the test, they would get 3 experience points (5-2), whereas if Achies (Rend skill 6) passed the test, they would get no experience points (5-6).

Variable tests

Where the skill is being tested against another skill, both sides roll the number of dice for their skill level and compare totals, the highest total wins. The difference between the two rolls is the margin of success. In combat, the margin of success also determines how much damage the strike does. In regular tests, it determines the degree by which the victor has beaten their opponent. The degree to which each test is succeeded is covered in the individual skill descriptions, as well as any bonuses that the victor may claim for excellent results. Unlike static tests, the roll made by the losing side is always the amount of experience gained. This represents that any test of skill against a live opponent will give some opportunity to learn something, even if it's not very much.

Example of variable test.

A fight between Kalin and Tasla, two evenly matched characters with Melee skill two, Daggers (x2 damage code), 30 hit points, and no armour might run as follows.

Both Characters roll three dice (Skill level 2 + Basic die) to determine their totals each round.

Round 1 – Kalin rolls 10, Tasla rolls 4, Tasla takes 12 (difference of 6×2) damage and Kalin gains 4 experience points.

Round 2 — Kalin rolls 6, Tasla rolls 13, Kalin takes 14 (difference of 7 \times 2) damage and Tasla gains 6 experience points.

Round 3 – Kalin rolls 10, Tasla rolls 13, Kalin takes 6 (difference of 3×2) damage and Tasla gains 10 experience points.

Round 4 — Kalin rolls 11, Tasla rolls 12, Kalin takes 2 (difference of 1 \times 2) damage and Tasla gains 11 Experience points.

Round 5 – Kalin rolls 12, Tasla rolls 10, Tasla takes 4 (difference of 2×2) damage and Kalin gains 10 Experience points.

Round 6 – Kalin rolls 13, Tasla rolls 9, Tasla takes 8 (difference of 4×2) damage and Kalin gains 9 Experience points.

Round 7 — Kalin rolls 12, Tasla rolls 8, Tasla takes 8 (difference of 4×2) damage and Kalin gains 8 Experiences points. At this point, Tasla is unconscious and the fight ends.

Tasla (presuming they live to fight another day in the end) would gain a total of 27 experience points, Kalin would gain 31 experience points. Both have gained a solid lesson from an equally matched opponent.

Shadow in the Sky

In recent weeks, caravans running over the mountains of Balion have been encountering issues on the high run. There have been two caravans lost, with no trace found of the cargo, the beasts pulling it, or the crew driving it. Runs are now being diverted around the mountains, but the length of time taken to get around the mountains increases the cost of the run by ten times and is not without its own dangers as the trip would either take the north road across the river in the regions frequented by Division Beasts, or the south run through the massive forest of Tolris where the Samca hold sway.

Garvel Grissom, a philanthropist and trader in rare and valuable goods, is in town looking to collect some information from the Illenial Observatory on the far side of the mountain of Insai. Grissom dresses in the manner of an Invicarn desert runner, his clothing elaborate wrappings of silk and rope, his hair is worn loose like a mane around his head and his voice is soft, with the sibilant hint of a Elevasion accent. He speaks slowly, choosing each word as if savouring a delicacy, and explains that his overwhelming concern is for the safety of the people he has working up in the observatory. He will pay twenty stars to each character for the attempt to recover his people, with fifty stars more for each of the workers that they manage to retrieve, and a bonus of two hundred more stars if the information they have been gathering is brought down as well.

Presuming the characters are interested in the job, they can negotiate for additional fees if they wish, this can either be done narratively with the GM, or through the use of the Influence skill in an opposed skill test. Garvels Influence skill is level 4, a success will add ten percent to the figures listed above. A success by more than ten points will add twenty percent, failure by more than ten points will reduce the fee's offered by ten percent.

Setting out

Garvel has a caravan of his own that is due to depart over the mountains the following day. The creature pulling the caravan is a Marlus, hooked to the caravan at several points on it's armoured shell in such a manner that the caravan would not become unhooked on steeper slopes.

Inside the caravan are benches sufficient for six and sleeping mats that could hold four at any time, the food is held in the cabinet at the rear of the caravan and there is space on the top of it could hold two people in the steering compartment, with space for a further person in the observation port. Anyone examining the caravan closely may make an Aware or Build roll against a difficulty of ten to see that the caravan is fitted with several concealed compartments, most of which are hidden between the floor of the caravan and the rear axles. There is damage to much of the caravan from burn and weapon, and it is apparent that this caravan has seen long service and not just in the carrying of legal goods. Garvel advises that the torches on the Observatory gate must be lit in a particular order to allow entrance to the Observatory.

