

5E
system

ADVENTURE I™



Requires the use of the
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® PLAYER'S HANDBOOK,
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ADVENTURE I



**You are what you do... when it counts.
Heroism is not a fad.**

INTRODUCTION

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Sean Holland deserves a huge thank you. His contributions to this book cannot be measured.

DEDICATION

You.



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Adventure I, a collection of d20 Fantasy scenarios from Alderac Entertainment Group. These modules were first released at the dawn of the d20 movement under the “Adventure Keep” title, providing Dungeon Masters with ready-to-play adventures: one-shot stories or links to home grown campaigns. For this collection, we retooled all of the game rules to comply with the new 3.5 Edition of the d20 System. In addition, we added dozens of options for running the adventures, expanded advice for the DM, created random encounter charts, helped with PC knowledge and information regarding the adventure, made bardic knowledge more useful, and added (new) improved encounters that are sure to make the adventures stellar. In some cases, the plots themselves are reworked to get the most drama out of your game and to keep internal logic consistent.

ADVENTURE CONDITIONS

Naming conventions are universal. If the adventures are worked into an ongoing campaign, replace any NPC or settlement name with one suitable to your campaign environment. Replacing an important NPC in the adventure with one the PCs have a relation with adds verisimilitude to the adventure and raises the interest level quite a bit.

Throughout these adventures, some items are standard. All doors, for example, unless specifically noted in the text have the following statistics:

▣ **Basic Wooden Door:** hardness 5; hit points 10; break DC 13; locked DC 15.

Not all doors may be locked. Make individual determinations depending on the circumstances or simply roll 1d20 (1–10 it’s locked, 11–20 it’s open).

For lighting conditions, if there is constant activity with creatures capable of producing their own light (either with torches or lanterns), consider the lighting normal. Some kind of light is still required for creatures with low-light vision. On less-traveled pathways or personal rooms, the PCs should produce their own light-sources.

BARDIC KNOWLEDGE

A majority of the adventures have sidebars included specifically for the Bardic Knowledge special ability. This presents DCs for bards using their special class ability to gain information or obscure knowledge relating to the adventure at hand, giving PCs helpful information once they have a basic idea of what is involved. These also double as Information Gathering skill checks, or other “in the know” skill DCs at the DM’s discretion (Knowledge (local) for rural town information, Knowledge (nobility

and royalty) when dealing with kings, lords, and nobles, and Knowledge (arcana) when magical lore would be in question.)

These were specifically written in order to detail what lore would be readily available, what would be told to other passing bards, or what could be known within reason. Just because a bard can take 20 on his Bardic Knowledge check doesn’t mean he gains access to knowledge that simply has never been relayed. Telling him “the secret of the adventure” takes a lot of the mystery away from game play, which would effectively make this book useless, the monster stats aside.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Nearly every adventure has a random encounter table. These encounters are to extend the adventure by providing encounters the PCs would have en route to the adventure. Very rarely are these to be used while actually partaking in the adventure itself. They can represent hunting creatures, NPCs with information, or encounters with creatures with clues as to what the adventure has in store. Unless otherwise instructed, don’t use them once the actual adventure plot is underway; use them for the journey there.

City and town adventures are a different matter, however. Frequently the adventure begins with the PCs already in the adventure setting, and there is no set path of action as there is in a dungeon setting. In this case the random encounters are more like incidental mishaps the PCs will naturally run into throughout the adventure, as the city won’t sleep or cooperate with the PCs for convenience’s sake!

SCALING THE ADVENTURES

Every adventure is intended for a level range of PC participating, and gives basic advice on the types of skills or classes that will be useful. In each case there is a 3-level spread of suggested PC levels. This is intentional. Take this example from the adventure Dawn of the Serpent:

“This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 5 to 7. Wilderness skills are invaluable in this adventure.”

If you have four or five PCs, the optimal level of the PCs participating is 6th. If you have fewer than four PCs, the ideal level for the party is 7th. If they have more than five PCs, the ideal level should be 5th.

Noting wilderness skills should clue you in that a ranger or druid in particular would be of benefit to a party undertaking the adventure. These aren’t strict requirements, and not having a ranger or druid for this adventure doesn’t make it impossible for a party not so equipped to complete it. These are suggestions to help the

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DM gauge the theme of the adventure. Undead are a special situation. A party tackling an adventure featuring a majority of undead are going to be at a severe disadvantage if they don't have a cleric in their ranks.

If your PCs are of a level simply unsuitable for the level range suggested, there are still ways to retool the adventures.

- **Mostly Roleplaying:** In this instance the adventure features a healthy mix of roleplaying and investigative skills. There is usually one specific threat monster and it's not encountered often. In this case it would be wise to simply replace the major creature with another monster of the appropriate challenge rating to your group. For example, the medusa in the adventure *Dawn of the Serpent* is a CR 7 creature. If you have a group of 3rd to 4th level PCs, replace the medusa with another stone-making creature, a basilisk, which is CR 5. If you have a group of 10th level PCs you could instead use a greater abyssal basilisk, which is CR 12.
- **Combat Variety:** These types of adventures feature an array of encounters with classic D&D monsters of all types. Without rewriting the adventure or spending hours reworking stats, there are some easy fixes you can implement. If your group is having an easy time of

the adventure, add an additional creature or two to the encounter. Don't do this abstractly, simply consult the DMG for the consequences of adding creatures with differing CRs to an encounter and the overall effect it has on the challenge to a group of PCs. At its most basic, taking 1 or 2 creatures away makes a combat easier, while adding 1 or 2 could make it nearly impossible.

In either case, simply adjusting the stats on the fly can make all the difference in combat. Each creature or NPC with weapons, armor or tools has them listed in their stat blocks. Replacing a guard's chain mail with leather armor and retrofitting him with a short sword instead of a battleaxe can make a difference. A creature could be wounded, having just fought a battle with another monster not in the adventure. In this case, it confronts the PCs with less hit points, perhaps 1/3rd or even more off its total. And for spellcasting encounters, not every monster with spell-like abilities or NPC sorcerer will have saved all its powers especially for the PCs...

For monsters, there is excellent, easy advice in Chapter 4 of the *Monster Manual* detailing how to "level up" monsters to make them more challenging.

Do not try to equip NPCs with magic items outside of their range just to get an edge on the PCs. Every magic item you introduce for your foes is generally going to find its way into your PCs' hands, eventually. Don't equip an NPC with anything you don't want your players to take advantage of.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE "MYSTERIOUS" STRANGER IN THE TAVERN

1d20 Adventure Trigger

- 1 An NPC relative of the group approaches them for help.
- 2 An omen or spirit talks to a druid or ranger filling out the adventure's details.
- 3 An organization (guild, church) of one or more PCs has an interest in the area of the adventure and asks them to investigate.
- 4 Bard needs to fulfill a specific quest to "live the experience".
- 5 Have a fellow adventuring band be celebrated as high heroes with special treatment just before dropping your hook.
- 6 Have the one telling the tale get the name of the villain wrong, accidentally naming a villain the PCs thought they defeated.
- 7 Have the possible tales of treasure be overly exaggerated for greedy PCs.
- 8 Illusionist needs to see first-hand a specific monster so he can accurately depict it with illusion spells.
- 9 Necromancer PC or NPC needs an anatomical examination of the featured monster.
- 10 NPC has something the party needs (exotic equipment, spell to trade, gems to purchase) and lives in the adventure location.
- 11 Paladin needs to atone for a minor transgression and is assigned the adventure by his church.
- 12 Passing bard tells the tale of the plight of the village or town where he last played.
- 13 PCs come across a (false?) treasure map leading them to the adventure location.
- 14 PCs come across a deed to a small house, keep or dilapidated inn in the region of the adventure.
- 15 Rival dares the PC to undertake the quest.
- 16 Romantic interest of the PC has a vested interest in the adventure location; dealing with the threat would endear them to him or her.
- 17 Swap out the race of those in trouble with one represented by the majority of the PCs (humans become elves or dwarves).
- 18 The Monk's spiritual journey guides him to the adventure's location.
- 19 While researching something unrelated, have the PC stumble on information about the specific magic item or spell related to the planned adventure.
- 20 While scrying on something totally unrelated, give the PC a glimpse of the terror happening in the adventure location.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS AND MONSTERS

Each of the adventures features a new magic item or spell and a new monster. These have been collected for handy reference in the appendices (magic in appendix A and new monsters in appendix B). An abbreviated stat block of the monster's abilities are in the adventure where it appears, but for a full description, refer to the appendix.

DIVINATION AND MAGICAL ANSWERS

For adventures of 5th level on, take the time to be aware of the possibilities (and limitations) of various divinatory spells in your game. In particular, the spells *arcane sight* and *greater arcane sight*, *augury*, *commune*, *contact other plane*, *detect chaos/evil/good/law*, *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, *discern location*, *legend lore*, *scrying* and *greater scrying*, *true seeing*, *vision*, and *zone of truth* can wreak havoc with mystery and suspense if your PC spellcasters are of high enough level to cast them. Taking a little time to brush up on exactly how they work can save lots of headaches when running the game.

At the same time, these powers are a part of the game. Just finding the spell or ability that foils the spell and equipping an NPC thus makes the PC spellcaster feel useless (especially if divination is a specialty). Find mundane reasons to avoid relying on the spells. How a specific NPC is portrayed goes a long way towards who PCs to target with divination spells.

CAMPAIGN OPTION AND FURTHER ADVENTURES

The adventures in this book can be run as separate one-shots or a DM can carefully craft an ongoing campaign with them, taking PCs from 1st all the way to 12th level and beyond! We have made this especially easy. Many of the adventures featuring towns and cities take place within the same region; one city in particular, Desburg, is a veritable hotspot for adventure activity! Additionally, at the end of each quest is a section providing direct links with a few of the next higher-level adventures and how to work them together. Make sure to take advantage of these so the PCs don't simply stumble from adventure to adventure as your campaign grows.

MONSTER AND NPC COMBAT TACTICS

Many of the NPCs and monsters in this collection are built with special abilities that can be subtle. Even feats can sometimes be overlooked in play when your attention is on a creature's attacks and armor class numbers. Pay special attention to the abilities an NPC would use to boost his own powers providing he is prepared for the PCs (spells like *mage armor* or *fox's cunning* for example). Feats like Power Attack and Dodge can be used every round; be aware of them!

Last but not least, overlook the more interesting d20 System combat options available to everyone. Disarm

maneuvers, bull rush attempts, and weapon sundering and grappling attacks all have specific rules making some creatures naturally excel at them. Take advantage of these to make combats more exciting and to keep the PCs on their toes.

DM TIPS AND TRICKS

If in any instance your players go off the beaten path, remember to keep naming conventions fluid while maintaining logic. What this means is, if they hear of a specific adventure (villagers swamped by monsters) in a particular town and decide to pass on the chance to go elsewhere, the name and location of the town simply changes to the next settlement they come across (also plagued by similar monsters). Instead of being "hired" to tackle the threat, they walk right into it and have little option but to react.

If a vital NPC is killed, make sure whatever information or item important to that NPC makes its way to another NPC still living so the story can go on.

Finally, there are a number of adventures herein that treat the adventuring population as little more than mercenaries. If your group won't easily fall for helping any sod with a sack of coins and require other hooks to land them, try on some of these optional triggers as opposed to "the hooded guy in the tavern".

FINAL THOUGHTS

The adventures here feature battles with undead and demons. There are murder mysteries and deceptions crafted to confound the PCs. There are mad wizards, mindless minions, scheming devils and NPCs just trying to get along. There are adventures in deep glades, high mountains, vast deserts and the open seas. Take advantage of the themes introduced to extrapolate additional dangers for your PCs. In particular, the DMG has excellent rules and advice for running PCs through out all sorts of terrain hazards. Crossing a mountain range or swamp is only as easy as you let it be!

Last but not least, be gentle but tough. If you are sure the party will have their hands full with the major encounter or foe, don't beat them up senselessly with random encounters just to wear them down, especially without magic healing on hand. But don't pull the punches if the PCs fail to prepare or equip themselves against their foe. The best gaming war stories are about the games where the PCs triumphed over a greater evil or won by the skin of their teeth, not about the time they trounced the demon with a shot or two then waltzed to the local tavern for a brew and some rest and relaxation.

Each adventure is a real war story for your campaign. Game on!

Chapter 1:

Bring Him Back Alive

Levels 1 to 3

by Matt Forbeck

It's a warm summer evening, close to perfect. A cool breeze blusters in from the northwest, carrying with it a promise of the encroaching autumn, but at the moment it simply brings you a welcome relief from the heat of the day.

After spending most of your summer delving into the deeps and dungeons beneath the land, you're just happy to be able to relax in the comforts of a world in which the sun sets and rises with some measurable regularity. For what seems like the first time in ages, you're not so worried about what might be lurking just around the corner or behind the next door as you are about the terrible prospect of draining dry the local tavern's stores.

You have just finished a marvelous dinner at the Stumble Inn. (The weathered wooden sign creaking over the door depicts a boot clad foot tripping over a lump of gold.) The innkeeper and his wife — Carbad and Kamalda, an honest pair of retired farmers as weatherbeaten as their place's sign — have hauled out their very best just for you. They know that you are restless to be on your way and that they aren't bound to have the pleasure of your company much longer.

Just as you are about to raise a toast to your deserving host, a rumpled shape staggers through the inn's open door.

Startled by the intrusion, but before you can act, the figure crumples to the floor. The innkeeper dashes over and turns the stricken stranger onto his back. "Marcaeus!" he gasps, and then looks back up at you, his face filled with dread.

You rush to the fallen man's side. He's alive, but barely so. He's literally been beaten within an inch of his life, and his right leg is twisted at a decidedly uncomfortable angle.

You roll the man over onto his back, and he groans loudly as the bones in his battered leg crunch together.

His eyes flicker for a moment and then open wide. His gaze, clouded by his intense pain, fixes directly on you.

Just before he mercifully passes out, he reaches up and grabs you by the front of your shirt.

"My son," he whispers though his battered lips, "they've got my son!"

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 1 to 3.

The farinae (see New Monsters — Appendix B) are a race of tiny humanoids living in the ruins under an ancient keep in the wilderness. They are a fairly primitive people, basically hunters and gatherers. They are immortal, and their needs are few, so they haven't bothered to develop the ways and means of the more "sophisticated" races.

Also, they're bred to be followers. Well, almost all of them. In fact, the farinae had a king until recently — the only farinae who was capable of leading — but he was killed in a tragic hunting accident.

The farinae knew that this was a problem. They needed a leader, and there weren't any to be had. In fact, no one could really remember there ever being more than one king farinae around at a time.

That's when they turned to Kamalda, their shaman.

As shamans go, Kamalda is moderately talented, although she's picked up some tricks over the years. Most

BRING HIM BACK ALIVE

of these are in the shape of the spells she managed to rescue from the keep of the wizard that created the farinae.

Kamalda is also the keeper of the farinae's greatest treasure: the fae talisman, an amulet that changes the wearer into the race of the person that gave the amulet to the wearer. Better yet, it does something to the wearer's brain to make him think he's always been a member of that race and would have no reason to want to change back.

HISTORY OF THE FARINAE

The farinae are a race of humanoids created by an ancient wizard to act as his loyal assistants. He created them with an inbred desire to follow his orders, and created the king farinae when the farinae grew too numerous for him to track. Most of the farinae have long since forgotten this fact, but Kamalda has kept her mind sharp and clear.

The immortal farinae have outlasted their old master and their original king. They have replaced their king once before. Kamalda grabbed the fae talisman from the wizard's castle after he died, and she used it to create the last farinae king from a thief the farinae caught poking around.

With the death of their latest king, the farinae needed another. To that end, they waited along the main road into the nearest village and then ambushed the first tiny group of travelers to appear.

The ambush victims were two men — a wealthy merchant named Marcaeus and his adult son Lucente — who were quickly overcome by the sheer numbers of the farinae. The son was bound and gagged and taken off to the farinae burrows, while the wealthy father was left alone and unconscious on the side of the road.

HELP!

The action starts up here directly after the events described in the introduction to this adventure.

Give the PCs a moment or two to get themselves together. They may search the area outside the inn for potential dangers, but the only things to be found are their mounts and the innkeeper's ornery mule.

Carbad identifies Marcaeus as a wealthy merchant who regularly travels the road that passes by the inn. In fact, Marcaeus often spends the night in Carbad's inn. Usually, however, the merchant has his son Lucente with him. The fact that the young man is missing causes both Carbad and Karna much concern.

Carbad checks Marcaeus's purse and finds 50 gold pieces inside. The merchant is known to not carry large amounts of cash on him, preferring instead to leave larger sums spread throughout banks in the cities he visited. Even so, apparently the motive of the attack was not robbery.

CREATION MYTHS

Exactly what are the farinae? While this adventure assumes a wizard created them long ago, this explanation is a little vague for an ongoing campaign if the PCs have questions...it also helps set the tone for the rest of this adventure.

Since wizards are rarely so talented as to invent a new race outright, chances are this ancient arcanist dabbled in modifying an existing fey race. The question posed to the DM then is this — what was at the core of his reasoning?

Seelie Court: The old wizard modified a sprite, pixie, or other prankster/friendly fey to help him in his experiments. While he is long dead (and the farinae have developed into a culture of their own), they are not malicious. They are simply unaware that their actions are unacceptable (or, more likely, if they just get away with this little crime and no one notices they will be okay). This presents a morally gray roleplaying bent to solving the situation and allows you to introduce them to your campaign without undue bloodshed. In this case use the farinae as written, with a chaotic good outlook on life.

Unseelie Court: The old wizard modified a dark fey from the unseelie court who delights in the pain and suffering of mortals, and he was modifying them to be his personal guardsmen and protectors while he locked himself away for more experiments. In this case the farinae are fully aware they have captured a mortal to transform him into their king, and intend to keep him no matter what. In this case, the farinae attempt to deceive the PCs at every turn, lying to them when questioned, outright attacking them, and setting ambushes and traps to keep the PCs at bay. Therefore, the PCs are in mortal combat with a dark, artificially created race that gets what they have coming to them. In this case modify the farinae as written to be chaotic neutral in nature, not chaotic good. Perhaps they have a little bit of orc blood too, just to make the slaying of the farinae that much more palatable.

Not the Farinae?: Perhaps the farinae are some other race from your home campaign. Feel free to replace them with nixies, sprites, the graben or nith from Mercenaries, or any of a host of OGL monsters that fit the feral fey template.

Marcaeus has seen better days. His face is battered and bruised, as is most of his body, which the PCs may discover if anyone bothers to check his wounds. Strangely, the vast bulk of the injuries have been sustained on his legs.

The man is near to death. If any of the PCs uses some healing magic on him, Marcaeus revives almost immediately. Otherwise, he isn't lucid enough to speak until the following morning.

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THAT WAS NO ROBBERY

When Marcaeus is well enough to talk, he asks to see the PCs. If they're not around, Carbad the innkeeper brings them to the man. Read the following to the players aloud:

Marcaeus sits up in his bed, thanking those around him for their help. He is quiet for a moment then until Carbad asks him what happened. At that, the man's face blanches and his eyes widen with fear.

"It was horrible," he says, his voice barely a whisper. Any hint of the merchant's natural joviality is gone.

"My son Lucente and I were riding along the road, just like we've done dozens of times before. Less than a mile from here, though, in the shadow of those old ruins, it all fell apart.

"One moment I'm riding along, and the next thing I know my horse throws me...

"I looked up and see Lucente fighting these things for his life. He has his sword out, and he's laying about to his left and right, but there were just too many of them.

"I managed to struggle to my feet, and then they're on me as well. As short as a human child they were, with skin the color of black earth, and eyes as round and dark as those of some netherworldly beast.

"And they had spears.

"I fought back as best I could, struggling to get to my horse's body and recover my own blade. But it was no use. Before long, I was overcome. As I fell once again, I saw Lucente being dragged from his horse. I cried out his name as he disappeared from my view.

"Then I knew nothing.

"When I awoke on the road later, night had fallen, and Lucente and the devilish creatures were gone. And so were our horses. I staggered off in the direction of the nearest haven I could think of, and I ended up here."

AN OFFER MADE

Once Marcaeus finishes his story, he tries to vault out of the bed to set to searching for his son, but his strength fails him. He looks to the PCs for help. He is prepared to offer them each 500 gold pieces — collectible in any nearby city — for the safe return of his son Lucente.

The only real clue that the PCs have to go on is that the attack happened "in the shadow of those old ruins." Marcaeus is, of course, referring to the ruins of the castle of the wizard that created the *farinae* so long ago. Carbad can provide information regarding the ruins. It is rumored that ages ago they belonged to a hermetic wizard, but no one ventures near the place any longer. "Superstition and all that."

