**Sylmore Campaign**

**Adventure One: Prologue (Part I)**

**Played Sunday, 8/21/2005**

*I was expecting to be two or even three players short this game, so I figured we’d spend half the time working on generating characters, and half the time playing a short prologue adventure. As it happened, everyone but Patrick was there.*

The saga began with two adventurers making their way north along the old road to the village of Sylmore. They had left behind the core regions of the Kingdom of Saxland and were now deep in the frontier. Much farther north and they would be in the barbarian highlands. Both adventurers had heard rumors of the Old Ruins near Sylmore, and were determined to try their luck delving into the mysteries there. They were both humans (non-humans being quite rare, even in frontier lands such as this): **Gaspar of Hornwood** (Troy), a paladin; and **Alfred Bearclaw** (Tom), a ranger. Somewhere along the journey they had acquired a donkey and a small cart.

As Gaspar and Alfred walked along, leading the donkey, they discussed the rumors that they had heard of the Old Ruins. This attracted the attention of a strange creature. Human-shaped, but not much bigger than a beagle; gnarled and rugged of feature, but with a magical glint in his eyes, and dressed in browns and greys. He said he was a gnome, and he asked for a ride. He was also interested in the Old Ruins, and figured a paladin and a ranger would make good company. The two humans called him **Shorty** (Pat F.).

A little bit later, the three spotted something approaching them up the road: a humanoid figure, but very tall, with a long spear and a slouching posture. The figure’s cloak covered him completely; the hood was pulled down very far over his face. The figure started at the sound of the approaching cart, and left the road to hide behind some bushes. Since this was done in full sight of the party, they were much amused by the stranger’s antics. The stranger said his name was **Garlor** (Mike F.), and he would not show his face, but his gruff voice and unusual build led the others to believe he perhaps was not quite human. Once it was pointed out that the village of Sylmore was to the north, not south, Garlor joined the travelers.

Late in the day, the party spotted someone watching them from the edge of a deep wood. It was a pregnant human woman, gathering berries and other edibles in a basket. She said her village was in the heart of the forest, and she hoped that the party could help, for there was a horror in the woods, and food was becoming scarce to find.

The party did not get much more information from her than that. They camped just inside the woods for the night. The ranger took the first watch, and intended to take the last watch. The middle two watches were to be watched by a bat that Garlor carried around with him, reasoning that since the bat had slept all day, it could be expected to stay up most of the night. At midnight, all were awakened by the howling of wolves! Swiftly surrounded, the party fought for their lives. Garlor and Shorty noted that the wolves seemed to behave as if magically summoned. (*I had originally intended to throw 10 normal wolves at the party, but at the last minute, I decided I was too lazy to run that number of opponents, so I decided to make them just three dire wolves. Then I looked at how powerful dire wolves were and quickly decided to make them 5 regular wolves, just a bit bigger than normal. I didn’t have the wolves do their claw attacks either, just biting. Even so, it was a fairly close battle. If I hadn’t rolled so poorly on the attacks, the party may have gone down*.) Gaspar and Shorty were cruelly bit, but eventually the party slew all but one of the wolves, which beat a hasty retreat. The donkey acquitted himself well in battle, lending a swift kick at an opportune moment.

In the morning, the party began exploring the forest. An illusory figure confronted them, attempting to scare them off, but the paladin’s *sense evil* ability came in handy, and the spellcaster was chased down by Gaspar and Alfred. Gaspar was knocked low by a *color spray*, but Alfred’s hot pursuit caused the spellcaster to expend spell after spell. Eventually, the antagonist got away, without anyone ever getting a good look at him. They could tell that he was a smallish humanoid, hunched over, almost reptilian. His tracks were of bare feet with clawed toes. Meanwhile, Garlor found himself confronted by the “strong man” of the village, a barbarian by the name of Gunnar. A spear-fight ensued, which Garlor had the worst of, despite some stealthy intervention on the part of Shorty and a stout kick by Donkey.

By this time, Alfred came back, dragging the unconscious Gaspar. Alfred quickly knocked Gunnar unconscious. The noise attracted the woman to whom they had spoken the day before, and she took Gunnar back to the village in the cart, while the restored party hunted the evil spellcaster. After much traipsing through the woods, the party came across some kind of old stone cairn or altar, with some pitons driven into the top. It radiated fairly strong evil. Gunnar confronted the party again, accompanied by some un-enthusiastic men from the village armed with short bows.

*The game adjourned for the night with a standoff between the villagers and the party. The party is faced with a choice:*

* *Destroy the evil altar, even though the villagers do not wish them to do so, saying that they need it.*
* *Continue hunting for the spellcaster, who, though presumably out of spells for the day, has shown himself to be able to move faster than the party through the woods.*
* *Leave the ungrateful villagers to their own mess and continue the journey to Sylmore.*

*It occurs to me that I was mis-using concealment. Tom’s character winged a couple arrows towards the spellcaster, and I increased his armor class by 2 due to concealment. The correct method is to use normal armor class, but roll percentile dice to determine the effects of concealment. I don’t think it would have mattered in this case anyway.*