

## A Module Building Challenge to Educate Builders.

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### Introduction.

I suggested this tutorial as useful aid in the development of the module building skills of our guild members. Rubberducky more or less said, "go ahead then," so here we are.

This module building is not intended as a competition between us but as an individual challenge to each of us. Hopefully along the way we will all become more knowledgeable of what the neverwinter toolset can provide.

For this module we will make something without any custom scripting, using only what is already provided or what can be written by the wizard. It will include all the basic elements available; exploration, conversation, combat and trading. We will build three areas with suitable transitions between them, decorate them with placeables, light them, add music and sound effects and populate them allies, neutrals and enemies. We will add a mission for the player to perform and a "boss" final encounter required for the completion of the mission.

### The challenge: The Hermit's Chalice.

The player will start the module playing as a fighter type of 1st level in a small

spooky wood. He is standing on a ruin - a place he returns to if he is ever killed. In the wood are neutral birds and encounters, which spawn unfriendly bears. If the player is a ranger he can talk to the birds. When the bears die they drop bearskins for the player to pick up. Joining to the wood is a small cave system and an ancient crypt. The player should not be able to enter the crypt. The cave has scattered leaf debris inside the entrance and looks a bit damp. In the cave is a hermit willing to trade with the player and gives a good price for the bearskins. After trade the player should be able to buy at least a +1 weapon.

The hermit explains that the bears are a nuisance as they stop pilgrims from visiting the shrine at the back of his cave. After bringing at least one bearskin to the hermit he congratulates the player and offers him two things: a key to enter the shrine and a key to get into the crypt. The shrine is brightly lit with a pool and sounds like a holy place. He will only give the key to the crypt if the player promises to recover a relic stolen from the shrine by a wicked undead creature. If asked about the creature he says he used to have pity on it and allowed it to roam the woods for food - it kept the bear population down. But the creature went back to its evil ways and stole a magical chalice. Since then the hermit locked the crypt so the creature is trapped down there. If the player offers to recover the chalice he gets the key to the crypt and is rewarded 100xp.

The crypt is misty. The corridor is clear while adjoining rooms are shrouded in fog. Entering each room spawns a monster, has a ground trap (which can be walked around) or both. In the last room is the undead creature. There are a few cure potions scattered about. At first the creature is neutral and if spoken to will offer to exchange the chalice for the key to his crypt. If the player declines he goes hostile.

Returning the chalice to the hermit earns the player 500xp. There are alternate conversation threads depending whether the creature was killed or not. The hermit would prefer the creature dead but will accept the players word that it will not be a nuisance in the future.

In a few days I will be posting on this thread with guidelines as to how this is achieved and with more suggestions for adding colour to this module.

In the meantime if you want to join in start building now. Do as much as you can. If you complete it post the module on the vault. Call it "The Hermits Chalice - \*your name\*". For example mine would be, "The Hermits Chalice - Firestarter". Don't list it as final. Say it has been written for a single player, 1st level fighter type. Describe it as a submission for a short tutorial module from the The Builders Project guild. Don't allow posting of remarks. Once you've posted the module you will get an email from the vault explaining how you may update the module. It may not appear on the vault for 1-2 days.

If there is something that you need to know now, before you can start something don't wait for the guidelines, ask here.

Tell us here if you're building this module, if you've posted a module and once it appears supply a link to it. Good luck.

### Specifically on the fog/no fog effect.

Start a new area with the crypt tile set. If this is a module you are just starting to build the Module Creation Wizard will start, in this case click Next, type The Hermits Chalice - \*name, Area Wizard, Crypt, Next, enlarge the area to 12x12, tick Launch Areas Property Dialogue, Finish, name the area The Crypt, OK, Next, Finish.

You should now have a large black area with a small section of crypt in the middle.

Click: Edit, Area Properties, Visual, and Customise Environment to access the area lighting options. As this is an underground area the 'Always Dark' will be checked and we will only have the moon colours to worry about. Click the 'Ambient Colour' I'm going for green fog so I'm choosing a dirty mid green from the bottom row of the 'basic colours' offered. Click 'Diffuse Colour' and 'Define Custom Colours'. Select a colour that is just a bit duller than the ambient colour. Click 'Fog Colour' and 'Define Custom Colours' again. Choose a point near to pale grey that just starts to get a hint of the ambient colour you've chosen. Set the 'Fog Clip Distance' to 45m. Put the Fog Amount slider to Max. Now click Apply, OK, OK.

No fog: In the parts of the area that you want no fog keep the rooms small and use twisting passageways. Where the visibility range is restricted by to less than 20 meters by the walls no fog will be apparent. Give those tiles a white main light. The white light will suppress the area's ambient colour to virtually nothing.

Fog: Opposite to above. Make the rooms expansive with a view across them of 40 meters plus. Give these room tiles a green main light. This will give the player the impression that the light he's carrying is no longer pushing back the fog.

Keep the entry points between the fog and no-fog regions restricted to doorways. This gives the player a nice view across a green fog shrouded room when he opens the door.

### Regarding tile lights.

Right click on a tile and select 'Tile Properties'. You will see two main lights and two source lights. Sometimes one or both of the source lights will be washed out so that they cannot be selected.

Main Light 1: Is the main overall colour of the tile. Notice that it does not colour objects/placeables that you might sit on the tile. Just the floor and walls get coloured.

Main Light 2: This is like a little spot light illuminating a little bit of the tile. Sometimes it is feature rising from the floor that gets the spotlight but often it is just a patch of wall. You can't adjust where the light goes. Often it is really difficult to see it at all.

Source Light 1: This will affect something like a torch bracket upon a wall. What it

does is select the colour of the flame coming from that torch. If you set it to black there is no flame.

Source Light 2: Where there are two light sources this will affect the second one. E.g. On corner tiles there will be a torch bracket on both walls.

### Creating the first area.

Since we've already been talking about the crypt we'll continue with that. So far all we have is a bit of floor in the middle of the area.

Start the toolset and select the module you've been building. Double clicking on the crypt area you started will open it up so you can see it again.

Hold down Ctrl and the right mouse button. By moving the mouse you can orientate the map. I've got mine set to about a 30 degrees top down view similar to the default view when playing the game. Use the mouse wheel (or + - keys) to zoom in and out.

Click down the Paint Terrain button. Open up the Terrain list below it that starts: Bridge, Corridor, Doorway, etc. Select Wall and click over the bit of floor in the middle of the map so that we have a completely blank, black area to start with. Click Features to open that list and select Stairs Up. Zoom out and hold the cursor outside of the area of the map to help you to see what the stairs up tile looks like. By right clicking the tile will rotate to its different orientations. Decide where to put the stairs and orientate it so that the stairs will face into the area. Click on that spot and the stair tile is placed. Click the back button (the red arrow point left) if you're not happy with it and start again. These stairs will eventually lead down to here from the woods.

Now select corridor from the terrain list. The green oblong that appears as you move the cursor over the area represents where the corridor will appear if you click. Paint twisting and branching corridors from the stairs by clicking and click dragging. Join the corridor sections together.