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard of the *farinae* and their history. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Knowledge check.

DC 10 Legend has it that a wizard who once lived in the castle created the *farinae* centuries ago. Little is known concerning these small beasts.

DC 15 The wizard supposedly crafted his creations from the souls of those foolish enough to approach his home.

DC 20 It is said the *farinae* are an offshoot of the fey. They are simple pranksters, fluent in making humans serve their games and riddles. (seelie) they are malicious little schemers, capable of unspeakable evil. (unseelie).

DC 25 It may be too late for young Lucente. He may still be alive in those ruins, but if he is, he's sure to be in the form of a *farinae* himself. It seems the *farinae* have their old wizard's power to twist the form of the living to their will.

Assuming the PCs decide to accept Marcaeus's offer, they can set off right away — or as soon as dawn breaks. In a case like this, there is no time to waste.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the PCs balk at going after Lucente, Marcaeus is prepared to double his initial offer. After that, he balks. He can't place a price on his son's life, but he doesn't have much more money available. He offers the PCs continuing work as a guard for him if they like, and at a handsome salary, on top of the reward money.

If need be, Marcaeus actually falls on his knees and begs for help. At this point, Carbad himself goes out and straps on his sword, scowling at the PCs all the while. Even at his age, he can't stand to see a man in such dire straits without lending him a hand, and he curses the PCs as cowards or cutthroats for refusing.

If the PCs still refuse to help, you could have the *farinae* attack them as they pass each other on the road, but you may not want to bother. If the PCs really are that afraid of a little adventure, they should probably be left alone.

INTO THE WILDERNESS

In this section, the PCs make their way out to the ruins, find the entrance to the farinae lair, and — with any luck — rescue Lucente. As the PCs reach each area, read the boxed text to them aloud.

THE ROAD TO RUIN

The road to where Lucente and Marcaeus were assaulted is easy, wide, and clear, and it runs east and west. Under Marcaeus's directions, you head west into the forest. Few travelers are on the road, and none of them have much if anything to say to you. The overall trip isn't too long, perhaps an hour of travel time total.

As you make your way down the road, the ruins of the wizard's castle come into view atop a hillock off to the northwest.

Soon you come to the arena of the attack. The dust of the road still bears sticky bloodstains. Signs of struggle are at the edge of the road, where Lucente presumably made his stand. Broken weapons and blood lead off into the woods. The carcass of a recently slain horse just inside the tree line suggests someone or something hastily covering its tracks. A few birds have already started to pick at the body.

Exactly how much time has passed depends on how long it took the PCs to arrive. It is possible that crows and maggots emerge from the carcass.

The trail the farinae took back to the castle ruins should be obvious. Ten farinae were involved in the ambush, and they dragged Lucente and one of his horses a mile or so up the hill to the ruins. A blind man could follow this trail; it requires a Survival check (DC 5).

Even if the PCs do not have any way to follow the trail, they soon realize the only real lead they have is the ruins.

Random Road Encounters

The untamed wilderness between the tavern and the ruins can be a dangerous place. As the party travels along the road, consult the following table to see if anything befalls them on their travels.

ROAD ENCOUNTERS

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No encounter
11	Giant Bombardier Beetle (hunting)
12	Giant Fire Beetle (foraging)
13	Gnoll Scout (for a possible advanced force)
14	Grigs, 1d3 (recently escaped slaves from a nearby underground cavern system)
15	Merchants (unaware of the farinae danger)
16	Snake, Medium Viper (hunting)
17	Spider Swarm (feeding)
18	Stirges, 1d4 (hungry for blood)
19	Stray Mule (from an adventurer or merchant who got in the farinae's way)
20	Wolves, 1d3 (hunting)

THE RUINS

The ruins sit in a large circle about 50 yards wide. It's obvious that this "castle" is in fact little more than a keep, a fortified home for a powerful wizard and perhaps a few friends, but little more. When compared with the castles of the leaders of the nearby nations or city-states, it pales in size.

Even then, it has been a long time since there was enough of a building here that was capable of keeping the rain off, much less serving as fortification against intruders. Most of the walls have tumbled down entirely, leaving only a few teetering towers of moss-covered stones that look like a good breeze might be able to bring them low.

Still, this is where the trail leads.

The trail ends as the PCs follow it onto the keep's battered floor. Looking for a secret door requires a successful Search check (DC 10). Every time a check succeeds, roll 1d4 and consult the table below for the item uncovered. For each additional search, add +1 to the 1d4 roll, going to the next highest result if you roll a duplicate discovery. Persistence pays off.

Roll	Result
1	Rats' nest
2	Spider's parlor
3	Cat's lair
4	The chimney
5	Alcove
6+	The trap door



BRING HIM BACK ALIVE

1. Rats' Nest

You peer over a suspicious-looking rock and spy a hole leading down into the darkness beneath the keep. You nose your way in closer to get a better look, and you suddenly realize that the darkness is looking back.

Encounter: The PCs have disturbed a nest of rats. The six beasts rabidly attack as soon as any hero gets within a foot of the opening to their underground warren.

🐭 **Dire Rat:** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+1 (5 hp); Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

2. Spider's Parlor

There's a bit of an overhang left attached to a crumbling wall here, just enough to give you an idea of where the ceiling of the once-room you're now standing in must have started. As you peer up under the ceiling remnant, you notice a large, thick web flapping gently in the breeze.

Encounter: Most PCs are going to be on guard for a spider leaping down on to them from above, but they're looking in the wrong direction. There's a monstrous spider here all right, but it's of the trapdoor variety. If the PCs don't manage to find the spider's hiding hole with a Search check (DC 20) below them, the spider surprises them as it bursts from beneath an innocent looking piece of sod.

🕷 **Monstrous Spider, Large:** CR 2; Large vermin; HD 4d8+4; hp 22 hp; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +9; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +3*, Jump +2*, Spot +4*

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d6 Str; secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is constitution-based.

Web (Ex): A monstrous spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

Tremorsense (Ex): A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

Skills: Monstrous spiders have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A monstrous spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Monstrous spiders use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher.

* Hunting spiders have a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks.

3. Cat's Lair

It seems like all sorts of wildlife are living in these ruins, taking whatever shelter they can from the elements. But apparently not all of the creatures are technically of the wild variety. As you poke around in a pile of rubble, you spy a battle-scarred cat with its back up against a wall. As you get closer, you notice that the poor thing smells like it's been rolling around in rotting meat. It hisses as you approach.

Encounter: This zombie cat was once the familiar of the old wizard who lived in this keep. It died before its master did, but the wizard couldn't bear the thought of life without his cherished pet. He called on the dark forces of necromancy to grant some semblance of life to the creature. Although the wizard is long gone, the cat still follows its master's final orders: to protect the place from humanoid intruders.

🐈 **Zombie Cat:** CR 1/8; Tiny undead; HD 1d12+3; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk -3 melee (1d3-3), or -3 melee (1d3-3, slam); Full Atk -3 melee (1d3-3, 2 claws), and -3 melee (1d3-3, bite), or 0 melee (1d3-3, slam); SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 5, Dex 13, Con —, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

4. The Chimney

You notice a thin trail of smoke coming from the top of one of the larger remnants of the old keep, about 10 feet from the ground.

BRING HIM BACK ALIVE

Encounter: Getting to the top of the rubble requires a Climb check (DC 10), and there the PCs find the source of the smoke: a narrow chimney hidden in the ruined wall. The chimney is only about nine inches wide, making it almost impossible for anyone to get down it. Even if this were possible, the tiny traveler would have to be lowered nearly 100 feet down a smoke-filled chimney and into a roaring fire.

Anything dropped down the chimney may attract the attention of the farinae in the main hall. The same goes if the chimney is blocked. If either of these happens, the guards in the guard hideaway (area #1) are sent up to investigate. If they find anything, they instantly use their telepathic ability to alert the rest of the farinae, making it almost impossible for the PCs to catch them unawares, no matter the guards' fate.

5. Alcove

As you come around a large, tall chunk of the ruins, you discover a collapsed section where an alcove has formed. Perhaps this was once an entrance into the structure...and could be again?

Encounter: A refugee from another nearby structure where the hunting was good (until the area collapsed under the stress of age), a bedraggled and somewhat confused choker has taken up residence in this alcove. The alcove itself consists of fallen rock and debris, creating an 8-ft. high section about 10 ft. wide. Medium and Small creatures can easily explore within.

At first glance it appears lead to a secret entrance, as it rests against the old keep. However, this is the hiding place for a hungry choker. He's patient and quiet, waiting for a PC to get close. It takes 20 on its Hide check, making it hard to Spot (DC 30). A Listen check (DC 21) allows a quiet PC to hear something breathing in the darkness.

Tactics: Once a PC is within striking distance, the choker lashes out, attempting to choke and disable the largest PC. Because of the patient nature of the choker and the location of the ambush, allow the choker to roll two dice for its Initiative check; take the best result.

☛ **Choker:** CR 2; Small aberration; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d3+3, tentacle); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+3, 2 tentacles); SA Improved grab, constrict 1d3+3; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., quickness; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Hide +10, Move Silently +6; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy.

Constrict (Ex): A choker deals 1d3+3 points of damage with a successful grapple check against a Large or smaller creature. Because it seizes its victim by the neck, a creature in the choker's grasp cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a choker must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict. Chokers receive a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks, which is already included in the statistics block.

Quickness (Su): Although not particularly dexterous, a choker is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra standard action or move action during its turn each round.

6. The Trap Door

Encounter: The entrance to the farinae lair goes down into the earth at a relatively steep but navigable angle. It's topped by a wooden door covered with a thick layer of dirt and a thatch of overgrown grass. It's normally pretty hard to find, but dragging two horses and a grown man down through the doorway last night crushed enough of the grass around the area to make the doorway more than obvious.

THE FARINAE LAIR

No lights are in this lair. The farinae see just fine in the dark and don't need them. The PCs will have to track carefully just how their characters are seeing in the dark.

7. The Guard Hideaway

Once through the hatchway, you find yourselves in a low and tight tunnel leading down into the darkness at a sharp angle. The passageway is only about four feet wide and seven feet tall — just wide enough for a single-file line and tall enough so that an average human shouldn't bump their head on the ceiling. In other words, it's cramped, but not too bad.

Encounter: The rampway down into the farinae lair has three switchbacks before it reaches the bulk of the farinae in the main hall. At the second switchback, the farinae have installed a hideaway for guards in the wall of the passageway. Two farinae are always on guard in this hideaway. New guards rotate in six times a day, making for four-hour shifts per guard. To cause additional trouble for the party, the farinae could spread caltrops across some of the passageways or set up other small traps, perhaps using alchemical items (like a thunderstone) left by their creator.

If the PCs find the doorway and open it, the four guards alert their friends below telepathically and then immediately attack, hoping for surprise.

If the PCs fail to find the doorway, the guards wait for the PCs to pass them by and then sneak out of the room and follow the PCs. They telepathically alert their friends in the main hall, and just as the PCs are about to enter the main hall, the guards accost them from behind. The farinae in the main hall ready themselves at the same time, trapping the PCs nicely between them.

BRING HIM BACK ALIVE

Tactics: The farinae distrust strangers. If you are using the farinae as seelie, they don't really want to fight at all, but are interested in defending their home and people. If you are using the unseelie option, the farinae are just waiting for the right moment to assault the PCs.

If the PCs give in, they are stripped of their weapons and taken down into the main hall where every farinae in the place comes out to meet them. Attempts to keep any weapon, no matter how harmless it seems, are difficult (increase all DCs for altering attitude by 5).

Bloodthirsty, combative PCs are in for a shock if they initiate combat. The farinae (of either outlook) are ready to fight to the death, and aggressive PCs will surely have blood on their hands. If the PCs surrender at any point, the seelie farinae accept with little comment, no matter how many of their kin lie dead. The unseelie simply appear to accept, hoping to lead the PCs into another ambush later on.

8. The Main Hall

You make your way down the ramp, further into the depths beneath the old ruins, and you actually sense that the darkness up ahead is brightening a bit. As you go lower and lower, a faint scent of smoke reaches your nostrils, along with the smell of roasting meat...

You step into a large, high-ceilinged room. In the center stands a large fire, drafting up into a hollowed-out spot in the roof. Most of a half-cooked horse stands scorching on an unturned spit.

A number of tiny, ebony-skinned, hairless people stare at you, eyes as black as a shark, their spears at the ready.

The room's ceiling is 12 feet tall, while the floor is 60 feet square. The walls of the room are lined with shelves filled with the farinae's simple belongings.

Encounter: This is where most of the farinae live, eat, and sleep when they're not out hunting and gathering food. Currently, the farinae are preparing a feast with the flesh from Marcaeus's and Lucente's horses, a meal they hope to hold tonight to celebrate the arrival of their new king.

Eight farinae live in this room. They, along with the two guards, the queen, the shaman, and the king, make up the entire tribe. If you like, you can lower or raise the number of farinae in this room to prepare a more fitting challenge for your PCs. It is recommended that you have two to three farinae per PC, but you can go with even more if you like.

♣ **Farinae Guards:** CR 1/4; Small humanoid; HD 1d6; hp 3; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk +1 melee (1d6-1/x3, halfspear) or +3 ranged (1d6-1/x3, halfspear); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6-1/x3, halfspear) or +3 ranged (1d6-1/x3, halfspear); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tribal telepathy; AL CG; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +4; Dodge.

Tribal Telepathy (Su): Farinae can telepathically communicate with each other — or at least any other farinae created by the same wizard — at any range. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in a group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No farinae in a group is considered flanked unless all of them are.

Skills: Farinae receive a +3 racial bonus to Hide checks. This adds to their +4 bonus to Hide checks for being small creatures. This is already figured into the profile above.



BRING HIM BACK ALIVE

✦ **Kamalda the Shaman, Farinae Adp 2:** CR 1; Small humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp -1; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1/x3, halfspear) or +4 ranged (1d6-1/x3, halfspear); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1/x3, halfspear) or +4 ranged (1d6-1/x3, halfspear); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tribal telepathy; AL CG; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +4; Dodge

Tribal Telepathy (Su): Farinae can telepathically communicate with each other — or at least any other farinae created by the same wizard — at any range. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in a group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No farinae in a group is considered flanked unless all of them are.

Adept Spells Prepared (3/2; save DC 11 + spell level):
0—*detect magic, light, mending, touch of fatigue*;
1st—*command, sleep*.

Skills: Farinae receive a +3 racial bonus to Hide checks. This adds to their +4 bonus to Hide checks for being small creatures. This is already figured into the profile above.

Tactics: Each of the farinae attacks with a pair of spears.

They throw one first and keep the second for melee combat. If too many farinae are up front for the ones in back to attack up close, the farinae are not afraid to hurl a spear over the heads of their friends. Tall folk make great targets.

If the PCs surrender, they are brought here before the new king. Lucente is still a bit dazed by his transformation, but he refuses to believe that he was once recently a human. The only clue that the PCs have as to Lucente's true identity is that he is the tallest farinae around.

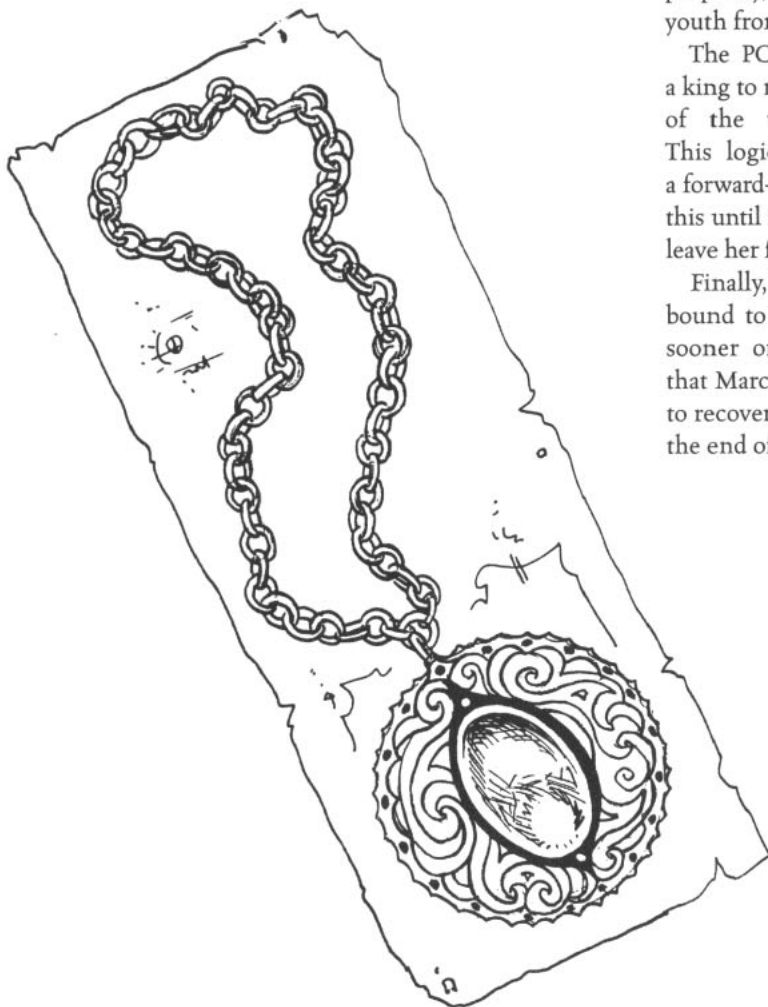
If the PCs plead their case well, the seelie farinae relent. PCs facing the unseelie farinae must show force or directly threaten the lives of the queen or shaman. This is enough for them to relent and hand over Lucente.

Kamalda, the farinae shaman, removes the Fae Talisman from around Lucente's neck, immediately transforming him back into his human form. The PCs are then free to take Lucente and go.

Of course, convincing the farinae that they don't need a king can take some doing. One of a few obvious tactics the PCs can use is to appeal to the farinae sense of propriety, pointing out they have stolen this innocent youth from his family.

The PCs can also argue that the farinae hardly need a king to rule over them like some kind of puppet version of the wizard who created them so long ago. This logic appeals most strongly to Kamalda, always a forward-thinking farinae. Queen Maralba argues against this until it's pointed out that the absence of a king would leave her firmly in charge.

Finally, the PCs can argue that the farinae's actions are bound to bring the wrath of the locals down on them sooner or later. There's a good chance, for instance, that Marcaeus isn't going to be satisfied until he manages to recover either his son or his remains. This could mean the end of the farinae.



BRING HIM BACK ALIVE

9. The Shaman's Quarters

This small room is filled with all sorts of things: pots of ointments, vials of strange liquids, scorched crucibles, and the like. In one corner stands a tiny, perfectly made bed. In another, a leather-bound book balances atop a polished podium. In the center of the room, the corpse of a halfling lies on a table, his body covered with hides.