Characters will be able to take whatever equipment they wish to take, but if they already have mounts, those mounts will either have to remain behind or be ridden alongside the caravan. Garvel brings the characters a map of the route to be taken, the map shows the three different routes around the mountains. A green route in the lowlands that goes through the Tolris forest, a red route that goes to the north and continues through the mountain pass between Insai and

Tanos, the two highest peaks. The final route is marked in black, and passes by a building at the top of the flat plateau of Insai, it is this route the Marlus will be taking. The journey would normally take three days, there are provisions within the caravan sufficient for seven days.

The caravan sets out on the long road up the mountain early in the morning, the Marlus moving at a constant pace whatever the angle of the path. The road is well travelled, the stones ground into dust by the continual wear of the trade passing over it, and it's clear that several parts of the mountain were carved away with tools unlike anything the characters have ever seen. In the lower levels of the mountain, there are trees and bushes that the Marlus pauses to eat from occasionally, but as the caravan rises above the level of the smaller hills around it, the foliage gives way to bare rock and the temperature begins to drop.

From the high path, the characters will be able to see the surrounding lands easily, there are other caravans travelling the lower routes, those in the trees partially obscured by the cover there, the only movement tracked by the birds that are disturbed by their passage. Further up on the plateau, various travellers can be seen in the valley below making swift progress through the stone pass.

Around Midday, a sound like humming can be heard in the air, not that of a bee or similar small creature, but similar to that of a weapon cutting through the air at speed. Those on the outside of the caravan can make an aware test against a difficulty of ten to determine that the sound came from above them, and passed over before returning. The Marlus climbs for most of the day till the evening starts to draw in, and the cold of the mountain starts to descend upon the caravan. The driver explains that they normally allow the Marlus to rest overnight so there's no possibility of them losing their way in the dark.

The Journey

The Marlus will travel at less than a few miles an hour at most, it's designed for slow and steady travel rather than rapid hauling. It is possible to get almost the entire way across the plateau in a single day if the Marlus keeps moving at all times, but that would leave no time for investigating anything on the way.

(GM's note, all parts of the map are subject to variance if it suits the plot, see Appendix 2)

On the Insai Plateau, there are a total of six hours of daylight to travel in. Given that the driver is under the characters instruction, they can continue on through the night if they wish, but the driver (Skill level 3) will have to make Handle Tests every half hour against a difficulty of 15 to ensure that they have not lost their way. Each missed roll will put the caravan further off their course. After three failed rolls, in the dark, the driver will pull the Marlus to a halt and point out that they have lost their way and need to wait for daylight to put themselves back on track.

Points on the Map

What follows are the locations on the map and what remains within them.

Marlus Shell

Each of these points is a Marlus shell and the shell alone. Those making a Fauna roll (difficulty 10) will know that Marlus do not shed their shell, it remains a constant part of them, steadily breaking apart as the Marlus grows new plates. When fully formed, they remain the size they grew to for life. The shells are both from Marlus that were fitted with a towing harness that has since been removed, but there are no signs of a fight, and no sign of where the Marlus body was removed to. Investigating the shell further reveals that the inside of the Marlus has been inscribed with runes. Anyone making a magic roll (difficulty 7) will be able to see that the spell carved into the shell is one of warmth, anyone putting a single magic point into the runes will provide warmth throughout the shell for ten minutes, the same spell also keeping the wind from blowing into the shell. There isn't space inside the shell for the caravan and it looks as if someone has deliberately engineered these shells as a form of protection for unwary travellers.

Trista's Bridge

Named for one of the first merchants to lose a caravan over the pass, the path here becomes very narrow, with a sheer drop on both sides and barely enough space for the caravan to pass through. Experienced drivers (such as the one provided with the caravan) know how to guide the caravan through without issue, but if trying to get a caravan through without guidance or prior knowledge, it becomes a Handle test to get through. The initial test is at a difficulty of 12, with the difficulty raising by 2 for each test failed. This represents the caravan starting to slip on the side of the bridge, if three tests are failed in a row, the caravan will lose traction from the path and be lost down the mountain. If guided over the bridge by a driver who has already handled the pass, the difficulty goes down to 6. These tests only apply to caravans and land trains being brought over the bridge. Anyone walking or taking a single person animal such as a Horse or Learse will not have to make this roll.