Select Pit from the terrain list. Paint a chasm across your area by click dragging this tile. If you move the cursor up and down a bit as you drag you'll end up with a more natural looking chasm. Now select Bridge. Join up the corridors that you've obliterated with the chasm with this tile. It's placed just like the corridor tile. I've got two bridges over my chasm. You may need to move some of the corridors to make it 'look right': use the eraser (from terrain list) on the offending corridor and repaint it.

Paint some large rooms. I've got four at least 3x3 tiles big. Place them where your corridors would naturally lead to a room. Select Floor from the terrain list and click where you want the room. If you click over a bit where you've already put a floor the tile's appearance will change a bit. Click around each room's area until you're happy with its appearance.

Paint doorways into the rooms. Select Doorway and paint it over the last bit of corridor going into the room. Click the Paint Doors button then Universal – Metal and

select the third door on the list. The first two are like barred gates which can be seen through, the third is a solid door. Paint a door into each doorway. I've also put doors leading to the bridges.

Paint some small rooms. Click Paint Terrain again and select Doorways. Paint doorways leading off the rooms and/or the corridors. You can put a door in it too if you like. Later on I'm going to place coffins, chests and/or creatures into these little rooms.

Place some features in the rooms. Select Features. Click on each one in turn and (as you did with the stairs tile) move the cursor out of the map area to get a good look at it. Decide which one(s) you'd like in your area and what orientation you need and paint them down. Sometimes when you place a feature the adjacent tiles become altered. You can't for example put a feature right next to a wall – the wall will get redrawn into a floor tile.

Place some groups. Select Groups. The numbers next to each group describes how big (in tiles) the group is. Repeat what you did with Features. If the rooms aren't big enough they will either be redrawn when you place the group or it won't allow you to place the group (a red line appears around the tile when placing is not possible. This will be because the group goes off the map or is too close to another feature or group.

Follow my description above about colouring the tiles. I have the Main Light 1: set to white in the corridors and green in the rooms. Click the Use Area Lighting to see what it looks like.

You will probably want to fiddle with the arrangement of corridors and rooms. The rooms don't have to be perfectly square – it will look more natural to the player if they're not. Avoid putting rooms so close to the edge of the map that it doesn't have a wall all around it. Play around until it looks right

Clicking down the 'Fog' button and zooming right in shows how the player will see it. With the fog on you won't see a thing with the map zoomed out even a little bit. Mostly while you're building the area you'll want the 'Use area lighting' on and the 'Fog' off.

You might want to resize the area. Click Edit – Resize Area. If you increase the area size tiles will be added to the top and right side of the map. If you aren't sure which is the top click the Reorient Camera (eye) button. If you decrease the size tiles will be removed from the top or the right side. If you want to add tiles to the bottom or left side you must rotate the area first by clicking Edit – Rotate Area. When you finished rotate it back.

Check the sound. Click Edit, Area Properties, Audio. Ambient sounds have already been set to crypt. Click the Environmental Audio Effects down arrow and choose a suitable type. I've chosen Dusty Room. This makes use of the player's advanced audio features on his (more expensive) sound card. The music has already been set to crypt and dungeon combat. If you click down the 'Play ambient sounds in area' and the 'Play ambient music in area' (the green buttons) you can hear what it will sound like.

### More notes on building areas:

As you modify your area sometimes the lighting effects and shadows of a previous layout will get left behind. If you press F5 the lighting will get refreshed.

Animation Loops on features and groups. When you right click on the tile of a feature or group and look at its properties you may see Animation Loop 1, 2 and 3 with tick boxes next to them. These refer to effects on these special tiles. For example on the Mass Grave feature has two candelabras, ticking the animation loops 1 and 2 will light the candles.

### Using the Toolset and your Graphics card.

Using the toolset is a lot more demanding on your graphics card than playing the game is. Typically an old or non-standard graphics card will have you cursing the name of neverwinter with the amount of lock ups and system crashes that you suffer.

When NW first came out I was using a card based on an ATI128Rage chip. It played the game to an acceptable level but was continually locking up the toolset. Sometimes I'd get three or four crashes a session. If you suffer problems like this then the blame may lie with the graphics card.

Fortunately by now most gamers will be using graphics cards that are of the same generation as the GeForce2 chipset or later. I updated with a budget Geforce4MX card (which is actually based around a GeForce2 not a GeForce4 chip) and this is mostly fine. I've had two lock ups since Christmas with the toolset and one with the game. If you lust after more power and stability the basic GeForceFX cards (based around GeForce4 chips) can now be found on the budget shelves.

### Advanced Area Properties.

With your area open click Edit, Area Properties.

We've already looked at the Visual and Audio sections. The Events tab has places to put area wide scripts that we're not looking at here. Click the Advanced tab.

Altering Check Modifier – Listen and Check Modifier – Spot would apply a penalty (or a bonus) to those skill checks used by PCs while in this area. Increasing the numbers makes the checks easier.

Loading Screen. The default is Random in which a random picture will be shown of the area type. I always like to set my own. Click the ... button, uncheck Use Random Loading Screen and click on the various picture options. Choose the one that best reflects the area you have built and click OK.

No Rest. If you don't want the player to be able to sleep in this area tick this box.

Player vs. Player has four options under the √ button. The default setting allows the computer hosting the game to set this option. Party Protected ensures that the player can't accidentally hurt any of his fellow party members (i.e. if he casts a fireball into the middle of a melee it won't effect anyone in his party faction.) Full PVP lets the players really go at each other and No PVP doesn't allow any player-to-player damage even if they're in different parties.

The Tag is just the tag of the area. You can change the tag but you can't change the ResRef. [Dallo: Small correction. You can change the ResRef if you wish by copying the area. This will give you the option to do it if you want. Then you can just remove the old area.] Scripts running throughout the module can check which area the PC is in by looking up its tag.

Terrain Type is more interesting than it sounds.

Interior and Exterior: turn weather effects off or on.

Natural and Artificial: as far as I know this only affects the ability of certain Feats. For example a Druid's ability to move silently in wilderness areas would only be useable if the area is outdoors and natural.

Underground and Above ground settings also affect some Feats but also has a dramatic effect on the visibility range of the mini map. In Underground setting the mini map will reveal anything within 80m (a distance I've roughly judged) provided that a door doesn't block the path. In Above ground setting the mini map only reveals adjacent tiles or about ten meters. I know this is opposite of what would be logical but that's the way it works.

For our purposes it will add to the atmosphere tremendously if we cripple the visibility of the mini map in our labyrinthine crypt. So click Above Ground and make sure the Interior stays clicked on – we don't want it to start raining down there! This will have a minor effect on the player's use of feats. It also allows the player to see through doors by 10m. So use it sparingly and only in appropriate areas.

### Laying down placeables.

Another long post, lots to read.

The placing of objects around your area will greatly improve its appearance for the player.

Something to remember: objects placed across tiles have a greater impact on CPU usage as the engine keeps the appearance of the object in perspective while the camera is rotating and zooming. While not always possible it's good practice to keep placeables within a tile. Turn the grid on by clicking Environment, Display Grid to see where the tiles are. This is more important where a heavy combat is going to happen.