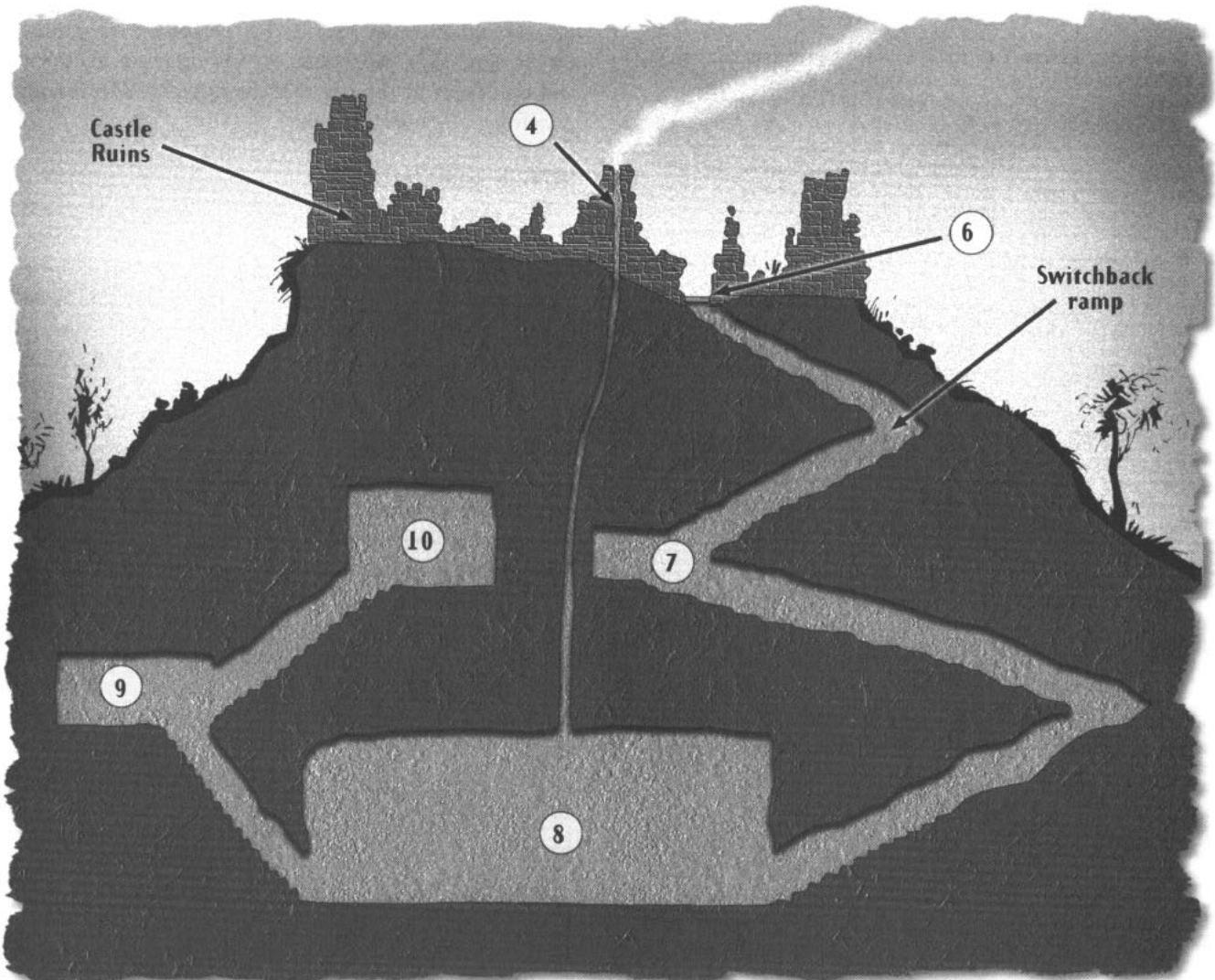
This is the home of Kamalda, the formidable farinae shaman. She experiments with creating potions, but she's not really all that successful. The room is 10 feet by 10 feet wide, and beside the bed on which the body rests, there is a bed for Kamalda, as well as a low desk on which rests the shaman's open spellbook.

Tactics: Once alerted to the PCs' approach, Kamalda immediately heads for the main hall where she can support her fellow farinae with her spells. These spells are all kept in her personal spellbook on the podium.

This is also where the body of the last king lies. His body is covered by rough-tanned hides, leaving only his head and feet exposed. This poor soul is a halfling that was caught snooping around the farinae lair 13 years ago and transformed into their king until his death.

10. The Royal Chambers

These opulent chambers are decorated with all manner of worthless, but pretty finery, not as well upkept as one might imagine. Two gilded but small thrones adorn the front section of the room, denoting this place as the royal chambers.



BRING HIM BACK ALIVE

This room is 40 ft. long by 20 ft. wide, and the ceiling is 10 ft. tall. This is the home of Queen Maralba and her new King Lucente.

▲ **Queen Maralba, Farinae Ftr 4:** CR 4; Small humanoid; HD 4d10; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +1; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/x3, halfspear) or +8 ranged (1d6+1/x3, halfspear); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/x3, halfspear) or +6 ranged (1d6+1/x3, halfspear); SA —; SQ darkvision 60 ft., tribal telepathy; AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +2, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Spot +2; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (halfspear), Weapon Specialization (halfspear).

Tribal Telepathy (Su): Farinae can telepathically communicate with each other — or at least any other farinae created by the same wizard — at any range. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in a group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No farinae in a group is considered flanked unless all of them are.

Skills: Farinae receive a +3 racial bonus to Hide checks. This adds to their +4 bonus to Hide checks for being small creatures. This is already figured into the profile above.

Possessions: Chain shirt, masterwork halfspear (2) [decorated with crow feathers].

▲ **Lucente, Farinae Exp 2:** CR 1; Small humanoid; HD 2d8; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d6-1/x3, halfspear) or +2 ranged (1d6-1/x3, halfspear); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6-1/x3, halfspear) or +2 ranged (1d6-1/x3, halfspear); SA —; SQ darkvision 60 ft., tribal telepathy; AL CG; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +7, Bluff +4, Hide +10 Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Profession (merchant) +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6, Use Rope +3; Dodge.

Tribal Telepathy (Su): Farinae can telepathically communicate with each other — or at least any other farinae created by the same wizard — at any range. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in a group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No farinae in a group is considered flanked unless all of them are.

Skills: Farinae receive a +3 racial bonus to Hide checks. This adds to their +4 bonus to Hide checks for being small creatures. This is already figured into the profile above.

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, masterwork halfspear, peasant's outfit, crown of woven ivy.

The thing that makes Lucente stand out — other than the armor — is the fact that he's the tallest one in the group. This should hopefully help the PCs pick him out of the crowd and cause them to not harm him. Also, he wears the fae talisman prominently around his neck. It is both his badge of office and his curse.

Treasure: In the front part of the room are two gilded thrones (farinae-sized) worth 1,000 gold pieces each. Behind this is the royal sitting area and the royal bed.

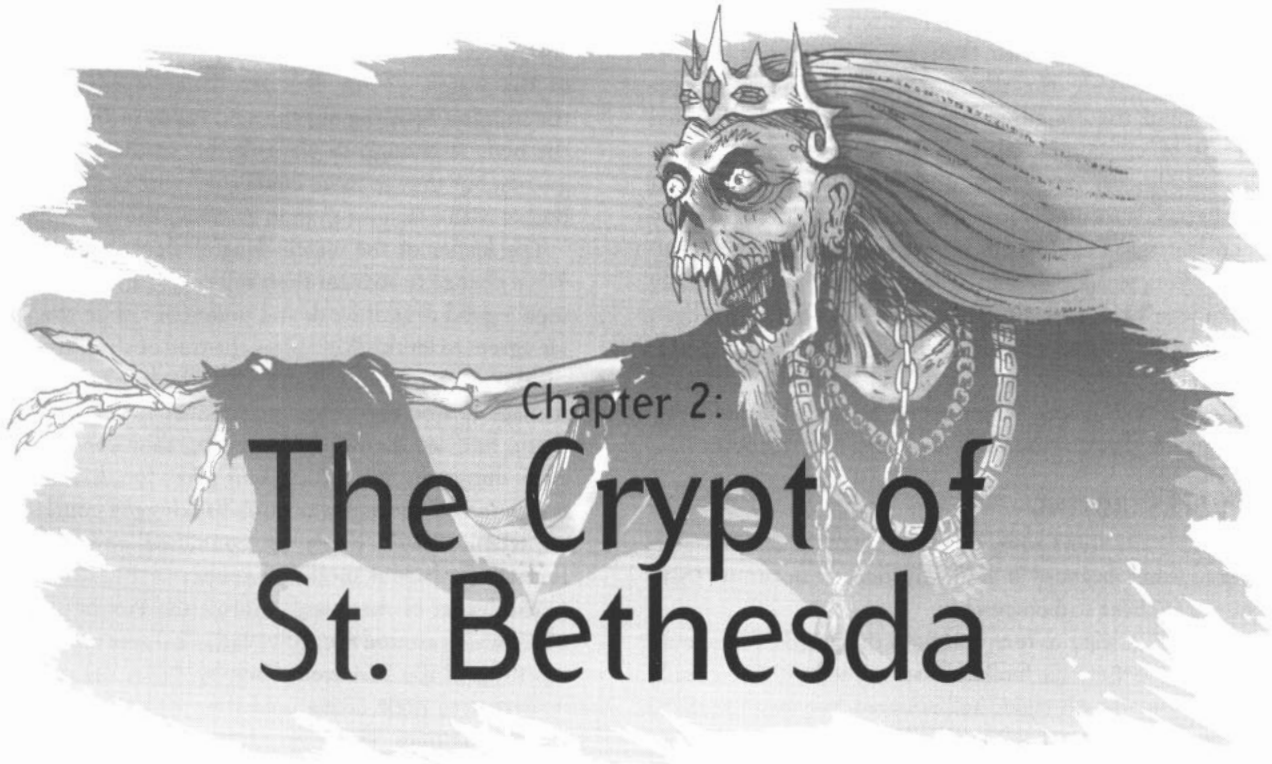
EPILOGUE

If the PCs fail, Lucente is doomed to spend his days as the king of the farinae, until he dies and is replaced by another soul.

If the PCs manage to get their hands on Lucente and remove the amulet, he instantly returns to normal. When they return Lucente to Marcaeus, the merchant makes good on his promise, giving the PCs each a handwritten voucher that they can cash in at a bank or guild in a nearby city. He also offers them jobs as his personal bodyguards. Either way, they can count on his undying gratitude and take heart in the fact that they have saved a young man from a life not his to live.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Just when the PCs think they've saved the day and try to relax, another wounded and beaten man stumbles into the Inn! He claims to have been traveling near the northern village of Treefall just two days' ride from here, when he and his mount were attacked by some horrible mutated bear-creature (see the adventure "Jerimond's Orb").
- Emissaries looking for a specific adventuring band (but unable to locate them) from the nearby kingdom of Azinth overhear the party's success from the city guardsmen and ask them if they would be interested in undertaking a mission for their liege (see the adventure "The Ice Caves of Azinth").



Chapter 2:

The Crypt of St. Bethesda

Levels 1 to 3

by James Macduff

Not all threats lurk in the wilderness, and not all dungeons lie far from the realms of the common man. The gravest threats appear in the heart of civilization, hiding beneath harmless veneers and waiting for the moment to strike.

You and your friends find yourselves in the large and prosperous city of Desburg, with money in your pockets and time to kill. You spend an evening engaging in revelry — drinking, gambling, dancing — then stumble back home in the wee hours of the morning. Your path takes you through an obscure area of the city: the cemetery district, where fields of graves jostle against ancient churches and family crypts. Off in the distance somewhere, you hear a scream, but there's no way to tell where it came from, so you ignore it. Rounding a corner soon after, one of you stumbles over something in the dark.

You think it's a pile of garbage, but closer examination reveals something grislier: a human corpse, its face frozen in fear. Several stab marks ooze fresh blood, and its flesh is marred by what appear to be acid stains. The skin is warm to the touch, and some of the injuries still smoke. He's not been dead for more than a few minutes.

The body shifts slightly as you examine it, and for a moment, you think the victim may still be alive. Then the truth reveals itself: small, sinewy worms, colored a strange lavender, twist and writhe within his clothes. They number less than 20 and seem to cluster near the acid burns. A faint trail of slime leads from the body to an open grate in the street, dotted with more of the

strange, lavender worms. The building above it, a towering wreck of a cathedral dedicated to someone named St. Bethesda, has been boarded up for years, but if you listen closely, faint noises can be heard beneath it.

"Halt!" The clink of mail, and the sound of running feet break up your examination. A squad of city guardsmen — several blocks away but closing fast — flash their lanterns in your direction.

"Murderers!" the cry goes up. "Halt in the name of the watch!"
This doesn't look good.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 1 to 3. The adventure plays better if none of the characters are from Desburg (or whatever city you set it in). A cleric (or two) is instrumental to any adventuring group.

As stated in the introduction, the party has stumbled onto a murder they now stand to take the blame for. With the watch bearing down on them and an obvious trail leading to a nearby basement grate, they have little choice other than to enter the opening and find the killer.

The man was killed by a wormwraith (see Appendix B), a hive-mind bundle of sentient worms hiding beneath a human shell. This particular specimen is growing old and wishes to pass on its seed before it dies. It emerged from its lair beneath the city, hid in a nearby alley, and killed the first passerby to wander along. It would have planted its seed (a small cluster of worms designed to grow within the

THE CRYPT OF ST. BETHESDA

victim), but the PCs happened along before it could finish. It quickly slunk back to its lair, where it hopes to wait until the ruckus has died down, then complete its work.

Unfortunately for the wormwraith, the PCs have uncovered the creature's lair. It resides in an extended series of catacombs beneath an abandoned cathedral. The cathedral originally belonged to the Order of St. Bethesda, a cult dedicated to Sharisis, goddess of mercy and spiritual healing. Once very popular, the order suffered from steadily declining membership and eventually abandoned the area altogether. The years have not been kind to their former home, and the structure now stands as a dilapidated eyesore. It also holds an extensive series of underground crypts, which some of the city's predators (human and otherwise) have used as a rallying point.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Some players aren't going to want to take the obvious path here, either because it honestly doesn't occur to them or out of sheer stubbornness.

If the PCs want to turn and fight the guards, you should point out to them the foolhardiness of such a plan. Not only are the guards well armed and armored, but there are many more of them than there are of the PCs. This particular contingent is better trained as well because they regularly patrol the dangerous district the PCs are now in. Additionally, more guards can be summoned in a matter of moments, and the PCs would likely find themselves quickly surrounded and captured if not killed outright for resisting arrest.

If the PCs try to run, they quickly find the watch is closing in on them from every angle. No matter which way they turn, they find guards encircling them and herding them back toward the scene of the crime.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard about this situation. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check.

- DC 10** The guards of this city, particularly the dangerous graveyard section, are highly trained individuals.
- DC 15** St. Bethesda was the leader of a cult dedicated to Sharisis, goddess of mercy and healing.
- DC 20** The cult suffered waning popularity and funding shortages in recent years, and abandoned their temple.
- DC 25** It's now a boarded up wreck, and some say there is a hidden catacomb network beneath its ancient walls.

If, for some reason, the guards capture the characters — whether the PCs are subdued in the course of arrest or are simply foolish enough to throw themselves at the mercy of the watch — the PCs are detained as suspects in the murder. Pointing out the acid burns or the worms on the body is enough to plant doubts in the minds of the guards, but they're more concerned with providing their bosses with a suspect than in catching the real killer.

The leader of the watch, Hurrel, decides to offer the PCs a chance to redeem themselves and save him and his men a good deal of work and potential risk to their lives. He agrees to let the PCs follow the trail of slime down into the open grate leading under the cathedral. If the PCs can manage to find the killer and produce evidence clearing them, he'll let them go. Otherwise, they can rot in the city's dungeons for as long as it takes for their crime to make its way through the city's backlogged court system — where they'll likely be convicted and sentenced to death for lack of another suspect.

The leader of the guard informs the PCs he's going to post a watch around the entire cathedral area until the next morning. If the PCs aren't back by dawn, the entire city is alerted to their crime, and they will find themselves wanted fugitives. Worse yet, the watch is sent down after them. The city's guards absolutely hate dealing with things beneath the streets of their home, and they're not likely to be in a forgiving mood when they finally find the PCs.

THE CATHEDRAL'S DEPTHS

As the PCs enter each room, read the boxed text to them aloud. The rest of the information is for you.

1. The Cathedral Basement

Entering the grate, you find yourselves in a large room containing all manner of discarded furniture. Pews, chairs, candelabras, and low tables lie in jumbled piles, covered in cobwebs and wood rot. This seems to be the basement for the abandoned cathedral above. A rubble-choked stairway can be seen to your left, and two empty doorways yawn at you from the far wall. The trail of slime ends here, fading into the filmy dust on the floor. Behind you, you can hear the footfalls of the approaching watch.

Encounter: With the guards still hot on their heels, the PCs should feel the need to hurry through this area, but curious characters may want to poke amid the furniture for hidden treasures. A monstrous centipede lurks in the wood. It does not reveal itself unless disturbed, but anyone who sticks his hand in the furniture gets a nasty bite.

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The centipede flees after it bites the intruder, scuttling up the rubble-filled stairway and disappearing among the fallen rocks.

The stairway is entirely blocked by the rubble. Any efforts to clear the rubble result in a cave-in. This causes 2d6 damage to anyone within 10 feet of the stairs; a successful Reflex Save (DC 10) results in half damage. Any PC with stonecunning (or similar) automatically spots the rubble's instability.

🐛 **Monstrous Centipede, Large:** CR 1; Large Vermin; HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 40ft.; 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +7; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1 plus poison, bite); SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Hide +6, Spot +4;

Weapon Finesse

Poison (Ex): A monstrous centipede has a poisonous bite. Anyone bit must make a Fortitude save DC 14 or suffer 1d4 temporary Dexterity damage. The save DC is Constitution-based. The indicated damage is both initial and secondary damage.

Skills: Monstrous centipedes have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Climb and Hide checks. They can use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher. Monstrous scorpions can take 10 on Climb checks, even if threatened or distracted.

2. Storage Cellar

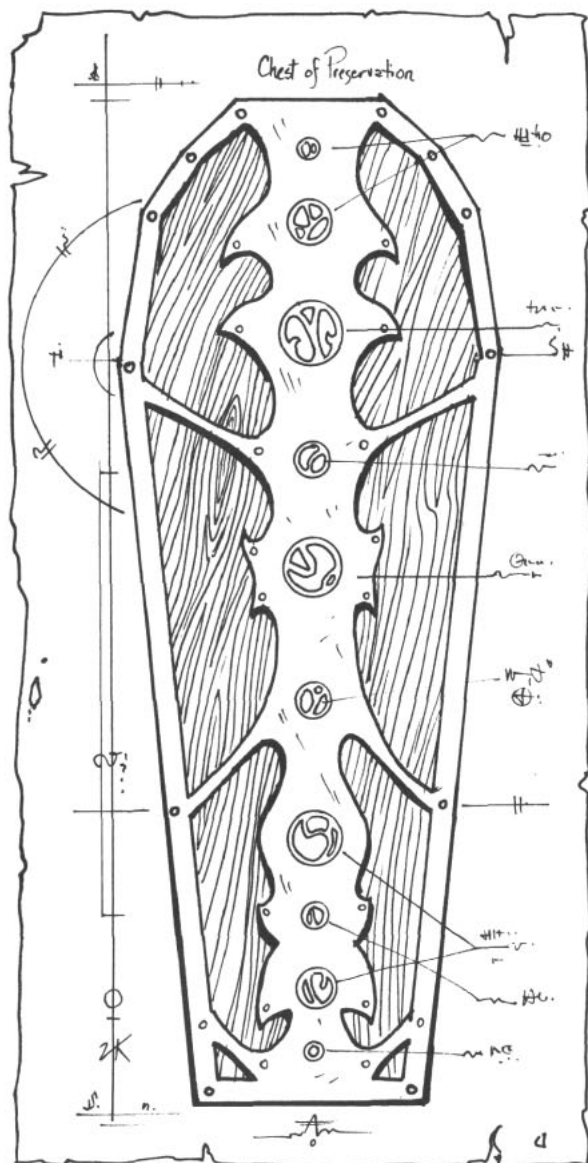
This small, cramped room contains crates of moldy hardtack and a row of huge wine casks propped up against the far wall. Signs of giant rats can be seen amid the debris: droppings, tracks, and pieces chewed out of the rotting food.

Encounter: There are no giant rats currently living here, although the evidence is overwhelming they did at one time. A wine cask in the far, right-hand corner has been made into a nest, which looks like it has been abandoned for some time, spoiling the contents. A hole has been dug in the wall behind it, large enough for the party to get through. It emerges into a stone corridor on the other side, leading deeper into the catacombs.

Treasure: A second cask of wine has survived the ages perfectly, and could be sold for up to 150 gp to a collector.

3. Library

The doorway into this room opens into a spacious stone chamber filled from top to bottom with a series of bookshelves. Tomes and scrolls, swollen with moisture and mildew, pack the shelves, some spilling out onto the floor. Most of them seem to be hymnals and religious texts dedicated to St. Bethesda's order to Sharisis. Several shelves are completely bare, standing out like missing teeth. A large, stone door can be seen in the far, left-hand wall. The words "The Honored Dead" are inscribed in common above the stone doorway.



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Treasure: The ghouls (area #6) confiscated the missing books for their nest. A thorough search of the bookshelves (which makes a pulpy mess of more than one text) produces a scroll with an *unseen servant* spell (written at 5th level). It is still barely legible. There are also three scrolls with *cure light wounds* on them (all written at 5th level). These scrolls are in good shape but require a Search check (DC 15) to uncover.

4. Crypt

A row of stone coffins lines the walls of this room, each inscribed with a name and the seal of St. Bethesda. A few bits of lichen grow along the walls, but as a whole the chamber seems remarkably free of the mold and decay covering the rooms you've seen so far. An opening to the left appears to lead deeper into the complex.

Encounter: When the wormwraith first took up residence here, it hired a necromancer to animate some of the deceased priests. Five skeletons dressed in robes of St. Bethesda wait in the coffins to strike. They rise with a howl and attempt to drive the party back into the library (area #3), then bar the door. If they succeed, they then return to their coffins.