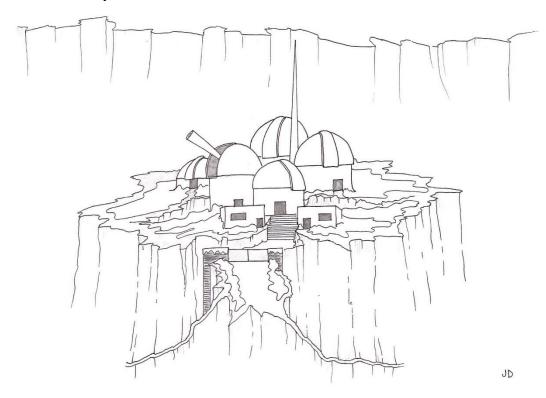
Plateau of unseen footsteps

At the top of the mountain, just before the main plateau evens out, the snow rolls in from the upper mountain slopes on a regular basis. It has been known to let up for a day, but sometimes it doesn't stop for days on end. The continual fall covers over the tracks of those who go across the pass, making it impossible for anyone to see who has gone before them and when. The cold and wind at this point make it very difficult ground for those travelling on foot, and it is easily apparent as to why the second Marlus shell has been left in the space just beyond.

The Bonefield

As the plateau evens out, shielded on both sides from the wind by the edges of the mountain, the remains of several caravans can be seen, the rocks around them stained with the blood of various creatures. No traces remain of the creatures themselves however, no remains of people, no weapons, no armour, only the devastated kindling that used to be the wagons they were travelling in. If searching through the remains, there may be trace amounts of previous cargos, but most of the area has been picked clean. The damage caused to the caravans has obviously been done by a larger creature of some sort, but the size of creature that could do that sort of damage would have no purpose for the equipment that the people would have been carrying.

Illenial Observatory



The observatory itself is a large stone building, clearly built with the use of magic or massed labour. The path leading down to the observatory is negotiable by those walking, but will not fit caravans or wagons down it. It is a four mile walk from the main path through rough ground before the crater in which the observatory is mounted is encountered. Possessed of one large telescope used for observation of the heavens and several smaller watching points to observe the mountains and lower areas not covered by the high edge of the crater to the west. Possessed of a gleaming spike of metal that extends high up to channel the frequent storms in the area, the Observatory is proof against most of the weather in the mountains.

The gate is bound with chains and ropes that link to bells within the compound that alert the occupants if anything tries to scale them. The walls are constructed of solid stone and have been reinforced both structurally and magically to resist the bitter weather conditions found at the top of the mountain. There are quarters sufficient for six in comfort or twelve if cramped or sharing shifts. There are paths leading up into the mountains beyond the observatory, but no one has returned from walking them.

Illenial Observatory Supplies

Down a wide path to the north is a cave dug from the side of a mountain, the front of which is covered over by a huge wooden gate that covers it from top to bottom. The wood is treated with something that prevents the snow settling upon it, and while difficult to move the gate (a combined muscle of 10 would be required to open the gate), the hinges are well maintained and there seems to be no effort to lock the gate. Within are the spare supplies for the Illenial Observatory, everything from building materials for repairing the walls to lenses for the telescopes and the remains of preserved rations in sealed grease, most of which have been ransacked. There are supplies of fresh water in here, but the temperature has reduced them to solid blocks of ice within their containers. It's apparent a large number of people have been here in recent times, with footprints ranging from adult size to child.

Descent Begins

Named because if not taken with care, the Descent will be very much faster than was anticipated. This point is a sharp bend in the road, leading to a marked increase in the decline of the mountain, from less than ten degrees to more than thirty. As with Trista's bridge on the other side, piloting a caravan down this without assistance for the first time would be a difficulty of 12, with the difficulty raising by 2 for each test failed. Failing three tests will cause the wagon to be lost down the mountain. If the characters have managed to keep the caravan in one piece, it's likely the driver made it as well as they wouldn't have left the caravan at any point in the attack.

Garlass Pass

At this point, the plateau widens again, becoming easy to traverse without having to wonder about whether or not the wagon might be lost to the mountain.