Click the Paint Placeables button that looks like a table. For our crypt there are certain placeables that we can use a lot of. These will just add colour to the area and will all be left set as static. Right click on a placeable that you've put down, select properties and under the basic tab make sure the static box is checked. This stops the PC from being able to use the item. I'll point out some placeables for you below but it's a good idea to have a good through them all. I know this will take a long time but that knowledge will pay off. Just click on the + to open up the various lists, click on a likely description and click on the map to place it. After you've placed a placeable click on one of the red rotating arrow buttons to orientate it into place.

Battlefield: bloodstain, bones, the various impaled placeables, rubble and skull pole.  
Miscellaneous: garbage, the first skeletal golem parts and web. Miscellaneous  
Interior: some of the broken furniture placeables, hanging shield and urn. Parks and  
Nature: dirt patch, mold, moss, stones and water drip. Pennants and Signs: the various  
banners. Visual Effects: Dust plume.

I've started with rubble and moss to simulate leaf litter that has fallen into the crypt from the woods above. If you want to place a lot of one object hold down the shift key, select the placeable and click, click, click all over the map where you want it to appear. Later go back over each one, click and drag to move it into the exact position and rotate it so that it looks a bit different to all the others. Remember how to move the map around easily by holding down Ctrl then click and drag to move the map or right click and drag to tip and rotate the map.

Placing useable placeables. Example you put a banner near to a door and want the player to be able to see the description of the banner, e.g. "Here interred is Hector the Honoured. Felled by the dread rot disease." Place the banner, right click on it, select properties and click the useable box. Click the Description tab and write in the description that you want.

Placeables with built in scripts, example: Under Battlefield there are two placeables, Skeleton bones and Zombie corpse. They have the ability to turn into the creatures of their names when a PC is nearby. However the monsters created are a bit too powerful for a first level PC so isn't really suitable for our module without a bit of adaptation. Right click on the placeable, select the scripts tab and click on the OnHeartbeat script there. In the Skeleton bones' script change the two references to NW\_SKELWARR01 and NW\_SKELCHIEF with NW\_SKELETON. In the Zombie corpse placeable change the two references to NW\_ZOMBWARR01 and NW\_ZOMBIEBOSS with NW\_ZOMBIE01. Click the save button which looks like a floppy disc, click Exit and OK. This adaptation will have the placeables create normal zombies and skeletons that the PC will be able to cope with, even so – don't put more than one or two together. Changing this Bioware script will only effect the module in which it was changed not any other module that you have or will make.

Creating a secret door: In HotU this is now controlled by a trigger. The instructions for creating secret doors are in the script x0\_i0\_secret. To look at this click Tools, Script Editor, Open Existing File and All Resources. Type in x0\_i0\_secret where it says Resource Name and click Open. I recommend you look at this.

I'll run through how to make a secret stone door. Go to an area on your map where you'd like a secret door. Click on the Paint triggers button that looks like a green diamond and select the + of Secret Object Trigger to open up that list. Select Walldoor Stone. You can now paint a trigger by clicking on the map where you want the corners of the trigger to be. Double click to finish off the trigger's region. If unhappy right click on the trigger you've created and select Redraw Polygon to have another go at painting the trigger. Change the trigger's Tag to SecretDoorOne. Paint a waypoint (they're under the button that looks like a flag) where you want the door to appear and change its tag to LOC\_SecretDoorOne. Change the orientation of the waypoint so that it points at the wall. The centre of the door will appear right on the tag's flag so position it carefully. Put another waypoint where you want the PC to be transported to when they use the secret door, change its tag to DST\_SecretDoorOne. Now this will look a bit silly if there is no way back. Repeat the above process at the other end of the secret doorway but this time substitute SecretDoorTwo instead of SecretDoorOne. When you play test the module you will have to check that the secret door you've made looks and works correctly.

### Laying down encounters.

Creating Encounters: Click the Paint Encounters button that looks like a pair of crossed swords. Click Very Easy and select Undead, Low group. Now you can put down an encounter trigger. Paint it just as you did above. Right click on it and select Add Spawn Point. Click and drag the spawn point to where you want the creature(s) to appear. Right click and select properties. Change the minimum creatures to 1. Click the Creature List tab to check that the monsters are suitable for our adventure. This is a module for a 1st level PC so there must be at least one creature there with a CR of 1. When the PC steps on the trigger the engine automatically creates creatures from the list at the spawn point and numbering between the minimum and maximum creature settings. It will choose creatures that the PC can cope with. However if the only selection on the creature list was a lich then that is what would be spawned regardless of the PC's level so be careful.

If you don't like the look of a certain creature on the list click on it and click the <- button to remove it. Next to each creature on the list is a unique box, tick this if you only want one of these monsters to appear in the encounter. Other encounters that might be suitable for our crypt are; Vermin - Beetle Group, Zombie Group and Animal – Flying non-hostile group (with just the bats). After placing the spawn point you can orientate it to set the direction the monsters will face when they spawn with the rotating arrow button. Spawned monsters will roam about randomly until they see an enemy to attack.

### Creating Custom Items.

What we need is a key for the hermit's grotto, a key to the crypt and the chalice.

Click the paint items button that looks like a sword then Custom. Right click on Armor and select New. Scroll down the list, select key and Next. Give it the name

Grotto Key, click Next, select Plot Items, Next, tick Launch Item Properties and Finish. Click the Appearance tab and change the look of the key to something suitable. I like top model 5 and bottom model 4. Click OK when you're happy and you'll see it added to the custom, plot list. Repeat this for the crypt key, for that I prefer top model 6, obvious really when you see it.

For the chalice, right click on Armor, click New and select Miscellaneous Medium. Click Next and name it The Chalice, Next, select Plot Item, Launch Item Properties and Finish. Click the Appearance tab and there just happens to be a nice picture of a chalice about a fifth the way down the list. Select it. Choosing any of the other miscellaneous types would have presented you with a different set of pictures, if you want you can try creating your chalice with one of the other types and seeing if there is a more appropriate picture.

I'm going to give my chalice a simple power. Click the Properties tab and the + by cast spell. Scroll down the list until you see a suitable spell, select it and click the -> button to add it to your chalice. I've chosen Cure Moderate Wounds (6). You'll see it says Single Use next to it that means that it will only work once. Double click on your choice and you can change it from single use, I chose, "2 uses per day". Click OK. Click the General tab and have a look at the Required Level. If you want the PC to be able to use this then it probably needs to be no higher than 3rd. If you gave your item, "x charges per use" then you'll have to give the item some charges too, this is under the General tab. Once you're happy click OK. You can always change an item later by right clicking on its entry in the custom item section and selecting Edit.

Make a note of the Tags of these items. You'll need these for the creation of wizard scripts that we're going to deal with below.

### Creating The Boss.

Firstly decide what monster you're going to have as the creature. The PC might be 2nd or 3rd level by the time he reaches him so pick something appropriate. I've chosen a skeletal mage that has a CR of 4. The guide is written for that monster but you can choose another.