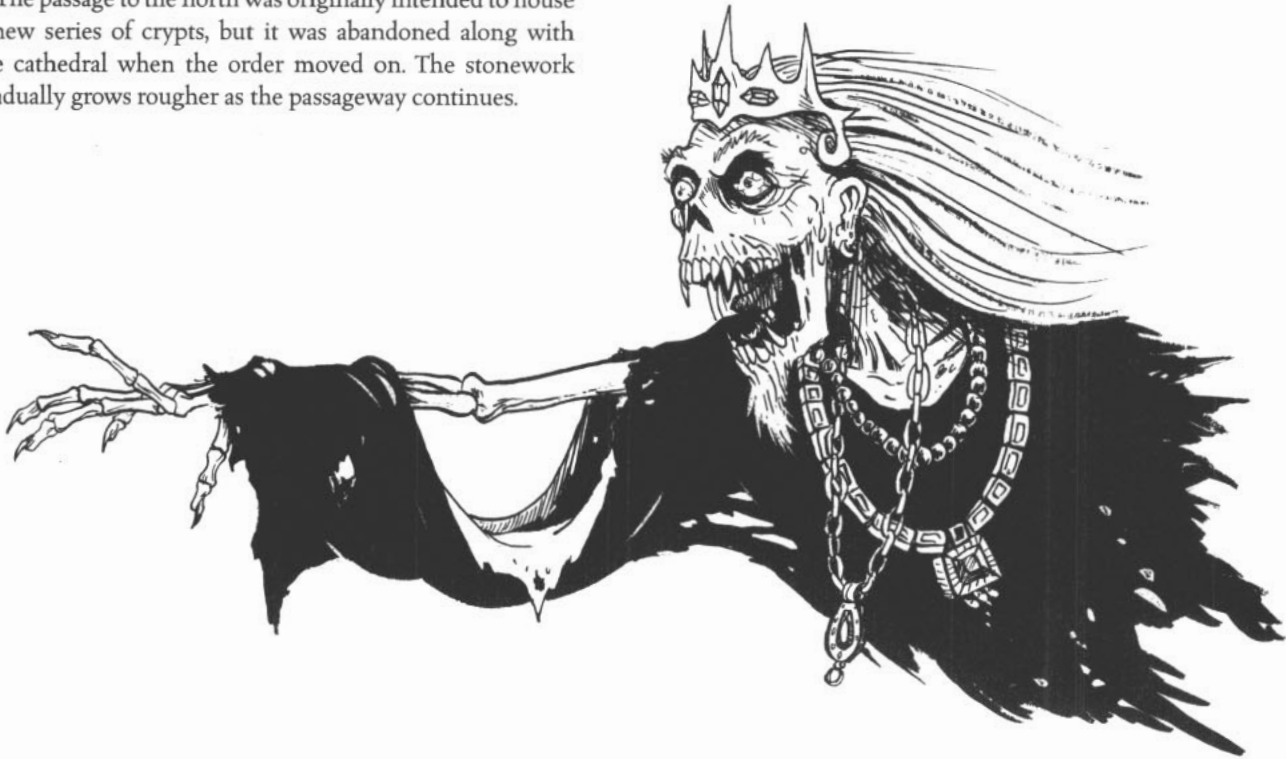
The passage to the north was originally intended to house a new series of crypts, but it was abandoned along with the cathedral when the order moved on. The stonework gradually grows rougher as the passageway continues.

3 Human Warrior Skeletons: CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12 (6 hp); Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee, (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee, (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1. Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative

5. Dead End

The passageway ends in a solid stone wall.

Trap: There is no secret door here. The passage was walled up when the library was built. However, the masonry is weak and could collapse if pushed too hard. Anyone with a Strength higher than 13 and a Dexterity lower than 13 searching for secret doors brings the wall (and the bookshelf behind it) crashing to the ground. This causes 2d6 damage to the searcher (half damage with a successful Reflex save) and sends a flurry of dust into the air. Any PC with Stonecunning or ranks in Knowledge (architecture and engineering) automatically spots the weak masonry.



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6. Ghoul Colony

The door here is a poor fit, built over a seemingly natural opening. Anyone listening hears wet chewing sounds coming from the other side.

The door opens into a rough square of a room. A crude nest of masticated hymnals and chewed coffin wood has been scattered about the floor. Their openings set in the far wall, a series of small warrens and tunnels branch out into the distance. A quartet of emaciated humanoids squat in the center of the room, munching on what appear to be a pair of human corpses. They look up when you open the door, and they instantly rise to the attack.

Encounter: A small colony of four ghouls has taken up residence here. They use the warrens to plunder nearby graveyards, and then drag the scavenged bodies back here for a messy meal. The wormwraith leaves them alone, since they provide it with added security and an escape route into the cemeteries if it needs one. The party's presence means they can enjoy some fresh meat for a change.

Tactics: The ghouls are ready to fight to the death.

Treasure: They ghouls have no monetary treasure, but one of the bodies they were munching on is wearing an antique brooch worth 250 gp. Of course, the party must decide if keeping such an item is ethical, but the former owner's relatives (if found) are willing to pay a reward of 75 gp for the return of the heirloom.

The warrens in the back of the chamber can be followed, though it's a tight squeeze for anyone over five feet tall. All of them lead to plundered graves in the nearby cemetery. A good digging at the terminus opens the warrens up to fresh air.

☠ Ghoul: CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12 (18, 16, 14, 12 hp); Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite) and +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

7. Giant Spider

A vast cavern lies beyond this doorway, covered with stalactites and stalagmites. The walls vanish into shadow, and the ceiling cannot be readily seen. Your lights illuminate a dozen ghostly shapes hovering in midair at various locations about the cavern. They quiver and shift in the flickering light.

Encounter: The answer to what happened to the giant rats in the storage room (area #2) can be found here. The ghostly figures are actually the cocooned corpses of the beasts (along with a waylaid ghoul), hung from an enormous spider web. Webs festoon every corner of the chamber, but they cannot be easily detected in the dim light. Anyone entering the chamber and failing to detect the webs with a Spot check (DC 20) is caught in the sticky strands, which is a nuisance but not particularly deadly (a Strength check (DC 5) is enough to pull free).

Getting caught in the web alerts the giant spider lurking near the ceiling. The spider quickly descends with frightening speed and attacks anything within the room, starting with PCs caught in the web. While the arachnid is horrendously large, it's also much too big to fit through the door, so retreating characters can probably escape it easily.

Treasure: A small sack containing 150 gp is cocooned with one of the rats. Several holes in the far wall lead to the ghoul colony (area #6).

☸ Monstrous Spider, Large: CR 2; Large vermin; HD 4d8+4 (22 hp); Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +9; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +3*, Jump +2*, Spot +4*

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d6 Str; secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is constitution-based.

Web (Ex): A monstrous spider can throw a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the spider. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 13) or burst it with a Strength check (DC 17). Both are standard actions. The check DCs are Constitution-based, and the Strength check DC includes a +4 racial bonus.

Web-spinners often create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 feet square, depending on the size of the spider. They usually position these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has the hit points given on the table, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/—.

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A monstrous spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

Tremorsense (Ex): A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

Skills: Monstrous spiders have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A monstrous spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Monstrous spiders use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher.

*Web-spinning spiders have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

8. Otyugh

This room contains a variety of trash and garbage: rotting bones, slime-encrusted mulch, and rusty equipment. A series of holes can be seen in the ceiling, and as you watch, something falls from one into the rotting pile below. Two other doorways can be seen in the walls.

The room is used as a garbage dump by the inn directly above it. The people there toss their trash down the holes and assume it goes into the city sewer system. (There's no one at St. Bethesda's to tell them otherwise these days.) The wormwraith discards its victims in here too, hiding the bodies amid the other debris. (Sadly, none were fresh enough for it to use as a host.) In addition, the pile has become the home of another nasty critter.

Encounter: As soon as the party enters the room, the trash in the middle explodes outward, revealing a young but territorial otyugh. An open grate in the corner of the room leads further down into the city sewer. The otyugh uses it to come and go, and it retreats down the grate if hard-pressed.

Treasure: A silver bowl valued at approximately 200 gp is buried amid the trash near the grate.

👤 **Young Otyugh:** CR 3; Large aberration; HD 5d8+8 (30 hp); Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +3 melee (1d6, tentacle); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, 2 tentacles) and -2 melee (1d4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with tentacle); SA Constrict 1d6, disease, improved grab; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide -1*, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle).

Constrict (Ex): An otyugh deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 13, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an otyugh must hit with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: *An otyugh has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in its lair, due to its natural coloration.

9. Abandoned Altar

This room is far cleaner than the remainder of the crypt. A few moth-eaten tapestries hang on the walls, but otherwise it manages to be remarkably clear of trash. Even the stone gleams from beneath the years of dust. A large altar has been carved out of a single rock in the center of the room. The sigil of St. Bethesda can be seen on its surface.

Encounter: This area once housed a secret meeting chamber where the high priests of St. Bethesda conducted their most private rituals. It looks threadbare (everything of value was taken when the order moved on), but the altar remains intact. A pair of hinges has been cunningly inserted underneath its top, but can be found with a Search check (DC 21). If the top of the altar is swung up and open, it reveals a thick stone knob radiating strongly of magic. Turning the knob deactivates the statue (area #13), allowing the party to get the drop on the wormwraith.

A secret door is hidden in the left-hand wall; it can be discovered with a Search check (DC 20). The catch which turns it can only be found if the altar top is closed.

10. Pit Trap

The passageway slopes gently downward here, gradually growing rougher as you proceed.

Trap: Fifty feet into the corridor lays a pit. The pit is rather shabbily concealed by a gray-painted tarp stretched over the dungeon floor, but it's difficult to spot in the dark. The bandits (area #11) set it for their own protection. They didn't want any of the minions of the "necromancer" — as they think of the wormwraith — to pay them an unexpected visit.

♣ **Camouflaged Pit Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 19.

Beyond the trap lies a concealed door the bandits disguised much the same way they disguised the pit. It requires a Spot Check (DC 17) to notice. The bandits never use it, and it creaks loudly on its hinges if opened, alerting both Gunge (area #11) and the otyugh (area #8).

THE CRYPT OF ST. BETHESDA



11. Bandits' Lair

This small chamber looks clean and reasonably well cared for. Each wall holds a closed wooden door, and a fire smolders in a stone circle in the center of the room, the smoke rising through a hole in the ceiling. A series of bedrolls are arranged around the fire, though none of them are occupied. A sealed chest sits in the corner, and a rough-looking man leaning on a spear sits atop it. The man's eyes are closed, and he's snoring loudly.

Encounters: The sleeping man's name is Gunge. He belongs to the bandit gang making its hideout here. The rest of the gang is out on a raid, and Gunge fell asleep while standing guard over the lair. The PCs can move on without incident if they wish, but they won't be able to get the chest open without waking Gunge up.

Tactics: If the party lingers here for longer than a few minutes (DM's discretion), the bandits return from their night's work and are not happy. There are five of them, plus Gunge, led by a nasty half-orc by the name of Reimar Broken-Tusk. If more than half are killed, they flee. Captured bandits can tell the party about the trap to the north (area #12), but know nothing about the remainder of the crypts. They claim a "necromancer" (the wormwraith) allowed them to establish this hideout as long as they agreed to stay out of the rest of the catacombs. Reimar is smart enough to keep the others from disobeying.

Treasure: The chest is locked (Open Lock DC 25). It contains 500 gp, a *potion of healing*, and a rare gem worth 50 gp. Reimar has the key on his body, which the PCs can easily find if they have enough fortitude to search his smelly hide. Another bandit carries a large satchel containing tonight's haul: 35 gp, 75 sp, and a tin necklace set with paste jewels (2 cp).

▲ **Reimar Broken-Tusk, Half-Orc Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, flail) or +3 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, flail) or +3 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., orc blood; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Listen +1, Spot +1; Weapon Focus (flail), Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: Chain shirt, buckler, masterwork flail, 2 daggers, small sack, 12 gp.

▲ **Gunge and Fellow Bandits, Human Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d6; hp 6, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 feet.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, dagger, belt pouch, 8 cp.

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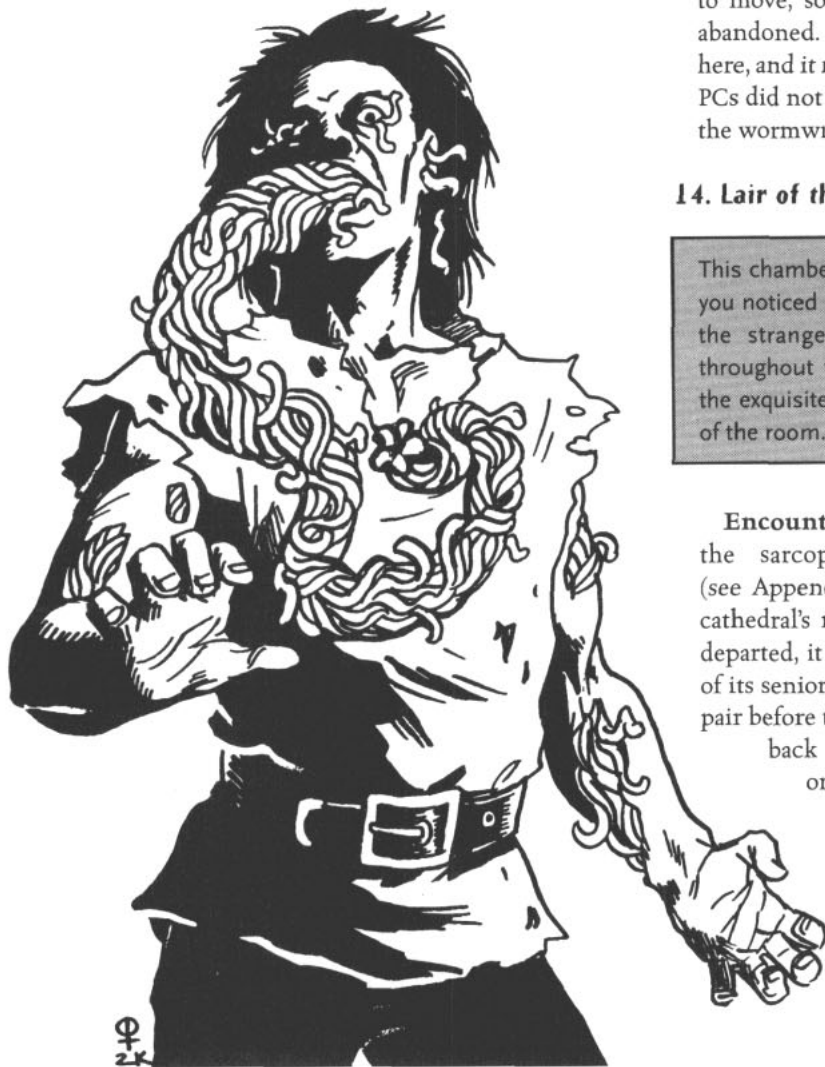
12. Trap

The corridor beyond the bandits' lair extends far into the distance in front of you.

Trap: The bandits (area #11) carefully set up this trap to deal with any interlopers. The corridor here ends in a blank stone wall after 30 feet, although the wall is painted to look like a continuation of the corridor (Spot DC 20).

The last 10-ft. section of the corridor is magically warded by the clerics of old.

♣ **Sleep Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (sleep, 5th-level wizard, 4 HD worth of creatures, DC 12 Will save to avoid); Multiple targets (10 ft. radius burst), Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.



13. Magical Statue

A pair of corridors meets here, extending in four directions. A white stone statue of St. Bethesda — a beautiful, matronly woman dressed in a hooded robe — stands in the crossroads.

Read the next sentence only if the party did not turn the knob hidden in the altar in area #9.

As you approach, the statue booms at you in a loud voice: "Welcome, brethren! And may the healing balm of St. Bethesda ease your suffering."

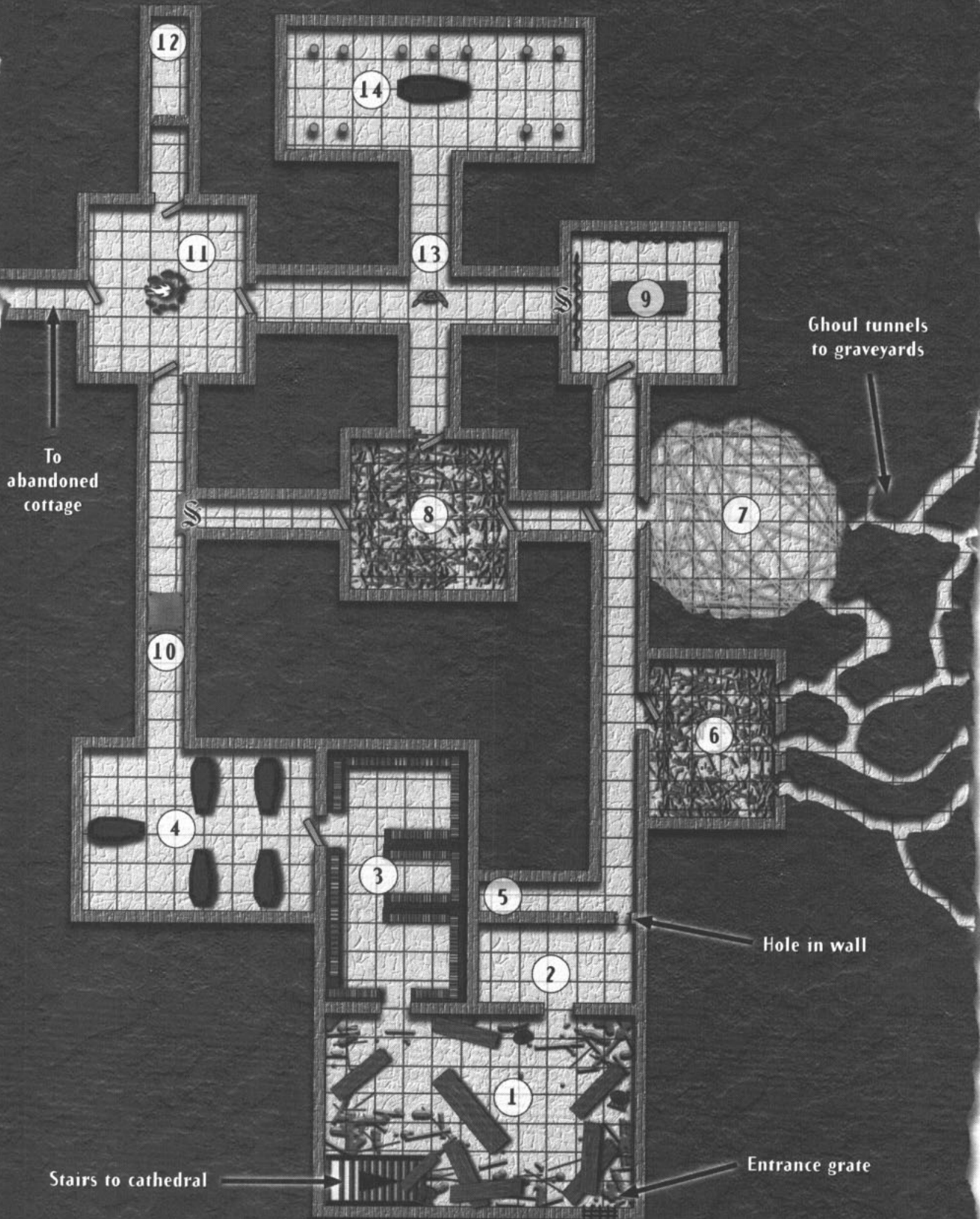
Encounter: Though quite loud, the statue is harmless. The voice comes from a permanent *magic mouth* spell. The statue was originally used to commence ceremonies in the cathedral above. It was too heavy for the priests to move, so it remained behind when the church was abandoned. The wormwraith managed to drag it down here, and it now uses the statue as an alarm. Assuming the PCs did not deactivate the statue (area #9), its voice alerts the wormwraith of their presence.

14. Lair of the Wormwraith

This chamber opens up in a wide hallway. The slime trail you noticed up above on the street reappears here, as do the strange, lavender worms. These coat the floor throughout the hall and seem particularly thick around the exquisitely carved wooden sarcophagus in the center of the room.

Encounter: The wormwraith awaits the party in the sarcophagus, actually a *chest of preservation* (see Appendix A). The chest was originally one of the cathedral's most sacred magical items. When the order departed, it entrusted safe transport of the device to two of its senior most clergymen. The wormwraith killed the pair before they could leave the city, and it took the chest back to its then-new lair. The remainder of the order assumed the clergymen had been killed on the road. They lamented the loss of both their brethren and their coveted artifact but never came back to look for it.

