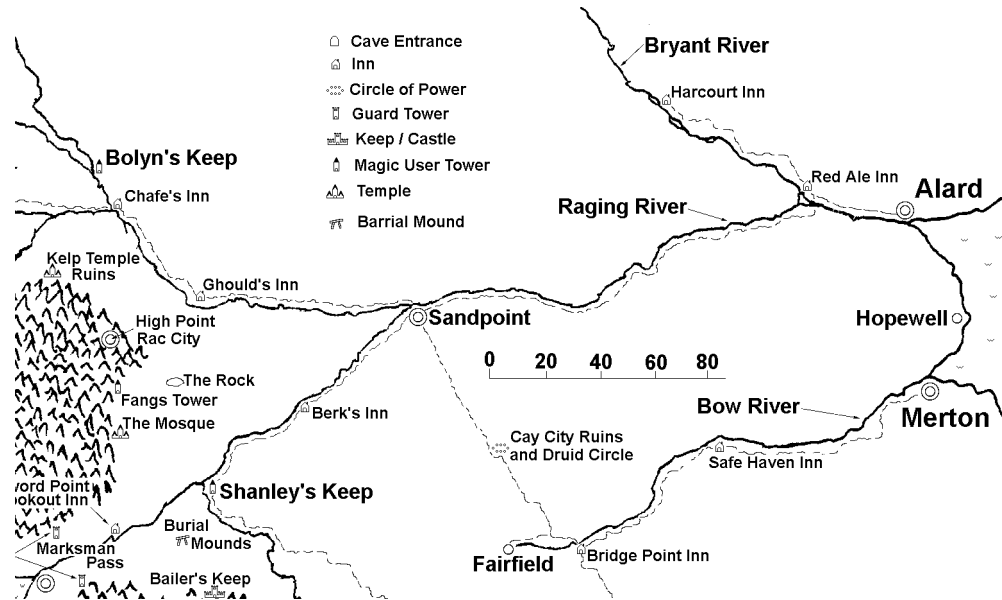


The Trip to Shanley's Keep



This is a section of the Uta Area Map.

General Information

This is a bridge between the adventures that take place in Sandpoint and Shanley's keep. The group should be introduced to the game when in Sandpoint and have one or two short adventures to learn how the game works. Once that has been done, you will want to get them to Shanley's keep. This document allows you to do that.

When you downloaded this document, you should have seen the accompanying creature files. These files provide you with monsters, creatures and character's found in these pages. They also give you further example of creatures that you can use to plan your own adventures.

The Caravan Arrives

After the group has gotten its feet wet in the Sandpoint area, a major Caravan will arrive in Sandpoint coming in from Alard. The bulk of the caravan will park itself just south of Shantytown. The caravan will consist of 30+1d20 pack animals as well as 36+2d6 guards plus animal tenders and cooks (another 20 or so people). The caravan's owner, Bernard will stay at the Rusty Weapon Inn. His business partner will set up tables in the town's main market place buying and selling the product they have brought in from Alard. The caravan contains a lot of product, generally trading finished goods for raw material as it makes its way through the outposts and smaller settlements scattered throughout the area.

It sells its stock and items for the same rate as other merchants in the area.

The caravan follows a trade route through the Keal area. The trade route starts in Alard, passes through Sandpoint, Shanley's Keep, then on down to Shirken and back out through Stang to finish at Van-Tol (you will have to refer to full Keal area map to view the entire route).

Finding Work

Bernard is in need of people who can track and have skill in bush craft and mountain craft. If the group has these skills (even if split between multiple characters) then they can be hired as scouts for Bernard. Bernard pays his scouts 400 talons a month, per person.

If the group does not qualify as being scouts, Bernard will still hire them to guard his caravan. In this case he will pay 300 talons a month. Employment also includes food and a dry place to sleep (a tent).

Even if the group is hired to guard the caravan they will still be used as scouts. Bernard lost his entire scouting party on the way to Sandpoint. The group will replace them, since they are the "new" guys. Bernard will not tell the group what happened to his old scouts, although they will find out once they are far enough away from Sandpoint.

In actual fact, Bernard hires a lot of extra fighters when he makes this trip. He always has each of his employees sign a 6-month work contract. Pay is withheld until the end of the contract period (one lump sum payment of either 1800 or 2400 talons).