Click on the monster button that has red demon head on it, the + next to Monsters, Undead, Skeleton and finally Skeleton Mage. If you move the cursor over the map a ghostly image of the skeleton is attached it, click to place it on the map. I've arranged his placement so that it's the last place the PC will get to.

Right click on the creature and choose Properties. If Create Waypoint is the only option you see just move the cursor up a bit and right click again. First off we need to name him, I've just put The Creature. Click on the Advanced tab and you will see that he belongs to the Hostile faction. Left at a hostile he will attack the PC on sight but I always like the player to be able to talk to the boss so he needs a new faction.

Change the faction. Click Edit Factions, and Add Faction. Put a name for the new faction, I put Boss. Below you can see the other factions already in the module listed under Parent. The faction that we select here will be reflected in the new boss faction

i.e. it will have the same friends and enemies. Any faction can be edited later but it's best to leave the four basic ones alone. Click OK. Click on the new faction that has appeared on the list and you get a bar graph. This is how it feels about the other factions. 100% is totally friendly, 0% is totally hostile and 50% is neutral. By clicking and dragging the top of the bar you can alter the percentage of friendliness. Now click the Full Detail box and you'll see twin bars appear, the second bar is how the other factions feels about the boss faction – not always the same. Alter the graphs so that the boss faction is neutral to everyone else and friendly towards itself, set the full detail bars identically. Make sure that Global Effect is ticked and click OK. It may take a while for the toolset to digest the change so be patient. We can now change the creature's faction, click the √ next to his faction and Boss will be at the bottom of the list, select it and press OK. Give him some dialogue. Go to his properties and you'll see that his Conversation box is empty, click Edit. The Conversation Editor will open. Along the left side is a column of buttons, all you really need is the top Add button, click it. Enter the words that the creature will say first. I've put,

You have invaded my lair and killed my servants. Why have you done this?

Click OK and the text will appear in red at the top. Click on this dialogue to highlight it and click Add again. Now you can type in the PC's response. I want to give him a choice of things to say so I've typed in the first response, clicked OK then Add, the second response and so on. I now have below the red dialogue three entries in blue...

To kill you.

To recover the chalice that you stole from the hermit.

O nothing, I just stumbled in. Sorry about the mess. I'll be going now.

It's worth reinforcing this information: The creature's dialogue always appears in red and the PC's is blue. If you ever see you've put PC's dialogue and it shows red then you've messed up the conversation tree somewhere. When this happens you just have to delete it and type it again from the correct branch of the conversation. Cut and paste is possible for moving dialogue around but only back to the same speaker, i.e. you can't cut dialogue from the creature and paste it into a PC branch or visa versa.

For each of the PC's conversation branches we need a response for the creature. Now click on the first PC response and Add. I've put,

It is you that will die. I shall raise your body into an undead servant to replace those you have destroyed.

Click on this branch of the dialogue. We want the creature to simply attack after this branch of the dialogue. Click the Actions Taken tab and then the Script Wizard button that looks like a red wizard's hat. Tick Perform an Action and click Next, Attack, Next, Finish. You'll now see a script has appeared in the box probably called at\_001. at\_ scripts are action scripts written by the wizard.

Click on the second PC choice and Add,

The hermit is a fool but I will bargain for the chalice. Give me the key to my crypt and I will give you the chalice.

Again I want the PC to have a choice. Click on this and Add.

No you can't be trusted. I will kill you and take it from your decaying bones.

Click Add again and,

OK. Here's the key. Give me the chalice and I will leave you in peace.

Under the first option we need combat again. Click on it to highlight it, select the Actions Taken tab. Put at\_001 (if that was the name of the wizard's script) in the box and you should see the attack script appear below it.

Highlight the second dialogue and click the wizard button under the Actions Taken tab. Tick both Give Rewards and Take from Player then click Next. By Give Item click the ... button. Navigate to the custom/plot items, select the chalice and click OK, Add. Click Next. Put the Tag of the Crypt Key that you noted above (probably CryptKey) in the box under Take Item (by tag) and click Add, Next, Finish.

As that was a bit complicated it's worth having a look at the script to check it's done properly. There should be two sections, clearly a give item and a take item. You should be able to see the name of the chalice and the key in there, if you can't then you missed a button press along the way – probably the Add button after you selected each item.

We have one bit of PC dialogue left without a creature response. Select it and Add,

Then go your way foolish mortal.

There's no need to have any action script after this so click Done. It will prompt you to give a name to the conversation, for ease of finding it among many other conversations you might create put something like the creature. Click Ok and back at the main screen press the Save button.

### Tidying up the crypt.

We may have to come back here with the toolset later to place links between the hermit's and the creature's conversations. Both conversations have to make sense. For example: if the PC has spoken with the creature he'll want to be able to report that to the hermit. For now though there are some loose ends that can be tidied up.

The creatures dialogue. This works if the PC chooses to fight the creature. But what if the PC trades the key for the chalice then talks to the creature again? He gets the same conversation again which is senseless. To fix this we have to do the following.

Open the creatures conversation and highlight the PC's line, "OK, here's the chalice..." Add a line for the creature,

“You are wise to trade rather than anger me. Now be gone before my patience ends.”

Highlight the new line, click Actions Taken, script wizard button, tick Set Local Variables, Next, type `traded_key` in the box next to `int`, put a 1 in the box next to constant `int`, Add, Next and Finish. You should see that a script has been added called something like `at_004`. What we’ve done is place a local variable onto the PC. Any time later we can check if that variable has been set to 1, if it has then we know the PC traded items with the creature.

Now go to the Root of the creature’s conversation. Highlight Root. Add a new line,

“Why do you bother me again? We both have what we want. Be gone fool!”

This will appear at the bottom of the conversation. But we need it at the top. Why? Well we’re going to put a check in it to see if the PC has already traded, we need the check to be made before the creature says, “You have invaded my lair...” If the PC has already traded then he will say, “Why do you bother me...” instead. To move this line to the top of the conversation click and drag it there.

With the line still highlighted we’ll put the check in. Click Text Appears When, script wizard button, tick local variable, Next, type `traded_key` next to `int`, put 1 next to constant `int`, Add, Next and Finish. Make sure that the `traded_key` is spelt exactly the same in both scripts. We now have a line that the creature will speak only when the PC has a local `int` on him set to the value of 1.

It just remains to add some PC responses. I’ve put two:

I have decided that I cannot let you roam freely. You must be destroyed.  
Sorry. I didn’t mean to disturb you. I’m going.

I’ve highlighted the first line and added the attack script (probably `at_001`) onto its Action Taken. When you’ve finished click Done, OK and save the module again.

OK. So what if the PC just attacks the creature? He might expect to find the chalice on the corpse. We could just put a chalice into the creature’s inventory. But if the player traded for the chalice and then killed the creature we would have two chalices. See how complicated simple things can get? We could use a custom script to solve this but for this module we’re trying to avoid that.

The solution is to put a key into the creature’s inventory that opens a door to his treasure vault. We can set the door’s lock so that it will only open with that one key.