CATACOMBS BENEATH ST. BETHESDA'S CATHEDRAL



Tactics: The wormwraith's alien nature allows it to remain conscious while ensconced within the chest. If the voice of the statue (area #13) went off, the wormwraith waits until the party approaches the coffin, and then launches a surprise attack. If the statue remained silent, the wormwraith is unaware of the party's presence and attacks only when the chest is opened.

The wormwraith has been using the *chest of preservation* to sustain itself long after it should have perished, but the device's magical powers are being taxed to their limits. As the wormwraith rises, lavender worms fall from its eyes and ears, and several open wounds in the skin of its once-human disguise betray the pulsating mass within.

The creature attacks violently and without mercy. It may not survive the night as it is. All the creature cares about is passing on its seed before it dies. If it kills one of the player characters, it spends two rounds shooting a tentacle down the mouth of the body, then another round expelling a small bundle of worms into the victim's stomach. Once the wormwraith has accomplished its objective, it collapses and dies.

A full description of the creature can be found in *New Monsters* — Appendix B.

🐛 **Wormwraith:** CR 4; Medium aberration; HD 5d8; hp 22; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus 1d6 acid, tentacle); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus 1d6 acid, tentacle), +4 melee (1d8 plus 1d6 acid, 2–4 tentacles), +3 melee (1d8+2, 2 longswords); SA Acid touch; SQ No discernable anatomy; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Hide +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Search +5; Blind FightB, Multiattack, Two-weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (tentacles)

Acid Touch (Ex): The tentacles of the creature cause 1d8 points damage each and are coated with a corrosive enzyme, which causes an additional 1d6 acid damage.

No Discernable Anatomy (Ex): The wormwraith's vitals are widely dispersed throughout the mass of worms that comprise its anatomy. As a result, it is not subject to critical hits.

EPILOGUE

Once the wormwraith is slain, the PCs may present it to the town guard, which is sufficient to let them off the hook for the murder of which they're suspected. The guards commend the PCs for destroying the beast before more innocents suffered. The PCs are allowed to keep any treasure they found in the crypt (minus a 10% surtax), and the guards look upon them as trustworthy allies thereafter.

The party may want to locate the Order of St. Bethesda and return the *chest of preservation* to them. This may take some research, as the order isn't prevalent in this land, but a wayward church might be found in a seaside town some distance away. The exact location is up to the particulars of the DM's campaign, but a temple in the adventure *Illusionist's Daughter*, page 225, might be a good place. The order is most grateful for the chest's return, and the priests offer the PCs a reward of 500 gp in appreciation.

If the DM wishes to extend the mayhem, then the wormwraith may have actually successfully planted its seed in the victim's body before the party interrupted it. The deceased is later buried in a nearby cemetery, but his body rises 10 days after as a new wormwraith. The creature's first instinct is to get out of town (someone might recognize its disguise), but before it can manage this, it is spotted by one of the guardsmen, who alert the party at his first opportunity. The city may be willing to pay the characters to hunt the creature down, leading to a cross-country chase resulting in all manner of adventures.

Further Adventures

- Just when the PCs think they've saved the day and try to relax, a wounded and beaten man stumbles into the city with grave news from nearby. He claims to have been traveling near the northern village of Treefall just two day's ride from here, when he and his mount were attacked by a horrible mutated bear-creature (see the adventure "Jerimond's Orb").
- Emissaries looking for a particular adventuring band (but unable to locate them) from the nearby kingdom of Azinth overhear the party's success and ask them if they would be interested in undertaking a mission for their liege (see the adventure "The Ice Caves of Azinth").



Chapter 3:
Jerimond's Orb

Levels 2 to 4
 by Ree Soesbee

Ten days' ride north of the great city, there is a small town known to locals as Treefall. Until recently, this town was famous for its rich harvests, happy villagers, and prosperous weather to boot.

These days, however, the once-proud details from Treefall have turned dark. Instead of tales of unending prosperity, you hear hushed whispers that a great curse has struck the now disparaged village. Word has it where once roamed contented cattle, now strange beasts hunt by the moon's cold light and terrorize the hapless region.

You have scoffed along with the others at these stories. Despite the things you've seen in your adventures with your friends, the thought such ill might befall such a sleepy little town strikes you as terribly unlikely. There is plenty of evil in the world, true, but there are also much bigger and more substantial targets. But tonight, despite the firmness of your disbelief, the stories come to haunt you.

You have been traveling north along the roads on your own, enjoying the rich fall colors and warm afternoons. Your camp is small and secure, with a roaring fire and meat cooking over the flames. It's one of those crisp autumn days, which makes you long for a warm hearth after a long ride in the cool air. Still, the fire is good enough for now, and you and your friends have a wonderful meal, talking and singing and laughing, anticipating a restful sleep beneath the blanket of stars.

Until the beast attacks.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 2 to 4. This is a role-playing intensive adventure and may not be suited to all styles of play. This adventure is suited to a party of PCs with mixed abilities willing to understand that mercy for a defeated foe may bring benefits later.

Over 50 years ago, a traveling wizard named Jerimond lived in the forests near a small village known as Treefall.

The people of Treefall were kind to the old mage in his last days, so only days before his death he gave them a powerful orb he had enchanted. Jerimond's Orb (see Appendix A) can enhance the natural luck of any creature or area. However, if the orb is stolen, those men it once benefited are condemned to turn into beasts when the sun sets, and remain this way until dawn.

Note: Feel free to alter any reference to St. Cutallin to St. Bethesda or any god from your campaign.

THE BEAST WITHIN

The beast attacking the PCs at the start of the adventure is a mathorn (see New Monsters — Appendix B), one of the cursed creatures of the village — but the PCs don't know it yet.

The defeated beast lies still until the first rays of dawn strike it. Then it transforms into a young, human male no more than 20, with dark hair and the costume of a peasant farmer. He carries no weapons or other items, and the only marks on his body are those put there by the PCs.

The youth is stable at 0 hit points from the ordeal and transformation. He tells the PCs the following story:

My name is Arawn. I remember traveling home to Treefall, to my father's inn, and then... darkness. The darkness was thick, like clouds rolling across the ground. Then I was here. Please, let me go home to my village. My mother and sister must worry for me.

Arawn has no recollection of the encounter with the PCs, the beast he became, or anything else following sunset the evening before. He is shaken and scared. If permitted, he leads the PCs to Treefall by the most accessible path.

👉 **Mathorn:** CR 2; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 2d8; hp 12; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d6, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6, bite) and +3 melee (1d6 plus poison, 2 claws); SA Poison; SQ Immune to sleep and charm effects; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +5, Search +5; Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.

TREEFALL BY DAY

Arawn takes the PCs into the small town of Treefall, population 400. There are several outlying farms and buildings in the rolling, tree-lined hills of the area, but the town is the only population center for days in any direction. The villagers there seem frightened and look at the travelers with hopeful, but cautious eyes.

The big news in town is that the harvests are going bad. Rot taints the silos, and the weather has been overly dry. If this keeps up, Treefall might not have enough stores to last the winter, much less supply for trade or taxes.

▲ **Average Villager, Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

JOSEPH'S INN

The sign out front of the Inn reads: "Inn closes at dusk and does not reopen until dawn. No Exceptions."

BARDIC LORE

A Reclusive mage, there is little Bardic Lore concerning Jerimond's life or activities. A Bardic Knowledge check (DC 15) will reveal Jerimond was not evil. Gathering Information on the other hand is easy here...the townsfolk are quite willing to share their opinions and problems with the PCs if there's even a small chance they can help. Any PC who makes a Gather Information roll learns the information of his roll and all below it (a rogue who rolls 17 on his Gather Information check learns everything from 17 and below). This is information as the townsfolk see it, and therefore may be true or false, as noted.

- DC 5** The accidental death of a child caused the gods to curse Treefall. Sally Perkins was eight, the daughter of the owner of the general store. She was found dead in the town square five days ago. Her death has yet to be explained. (True, except for the source of the curse.)
- DC 8** Bandits are terrorizing the area, killing sheep and cows and roaming through the forests at night. (False. It's the mathorn.)
- DC 11** Many of the town's men are vanishing at night. Must be because of a new fishing hole Derris Jenkin found. They say it's filled with whoppers. (False. The men become mathorns. And the hole is fished out.)
- DC 14** Strange beasts are roaming through the woods at night and have killed several of the young men of the village over the past seven days. (True.)
- DC 17** The cleric DuVall stole Jerimond's Orb from the statue in the center of the village. The one there is a fake. He did it to make money for the church, so he could force us all to come in on holy days. (False, although the orb the statue's holding is a fake.)
- DC 20** Jerimond, the old mage, left a ton of gold hidden somewhere in the village. The rat Oakley Perkins is trying to find it. He's in league with Derris Jenkin, trying to convince everybody to move out of Treefall so they can have all the money when it is found. (Partly true. The gold is there, but it's Cole Jenkin who's after it.)

Joseph's Inn, in the center of town, is a low building with a small stable and about 12 rooms for rent. It is attached to a two-story dining area, the upper floor of which is occupied by the innkeeper and his family. The tables and chairs around the wide kitchen are well maintained, and a few visitors spend their time relaxing under the inn's wide gables. For but 1 gp per night, the party can rent a room and get two bowls of the steaming stew always simmering on the fire.

JERIMOND'S ORB

Joseph Murdoch and his wife Valerie run the local inn. They are an older couple, happy, with four children, two of whom long ago left to seek their fortune. Arawn is their third son, currently employed by a local farmer named Derris Jenkin, outside town.

Arawn comes home once a week. He was due in last night, and his parents are panicked about his absence. Their only remaining child, Beth, works in the inn.

Joseph knows what's going on in the town, but he keeps his mouth shut. If he takes to the PCs, he may tell them the following:



"About five days ago, I was headed out to the well for some wash-work and saw DuVall — the priest — out by the statue of old Jerimond. This was right about the time the forest beasts started attacking? I went over to see what he was up to, and dang it if the man wasn't digging up Jerimond's ashes! Well, I cuffed him right soundly and sent him on his way! He must be some kind of necromancer. He's the cause of all this, I'm sure of it."

One of the other men in the tavern is a young farmer named Cole Jenkin, Derris's son. He mumbles some nasty comments about the PCs (about them being troublemakers), hangs around, and listens until he has determined their interest in the town. He shoves angrily past Arawn when he leaves, knocking the boy to the ground. If Arawn is already dead, Cole shoves past one of the weaker PCs instead. Don't tip Cole's hand at this time. If a PC wants to start a fight with Cole, it's best if he ignores them or tries getting out of it somehow for now.

THE GENERAL STORE

The general store is owned by Oakley Perkins, father of the dead Sally. He is a crotchety man with glasses and a lame leg. When the PCs enter, he looks at them with false friendliness, warming up to them hoping for a sale. If he realizes they are here to pump him for information, he quickly turns cold.

Oakley's wife Karen is "unavailable." She's in the back of the house, mourning the loss of her daughter. Oakley's also upset, but he's covering it under a strict work ethic, cleaning as if his life depended on it.

Getting Oakley to talk freely will require finesse. Use of Diplomacy might be required as well, to sway his reaction. Currently Oakley is considered unfriendly. A Diplomacy check (DC 15) will turn him indifferent. If the PCs manage to get Oakley to talk, he says:

"Yes, my daughter was killed. No, I don't know why. We didn't hear her leave the house and when we went to wake her, she wasn't there. We found her body in the town square, terrible knife wounds ... I know those bandits killed her — probably the boy Cole, who hangs around here at night, drinking and pestering Petra, my older daughter.

"Bandits, I tell you, looking for the mythical 'hidden gold' old man Jerimond supposedly left behind. A bunch of bunk, but it cost me my daughter's life. You can hear them scrabbling around in the town square after dark. I've taken to staying down here at night and locking my wife upstairs to keep her safe. You want to help this village? You can start with the no-account boy Cole Jenkin! You tell him to stay away from my daughter, you hear?

Continued on following page

JERIMOND'S ORB

"And now, if you're finished bringing to light my family's personal tragedies, either buy something or get out of my store."

Oakley's wife, Karen, tells a different version of the tale. If the PCs cause any kind of ruckus, Karen comes out and begs them to stop. If one of the PCs is a cleric to any recognizable neutral or good deity, she immediately asks to be blessed and begins crying over her lost little girl. If the PCs are kind to her, she sobs through her tale without being prompted.

"Poor little lamb. She must've been going out to the statue again. She did, when she was little. She thought the statue was St. Cutallin himself, and wanted to see the orb. It glows, you see, and she thought the light was the angels watching over her. And this time — this time, something got her. Something with claws. I saw the body: claw marks, claws everywhere! It was something awful. Oh, priest, bless us, for the gods have taken away our youngest child!"

Karen is otherwise too distressed to be of much help. Once his wife's outburst is over, Oakley sternly shoos the characters out of his store. As the PCs leave, they may look behind them, making a Spot check (DC 15) to see Petra peering out of an upper window. She is 17, wearing black, frightened and tearful. She is partly hidden behind the curtains of the window, looking haunted, a bruise on her cheek. When she sees the PCs looking at her, she quickly steps away from the window.

If questioned, Oakley and Karen refuse to allow the PCs to talk to Petra or to talk with them about her at all.

THE TOWN SQUARE

Treefall's town square is a large, open, cobblestone area. In the center is a statue of an ancient, kindly mage holding a staff in one hand and a brilliant blue orb in the other.

A carefully carved wooden plaque at his feet reads: "Jerimond the Mage, friend to all and patron of Treefall. Orb of light, orb of peace and plenty — Jerimond's last gift to his friends — Rests here, with his ashes." It can be safely said he is sorely missed.

The statue is made of bronze, and the plaque and stand are wooden. The orb in the statue's hand seems to be some strange sort of blue precious stone the size of a grapefruit.

Inspecting the statue with a Search check (DC10) reveals scratch marks across the bottom of Jerimond's robes and the base, and some signs the statue has been moved recently — just an inch or so — and then replaced.

It requires a Strength check (DC 20) to move it. If anyone tries, the villagers in this busy square raise an alarm, accusing the characters of thievery and graverobbing.

A good look at the orb with an Appraise check (DC 12) shows it's a cheap glass gem made to look like a star sapphire. Also, there are dagger marks around the statue's uplifted hand, as if a thief pried the real gem out and replaced it with this fake.

THE CHURCH

The church of St. Cutallin has room for only 50 or so villagers. From the simple architecture and modest furnishings, it's obvious the church is rarely filled with worshippers. When the PCs approach, the church is empty. Inside, all the pews have been pushed to the walls and piled carefully on top of one another.

If the PCs go around the building's side, they find a monastic priest in common garb, digging in his vegetable garden. PCs with the Listen skill might (DC 5) hear the priest muttering to himself, concerned:

"Town's gone bad. Ground's all hard, the tomatoes over-ripe. Saint Cutallin, preserve us. If we don't find the bauble soon, we'll all be eating grass."

If the characters come close, DuVall looks up, wipes his hands on his tunic, and asks what they need. He is a pleasant man, middle-aged, with one blue eye and one brown. He quickly sizes up the characters and, based on their appearance and opening questions, makes educated guesses about their nature and alignment. If the PCs seem to be good people, he invites them to the church at night for an "all-night prayer session."

He carefully insists they arrive before dark.

If the characters seem evil, DuVall claims ignorance of any of the problems of the town and goes back to his digging. If so, have a townsman later let slip they are meeting in the church before dusk to "seek shelter with the gods."

THE VILLAGE WELL

Any townsfolk asked for information laughingly points the characters toward the village well. The well is known to be a common meeting ground for gossips. An old woman named Bethany sits by the well all day, sharing stories with those who will listen. She is half-blind and no less deaf. The only way to get her to listen is to speak loudly.

When the PCs arrive, about 20 people are in the area around the well, working and playing. Bethany sits at the side of the small fountain, spinning tales of yesteryear while another woman slowly winds a ball out of the thread Bethany is holding.

If the PCs ask Bethany a question, she responds with the following:

The Bandits:

"Bandits. We used to have bandits back 10, 12 years ago. They were in your face, fighting through the city streets. Then Jerimond killed their leader, and no bandit's had the gumption to come back. 'Cept young punk of Derris's, Cole Jenkin. There's a bandit if I ever seen one. Why, there was a time back, I'd've seen him whupped by his momma. Now she's dead, and without Mary, the boy's gone plumb bad."

The Church or DuVall:

"He's a canny character, always with his holier-than-thous. Old priest wasn't like that, but since he died, we've had to make do. DuVall showed up some three years ago, talking trash to the Perkins like there was no tomorrow. Accused them of greed and lust and some 10 other things. Oakley stopped going to church altogether, stopped his wife from going too. Now I ain't saying DuVall's not a faithful man, but I can say he's got some kind of faith I don't understand. Hides a bunch of people in his church all night and locks the doors. If it ain't some kind of cult, then Bethany's more blind than just her eyes! Locks 'em all up in the church — and that's when the beasts come, at night."

Another villager nods her head. "We don't let the false priest near old Jerimond's ashes. Might steal 'em for his dirty work, and then where would we be? Joseph Murdoch saw DuVall digging at the statue some weeks back, trying to steal the old man's ashes, and he put a stop to it! Now we keep an eye on the 'priest,' and soon enough, we'll be rid of him!"

Jerimond:

"Poor, old Jerimond. Right good wizard, he was. Used to have arguments with him about changing fate. Seemed he thought everything could be tilted to good luck or bad. Best thing he ever did for this town was give us the orb. Shines so bright even an old, blind woman can make her way home by it. Brings the town luck too."

Jerimond's Orb:

"The orb? Jerimond used to say it brought him luck. When he gave it to the village, our crops got better, and the sickness that passed through these parts some three years back missed us. Did Jerimond a lot of good too, but when he gave it to us, his luck changed for good. Came down with flu, got hit by a carriage, broke both his legs and finally died of some conniption. I don't know what'd happen to the village if it were lost. A curse, maybe."

The Monsters or the Curse

"You've seen the monsters? They come at night. DuVall's behind it, I can tell you. They're called 'mathorn.' Jerimond used to talk about 'em. Seen 'em come for the old mage once when he got back from adventuring. They followed him like night does day, screaming to have something returned to them. He killed 'em, but I guess there were more— or were called by the cultist DuVall. Attacks started a week ago, and it was only five days ago the 'priest' tried to defile Jerimond's grave. Poor, little girl was killed the very same night. Coincidence?"

VILLAGE WELL: THE HUNT

While at the well, the PCs are approached by a band of farmers planning to go out at night and fight the beasts ravaging the town. The PCs are invited to join. If they agree, they are told to meet at the bridge just after nightfall. The leader of these young farmers is Frederick Wilson. He tells the PCs:

These monsters have been plaguing the village for too long. They'll ruin the harvest! We can't let them kill any more of our children. If you'll fight with us, we can't pay you, but you'll get some good hunting out of it, and a grateful village.

JENKIN'S FARM

Derris Jenkin's farm is on the southern outskirts of the village, near the forest and bordered by the river to the east. The farmhouse is modest and has several butchered animals hanging from the eaves as they cure. An older man, perhaps 50, is sitting on his porch smoking a pipe when the PCs approach. When he sees them, he mutters something under his breath and then calls into the house. With a Listen check (DC 10), a PC can hear Derris say: "Stay in the house, boy." Derris then walks down the road to meet the characters a good 20 paces from the house. Read the following aloud:

The old man looks annoyed as he puffs on his pipe. "What y'all want out here?" he says sharply, not giving you a chance to offer greetings... "This here is private property, and we got no call for strangers. Y'all just get on, you hear? Nothing for you here, and if you come closer, I'll let the dogs go on you."

If the PCs force their way into the house or sneak inside, they find a common household with signs of someone having swiftly vacated the premises: food on the table and a half-drunk glass of water. A small piece of paper lies beside the plate, on which are doodled the names "Petra" and "Petra Jenkin," over and over again. The writer was Cole Jenkin, who just ran off into the woods to gather with his friends at their hideout: Jerimond's abandoned tower.

TREEFALL BY NIGHT

When night falls, everything closes down. By the time it is dark, there isn't a villager on the street or willing to open her door. Even Joseph the Innkeeper closes his doors, bars his shutters, and ignores any pounding or attempts to enter. Only the church has light streaming out its windows — along with muffled sounds of prayer. PCs who travel near the city commons see the statue of Jerimond standing stoically, surrounded by darkness. The gem in his hand is not glowing, despite any earlier descriptions of its power.