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About a third of those hired have worked for Bernard on a long-term basis (at least for two years) and will vouch for him. Many of the locals also know of his trips through the area and will vouch for him.

Bernard Tout

Alignment: Neutral Good

Nature: Cares for those that work for him. Wants to be fair in his business dealings.

Honesty: 6

Bravery: 6

Materialism: 8

Bernard owns the caravan making the trip to Shanley's Keep. Sandpoint is just the next stop on a trip that would last for up to six months).

Leo Greenberg

Alignment: Neutral Good

Nature: Wheeler and Dealer

Materialism: 7

Leo wants to wheel and deal and loves buying and selling. He is always on the lookout for raw gold or gems, or gold in the form of ancient coins and such (as well as loot plundered from ancient ruins and treasure hordes). If it becomes obvious to him that the group is seeking adventure, he will refer them to Bernard at the Inn for a job. He will say that Bernard is always looking for those that seek adventure.

Caravan Fighters (combat sheet provided)

Alignment: Neutral Good

Nature: Generally boastful

There will be 36+2d6 fighters guarding the Caravan when it arrives at Sandpoint. The fighters that Bernard has hired will generally do their job. They will boast about how good they are and complain about the hard work and rotten food... just about what you would expect from such a group.

Bernard always hires more fighters than he needs when he makes these trips. He has a good reason for doing so. Once he has a contract, he will often "sell" the contract to other that are in need of fighters

Leaving Town

The distance between Sandpoint and Shanley's Keep is over a hundred miles. The trail used is long, treacherous and slow. A caravan will make 2d4 miles a day.

A day or two after being hired by Bernard, the caravan will leave town. Upon hiring the group (i.e., after the group has signed his contracts) Bernard will simply tell the group that the caravan will be leaving at first light in two days time. If the group asks, he will tell them where the caravan is and looking them

up and down will give them a note. They can take the note to the caravan to show those in charge that they are entitled to food and sleeping arrangement while they wait for the caravan to break camp and continue on.

Sleeping arrangements represent a tent with sleeping bags, warm and dry but not much more.

The Job

As scouts the group will be expected to check out the terrain ahead. They will sometimes travel very close to the caravan itself but often they will be up to a mile ahead. Back of this there will normally be one or two fighters that get up to (but no more) than a half mile from the main caravan. Scouts relay information to these fighters that take it back to the caravan. The scouts do not just check the road they are walking on but will move off into the bush to the sides of the road looking for problems.

Encounters

The Caravan is going to make a trip that will last more than a few days. During the trip the group will have to deal with several encounters that will take place along the way. Seven encounters are described in the following pages. Some take place more than once and may be used as often as you feel fit (i.e., the unscheduled stops encounter). Others are one-shot affairs that will take place at specific points in the journey (i.e., the graveyard). Most of these are here to make the trip a little more entertaining and exciting for the group. Read them over and use any or all that seem to fit.

The final section *Once the Trip is Over*, tells you what happens once the caravan reaches Shanley's Keep.

1 Unscheduled Stops

One thing the group will notice is that Bernard will often order the caravan to stop. He will then take a horse or two loaded with goods and set off into the bush. An hour or two he will re-appear with some of the goods gone and furs and other items in their place. Where he goes, no one who is left behind can say or will say. It happens once each couple days or so. As a general rule of thumb, a long bow or long sword is traded for a pile of animal furs that stack as high at the bow or sword standing on end; so a 7 foot long bow would trade for a 7 foot stack of furs!

2 Goblin Camp

Once the caravan reaches the halfway point between Sandpoint and Shanley's Keep, it will come across a goblin camp, or more specifically, those within the caravan will realize that there is a Goblin Camp

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somewhere in the area. The group can make checks against their tracking skills at minus five to the dice roll (this means that the presence of the goblins is so obvious that even someone who cannot track has a 5 in 20 chance of realizing the Goblins are in the area. If a group member makes the roll then he or she will be the first to realize that there are signs of a large Goblin Force in the area. If the group fails to notice first then Bernard himself will be the one to realize it and will calmly ask if the group has noticed anything unusual in the area. He will be clearly disappointed if they have not.

If the group is powerful enough to meet a goblin scouting party, then have them meet one (the group should be 3 or 4 members strong for this). Have the group round the edge of some cliff rock, and come face to face with the Goblins. A harrowing battle should now take place. A goblin scout party will consist of the following.

