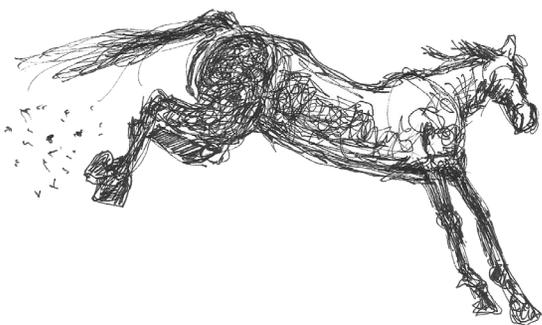


“Why work for somebody when you can work for yourself and take the whole purse?” — Felony Phillips before the court of the Grand Inquisitor

Nightmare at the Inn

The Prep: This solstice, the twin moons Jestrup and Solab will pass through the Horns of the Dragon constellation, an auspicious occasion for Unity Temple, a monastic society who follow the teachings of Giggs, the triple-deity of neutrality, balance, and harmony. At the height of the solstice celebration the Giggites hope to mate a **daystallion** with a **nightmare**, two magical horse creatures of similar breeds but opposed temperaments. Both can be found on Mount Magical, a holy mountain that lies just north of the temple, in the mountain range named the Giant’s Spine.



The daystallion can be summoned from the summit, and the nightmare summoned from a cavern in the bowels of the mountain. The Giggites need to summon both and deliver them to the temple. The pair can’t meet before the ceremony, for only the Giggite spells cast during the height of the solstice can keep the two from attacking each other.

Fragi, Orc Queen, Ruler of the Bone-Wrecker Orcs, lives on Mt. Slaughter, the peak just to the east of Mt. Magical. She knows what time of year it is, what the skies portend, and the Giggites’ plan. While she can’t use either magical steed for any supernatural purpose, meat is meat and the tribe always needs to eat. Her plan is to get one or both magical horses and serve them to the tribe, and if she can frustrate the plans of the Giggites, all the better.

Savage Bimm runs an inn on the Low Road, one of the few trails that crosses the Giant’s Spine Mountains. Bimm’s wife, **Aleanor**, is a sorceress, and every solstice and equinox meets **Lady Citerie**, an elf sorceress, and **Dame Loquilla**, a dwarf engineer, to exchange news, formal pledges of peace, and magical ingredients. The sorceresses and engineer do not know the Giggites’ plan, but will desire both (either) steeds if they happen to see them.

When the PCs see the supernatural steeds, they remember that each one is worth 150,000 Coolates on the open market – or whatever unit of currency you use in your campaign – and realize that each four-hooved wonder is worth a fortune.

The Stats: A daystallion is a 6D8 + 6 Hit Dice creature, just like the nightmare, with the same attacks and damage. The difference is its alignment, good opposed to evil. **Supreme Mother Mohar** and **Supreme Father Jaggry** of the Giggites are both 8th-level clerics, Fragi is as powerful as an ogre, and Aleanor, Citerie, and Lo-

quilla, are magic-users level 5, 7, and 9, respectively. The Giggites lead twenty 0-level warriors and six 1st-level clerics, and Fragi commands over 100 orcs and 10 “heavy cavalry” ogres.

The Play: There are a lot of moving pieces in this session, and lots of NPCs with conflicting desires. Alignment will help navigate some situations, but all are competing for the horses and don’t see a way to share them. How the adventurers affect this strife depends on who they decide to help, hinder, or ignore. Bimm’s Inn sits at a crossroads; the Low Road runs east to west as it crosses the mountain, the north trail heading to Mt. Magical (both summit and cavern), and the south trail leading to Unity Temple. The human, elf, and dwarf magic-users have magical means of transportation and do not need to stick to roads. The orcs ignore trails as they move like locusts over the landscape. The adventurers, however they arrive on the scene, are asked to aid whichever parties you think best suits them. If lawful warriors dominate your group, Unity Temple asks them for help capturing the horses. Queen Fragi approaches chaos warriors, opting to cut them in on the deal. Certainly the clerics will have magical armor that can be taken from the slain. A magical adventurer might encounter any of the sorceresses asking for help, or to include the magic-user adventurers in the solstice ceremony. Finally, Savage Bimm would ask a group of thieves to help him steal one of the horses. Sure, his wife will be mad, but he’s survived Aleanor’s temper before (his year spent as a toad). Once the deal has been struck, your job as DM is to tempt the players to break it, to take one (or both) of the horses for themselves. After the ritual, the daystallion and nightmare will be bonded, making them more manageable to carry off together...

The Locations: You’ll need to detail the inn and its surrounds, the route up Mt. Magical to the summit, and the tunnels through the mountain to the cavern. It’s unlikely that the top will be guarded, but a pair of mezzodaemons stand sentry duty below. It’s a gate to Hell, after all. If the clerics make it back to Unity Temple, you’ll need to define the ziggurat, because it won’t stop Queen Fragi’s forces. Imagine the epic battle of defending the temple from the orc army! Which sides to the other NPC agents take, based on their encounters with the adventurers?

The Prize: If the adventurers make a deal with any of the NPCs, they will be rewarded according to the agreement. Each NPC has some bauble or geegaw of small value for the PCs. The greatest, most immediate prizes are the horses, and to sell them at the markets in Melanthon on Jotjon Bay. Of course, the lasting effect of *that* move will be the lingering enmity of whoever the adventurers jilted the horses from.