THE CHURCH

Characters who return at dusk find a group of 70 townsfolk huddled in the church, praying. DuVall happily brings the characters to the rear of the room and speaks to them in a low voice, careful not to interrupt the others. Read the following aloud:

"I didn't think you'd come, but I see your hearts are true. You do wish to help us in the face of our burden. Let me show you something — something horrible." He takes you to a place near one of the church windows and begins to explain.

"This church is holy ground, safe from those beasts. It may also be because Jerimond once lived here, before his tower was finished out in the south woods.

"I believe the orb was keeping the creatures back from the village. I know Jerimond's journals are buried underneath the statue, but the townsfolk won't let me near it. They think I'm going to defile the man's ashes, but I can tell you this: His ashes aren't under there.

"Before Joseph Murdoch interrupted me, I saw the wrappings of the journals, but I couldn't reach them. If we're going to understand what this is all about, we have to get those journals!

"Worse yet, the books are in code. I had figured it out from other writings of Jerimond's I found, but my notes are gone. They fell out of my pocket while I was trying to move the statue. When I went back later, they were gone. Even if you get the journals, I'll have to start over, but I know I can translate them again, given time."

"But I can't get to the journals myself. Could you?"

If the PCs agree to go, they may meet with one or more of the following encounters. Quite a few mathorn are wandering the village streets, and at any time, the party may be attacked.

☛ **Mathorn:** CR 2; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 2d8; hp 12; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d6, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6, bite) and +3 melee (1d6 plus poison, 2 claws); SA Poison; SQ Immune to sleep and charm effects; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +5, Search +5; Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.



THE FARMERS AT THE RIVER BRIDGE

If the characters agree to meet Frederick Wilson and his men at the bridge, they are in for a rude shock.

If the PCs arrive early, about 10 villagers trickle in, carrying small swords and farm tools to "hunt" with. But as soon as the last light of the sun sets, the men drop their weapons and start howling in rage. Their bodies mutate, their teeth elongate into fangs, and their hands form into claws. Within five minutes, they have become a pack of mathorn, ready to hunt and kill. And the characters look tasty.

"Orb," the man-beasts whimper in agony as they change.
"ORB!"

THE INN

Characters who pass by the inn hear a strange snuffling and clawing inside. If they peer through the slats of the windows, they see a mathorn which may once have been Joseph. His clothes are on the floor, his sword fallen from the table. He is trapped in the lower chambers of the inn, unable to get out or to go upstairs. He is effectively contained and not a threat.

THE GENERAL STORE

As the PCs approach the general store, they hear a mathorn inside, tearing apart the lower chambers. Both doors are open, and as the PCs peer inside they see the mathorn picking over the still-warm corpse of Karen Perkins, a strange look of peace on her features.

The Oakley mathorn immediately attacks if it sees the PCs, and it fights until dead. The rear door of the store is wide open, and a scrap of black fabric is hung on a bent nail on the stair on the back porch (Search, DC 10).

JERIMOND'S STATUE

The Statue of Jerimond can be moved with a successful Strength check (DC 20). Beneath the statue is a small, stone niche, and within it lies a wax-cloth wrapped bundle with three small notebooks inside. In these notebooks are Jerimond's secrets, but they are all in a strange code. Just as the PCs get the journals out of the secret niche, they hear a terrified scream from nearby.

PETRA PERKINS

The terrified Petra Perkins stands alone in an alley between two buildings, screaming and desperately trying to fend off three fierce mathorn. It's up to the PCs to save her. Once they have, read the following aloud:

Now safe, the disconsolate Petra pulls herself together and says, "Oh, thank you, thank you! I was in my house, and my father changed into this creature. He killed my mother, just like he killed Sally — and then mamma put the body out in the street..."

"Oh, I just knew I was next, so I ran. But they chased me. I was trying to get out of this town — to meet Cole out at the abandoned wizard's tower. He said if I could just meet him there tonight, we'd leave this place forever. And he told me — he told me to bring this."

In her hand, she holds out a sheaf of papers with Jerimond's mark on the top page. "These were my father's. He found them in the street the day Sally died."

Just then, the church bells begin to ring.

If the characters take the journals back to the church, they find it under assault by 10 mathorn. The villagers inside are panicked.

☛ **Mathorn:** CR 2; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 2d8; hp 15, 14, 14, 13, 12, 10, 10, 8; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d6, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6, bite) and +3 melee (1d6 plus poison, 2 claws); SA Poison; SQ Immune to sleep and charm effects; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +5, Search +5; Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The PCs must fight their way through to get the journals (and Petra) to safety. Once the PCs are inside, Father DuVall sees they have his notes. If they have the journals as well, he asks for them so he can translate them on the spot. Once finished, he tells the PCs the following:

"Jerimond didn't create the orb. He found it among the ruins of the ancient city of Acarra, far away. Before his death, he managed to alter its purpose. Rather than simply affecting one person, it can now benefit an entire town. The orb must be within a set of brackets sealed in the hand of Jerimond's statue to work its magic upon the village.

"Sadly, the orb comes at a cost. If someone is deprived of the orb's power, the person (or village) is cursed. For an individual, this takes the form of sickness and fatigue. For a village, the men turn into ravenous beasts known as mathorn, their only purpose to sate their hunger and return the orb to its rightful dominion."

Upon further investigation, DuVall describes another section of the journal to the PCs.

"I've found what the bandits want. Jerimond did hide money, but not in the village. It's out in his tower. You need the orb and this code to open the lock on the treasure room's door. This must be why the bandits who took the orb haven't gone anywhere. They've been trying to break the code.

"But they could crack the code without these journals. I did it, after all. And if Cole wanted Petra to come out there tonight, he must be ready to leave the area — with the money and the orb. You've got to stop them!"

Petra joins DuVall, saying:

"Jerimond's tower is to the south of the village. I can tell you where. But please, don't hurt Cole. I know he's done bad things, but he just wanted the money so we could get married and leave this town for good."

COLE'S PLIGHT

Cole Jenkins really wants the best for Petra and himself. His luck over the years however has turned him into a sour, angry young man. He's blind to the many consequences of his actions, but he's not evil. While the PCs may feel they can talk Cole out of the orb, it will take at least a few rounds of combat before he'll give into reason. After all, Cole's men outnumber the PCs 2 to 1. He's confident, and will watch for looks of surprise when the PCs realize bandits seem to be coming from all directions. This job, of course, relies on the chaotic atmosphere you describe when the bandits pull up their arms and begin combat.

JERIMOND'S TOWER

Jerimond's tower is a small, two-story keep with one large entrance to the north. The place has been untended to for years.

1. Main Chamber

Once a formal living chamber, this room is in sad shape, with broken vines and twisted, small trees growing inside. Only the stone pillars, inscribed with Jerimond's code, are still intact. To the rear sits a large, empty fireplace. One of the pillars near the fireplace seems disturbed, as if something large is leaning against it. A slight glow spreads out from under a door to the west.

There are two secret doors in the rear pillars, which are hollow. The first pillar conceals a hidden stairway leading up to Jerimond's laboratory. A rusted key sits in the catch of the open "secret" door. (See "Upstairs.")

The second pillar has obviously been scrubbed, and several sheets of paper lie carefully placed around the bottom of the pillar, detailing the code on the pillar and the various attempts to break it. DuVall should have revealed the means to open the secret door to the PCs, so they should know the order to twist the stones of the pillar. Once the Orb of Jerimond is inserted into the pillar's secret niche (Search, DC 10), the concealed portal swings open. A set of spiral stairs leads into the darkness below. (See "Downstairs.")

2. Kitchen

This area contains a long fireplace, a table, and several counters. A small fire crackles in the fireplace. A bandit named Edward Wallens is in here, where he was eating until he heard the PCs arrive. When the PCs open the kitchen door, Edward jumps them, screaming an alarm.

▲ **Edward Wallens, Human Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +1; Spd 30ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Sneak Attack: This rogue's attack deals an extra 1d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 feet.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Possessions: Short sword, dagger.

3. Pantry

The pantry's shelves hold a few backpacks brought in by the bandits. They each hold two weeks worth of traveling rations.

4. Cook's Quarters

The furniture in this ramshackle room is in poor shape, mostly turned into firewood for the small stove in the kitchen.

5. Guest Chambers

The men from these five rooms are ready for combat when they hear Edward's cry. There are twice as many bandits as PCs. It takes them three rounds to awaken, grab their weapons, and charge across the main chamber. Some will charge to melee, others can take vantage points from tower walls with their crossbows to snip at PCs who remain outside. Cole Jenkin, desperate at this point but not stupid, leads his men forward with a grim determination on his face.

▲ **Cole Jenkin, Human Ftr 2:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+3, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d4+3/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d4+3/19–20, dagger); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Jump +5, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +5; Weapon Focus (longsword), Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: Chain shirt, masterwork longsword, daggers (3), orb of jerimond (adds +5 to all saves, already figured in).

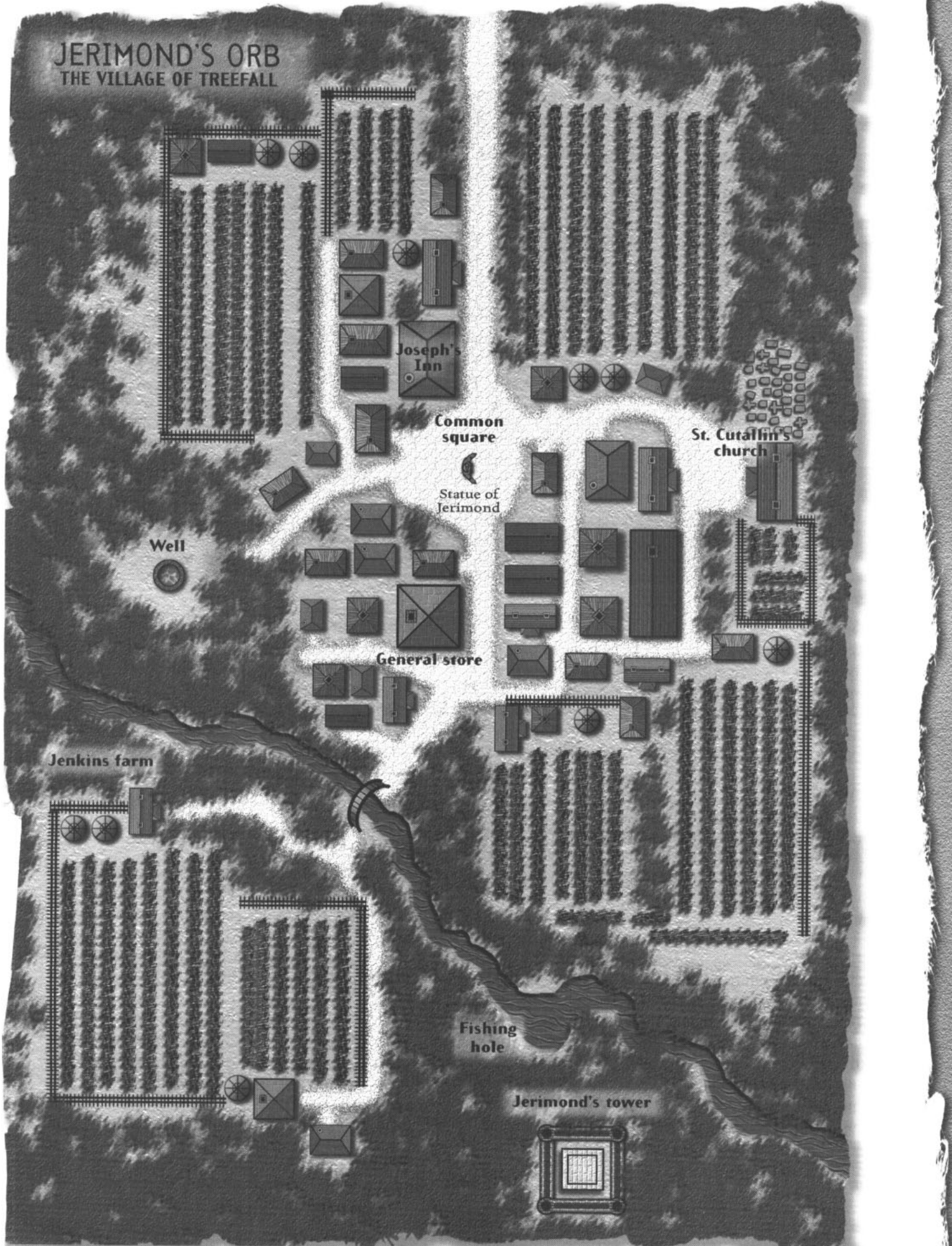
▲ **Bandits, Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +1 ranged (1d8/x3, light crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +1 ranged (1d8/x3, light crossbow); AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Longsword, light crossbow, 10 bolts, peasant's garb, 1d4 cp.

JERIMOND'S ORB

THE VILLAGE OF TREEFALL



Joseph's Inn

Common square

Statue of Jerimond

St. Cutallin's church

Well

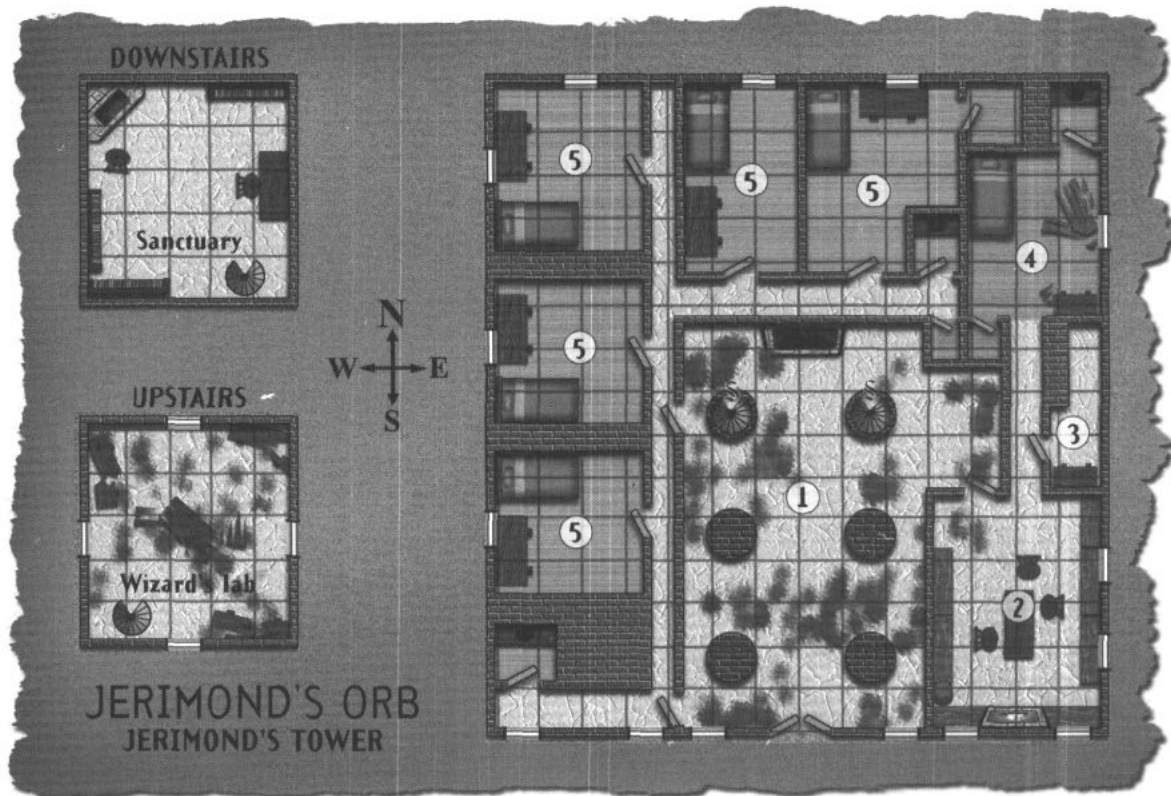
General store

Jenkins farm

Fishing hole

Jerimond's tower

JERIMOND'S ORB



UPSTAIRS

The laboratory is now a sad wreck of stone and crawling with vines. The four windows' shutters are open, and bad weather has blown leaves and other debris into the room. The lone table is in ruins, torn apart. Everything up here has already been ransacked or fallen, totally weatherbeaten, but the floor is in good condition, and the walls are sturdy.

DOWNSTAIRS

Jerimond's sanctuary is in good condition. PCs can scavenge 12 gp worth of wizard's spell components from the area. An unlocked but closed chest sits in the north of the room. It holds 1,000 gp and three emeralds each worth 50 gp.

EPILOGUE

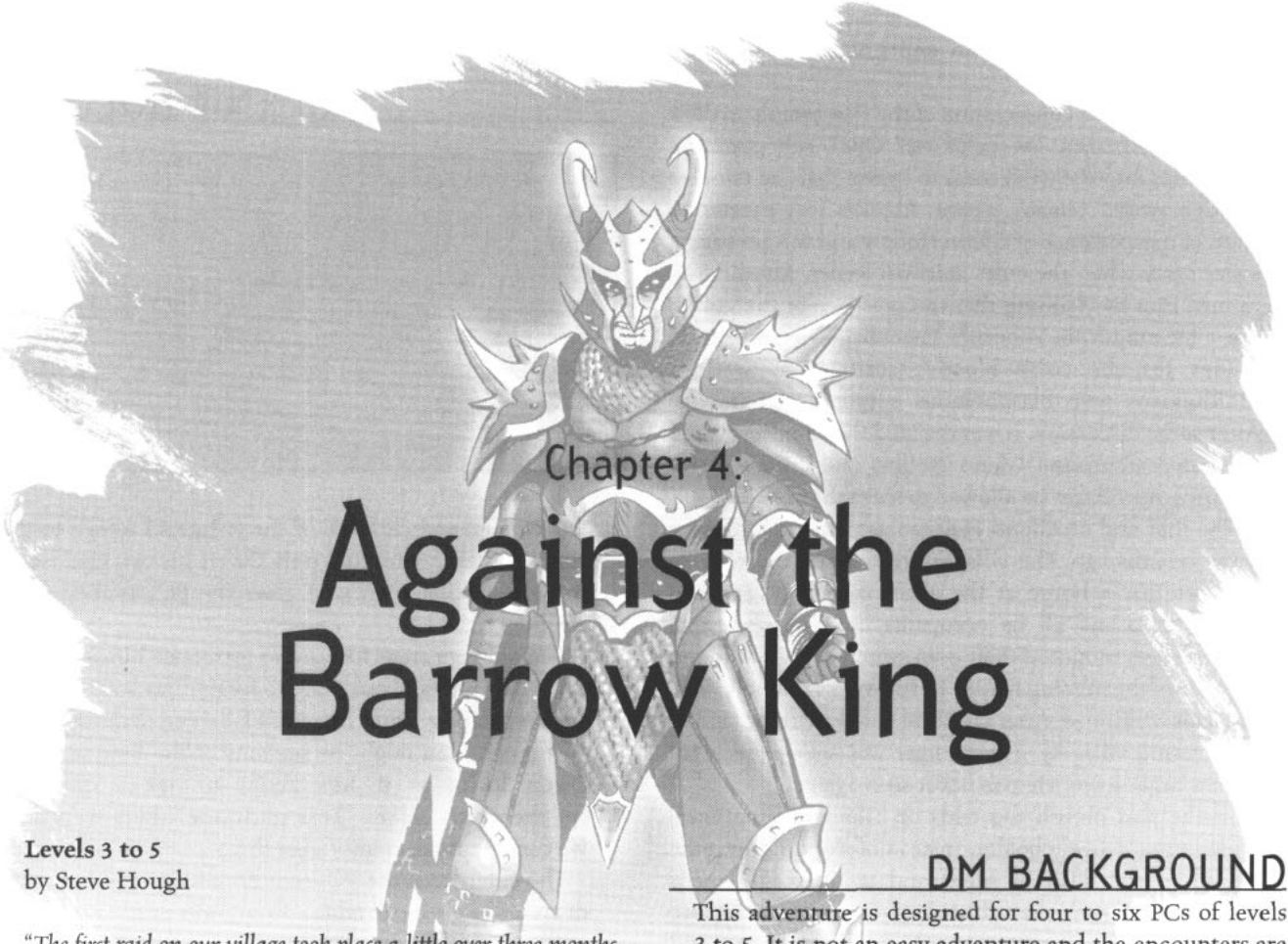
Once the PCs return Jerimond's Orb to its rightful resting place, all should end well. The PCs' testimony frees DuVall of any stigma in the village, and Petra takes over her father's store. If the PCs keep the orb and leave Treefall, the mathorns hunt them, following them with increasing ferocity and brutality. If they can, the mathorns take back the orb and return it to the village on their own, instantly returning to their human forms.

What to do with Cole Jenkins and his band is more difficult. Many of them are not even from this town. If the adventure takes place in a lawful kingdom, the town has a duty to make sure they face justice.