Firstly make the key just as we made the keys to the crypt and the grotto. Call it Vault Key. Put it into the creature’s inventory by going to its Properties, click Inventory, Custom Items, the + next to Plot Item, click and drag the Vault Key over to the contents. It should appear there.

Now create the vault. I’ve made a little room leading off from where the creature is located. Use the Doorway in the Terrain list and put a metal door in it. Put a tick in the door’s Plot box. Click the door’s Lock tab and tick both Locked and Key Required

to unlock or lock. Type VaultKey into the box next to Key Tag.

Lastly place the treasure with the chalice in it. I've used the placeable: Treasure – High – Chest. This item is pre scripted to put some good random treasure into itself when opened. Go to its Inventory and add the chalice to its contents.

Save the module.

### Conversation Cleverness

A couple of matters regarding the writing of conversations. The conversation editor is a powerful tool and it's a good idea to know your way around it. Moving the mouse cursor along the icons up the left side of the screen reveals what they do: Add, Copy, Cut, etc. If you right click on the line in the conversation that you are working on most of these options are repeated.

One command that is only available by right clicking is Test. This excellent function lets you test the logic of the conversation by running through how it will play out in the game. It doesn't run or check any scripts attached to any parts of the conversation. It is a lot easier to check for logical answers and responses in your conversation with this rather than staring at the conversation tree which can get confusing. I'm always missing endings to branches in the conversation and this is great for finding those.

When you click on a line in the conversation it gets repeated in the Text box at the bottom. You can edit the line in the text box. If you right click inside the text box you'll see one or two options: Insert Token and (maybe) Check Spelling. The spelling option will only appear if you have an appropriate word processor installed on your computer (like Word). This is the way I like to check the spelling in my conversations. At the moment I seem to have lost this option, I've upgraded to XP and HotU since last using it and now it doesn't seem able to see my version of Office. O well...

Insert Token. Mostly this is used to insert words into the conversation like the PC's name and race. If you want the npc to speak the player's name put the cursor at the spot in the text line where you want the name to appear, right click, Insert Token, FirstName and OK. <FirstName> now appears at that point in the text but when it is spoken in game the PC's name will appear. To change the colour of text (highlight it) you can use the Start- words. For example put <StartAction> where you want the new colour to start and </Start> where you want it to stop. Always put the </Start> there even if it's at the end of the text line.

Insert Token can be even more powerful than this. When you click on it you will see another tab appear called Highlight. Action and Highlight are for automating the text colour change you'd like. Type in the text you'd like to see in a different colour and the <StartAction>\*\*\*</Start> is put in for you. With Skill Check you can select which skill you are going to check for but the action it performs is identical to the others. It doesn't write the skill check script for you – you have to use the script wizard to add that in.

## Creating the spooky woods

We probably started with the most difficult area in the crypt. Doing the woods is going to be a doodle compared to that but there are a few things that we'll look at that weren't needed in the crypt.

Open your module, right click on Areas and click New. Name it Creepy Woods and select Forest. Click Next, 8x8 is an OK size so just select Next again. Tick Launch Areas Properties Dialogue, Finish, select the tabs as follows:

Visual: Select Exterior Foggy

Advanced: click the ... button next to Loading Screen, uncheck Use Random Loading Screen and select the spooky Forest 05 picture. Click OK.

Click OK and you should see a nice 8x8 forest. Put the Use Area Lighting and Fog buttons down and it will look suitably spooky. Lift the Fog button while you work on the area.

Select Terrain – Cliff and put some cliffs down along one side of the map. We need an entrance for the hermit's cave in those cliffs so select Groups – Exit 2 2x2 (which is a cave exit) and plant it among those cliffs facing into the map.

Next we need some ruins and for these there's Groups – Ruins 1 and Ruins 2. Features – Ruin and the Terrain – Wall looks pretty run down too. I've put a road (Terrain - Road) between where I want the PC to start (among the ruins) and the cave. By laying the road in broken strips I'll give the impression of an old run down road. Some of the road tiles have rocks, pools and stone heads attached to them. If you don't like the look of the road it gives to you just click again on the same spot until it fits with what you desire.

Finally we need a crypt entrance. Any of the following look pretty good: Groups – Temple, Groups – Exit 1 or Features – Exit. With either of the Exits you'll notice that you can't put a door into it. If you choose these then you'll have to put an entrance room in your crypt with an inner door allowing access to the rest of the crypt. We need a door to put a lock on that will require that crypt key we made. I choose the temple for simplicity.

The temple comes with two stone doors but we only need one. We can either delete one (right click, delete) or make it non opening (right click, Properties, tick Plot and under Lock tick Locked and Key Required. I choose the latter and put a description on it to the effect that it could not be used. On the other door set it to plot, locked and key required too but here put the tag of the crypt key (probably CryptKey) in the space for the Key Tag. Unless the PC has the key from the hermit this door will not open and it cannot be broken down.

The last thing we have to do with our crypt door is to set its transition to the crypt. Firstly change its Tag to TempleDoorToCrypt, Right click, Properties, Area Transition and Setup Area Transition. Change the Target Area to The Crypt and wait

while the engine finds all those doors in the crypt. Select the one you intended as the crypt entrance and click OK. When it asks if you want to save the area click Yes. If like me you'd forgotten to put a door in the crypt entrance you'll have to go back to the crypt area and do that, change its Tag too.

What happens when the PC dies? Nothing could be simpler. Put a waypoint where you want the PC to respawn and give it the tag `NW_DEATH_TEMPLE` and that's it. The standard scripts take care of the rest.

Now how about those neutral birds and angry bears? We'll have to create two custom creatures and a custom bear skin to put into the bear's inventory.

First the bear skin. Click Paint Items, Custom, right click on Armor and select New. From the list select Miscellaneous Medium, put the Name: Bear Skin, Next, open the list to miscellaneous – other, Next, tick Launch Item Properties and Finish. Under the Appearance tab select a picture of a skin (\_006 looks best) and under the General tab put the value 1000 in Additional Cost. That'll make it valuable to sell.

Now the bear. Click the Paint Creatures button; select Standard Monsters – Animals – Bear. Right click on Black Bear and Edit Copy. Black Bear is a CR2 monster, to make it CR1 for our lowly PC change its Classes in Animal from 3 to 2 and lower its Base Hit Points (under Statistics) to 8. Open the bear's inventory, click Custom Items, Miscellaneous, Other and drag the bearskin into the creature's inventory. While the bearskin is highlighted tick the droppable box. I've also gone into its Inventory – Natural Equipment and binned its special bite attack. When you're happy click OK.

Next the birds. Select Standard Monsters – Birds – Raven, right click and Edit Copy. Click Edit next to Conversation, Add and put

Squawk. Hail thee fair Ranger.

Highlight this line, start the script wizard, under What Conditions... select Class, Next, select Ranger from the drop down list, Add, Next and Finish. Now the raven will only say the line if a ranger tries to converse with it.