To the top of the world

The characters should be able to reach the observatory without significant issues if they are travelling through the day, but they will have to decide if some of them are remaining behind with the caravan while the others go on to the observatory. The driver will remain with the caravan either way, but will lock it down from anyone coming in if no one remains behind with them.

The path to the observatory is rough and covered with more snow than would have been expected from a path that should have been in more regular use, the characters will be able to get down the path without serious issue, but anyone checking the area around them (Aware test difficulty 7) will see that there has been a lot of movement on the high ground to each side of the path, rather than on the path itself. The observatory has a large gate extending over the edges of the approach path that is barred from the other side, and there is a network of chains of ropes seemingly strewn across the upper levels of the stone walls to both sides. There are holders around the gate, each one of them with a torch in position.

It is possible to scale the gates without lighting the torches (Agility roll, difficulty 7), but to do so without disturbing the ropes and chains would be significantly harder (Agility roll, difficulty 15), if the chains and ropes and touched, a bell begins to sound from within the Observatory and the Iron shutters on the windows will be brought down and not moved for any reason. Characters could try and climb around the walls, but this would be a difficulty of 25, with anyone failing the climb dropping all the way down into the crater.

If the torches are lit in the correct order, there is the sound of a bell from within and before long, a person wearing thick winter clothing climbs to the top of the gate, looking down on the characters. She asks that they identify themselves, and if presented with the seal that Garvel gave the characters, will motion to the people behind the gate who will open it and allow the characters in.

The woman introduces herself as Yennj Yrubdraba, one of the senior chapter masters of the Wanderers guild and currently the lead researcher at the observatory. Older than all of the characters, she possesses a strength of personality not seen in people half her age and while time has taken its toll, her zeal for life carries her forwards. There are two other members of staff still remaining, all of them looking like they could use a good meal and a few days with fuel for the fires.

Yennj was sent up here by Garvel to investigate changes in the stars. The studies were going well until a meteor struck down close to the observatory, high enough up the mountain that they could not reach the point without specialist equipment that they did not possess. They heard shrieks in the air, not those of people, but those of something far larger, and they could not risk investigating what was up there without leaving the observatory unguarded.

The troubles began about a week after the meteor, when one of the caravans was attacked by something airborne, it damaged the caravan and took the animals dragging it but didn't touch the survivors. When Yennj led the observatory staff out to check for survivors, they were attacked by a group of people all wearing leaf armour and branded with the mark of Tolris Exiles. One of the staff was killed and the survivors barely made it back, closing up the gates and locking down the observatory. In the weeks that followed, the staff have had to make runs to the supply cave, taking wounds to hit and run attacks but suffering no fatalities. They've managed to observe the attacks on the caravans, as the Tolris natives mark the caravan with something blue in colour and then retire to a safe distance.

What follows, the staff have been unable to verify, their telescopes don't move with enough speed to track the creature drawn to the caravans. They've had glimpses of it by focussing on the caravans as they are attacked, a gargantuan winged beast able to carry away even a small Marlus in it's claws. They know that it returns to a point higher on the mountain when it has finished, and it does not hunt upon the mountains, only coming out when drawn out.

Yennj is all for going further up the mountain to scout out the creature's nest and find out more about it, but she cannot go without the assistance of others, zeal will only get a person so far.

Back at the caravan

As night falls, if some of the characters have stayed back at the caravan, they will be under observation from the Tolris Exiles. There are not many of the Exiles, and they have no interest in trying to engage the characters in a straight fight. Their only objective is to mark the caravan

with a blue liquid that will draw the creature down from the heavens, then pick up whatever is left. If the characters have left the caravan by the edges of the pass, the Exiles will simply go above the caravan and drop the liquid down on to it. Any characters on watch with the caravan should make an opposed test of their Aware skill against the Exiles Stealth skill of 2, success by more than five points will give the characters a free action against the Exiles.

There are four Exiles in this group, if they outnumber the party and driver two to one, they will respond to any attack with a counter attack. If the numbers are less in their favour, they will seek to withdraw and attack again at a later point. They have been up here for more than a month, and the supplies they had ran out some time ago, they are battling their own starvation as well as the hostile elements and are not in shape for a prolonged fight.

If the Exiles are driven back without the caravan being marked, they will make two more attempts in the night to mark the caravan before returning to their caves.