- 8 to 10 Goblins of which
 - 5-7 goblins wield Sword and Shield
 - 2 Goblins will wield Crossbows or Bows
 - 1 Goblin Leader

If you have a small or weak party, you can cut back on the Goblins that wield Swords and Shields. If your adventuring group is particularly strong, you can increase the number of Sword and Shield wielding Goblins.

This fight should take place a fair distance from the caravan (i.e., no extra help for the group). Once they have finished they should be encouraged to report back to Bernard. Bernard will rightly guess that the scouting party is part of a larger raiding party that is probably a good hundred goblins strong. He will be correct.

The Goblin raiding party (that remains) consists of the following.

- 100 Goblins of which
 - 60 Goblins wield Sword and Shield
 - 30 Goblins wield Crossbows or Bows
 - 4 are Goblin Trackers
 - 6 are Goblin leaders

The goblins set up camp by making a set of crude huts or lean-tos. There will be one lean-to for each 10 goblins. They will not be arranged in any particular defensive order, but scattered about within a small area with no more than 10 feet between lean-tos. In the area between the lean-tos the goblins will keep their cooking fires. The lean-tos themselves will provide a lot of cover for the fires so the fires themselves will not make the camp too easy to find.

This means that the group will have to make tracking skill checks to follow a goblin patrol back to the camp. The camps leaders keep at least half a dozen goblins hidden around in the area as lookouts. The good news is that goblins are not particularly good guards and any given guard has a 30% chance of nodding in and out of sleep as his "shift" passes. A group member with a high awareness may be able to see a hidden goblin if he / she can take a good look around and makes his / her awareness roll. A successful tracking skill check will let the group know when they are getting close to the goblins they are tracking (i.e., close to the camp).

At any given time, there are about 40 goblins on patrol, 40 are resting and the rest are tending the camp. The camp will only be in the area for a day or two (you can assume that it reached the area about the same time the caravan did). It will be moving further away from the mountains as it searches for easy prey.

The Goblins keep four "patrols" in the field at any given time. The patrols consist of the following.

- 8 or 10 Goblins of which
 - 6 Goblins wield Sword and Shield
 - 2 Goblins wield Crossbows or Bows
 - Two of the four patrols will have a Goblin Leader
 - Two of the four patrols will also contain a Tracker.

If you have a very large group, then you can add the following to the Goblin Camp:

- 1 goblin Trainer with 2d4 (young goblin wolves). The trainer will tend to stick to the camp (i.e., he is there to help defend the camp from attack).
- 1 Goblin Poisoner that will stick to the camp like glue. The Poisoner will have a level of 18+20 in his Venonmer skill and will have all the leaders blades coated with his poisons.

This is a raiding party from within the Kanit Mountains. They are here looking for captives to take back for various purposes (read sacrifice). There numbers are not really large enough to assault the caravan (at least in their minds), although it is possible that they might set up an ambush and see how it goes. This will depend if you feel the group handles the situation so badly that it is the Goblins that figure out where the caravan is, rather than the other way around.

What you do with this will depend on what skills the group has and how large a group you have playing. You can cut back on the size of the Goblin Raiding party if you have group that is new to role-playing or

one that is fairly small. A group with the proper tracking skills, could probably ambush a goblin patrol or two with little problem (well, without too much problem). The intent here is either to wipe out the Goblin Raiding party or scare it into return to its home in the Kanit Mountains (if 50 or more goblins die, those remaining will head back into the mountains).

As a note to this, a group of only one or two characters is going to have a tough time taking out a patrol. I would say that a party of four is needed for such an action. But a lot of it depends on your players and how well they play.

If the group does succeed in driving the goblins away, then each group member should be given 50 to 100 affinity points, depending on how well you think they did. If someone is particularly outstanding and used their skills just at the right time, allow them to increase the skill by one point without the use of affinity points (if their base skill were 18, then the point would increase their synergy bonus in the skill).

3 Wolf Pack

The group will be out in front of the caravan when they are attacked by a pack of wolves. Two of the caravan's fighters will be close enough to render aid when the fight starts (it's the caravans advance guards). It will take the guards 1d4+1 combat rounds to reach the fight. You should have no more than 2 wolves per group member (the guards should tip the balance in the groups favour).