I've padded out the conversation a bit more with questions the Ranger might ask and suitable answers. When you're finished save the conversation as raven, click Done and OK. We should now have a black bear and a raven in our custom creatures list. Notice that under the Advanced tab for these creatures that the bear is already in the Hostile faction and the raven is in the Commoner faction so we don't need to change that.

Place the birds. Click on your new raven and place a couple on the map far apart. Right click on one and select Create Waypoint. Do this a few times until you have at least five. Spread out the waypoint and click on the raven. You'll see a white line appear joining up the waypoints. This is the path that the raven will take, wandering between the waypoints while the game plays. Arrange the waypoints into a suitable route for the raven. Because both ravens have the same tag they will both follow these waypoints. If you like you can change the tag of the other raven and give it a set of waypoints too. Try to keep the waypoint route free of obstacles – no need to give the

creature's path finding AI a headache.

Bear encounters. Click Paint Encounters, Custom, right click on Normal, New and Next. From the custom palette select monsters, animals, bear and black bear. Click the -> button to put it into the creature list, Next, change the name to bears and Finish. We now have a custom encounter with our black bears. Paint three or four encounters with bears. As we did before with the encounters in the crypt give them a spawn point each about ten meters from the trigger. I've painted the encounter triggers very large to make them difficult to miss. Three or four valuable bearskins should give the PC enough gold for that +1 sword and other equipment.

### The Hermit's Cave.

Finally we come to the last area,

This should be the easiest area and the only completely new thing that we have to deal with is a merchant. After I've completed this area I'm going to post my version as-is without any bug testing so anyone who wants to can see what a mess I've probably made of it. Thus the de-bugging of the module will be a shared part of this exercise.

Open your module, right click on areas, select New, type The Hermit's Cave and select Mines and Caverns. Then: Next, reduce the size to 6x6, Next, tick Launch Area Dialogue Properties and Finish.

Area Properties: Under Visual choose Interior Magical 1, under Audio change the Environmental Audio Effects to Cave and under Advanced change the Loading Screen to Mines05 instead of Random. I intend to put a bit of water in my cave. Click OK, Apply, OK.

Now try to remember which way the door faced that enters this cave and place the exit in this area to suit. You don't want the player to feel switched around. I'm using Features – Exit3 as the transition between here and the woods and putting it on the east side of the map. If at any time you've been rotating the map and can't remember which is east or west click the look down eye button, Reorient Camera, and this will set the map back to the orientation that the player will see.

Keep in mind that we need a place for our hermit to live and a place for the grotto. Use the Terrain to paint an area matching these criteria. My area has an outer room and doorway to where the hermit will be. From there I've put two other doorways, one leading to what will be a bedroom and the other to the grotto. Beyond the door to the grotto is a bridge going over some water. Trying to place bridges over water can be frustrating as you are constantly faced with only a red box where you want the bridge to go. Red means the bridge can't go there while green means it can. The restriction is that there needs to be a clear tile of water on each side of the bridge.

Doors. First set the transition back to the woods. If like me you forgot (again) to change the tags of the exits you'll have to do that before setting up the transition. Place stone doors in the doorways. Set the door into the grotto to plot, locked and requiring a key with the tag GrottoKey.

Now for the placeables. We can assume that the hermit keeps everything tidy so no need to be putting garbage all over like we did for the crypt. In the outer room I've simply put a useable/plot notice board with a description on it telling the reader that he is entering a holy place suitable only for calm and contemplative thoughts and that any violent emotions should be left outside. In the first inner room I've placed benches, urns, vases, candelabras, potted plants and an altar to suggest a place where worship might take place. In the hermit's bedroom I've put simple carpets, a bedroll, a bearskin rug, bookshelves, candelabras and a bench to suggest a spartan but scholarly life.

In the grotto I've put some ice flows and boulders around one section that has a pool in the corner. By placing Shafts of Light (under visual effects) in the pool I've made it look special. In front of the pool I've put a useable/plot Fountain, changed its name to Holy Spring and given it a description that it might hold magical powers. If you set the fountain lower into the cave floor you'll make it look more a part of the room. Do this by right clicking on it, select Adjust Location, change the Z position to -0.3 and click Apply. Finally put a sound where the grotto is, I chose Magic Crystal, Neutral and enlarged its Positioning to a 20m cut off and raised it to 3m height.

For a bit of magic open the properties of the fountain and put the script `x0_startconv` in its OnUsed. This is a standard script that you'll find in the All Resources section of the script editor and what it does is start the object's conversation. In its conversation (under the Advanced tab) put one line: 'You feel restored' with a single PC response of CONTINUE. In the Actions Taken part of the first line put another standard script: `x0_d1_heal_pc`

Now when the PC uses the magic pool he gets fully restored. Excellent.

After looking at that great mass of standard (pre written) scripts in All Resources of the script editor you're probably wondering what they all do and how many others you can use without learning how to script. If you open a few you'll see that they are all headed by a comment describing what they do, however most are useless on their own. Some interesting ones: those labelled `nw_t1_...` are trap scripts. `x0_trap...` are projectile trap scripts. Those with `_s0_`, `_s1_`, `_s2_` or `_s3_` in them are spells or spell-like effects. Ones with `_sc`, `_pcis` or `_has` in them do checks to see if a creature has a certain ability.

Don't get too distracted because we haven't finished this module yet.

First let's put down a merchant. Click the Paint Merchants button that looks like a stack of gold. Look down the list for Weapons and Armor Store. The second one contains +1 items. Click on it then click on the map to place it. It looks like a regular waypoint. Open its properties and change its tag to `hermit_store`. Easy

Let's create the hermit. Start the creature wizard, Next, select human, Next, hit the X to get rid of the Fighter class and Add cleric. Raise the cleric level to 9, Next, select a suitable portrait (`hu_m_02`, `05` or `42` look OK), Next, select Merchant, Next and give him a name. I put Hermit Thendry. Next then select where he will appear in the custom lists, I choose custom 1. Next, Next, tick launch creature properties and

Finish.

In the hermit's properties open his inventory and strip the armour and shield by dragging them to the bin. Let him keep his weapon just in case the PC forces a fight but move it from his hand to his inventory. Give a suitable robe; cleric's robe looks OK. Under Appearance change his head; I like the look of HEAD005, 022 or 031. Check to see if the head and the portrait match close enough. Again under Appearance click Colour and change the skin and hair colour to match the portrait.

Under Basic click Edit next to Conversation. We need to create dialogues for several situations. As explained before the situation that happens first (the first time the PC speaks to the hermit) must appear last in the dialogue tree. Since this conversation is complicated if you're a conversation newbie I advise you download my version of the module to have a look at its layout. Below I'll skim through the major sections and how to build them. I have these introduction lines in this order:

- Thank you for your help with that creature. It's good to have the chalice back.
- +Have you recovered the chalice yet?
- +Hello again. Have you more skins to trade or would you like to hear about the other task I have for you?
- +Welcome again.
- +Welcome pilgrim. It has been a long time since I had guests. Did you have much trouble with the wild bears?