If no characters remained with the caravan, the Exiles will easily mark it as the driver remains inside the sealed port.

A Nest in the high peaks

If the characters can be persuaded to take Yennj further up the mountain to investigate the creature, they will be faced with a difficult climb up a broken path of rocks and ice before coming to the top of the peak, where the creature makes its lair. The remains of several beasts of burden litter the plateau. Any character looking over the wounds caused to the remains could examine them to see if there are distinguishing features. A Fauna roll at difficulty 5 would reveal talon wounds from a creature with a span of more than a metre. A success by more than five points would reveal that the talons were used to hold the prey while the killing blow was dealt by something that more resembled a beak. The creature is resting in a nest constructed from trees taken from the Tolris forest far below.

If the characters investigate in the night, the creature will be sleeping in the nest, and the sound of its breathing is loud enough to mask most smaller creatures (including the characters) in the area. The nest is lower on the mountain than the path leading to it, and the characters should able to observe the creature at a reasonable distance to take notes.

If the characters investigate in the day, the creature will be awake and alert if the caravan has not been marked, making approaching it significantly harder. A stealth roll against the creature's aware skill of 4 would be needed to approach without being noticed. The first failure on this roll will alert the creature to the characters presence, the second will cause it to come looking for what has approached its lair. Combat could be initiated, but Yennj will counsel against that, as the creature is in its natural habitat and would be a very dangerous target.

While observing the creature, it's possible to see the corpse of a similar creature, only this one is more than three times the size of the one in the nest, and its head has been crushed by the meteor that lays embedded in the high peak. There are pieces of shaped metal all over the area, all of them looking as if they've been torn apart by the creature in the nest, dried blue stains coat the area around the metal pieces.

Anyone making a Fauna roll (difficulty 10) could make the deduction that the creature in the nest, for all its size and power, is the chick of the larger creature further up the mountain.

Death from Above

If the caravan has been marked in the night, the creature will come hunting the following day. If the characters see the marking on the top of the caravan, they have until daybreak to clean it form the caravan, and even then, the creature will still come looking for the blue liquid unless it's buried underground.

The only warning of the attack to come will be from the sudden shadow that whirls overhead before the creature turns to attack. The creature is only interested in the Marlus pulling the caravan and will seek only to fly away with the Marlus to eat at its leisure. The Marlus is not a beast bred for battle, and will rely on the characters to drive the creature away. If engaged, the creature will break off combat as soon as it has taken more than half its hit points in damage or if the characters use fire against it. If they do not engage it in combat, it will take the Marlus within minutes, leaving the caravan destroyed in its wake. This attack completed, the creature will return to it's lair.

Scavengers on the hunt

In the aftermath of the attack, the Exiles will look to attack what remains of the caravan to take what the characters have and prevent any of them escaping to warn others of what is going on. There are six of them (presuming none of them have been killed in earlier encounters) and they will fight till less than three remain, at which point the others will flee if possible, leaving the area for another place to raid.

If the characters manage to follow them back to their lair just down the mountain from the supplies cave, they find that there are not just the warriors, but another fifteen people, the families of the Exiles, driven from their homes at the same time. If given the chance, they will explain how they turned to raiding in their desperation to feed their families when the Observatory supplies ran out. They found the Geven as it tore into the pieces of metal, metal that at the time was still moving as if it contained something living, only bleeding blue, rather than red. The metal creature did not last long, but the Geven continued to tear at the metal till there it became exhausted and fell into a deep sleep. Not strong enough to make a competent raiding party, the Exiles had the idea of gathering the blue liquid and using it to draw the Geven down to attack those making a pass through the mountains. The liquid they managed to gather is now running low, and they would have had to move on anyway soon, they didn't want to see anyone dead, just get enough to keep their families alive.

Should the characters wish to, and if the caravan is still in one piece, it would be possible to ferry most of the families down while the healthy walked alongside.

The Observatory records

The Observatory information is held on paper records that would require the caravan to get them down in usable order. It would be possible to take a few of the records if the caravan has been destroyed, enough for Garvel to pay a quarter of the bounty offered, but no more. If pressed for the details of the information, Yennj will explain that Garvel was interested in astrological phenomena, mostly coming from the south east quarter of the heavens, but that their studying has not produced any results beyond the normal patterns of the stars.