4 Cave Bear

A giant cave bear stumbles onto the camp one night and starts tearing things up. The group will have to leap to their feet and go after the thing. This means no armour! It will attack at least 1d3 others before starting in on a group member. If a character saves the lives of the fighters that the bear drops, then give that character a bonus 25 affinity points. After the bear has been killed, give everyone in the group 25 affinity points. Only five people will be able to fight the bear at any one time (plus spell casters).

5 Treacherous Passage

At some point in the journey, the group will have to scout out a temporary alternate route. A flash flood will have wiped out or will prevent movement through a piece of the trail.

The characters will have to make use of their Bush Craft skill to find the new route. There will be two chances to loose animals on the new route. If the character's can make their bush craft rolls (one for each animal) then the entire complement of animals

make it through the area. Reward the character making the rolls by letting him or her increase their bush craft skill by one point. If the character's do not make the rolls (or don't have the bush craft skill) then the animals will be lost and they will notice Bernard shaking his head a lot at the fact.

6 The truth comes out.

Since they are new character's and their skills are fairly low, group members may wonder aloud at the fact that are needed as scouts. If they ask other fighters in the caravan, those they ask will be very evasive, rushing off to do other "work", even if the other work is sniffing a stew or rushing off to hide behind a group of horses.

After the caravan is over halfway to Shanley's keep, the group will overhear two of the caravan's guards talking about their previous scouting party. They will be discussing it in hushed whispers. If the group is persistent with these two guards, they will admit and tell the group what happened.

It seems that the entire scouting party were out checking the way ahead. The entire caravan was proceeding as normal when they heard screams and shouts from ahead. It was early in the morning and the scouts had just started out. They were close enough to the caravan for the caravan to hear their screams! A dozen of the caravan's fighters rushed ahead to give aid. They rounded some forest where the trail dipped through heavy bush and came upon the remains of the scouts. As they stood there dumbfounded, they heard something moving off into the bush. It was not the fact that the scouts had died to quickly that freaked out the guards though. It was the fact that only bits and pieces of the bodies were all that was left of the scouts. It was as if something had torn them to pieces while eating them and only the bits that fell out of the mouth remained.

Although non were sure what to believe, one of the guards swears that he saw something massive moving away through the woods. Something like smoke only from the smoke he could see a wall of writhing tentacles.

The characters will be told that there are a few guards that will not be signing back on when the journey is over and the caravan reaches Van-Tol.

7 Ancient Graveyard

At some point, Bernard will order that they are leaving the main trail. He has been though the area many times and knows that the section ahead is very treacherous and that it is normal to loose a horse or two when using it. He knows of an alternate path that is a bit safer if one knows how to avoid its pitfalls.

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The soldiers that have been with the Bernard will become jittery and nervous at this point and Bernard will order the Caravan stopped early to set up camp hours before normal.

If the group questions this, they will be told that they are going to cross a section of the trail up ahead that is best navigated by the light of a bright afternoon sun. The group will have to press the fighters for more information. When you feel they have asked enough of them enough times (I mean, asked the nervous ones enough time) they will be told that there is a graveyard up ahead. Although non have actually seen all the long-term employees of Bernard seem to think that it contains the undead. If the group asks Bernard specifically about the graveyard he will admit that it is there, but there is nothing to worry about so long as they pass by it during the afternoon sun.

The group may well want to investigate the graveyard and although Bernard will discourage this he will not ban them from doing this. His own opinion is that he would never send people into such a place but if they want to go... they just have to remember that he gets a share of what they find when they work for him (80% of it in fact... it's in the contract they signed...snicker, snicker). If the group wants to explore it, he will have the caravan move past the graveyard by about 5 miles and will then wait for up to 2 hours (no more) for the group to catch up. If they have not returned by then, he will assume the worst and the caravan will move on.

Once the caravan reaches the correct point, Bernard will stop it and point to a place off the road. He will look around for a few moments to make sure of his bearing and will then tell them it is in that direction. He will then order the caravan to move on. As the caravan leaves some of the old soldiers will flash concerned looks at group members. Some will even salute as they walk by...

The graveyard is about 400 feet of the trail. The group should not have a lot of trouble finding it, since it covers a fairly large area (about 500 feet to a side). The group will have no idea and see no indication in their travels (up to this point) of the town or city that would have spawned this size of graveyard.