Under the last line I've put a simple chain of conversation options where the PC asks about the bears or what this place is and the hermit offers to trade bearskins for gold or items and says a little about the shrine. In the last part of that chain click Actions Taken, the red script wizard hat and set the local int spoke\_hermit to 1.

For the, 'Welcome again,' line I put a Text Appears When script by starting the wizard and checking for the int spoke\_hermit being set to 1. Under that I put the following PC options...

- +I have some bearskins to trade.
- +Can I visit the shrine?
- +Tell me who you are again.

Under the first line put a check to see if the PC is carrying any bearskins. Click Text Appears When, wizard hat, Item in Inventory, Next, type BearSkin (if that is the tag of the bearskin item that you made), Add, Next and Finish. Continue that chain of the dialogue with an offer to trade and an offer for a more difficult task. Somewhere in that chain put an Action Taken script which sets the int has\_traded to 1 so that we know the PC has succeeded at trading bearskins.

Where the PC says, 'let's trade' we need to start the merchant. On that line, click Actions Taken, wizard hat, Perform an Action, Next, Start a Merchant, put hermit\_store in the Script Tag box, Next and Finish.

After the hermit's offer of a more difficult task the PC can say, 'Tell me about the other task'. Here the hermit talks about the stolen chalice and offers to give the PC the

key to the crypt if he will try to recover it.

Under the second line, Can I visit the shrine, put two npc responses. The first to say, 'Everyone is free to visit and you already have the key.' The second to say, 'everyone is free to visit the shrine,' and to give the PC the key. The first line must have a check to see if the PC has the key, this script will need the tag of the key. The second line will have and Actions Taken to give the grotto key, this script needs the key's ResRef.

The third line has a link to a part of the conversation from the first introduction. To create a link to another part of the conversation right click on the part you want to link to, right click and select Copy. Go back to where you want to link from, right click and select Paste as Link.

The, 'Hello again...' line has a Text Appears When script checking if the PC has the int has\_traded set to 1. The PC dialogue options are almost exactly like the previous line with all the same PC options plus one. The extra one is a link to the, 'Tell me about the other task.'

The, 'Have you recovered the chalice yet?' line has a Text Appears When script checking that the PC has the crypt key. You'll need the tag of the key for that script.

Under this line the PC's dialogue options are all the same except for a line, 'Yes, here is the chalice.' That will need a Text Appears When to check for the chalice. After that the hermit congratulates the PC and gives rewards. Here also you need to set the int job\_done to 1.

The, 'Thank you,' branch merely checks for the int job\_done being set to 1.

Now have a look over your conversation for missed dialogue branches, missing Text Appears scripts or dialogue options that don't make sense. You might check your spelling while you're at it.

### Writing the Journal.

Every module, even a simple one like this, needs a journal. It helps to define the module's story and reinforces the information that the player should gather (but sometimes doesn't) from the conversations. If there are sub-plots in your module then they should each have their own journal entries.

Click Tools, Journal Editor and the journal opens. It looks a lot like the conversation editor but is more basic. All you have to do is enter a category for the story or each sub-plot, then a series of descriptions, called entries that follow those categories.

Click Add. A new line appears called Category000. Rename it, The Hermits Chalice, and change the Tag to the same. The priority is where it will appear in the list of journal entries that the player is presented with. As we are only going to have one journal category the priority is unimportant but usually, since this is the main story of

the module, its priority should be set to Highest.

Click on The Hermits Chalice category and Add. A new line appears called Entry001. Click on this and change it in the Text box to,

I have entered an area where my adventurer's skills are needed. A religious hermit who maintains a holy shrine is having trouble with the local wild life. Angry bears are scaring away the pilgrims that usually visit his shrine. I have offered to clear the woods of bears and in return he promised to buy any bearskins for a good price.

Highlight The Hermits Chalice category again and Add. A new line appears called Entry002. Click on this and change it in the Text box to,

I have dispatched bears from the woods around the hermit's shrine and he has offered me a good price for them. I should think about buying better equipment from the hermit and perhaps I will visit his shrine. I suspect there is more adventure in this area and will talk to the hermit again.

Highlight The Hermits Chalice category again and Add. A new line appears called Entry003. Click on this and change it in the Text box to,

The hermit has told me of a darker evil in the area. There is a, 'creature' locked inside the nearby crypt that has stolen a chalice from the shrine. I have been offered the key to the crypt if I will attempt to retrieve the chalice.

Your entries may differ from mine depending on the exact story you have in mind. Continue adding entries until you have completed your story. On the last entry tick the box, Finish Category.

There are two ways to start or advance the player's journal. The first is via scripting and we're not covering that here The second, easiest and most useful is via the conversation editor.

Open the hermit's conversation. Highlight the line where the hermit tells the PC about the bears. Click Other Actions, √ under Journal, select The Hermit's Chalice and leave the entry number at 1. If you click Edit next to the Journal category box the journal opens and you can check that you have selected the correct entry number.

Further up the conversation highlight the place where the PC offers Bearskins to trade. Click Other Actions, √ under Journal, select The Hermit's Chalice and change the entry number to 2. Find where the hermit tells the PC about the creature and select journal entry number 3.

Continue putting the journal entries into the appropriate moments in the dialogue. You may need to open the creature's dialogue and add entries there, this will depend on the story your module has.

Often you will find that you need to alter the order of your journal entries or insert new ones. Notice that you can't click and drag entries around. Bummer. But you can cut and paste. So it is possible to add a new entry, cut the entry above it then paste the

entry you just cut back onto the end of the category. This is an awkward way of rearranging the order of entries in a category, awkward but possible. It also means that if you have already placed journal updates in your conversations you have to go back and change them because the numbering will have changed. A neater method is to renumber the entries from the start. Instead of 1, 2, 3, 4, etc make it 10, 20, 30, 40, etc. Then if you need to insert an entry between 20 and 30 you just number it 25 and it automatically gets put into the correct place.

### Debugging the module.

Not everything is going to be right first time. It's easy to forget things like setting the right loading screen. Even when something works it may not fit in with the style of the module when it is actually played. The only way you are going to discover these errors is to play the module. Then you have to debug it, that means put it right and make it work.

Normally before expecting someone else to play your module you would test it yourself. You are the best judge of your own work, as only you know what is supposed to happen. However, for this tutorial I wanted a, "warts an' all" perspective so I got famous mod-reviewer Dallo to play through my version of The Hermit's Chalice. This was his response:

### Bug Report by Dallo

**BUGS/MAJOR ISSUES:** I found it impossible to complete the bear-culling quest for the hermit. I checked him for a response with 2, 4 and 6 bearskins. A game stopper, obviously.

Combat requirements too difficult, even on easy.

**MY STARTING POINT:** Lvl 1 neutral evil fighter, female.

**CREEPY WOODS:** The loading screen choice was a good one and that's about where my plaudits for this area end. The music and ambient sounds I found totally inappropriate for a "creepy woods", and so of course I didn't find it creepy at all. The lighting could have been darker; there could have been a lot more foliage (especially dead trees etc). Edges of the area went off to infinity, which is contra to accepted guidelines these days. I thought tile selection could've been a lot better. There were no map pins. There was no placed sound for the waterfall. The raven didn't have a soundset, and there appeared to be no convo option for a ranger or druid (though there might be. I haven't opened the toolset). The raven also got stuck near a building i.e. it's WPs are obviously poorly placed.