Should any villager die as a side effect of an overzealous PC's battle lust (burning or hacking a defeated mathorn body, 'just to be sure') the PCs are still thanked for their heroism in helping the village but there is a funeral, not a celebration. PCs with kind words will still be treated decently.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Treefall is only one of a number of small villages in the area. Another nearby is Glenn Hollow, and villagers have heard rumors the people there are in need of heroes, and tell the PCs that their elder, a man named Owen, might be able to find them work (see the adventure "Against the Barrow King").
- On the outskirts of this village is Lady Elena Zadrian's small keep. She is a beautiful and endearing, if somewhat distant local figure who has been asking in the village if there is anyone who might help check on the disappearance of her father in a town named Cuthder. Many young men were eager to help but warned of the potential dangers involved. Perhaps the PCs can help her... DuVall offers to escort them to her keep personally (see the adventure "Castle Zadrian").



Chapter 4:
**Against the
Barrow King**

Levels 3 to 5

by Steve Hough

"The first raid on our village took place a little over three months ago... just before dawn. We awoke to discover that the Cooper family's house at the edge of town had been sacked and the entire family was missing," croaks Owen, the village elder. "We mounted a search party, but found no trace of them."

The old man lifts his gaze to the west woods. "After the third such attack, we sent a messenger to seek aid from one of the larger towns nearby. He never returned."

He turns back to face your party and continues, "We had no idea who or what was attacking our village... until last week. Creatures in black robes drifted out of the woods to the west and began setting houses on fire. Then, they seized four of our bravest men and carried them, screaming, into the mists."

Owen throws his mug of ale into the fire sending a shower of sparks into the night sky, suddenly angry. "The only creature capable of this evil is the Barrow King, who lives in the burial mounds to the west. But I swear, we have done nothing to bring his anger down upon us, nothing!"

Wearily, the elder stands, leaning heavily on his walking stick. Slowly he lifts it, pointing at each of you in turn.

"If it is the Barrow King, Gods help us!"

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5. It is not an easy adventure and the encounters are designed for PCs with a good sense of strategy and tactics and who can mix their abilities together with a decent level of sophistication. While the orc encounters should be easy for a higher level group, the churgeons are not as easy to overcome. Anyone familiar with the previous 3rd edition version of this adventure will find the new one more challenging. If the PCs do not engage intelligently against opponents, the final battle can result in 2 or 3 deaths, easily.

Six months ago, a cult devoted to Voodrith, the god of slaughter, began seeking a location to found a new temple. Since the open worship of Voodrith is forbidden in many parts of the world, the devout searched for a site far from prying eyes, and yet someplace that would serve to glorify their dread god. The cultists found their locale in the form of an ancient burial ground far from any large towns or well traveled roads. After conditioning the burial ground's resident ghouls by providing equal amounts of bloody brutality and juicy morsels to eat, the cult moved into the warrens beneath the graveyard.

Several miles to the east of the burial ground lay the small farming village of Glenn Hollow. The superstitious residents of Glenn Hollow all knew about the ancient

burial site and stayed far away, fearing that they might disturb the Barrow King, an entity that they believed stalked the area.

After the initial consecration of the new temple to their dark god, Abraxes, the cult's war chief, sent scouting parties out into the wilderness to insure that the temple's location would remain secure. Abraxes was furious to learn of the existence of Glenn Hollow and was preparing a war party when the cult's spiritual leader, Mordiggian, calmed him by claiming that the presence of the village was a blessing from Voodrith. The village would provide fodder for the cult's bloody sacrifices as well as Mordiggian's own blasphemous surgical experiments. After some discussion, it was decided that sentries would be posted all around Glenn Hollow and charged with ensuring no villager be allowed to leave the area.

The first raid on Glenn Hollow happened a little over three months ago. The villagers awoke one morning to discover that a house at the edge of their village had been sacked and all its occupants had gone missing. The villagers mounted their own search party but found no trace of the missing family. In the weeks that followed, the raids continued. After the third attack, with no sign of the missing villagers, a messenger was sent to seek aid from a larger town. He was never seen again.

In the past month the raids on Glenn Hollow have grown progressively bolder. Instead of skulking into the village in the dead of night and using magic spells to cover their work, the cultists have begun storming into the village at least once a week, taking prisoners and keeping the rest of the villagers properly cowed before disappearing once again into the western woods.

The villagers, seeing their fellows dragged off in the direction of the forbidden burial ground, have begun to believe that the cultists are the servants of the legendary Barrow King come to punish them for some unknown transgression.

To successfully complete the adventure, PCs must stop the vile activities of the cult leaders Abraxes and Mordiggian, and rescue as many captured villagers from the temple as possible.

The village of Glenn Hollow has been left deliberately vague so that you can substitute any sleepy town or hamlet from your own campaign. The only requirement is that the village be semi-secluded and not within a day's travel of another town or village. The forgotten burial ground is described as being located west of Glenn Hollow, but you should feel free to change this to fit the parameters of your own campaign.

THE VILLAGE OF GLENN HOLLOW

You are traveling west along a slightly overgrown but well-traversed road. The sun is setting in the autumn sky with a chilling breeze picking up from the north. The sky is growing dark quickly and the night is certain to be cold. Ahead, you can see the inviting glow of warm fires shining cheerfully through the windows of small cottages. After being on the road most of the day, the thought of a warm meal and a good night's rest in a comfortable bed is more than appealing.

The women and children of the village all retreat to the safety of their homes. It is only Owen, his two grandsons, and a few other men who greet the PCs as they enter the village.

The old man steps forward to introduce himself. "I am Owen," he offers, "You'll have to forgive our less than hospitable greeting. Our village has fallen on dark times and we thought you might be servants of the Barrow King." Owen looks as if he's about to ask a question, but then reconsiders. "Let's go inside where it's warm. We can talk more comfortably there."

The elder leads the PCs into his cottage and has them sit around a great oak table. Owen waits until everyone is settled with a hot meal before them before he begins to speak. He tells the PCs about the raids as described in the Adventure Background above. He describes the black-clad raiders and how they sweep out of the western woods to pillage their poor village. He also relates the legend of the Barrow King, the restless spirit of a forgotten king that haunts an ancient burial ground several miles to the west of Glenn Hollow. Owen then asks the PCs for their aid and offers them 100 gp. for their help. At this point, Owen retires for the evening to let the PCs discuss the deal, and hopefully their plans as well.

Assuming that the PCs agree to aid the villagers of Glenn Hollow, they are given fresh supplies the following morning and told that the burial ground lies six miles to the west. Following the path left by the cultists on their last raid is a relatively easy task for any PC with the Track feat (Wilderness Lore check DC 15). If they succeed, the PCs locate the burial ground in only 4 or 5 hours. If they fail this test or no member of the party has the Track feat, it takes almost a full day to locate the burial ground.

AGAINST THE BARROW KING

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard concerning the Barrow King. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10).

- DC 10** According to local legend, the Barrow King is a restless spirit from an age long past.
- DC 15** This malevolent spirit is said to loathe all that breathes life. It seeks to destroy the living whenever possible, especially delighting in the suffering it can inflict upon its victims before it snuffs out their breath.
- DC 20** A cultist to the god Voodrith is said to search for a way to ally himself and his followers to the Barrow King.
- DC 25** These cultists are said to have found the living incarnation of the Barrow King.

▲ **Owen Pereador, Village Elder, Human Com 2:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d4+7; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp 0; Full Atk +0 (1d6-1, club); AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +6, Spot +4; Skill Focus (knowledge (local)), Toughness.

Possessions: Club, commoner's outfit, pipe and tobacco, 102 gp.

▲ **Joshua and Kane, Owen's Grandsons, Human Com 1:**

CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+2; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +2; Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+2, quarterstaff); AL LG; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +4, Profession (rancher) +7, Spot +3, Use Rope +7; Skill Focus (profession (rancher)), Quick Draw.

Possessions: Leather Armor, quarterstaff, 50 ft. hempen rope, commoner's outfit, 3 gp, 9 sp.

The trip to the burial ground isn't far, about a half-day's travel. Roll once on the table below to determine if any random encounters befall the PCs on their journey, or merely choose a suitable encounter.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d20	Encounter
1-10	No Encounter
11	Bat swarm
12	Brown bear
13	Giant preying mantis
14	Goblin patrol (2d4)
15	Harpy (in a tree fort)
16	Orc rogue scout
17	Tiger
18	Wolf pack (2d3)
19	Worg (with saddle, lost from a goblin scout)
20	Yeth hound

I. The Burial Ground

After traveling for several hours, the sight before you is completely unmistakable. The burial ground is just as the villagers described it. Sixteen ancient burial mounds form a ring on the grassy knoll just below you. Each of the mounds has a round opening that faces the center of the circle. Most of these openings are filled with rocks or a rotting wood panel, but one stands open. A burning torch is placed to either side of its entrance.

The grass around the entire area has been trampled down. A large bonfire blazes in the center of the burial ring. You can see several shapes moving against the flames.

The barrows are approximately 30 ft. wide and do not contain anything of any interest.

Seven orc guards and four ghouls currently stalk the grounds. The orcs attack anyone who approaches the open barrow.

Tactics: The orcs are ready to fight to the death. Fiercely loyal to Abraxes, they charge forward to take down front line PCs first, leaving a single archer to pick off spellcasters. The ghouls on the other hand only attack anyone with the scent of the purple mushrooms (from area #14) on them, thanks to long-term training by Mordiggian. Otherwise, they are content to stay clear of any fights that occur and sate their hunger on the fallen once it is safe. If the ghouls attack, they run as soon as two of their number are slain.

If the fight is going too easily for the PCs, have the ghouls attack quickly before running off into the surrounding woods.

After the fight, the PCs may have time to examine the bodies. The orcs all bear strange ritualistic tattoos. A Knowledge (arcana) or Bardic Knowledge check (DC 25) reveals that these are not typical of orc tribes. In addition, they bear some resemblance to sigils and runes of the Barrow King, but are crude by human standards.

Once the PCs have dealt with the orc guards (and possibly the ghoul lurkers) they may make their way safely into the open crypt. If the PCs leave mounds outside the crypt and the ghouls have not been slain or driven away, the unprotected animals are eaten by the time the PCs return.

▼ **Orc:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 8, 7, 7, 6, 5, 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (2d4+4/18-20, falchion), or +1 ranged (1d6/19-20, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (2d4+4/18-20, falchion), or +1 ranged (1d6/19-20, shortbow); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort+3, Ref+0, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness.

Light sensitivity (Ex): Orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, falchion.

AGAINST THE BARROW KING

☠ **Ghoul:** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite), +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

2. The Crypt Hall

A set of shallow stairs descends for about 20 feet from the opening you just entered to a corridor below. The walls are made of rough stone blocks tightly fitted together. Three alcoves line either side of the corridor. At the far end of the hall, a filthy hide rug hanging from the ceiling conceals the back wall. Tracks can be clearly seen in the dust on the floor leading back and forth between the hide curtain and top of the stairs where you are standing. Cracked and peeling paintings of a long forgotten hero line the inside of the first four alcoves. Two rotting, wooden doors are set into the last two alcoves.

There are no actual dangers in the crypt hall, but feel free to add to the gloomy atmosphere. The hide skin hanging against the back wall conceals the entrance to the ghoul warrens described in locations 5 through 17.

3. Queen Marlane's Room

The air is thick. Cobwebs dominate every corner of the room, but the doorway remains clear. Man-sized footprints can also be easily seen in the dust on the floor. Discolored spots on the floor reveal where chests or barrels once stood. A stone sarcophagus lies on a raised dais in the center of the room. The lid shows signs of being recently moved and lies cracked on the floor. A bas-relief of a plain-looking woman in an unfamiliar style of dress is depicted on its worn surface. There are no signs of valuables in the chamber.

Treasure: All of the valuables from this tomb were looted months ago by the cultists and were moved to #17.

4. King Zarreth's Room

A nauseating odor hangs in the air here. Man-sized footprints can be easily spotted leading through the dust. Discolored areas on the floor reveal where chests or barrels once stood. Upon a raised dais stands a stone sarcophagus. The stone lid of the sarcophagus lies shattered on the floor.

Tactics: If the PCs enter the room, King Zarreth and Queen Marlane, now transformed into ghosts, attack them from the corner of the room to the left of the door, and fight until destroyed.

Treasure: All of the valuables from this tomb were looted months ago by the cultists and were moved to #17. However, the queen wears an antique hair comb in her matted hair. It is crafted into the shape of a gold dragon set with a red garnet and worth 1,050 gp.

☠ **King Zarreth and Queen Marlane, Ghosts:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 45, 40; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 and paralysis, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 and paralysis, bite), +3 melee (1d4+1 + paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

Ghoul Fever (Ex): Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghost's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even elves can be affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ghost's stench for 24 hours. A delay poison or neutralize poison spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

5. Room of Gibbering Chirurgeons

Pushing aside the filth-encrusted hide, you see a large, irregularly shaped room. Two corridors lead off from this room to the west and the east. Both are large enough for a man to travel through with ease. Gliding towards you are three twisted parodies of the human form, standing each at about 6-feet. Steel pins and rods stretch the flesh of these creatures into horrific mockeries of their original appearances. Stitches crisscross their bodies making

Continued on following page

AGAINST THE BARROW KING

them look like living jigsaw puzzles. Gore-smeared surgical tools extend from the stumps of their arms like slender fingers. A constant gibbering caterwaul comes from their twisted mouths.

Tactics: Three surgeons here attack the PCs as soon as they enter the room, fighting to the death.

♣ **Chirurgeon:** CR 3; Medium construct; HD 2d10+20; hp 36, 32, 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, claw/19–20); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws/19–20); SQ Construct qualities, haste; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Haste (Su): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a chirurgeon can enter a battle frenzy that duplicates the effect of the spell *haste* on itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts for 3 rounds.

Sharp Fingers (Ex): The blades that make up the chirurgeon's fingers are exceptionally sharp and threaten a critical hit on a 19–20.



6. Ghoul Cave

From the dark recesses of this room come the wet sounds of tearing flesh, punctuated by the cracking of bones and disturbing feral growls. Loud laughter, cheering, and curses in a guttural language can be heard from the north.

Encounter: Six ghouls are skulking in this room, feeding upon the remains of a cultist thrown to them by the orcs at #7. There is also a dead human villager here who is not touched by the ghouls. Careful examination shows the cultist's body has remnants of what appears to be a natural resin of some sort (the scent of the purple mushrooms in area #14...the ghouls only attack someone with this odor on them unless they are attacked themselves).

Tactics: Once four of the ghouls have been killed, the remaining two attempt to flee north along the corridor, alerting the orcs in #7 of the danger.

Treasure: The ghouls themselves have no treasure, but a large fire opal (worth 1,000 gp) can be found on the remains of the unfortunate cultist the ghouls are eating.

♣ **Ghoul:** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 20, 17, 14, 11, 8, 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite), +0 melee (1d3 + paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

7. Orc Guard Post

This irregularly-shaped room has several old crates and barrels stacked along the walls. In the center of the room, four crates have been pulled together around a large barrel to form a crude eating area.

The crates and barrels are empty, as the orcs are using them for a makeshift table.

Encounter: There are six orcs standing around the central table placing bets on a game of chance. The orcs have just finished feeding the ghouls in #6 and are not expecting any trouble from that direction. If the PCs are attempting to be stealthy at all, the orcs are surprised and only receive a partial action during the first round of combat.

AGAINST THE BARROW KING

However, if any of the ghouls from #6 have run in this direction, the orcs are on the alert for danger and ready to attack the PCs.

Tactics: The orcs fight to the death — they fear the wrath of Abraxes more than they fear death itself. Like the orcs at the burial mounds, these too bear the strange ritualistic tattoos of the Barrow King.

Treasure: 100 gp in coins from assorted nations, and two gold teeth from the cultist they fed to the ghouls worth 5 gp apiece.

✶ **Orc:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 9, 7, 5, 5, 5, 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (2d4+4/18–20, falchion); Full Atk +4 melee (2d4+4/18–20, falchion); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort+3, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness.

Light sensitivity (Ex): Orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, falchion.

8. Choker Cave

The ceiling of this roughly circular room rises over 11 feet above your head. At the back of the room hangs a moldy velvet curtain. The stench of mildew hangs thickly in the air.

Encounter: A choker is clinging to the ceiling near the entrance to room #9. The PCs must make an opposed Spot check against the choker's Hide skill to see it. If it goes unnoticed, the choker patiently waits for the party to investigate the room. It strikes out at the last person entering room #9.

✶ **Choker:** CR 2; Small aberration; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d3+3, tentacle); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+3, 2 tentacles); SA Improved grab, constrict 1d3+3; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., quickness; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Hide +10, Move Silently +6; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy.

Constrict (Ex): A choker deals 1d3+3 points of damage with a successful grapple check against a Large or smaller creature. Because it seizes its victim by the neck, a creature in the choker's grasp cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a choker must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict. Chokers receive a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks, which is already included in the statistics block.

Quickness (Su): Although not particularly dexterous, a choker is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra standard action or move action during its turn each round.

9. The Mimic's Lair

Strange, glowing fungus grows along the walls of this kidney-shaped room. The floor is dusty and shows signs of recent traffic. Four massive chests and two stout barrels are stacked up in the center of the room.

Encounter: Aside from the chests and barrels, there is nothing of interest here. One of the objects in the room is a mimic. Feel free to let the PCs poke around for a bit to lure them into a false sense of security before revealing the mimic.

Treasure: Located in the chests or barrels surrounding the mimic is 1,500 gp, a large folded tapestry with mildew stains (worth 100 gp) a well-crafted bag of elven silk (in reality a *bag of devouring*), a slender rod of birch wood (a *wand of magic missile*, 3 charges, caster level 5th), a silver dagger with a deep blue spine set in the pommel (+2 *dagger*), and a blue star sapphire (worth 1,000 gp).

✶ **Mimic:** CR 4; Large aberration (Shapechanger); HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +1; Spd 10 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +13; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, slam); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, 2 slams); SA Adhesive, crush; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid, mimic shape; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +19, Disguise +13, Listen +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (slam).

Adhesive (Ex): A mimic exudes a thick slime that acts as a powerful adhesive, holding fast any creatures or items that touch it. An adhesive-covered mimic automatically grapples any creature it hits with its slam attack. Opponents so grappled cannot get free while the mimic is alive without removing the adhesive first.

A weapon that strikes an adhesive-coated mimic is stuck fast unless the wielder succeeds on a DC 16 Reflex save. A successful DC 16 Strength check is needed to pry it off. Strong alcohol dissolves the adhesive, but the mimic still can grapple normally. A mimic can dissolve its adhesive at will, and the substance breaks down 5 rounds after the creature dies.

Crush (Ex): A mimic deals 1d8+4 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Mimic Shape (Ex): A mimic can assume the general shape of any object that fills roughly 150 cubic feet (5 feet by 5 feet by 6 feet), such as a massive chest, a stout bed, or a wide door frame. The creature cannot substantially alter its size, though. A mimic's body is hard and has a rough texture, no matter what appearance it might have. Anyone who examines the mimic can detect the ruse with a successful Spot check opposed by the mimic's Disguise check. Of course, by this time it is generally far too late.

10. Desecrated Antechamber

The unfinished walls of this circular room are splashed with blood and gore. The sand on the ground is stained. A feeling of evil so deep you can almost taste it hangs in the air. Launching themselves toward you are three gaunt figures with razor-tipped fingers.

AGAINST THE BARROW KING

Three Chirurgeons attack the PCs as they enter the room and fight to the death. Aside from the bloodstains (which are from the chirurgeons' last victim), there is absolutely nothing of interest in this room.

♣ **Chirurgeon:** CR 3; Medium construct; HD 2d10+20; hp 36, 32, 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, claw/19–20); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws/19–20); SQ construct qualities, haste; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Haste (Su): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a chirurgeon can enter a battle frenzy that duplicates the effect of the spell haste on itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts for 3 rounds.

Sharp Fingers (Ex): The blades that make up the chirurgeon's fingers are exceptionally sharp and threaten a critical hit on a 19–20.

11. The False Altar

The walls of this roughly hewn cavern are covered in glowing fungus. At the back of the room stands a stone altar. The altar is bathed in blood, and the sand around it is stained black. Four human supplicants kneel there, chanting softly.

Concealed against the northeastern wall is a secret door, which can be found with a Search Check (DC 20). The secret door opens with a loud grating sound alerting anyone in area #17. The four cultists rise and attack anyone who enters this sacred area and fight to the death.