The headstones upon most of the graves have worn nearly smooth. Even the outer wall, surrounding the entire area has fallen in many places and lies in piles of rubble. The main gate has been broken from its hinges and lies rusted and rusting on the ground.

All this you would expect from the ancient site. But where you would expect plants to have claimed the area, it is void of anything green. The entire cemetery

is bare earth and stone that extends at least a couple dozen feet from the walls of the area.

As the group looks about the patch of earth they will realize that many of the graves have sunken or collapsed into the ground. But even worse, many of the graves look as if something from within has clawed its way up out of the ground to freedom.

As the group looks around further they will hear a squirrel chattering at them. In addition, they will smell carrion and will find the half rotted / eaten remains of several wolf and a couple of deer carcasses spread about the graveyard. If anyone in the group has first aid, they may make a skill check. If they make a skill check then they realize that the creature that are dead here were suffering from horrible diseases. In actual fact, the character would hazard a guess that it was the diseases that killed them (they do not have to worry about these diseases so long as the sun is up or if they are underground when the sun does go down).

As the group continues to investigate they will hear and realize that there are many squirrels in the graveyard. They will finally see one on the top of a headstone, chattering at them. Its flesh is gone and nothing remains but its yellow and blackened bone.

The group will not be able to get close to the squirrels within the graveyard. But after seeing the first one, they will see others. They will start to see skeletal rats and other small rodents. All scurry and avoid them. It is a bazaar sight indeed. After they have moved about the area for a little while they will see a pile of bones and dirt. The bones will rise up and attack them.

The skeletons here are currently weak because it is broad daylight. They will have two or three fights before they are through exploring the graveyard. The group should not be here during the dark (that is a separate adventure all by itself).

What is happening?

The group is too weak for the graveyard at this point. Learning about it during the daylight is a good way to let them know about it. They can fight some weakened skeletons and will find that there are several sealed burial buildings that look like their contents should still be intact. In fact these buildings need powerful magic to open or you can wait until the souls midnight and watch the doors swing wide by themselves (the souls midnight is 3am in the morning). At this time the graveyard will be filled with undead of all type, not the place a low level group wants to be. The undead that is found below

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ground is not in a weakened state, even during the day.

The mage that runs the Swords Point Lookout Inn (his name is Deep Knife) knows of the graveyard. Eventually, the group will meet up with Deep Knife and will (surprise, surprise) hear him mumbling about an ancient graveyard of unspeakable evil. With this clue the group will hopefully ask about the graveyard and he will tell them about it. Deep Knife knows a lot about the Graveyard (although he won't know why it is the way it is) through his research into the area. He will know how to get the entrances into the catacombs open and will tell the group what has to be done to get them inside during the day. When shown on a map the group may even remember that they were there once (or believe they were). Upon their return to the area, they will know that they have been here before.

All the burial buildings lead to a single huge underground labyrinth (single level). At the heart of the entire place is a curse that corrupted the graveyard and turned it into the place the group now sees.

Once the Trip is over

If the group lacks these skills, Mountain Craft, Bush Craft or Tracking then you can have them check once they get to Shanley's Keep. If one seems particularly deserving of the skill (i.e., they have been doing their best to use the skill even though they don't have it), then have them roll, consult the following chart (what chart... there is no chart) and tell them that they now have the skill at 5+0 synergy level.

In addition, each member in the group should get 50 to 100 affinity points for making the trip to Shanley's Keep. You have final say on the exact amount.

Once the Caravan reaches Shanley's Keep it will set up camp outside the wall (fairly close to the gates). Bernard will stay at the Inn while Leo sets up tables to buy and sell from the locals.

The Caravan will stay for two days. Near the end of that time, the group will be called in for a meeting between Shanley and Bernard. Bernard will explain that it would appear that Shanley is in desperate need of their services and based on this, he has decided to "sell" their work contracts to the Wizard (this should get a rise out of them!). He will pay them their wages to this point rounding to a full month.

Bernard will leave, leaving the group with Shanley. Shanley will tell the group that he has some dangerous work for them and because of this the first order of business is a raise. They will now earn 600

talons a month and will be given rooms at his tower when in town.

At this point, refer to the write up on Shanley's Keep!