I would've also liked to have seen an NPC there to help orientate me just a little, and perhaps help me fight the bears, which were too hard for a level 1 fighter with a shorts word. A black bear will kill you with 2 hits. One if it's a critical, perhaps. And 2 black bears are simply impossible. I would've liked to have seen some means of victory at hand. A long sword and shield on the body of a fallen adventurer, a bow laying about somewhere (so you could at least get a volley in from the rampart). Etc etc

One door of the temple is plot and the other isn't, but obviously had a zillion hps. I left my fighter whacking it for 2-3 mins while I hit the fridge for a beer. This was just

annoying. Either make the bash doable or make the door plot.

HERMIT'S CAVE: Lot's of things about the build for this area were admirable. Lighting and sound was fine. However, the area near the Hermit was way too cluttered, and a pain to navigate. I got stuck a few times between him and the altar, for example.

A pile of books in one room is useable but doesn't have an inventory. I neglected to check whether it had a description.

Again, the waterfalls in the area didn't have placed sound. The shrine did, and it looked and sounded great. What you did there was excellent. Great use of placeables, and the effects with it were good. Though I would've preferred to see some description of what had happened to the PC in the placeables convo.

Again, no map pins in this area.

The merchant's shingle with the cool description at the start of this area is called "Merchants Shingle".... Another name please...

The Hermit's convo was not detailed enough. I got a journal entry for the bear quest, but the journal conveyed way more info than the actual convo. Er????

At no stage were the actual details of the bear-culling quest actually spelled out. I've killed 6 bears, and that was hard enough. It talks about a "cull" not a life-time annihilation of bears. Of course, I died so many times that the experience gain of killing that many bears was negligible (died 5 times - the Hermit killed 2 of the 6 bears...)

I thought night and day cycles could've been tweaked to be a bit more player-friendly.

I dislike bear hunting at night so I had to just go do something for a while till 6am rolled around. Boring.

I hit a game stopper, and I found the module to be generally lacking "finish". Lots of little things annoyed me eg the key to the door of the shrine wasn't destroyed when I used it. I hate inventory clutter.

Cheers, Dallo

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### Fixing the module

Now, we have something to get our teeth into. See how awful this looks, how virtually unplayable the module is? Don't get down hearted, fixing it is really not that hard, it just requires time. We'll cover it point by point as in Dallo's report.

First point, the hermit isn't responding to the PC having bearskins. Open the hermit's dialogue and look for the line that says, 'I have some bearskins.' There is a Text Appears When script (sc\_004) and looking closely at it I've put the tag as bearskin. But: the tag of the bearskins I've created is BearSkin. Syntax is important. So first job will be to Edit sc\_004 and change bearskin to BearSkin.

Combat too difficult. This refers to the black bears. Now I've already created a custom black bear for these encounters that has a CR of 1. However by looking at the encounter triggers I see that they are set to create the default number of bears Min:2,

Max:4. So I can either change the Minimum Creatures to one or further reduce the strength of the bear so that it is CR ½. I decide to go for a mix of the two. I change two of the bear encounters to a Minimum Creatures of 1. Second I edit the bear. Open the bear, reduce his natural AC to 0, his Dexterity to 10, his Strength to 15 and his hit points to six (its total hit points is ten with its Constitution bonus). I also ticked the box 'Leave Lootable Corpse' and increased the value of the skins to 2000 so that with only four skins the PC could still buy that +1 long sword.

Woods not creepy. Open the Area Properties. Under Audio I see that the Music, Day is set to the default: Forest Day 1, change that to Forest Day 2 for much less cheerful tune. Forest Night is not that spooky either so let's change it to Sewer that is much tenser. While in the area properties open the Visual section, click on Exterior Dark, Apply and Customise Environment. Under the Environmental Options open now we can get some of our fog back by raising the Sun – Fog Amount to 15%. As suggested let's plant a few dead trees from the Parks and Nature palette. I've placed some sounds: Leaf Rustles and Twig Snaps from the Nature palette plus Animal Cries Day and Animal Cries Night from the Animals palette. I've set all the sounds to Play Everywhere and animals to play only during day and night respectively. Finally there's no sound on the waterfall outside the cave so I've put a Waterfall Large sound there.

"Edges of the map going off to infinity," is a bit a problem with the woods tile set. We can encompass the area in cliffs, pits or wall. None of these is entirely satisfactory but pits are better so I've chopped off bits of the eastern edge of the area with them. It looks a bit better.

Map Pins. Didn't I do them? O no... Go to Waypoints and choose Map Note. Put one on the crypt and one by the entrance to the hermits cave. Open a waypoint, choose Advanced and look where it says, <place text here>. Alter the text as appropriate to Crypt and Hermit's Cave.

I've simplified the waypoint path for one of the ravens and added a set for the second that I'd left without any. A sound set for it is a good point so I've put c\_raven\_... noises in the Play Sound under Other Options in its dialogue.

Being able to find some better weapons in the woods from a fallen adventurer is an excellent idea. I've put some bones on the top of the stepped ruin with a crossbow, some bolts and a cure light wounds potion by him. After reducing the bear threat our 1<sup>st</sup> level fighter should be able to handle things now.

The door to the crypt should only open with the crypt key so I've made it plot and hopefully we've fixed the game stopper above so that now the player can get in there. The fact that one door leads nowhere is bad so I've deleted it and filled the cavity with garbage and rubble.

The Hermit Cave. I've put map notes for the exit and the grotto. I've; changed the name of the shingle to Welcome, spaced out the placeables in the chapel and changed the On Open script of the bookpile to x2\_02\_low (a built in treasure script) that should put some gear in there. For the waterfalls I've used Waterfall Small.

The reference to the 'placeables convo' must mean the healing pool that simply says, "You feel restored." So, I've put an option for the player to drink from it or leave it alone.

I kinda see what he means about the difference between the conversation and the journal. In the conversation it says, 'cull the bears' while in the journal it says, 'clear the area of bears.' It's all bear hunting and I don't really see the need to change it. And what's the difficulty with bear hunting at night? If you get a difference of opinion with a play tester (as you always do) it's best to discuss it rather than over rule. They've spent hours (maybe tens of hours) checking your module and they have earned the right to an opinion. So I'll share thoughts about the morals of bear hunting with Dallo and decide if it's really appropriate.

While testing these changes I found some other problems. I'd put the wrong coffin / containers in the crypt. These were locked and were for custom area treasure sharing (which I might cover in the next tutorial) so I changed them to standard Sarcophagus' from the Containers palette. The skeleton spawn points that I had by the sarcophagi were spawning 3 monsters, which didn't make sense so I changed it to one. The creature didn't drop the key to his vault when I killed him because I hadn't set it to droppable – another game stopper. So I fixed that. Also I found the creature too easy to kill so I gave him a few more hit points.