It would take the better part of a day to get all the records transferred from the observatory to the caravan as they would all have to be moved by hand.

Getting down again

If the characters with the caravan have prevented the Exiles from destroying the caravan, it becomes a matter of getting the survivors to it and then getting down the mountain as quickly as possible, setting out at daybreak from the observatory will get them to the caravan and halfway down the mountain before the following nightfall. If the observatory is left open, the Exiles will not pursue the characters, instead taking the time to ransack the observatory, reinforcing it so they can continue their raiding actions from the relative safety of the building.

If the caravan was not marked and the Exiles were unobserved, they will not attack the caravan, preferring to wait till another caravan comes past to try again. If the Exiles were observed, they will attack the caravan at their earliest chance, usually waiting for nightfall before they make the attempt.

Appendix 1: Creature statistics

Tolris Exile Warriors

10 in total, 4 in hunting/raiding parties, the remainder back at the hideaway.

Hit points 30

Melee skill 3

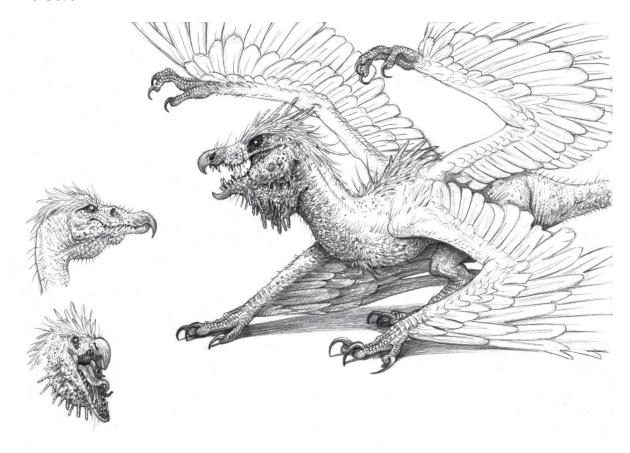
Range skill 3

Weapons: Sword (x3), Hunting Bow (x3)

Leaf Armour – 1 armour point against blunt weapons, 0 against bladed/piercing weapons.

Defence against ranged attacks - 10

The Geven



Hit points 120

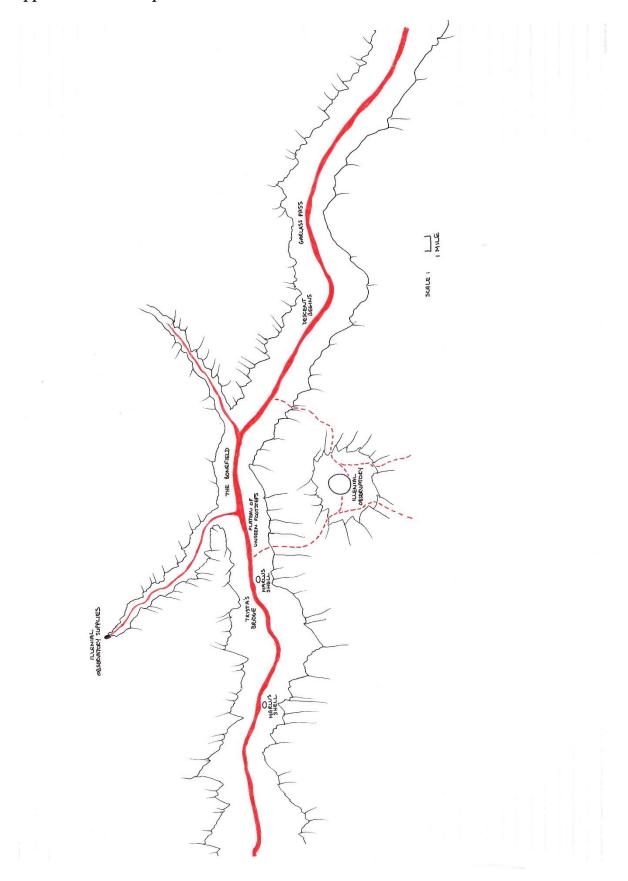
Claw skill 4

Bite skill 4

Weapons: 2 Claw (x5) 1 Bite (x6) each round, may target different characters.

Natural armour – 2 against all weapons

Defence against ranged attacks – 10 (Ground) 18 (Airborne)



Appendix 3: Pregenerated characters