♣ **Cultist, Human War 1;** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 9, 7, 7, 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8, morningstar); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8, morningstar); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Intimidate +5, Jump +4; Endurance.

Possessions: Morningstar, cleric's vestments.

12. Human Cultist Barracks

Seven beds stand along the walls of this irregularly-shaped room. At the foot of each bed is a small wooden chest. There is a pool of fresh water in the center of the room. Several buckets and drinking cups lie scattered around the lip of the well. Blind cave fish can be seen swimming contentedly in the cool water. Soft moans come from the corridor just to the northwest.

Encounter: This is where the human cultists sleep. Common items like idols, peasant clothing, and food items are all that occupy the chests. However, hidden in the third chest rests an emerald, guarded by a homunculus. It immediately attacks anyone who opens the chest.

Treasure: The homunculus guards a deep green emerald. When activated with a command word ("Voodrith"), the magical gem heals the person holding it of 2d8+5 damage (as *cure moderate wounds* spell cast by a 5th level cleric). Each use of the gem expends 1 charge. There are 3 charges left in this one. Without charges, it is worth 500 gp.

♣ **Homunculus:** CR 1; Tiny construct; HD 2d10; hp 12; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp –8; Atk +2 melee (1d4–1 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4–1 plus poison, bite); SA Poison; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 15, Con —, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +14, Listen +4, Spot +4; Lightning Reflexes.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage sleep for 1 minute, secondary damage sleep for another 5d6 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

13. The Cells

Along the western wall of this square room are four sturdy wooden cages. Each cage contains a single human prisoner. All the prisoners are dressed in soiled rags and show signs of severe malnourishment. Lash marks criss-cross their bodies and they moan in despair. Standing guard over these prisoners are three human cultists.

Encounter: The four prisoners in the cages are from the village of Glenn Hollow. The men are known as Forris, Khurt, and Berron; the woman is called Tressa. Once they notice the PCs, they begin grasping at the bars of the cages and beg to be rescued.

Tactics: The cultists attack the PCs as soon as they enter this location and fight to the death to prevent the rescue of the prisoners.

If any cultist guard comes within arm's reach of the cages during the combat with the PCs, the prisoners reach between the bars to claw at the guard. Unarmed attacks provoke an attack of opportunity; the bars provide the prisoners 50% cover if they are attacked.

If freed, the former prisoners gladly follow the PCs as they continue to liberate more imprisoned villagers.

AGAINST THE BARROW KING

▲ Cultist, Human War 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 7, 6, 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8, morningstar); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8, morningstar); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Intimidate +5, Jump +4; Endurance.

Possessions: Morningstar, cleric's vestments.

▲ Prisoner, Human Com 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 4, 3, 3, 2; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (woodwork, cobbling, weaponsmith and seamstress respectively) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

Possessions: Tattered peasant's outfit.

14. The Hall of Bone

Bones of all shapes and sizes form intricate patterns along the walls and ceiling of this room. All the bones show obvious tooth and claw marks. The caps of odd mushrooms peek up through the sand floor like plump purple fingers. The stench of death and decay clings to the air.

Nothing in this room is actually dangerous to the PCs. If the PCs cross the room, the mushrooms leave a sticky resin on their clothing and exposed flesh. It is this resin that is responsible for the unpleasant odor of the cavern. The resin, and the accompanying scent, remains on clothing and flesh until it is washed thoroughly. The ghouls (located in #1 and #6) immediately attack anyone with this scent on them.

15. The Surgical Prep Room

Along the western wall stand four steel cages. In the first cage, a slender woman with matted hair lies curled in a fetal position on the floor. The second cage is empty and its door hangs open. Drag marks lead from the cell through a curtain to the northeast. The male prisoner in the third cage sits with his knees drawn up to his chest, rocking back and forth like an autistic child. The woman in the fourth cage is weeping.

Encounter: The woman in the first cage is actually a ghoul (hp 17, stats as in area #1), and moves to attack anyone who opens the door to her cage. The prisoners in cages 3 and 4 are unaware of her true nature. The ghoul springs to attack the nearest available target as soon as the door to her cage is opened. The male prisoner is named Ruland, and the woman is named Azaria.

If freed, these prisoners follow the PCs and help in any way to help free other villagers.

☠ Ghoul; CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 20, 17, 14, 11, 8, 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 and paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 and paralysis, bite), +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

▲ Prisoner, Human Com 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3, 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (brewing and leatherworking respectively) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

Possessions: Tattered peasant's outfit.

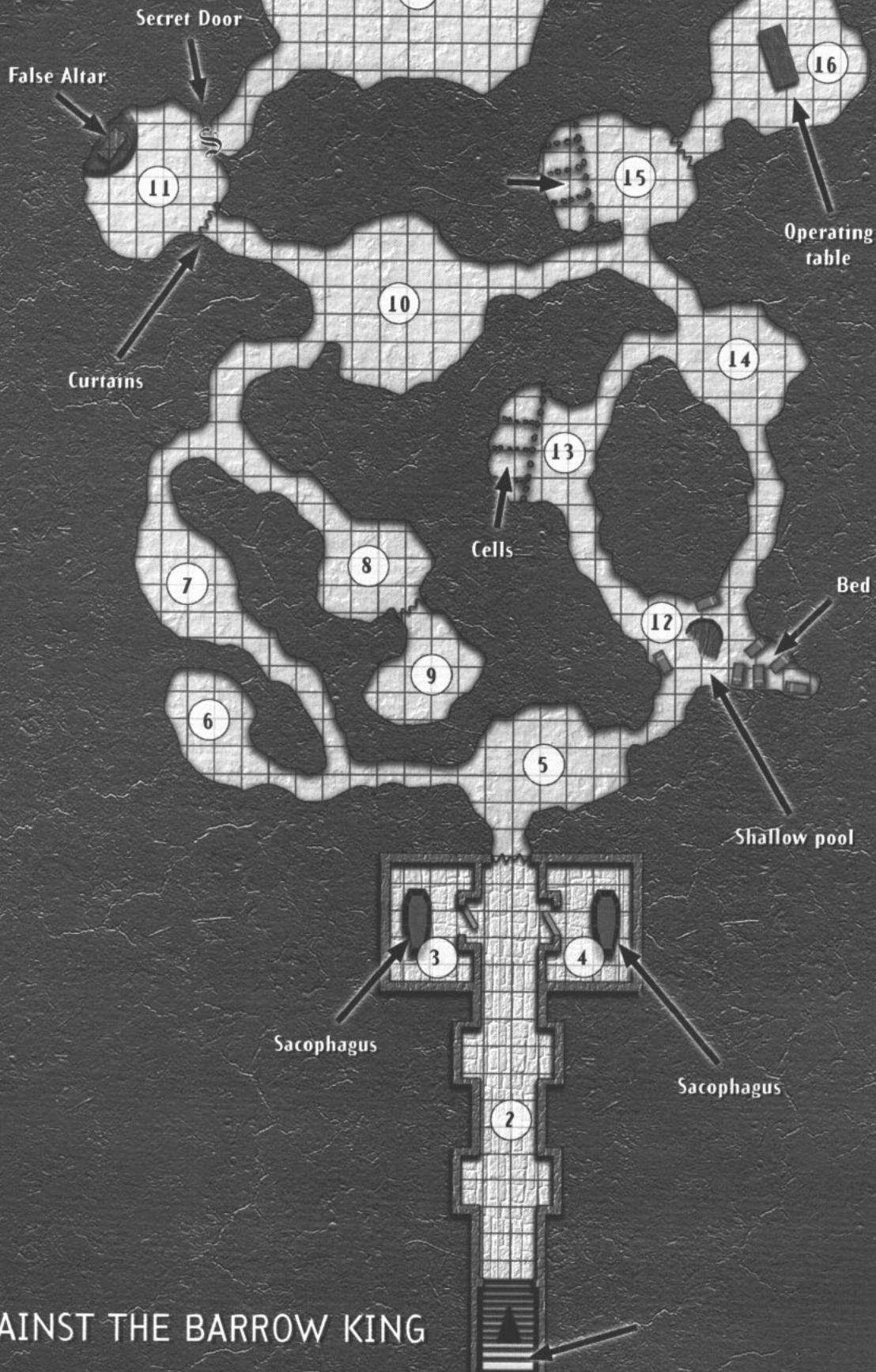
16. Mordiggian's Operating Theater

Magical light from multiple sources floods this room. Standing in the center of the room is a sturdy wooden table. A wild-eyed man bound hand and foot to the table cries desperately for aid. A thin, menacing man with deep-set eyes glares at you from the far side of the table. He grips a sharp knife in his hand. Two gaunt figures with razor fingers stand by his side. "So," he begins, his raspy voice echoing off the walls, "the legend of the Barrow King wasn't enough to keep you at bay?" He coyly glances at the door and turns back to regard you, letting the blood-soaked dagger fall from his grasp. "Then wait until you learn the legend is real. You will pay for your trespass. Kill them!" And with that, his Chirurgeons rush to the attack!

Encounter: The bound man is an imprisoned villager named Berod. Berod aids the PCs if he is freed. Mordiggian and his two Chirurgeons attack the PCs as soon as they enter this area.

☠ Mordiggian, Adp 5; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6+10; hp 30; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1 masterwork heavy mace); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, masterwork heavy mace); SA Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +8, Spellcraft +3, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Construct.



AGAINST THE BARROW KING

AGAINST THE BARROW KING

Adept Spells Prepared: (3/3/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—ghost sound, light, touch of fatigue; 1st—burning hands, command, sleep; 2nd—cat's grace.

Possessions: Masterwork heavy mace, surgical knife, leather butcher's apron, ring of protection +2, scroll of animate dead (2), 5 pp, 19 gp.

✦ **Chirurgeon:** CR 3; Medium construct; HD 2d10+20; hp 38, 37; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, claw/19–20); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws/19–20); SQ construct qualities, haste; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Haste (Su): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a chirurgeon can enter a battle frenzy that duplicates the effect of the spell haste on itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts for 3 rounds.

Sharp Fingers (Ex): The blades that make up the chirurgeon's fingers are exceptionally sharp and threaten a critical hit on a 19–20.

▲ **Prisoner, Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (pottery) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

Possessions: Tattered peasant's outfit.

17. The Hall of the Barrow King

This large chamber stretches nearly 35 ft. long and 25 ft. wide. Sand covers the floor. A stone dais rises from the sand against the northern wall. A squat figurine of a bestial deity and two chests filled with gold sit upon the dais. Two brass braziers hang from the ceiling and bathe the room in a hellish red glow. Standing in the center of the room is a large man in heavy armor, scars covering what flesh is exposed. He hefts a gore-smeared axe and presses it to his lips like a lover. A feral grin spreads across his features as he turns to face you, a wild look of glee brightening his eyes. "Meat!" he says.

Encounter: Abraxes, the false Barrow King, attacks the PCs as soon as they enter this area. He was a talented warrior for hire who volunteered to be 'enhanced' by Mordiggian's surgery. This surgery was never successful, but slowly turned Abraxes insane when combined with Mordiggian's brainwashing. He is now quite insane and truly believes he is a feral warrior of the past. He carries a black greataxe named *fiend* (see Appendix B). In the chests on the dais are 7,000 gp.

Tactics: In any round in which Abraxes does not suffer damage, he uses his Intimidate skill to demoralize

an opponent (See Intimidate, PHB chapter 4). He uses this ability on the PC with the highest Strength first, until everyone is demoralized.

▲ **Abraxes, Human Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+10; hp 45; Init +6; Spd 20 ft. (in full plate); AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +11 melee (1d12+8/19–20, x3, *fiend*, used two-handed); Full Atk +11 melee (1d12+8/19–20, x3, *fiend*, used two-handed); SA Unholy; SQ Resistance to fire 10; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 7, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Intimidate +6, Jump +8, Ride +7; Cleave, Improved Initiative, [Mighty Cleaving], Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Unholy (Su): Good characters struck by *fiend* suffer 2d6 points of damage.

Possessions: Full Plate, *fiend*, ring of minor energy resistance (fire).

Fiend is a jet-black +2 keen mighty cleaving unholy greataxe. (More information can be found in New Magic — Appendix A.)

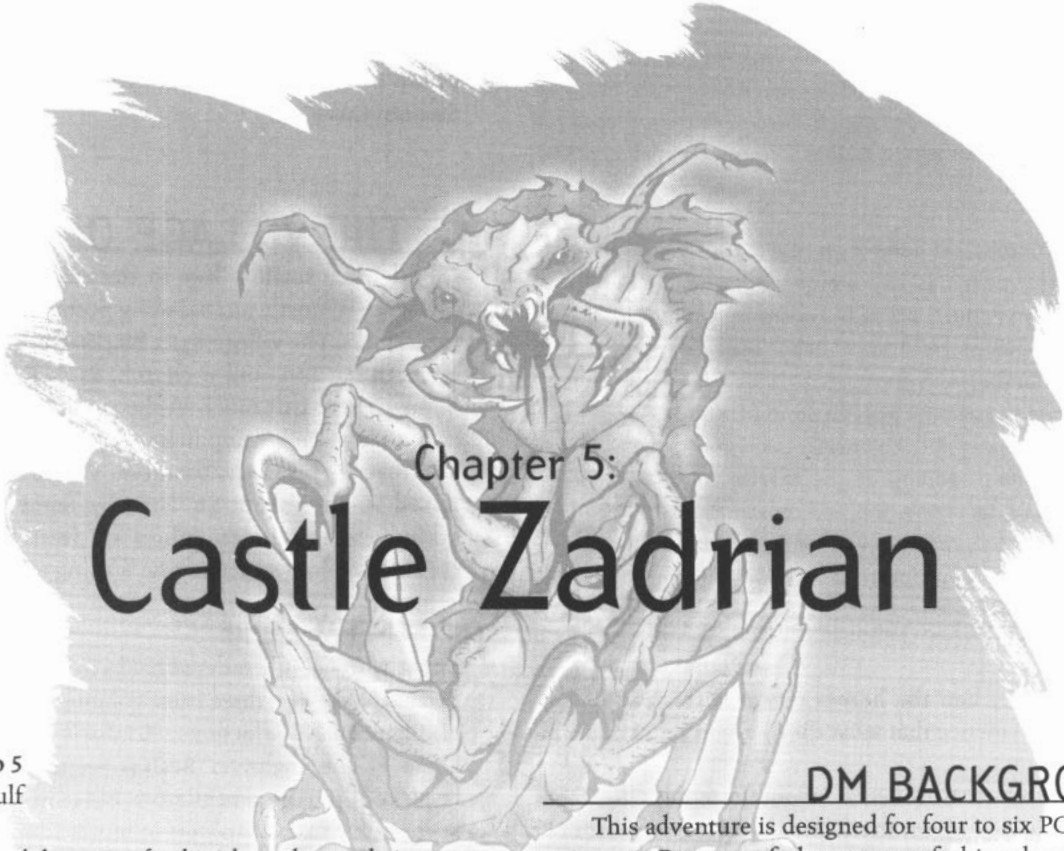
EPILOGUE

After facing the horrors of an abominable cult and rescuing the imprisoned villagers, the PCs have had quite a day. The deaths of Abraxes and Mordiggian has dealt the cult of Voodrith a serious blow. As DM, you are welcome to end the story here. However, if you wish to keep this plot alive, there are endless ways to torment your PCs. Other cult members could come seeking revenge for the deaths of their religious leaders. One of the prisoners they rescued might even have become a convert during their imprisonment thanks to Mordiggian's brainwashing and torture. Believing the Barrow King tales, this convert may even take new followers back to the warrens to strike at the village once again!

If your PCs don't want to keep *fiend*, the task of destroying the enchanted axe could become an entire adventure itself.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Wandering through the marketplace, the PCs find some food prices are skyrocketing, and other food is scarce. They soon learn a village the city depends on named Darbin for a large number of its foodstuffs has mysteriously broken all contact. The PCs are asked to investigate (see the adventure "Kurishan's Garden").
- A passing bard named Tinnemaen learns of the PCs' heroism, and informs them that the lord of the neighboring realm of Tirna'cel is actively seeking champions to aid them with trouble at the tomb of a great hero of the land (see the adventure "Out of Body, Out of Mind").



Chapter 5:
Castle Zadrian

Levels 3 to 5
 by Rich Wulf

DM BACKGROUND

When you read the posting for this job, you knew what you were getting yourself into. “Lady of means requires the assistance of a stalwart group of adventurers willing to undertake a mission of the utmost importance. Discretion required.” Words like that never mean that the woman in question is looking for someone to weed her garden — unless, of course, it’s full of man-eating plants. Those are the kinds of words you only post if you’re really in a bind...if it’s a matter of life and death... If you’re desperate for help and willing to pay for it through the nose.

So when Lady Elena Zadrian tells you that her father — the near-legendary alchemist Sir Timothy Zadrian — has gone missing, well, you’re not all that surprised. Lady Elena looks up at you, brushing long, blonde hair from her bright blue, tear-soaked eyes. “My father lives outside of a village only four day’s ride from here, a sleepy, little place called Cuthder,” she says. “He comes to see me every four months. He’s a forgetful, old man, but I could set my clock by his visits.” She chokes back a sob.

“It’s been eight months since I saw him last. I fear something has gone horribly awry. Either brigands have robbed his tiny castle, or one of his experiments may have left him dead — or worse.”

The lady stares you straight in the eye, and now you can really taste her desperation. “My father is a good man, wise and noble, but if word of his disappearance were to get out, it would hurl my household into a shambles. I need you to travel to his castle and learn for me what has happened to him, quickly and quietly.

“Please,” she begs of you, her ruby-painted lower lip beginning to quiver. “I need your help. And I’m willing to pay — handsomely.”

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5. Because of the nature of this adventure, it is perfectly suited for all levels, however. A great deal of investigation and problem solving takes place here, so PCs with a tendency to kick in the door and kill the monster, may not enjoy it as much.

Sir Timothy Zadrian is a strange man to be sure. His distant ties to nobility provided him with ample wealth through an inheritance, allowing him to pursue his lifelong passion: alchemy. Purchasing a small castle on the outskirts of the rural village of Cuthder, he leapt into his experiments in earnest. For decades, he has tinkered with combining alchemy and extraplanar theory. For the most part, his studies haven’t turned up anything new.

Until recently, that is.

Sir Timothy made an interesting discovery. He created a “dimensional web,” allowing his home to become much larger on the inside than on the outside, by existing in several planes of reality simultaneously. In doing so, he pierced a demiplane composed of raw chaos. Unfortunately, the experiment went awry, and Timothy was incapacitated. In the meantime, the denizens of the chaos demiplane quickly infested Timothy’s home.

In hindsight, building a large alchemical device to shatter the boundaries between worlds was a bad idea.

Lady Elena is willing to offer the heroes up to 1,000 gp for their efforts to determine her father’s fate. If they accept, she provides them with directions to his home and a small advance of one quarter of the total fee. The rest

BARDIC LORE

Timothy is a reclusive man, and Bardic knowledge on him is essentially nonexistent. However, asking specifically about the alchemist's dealings to townsfolk may uncover the following news with a Gather Information skill check (DC variable):

- DC 10** Timothy visits the town roughly every six weeks.
- DC 15** He rarely has any prolonged conversation with anyone; he is polite but secretive and not terribly sociable. He hasn't been seen in over four months.
- DC 20** He goes to the general store for supplies, places an order for his next visit, whiles away the evening reading at the tavern, then takes his mule cart home the next morning.
- DC 25** The only person in town who has ever been inside Timothy's castle is Johann Mason, the local stonemason.

is to be paid when the heroes return with news of her father and evidence that what they have to say about him is true.

The travel to Cuthder is about four days by foot. Twice each day roll on the following chart to determine if any random encounters befall the PCs.

▲ **Lady Elena, Human Ari 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +7, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Listen +5, Ride +5, Sense Motive +9; Iron Will, Negotiator.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

To add a few additional dangers on the road, roll on the following table. No more than once per hour, however.

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No Encounter
11	Ankheg
12	Assassin Vine
13	Drenshar the scholar, NPC (3rd level expert)
14	Giant wasp
15	Goblin patrol (2d4)
16	Merchant family
17	Owlbear
18	Pixie
19	Stream with bridge, merrow guardian
20	Unicorn

Merchant Family: This is a middle-aged merchant and his wife and two young sons making their way home from trading with the people of Cuthder. They noticed nothing strange about the area.

Drenshar the Scholar: A disciple of the goddess of knowledge, Drenshar is on his way to deliver copies of two recent texts his monks have scribed to the General Store in Cuthder.

THE VILLAGE OF CUTHDER

Cuthder is a small village in the midst of wheat farms. The place is mostly just a trading post and gathering point for farmers. The village has a blacksmith, a general store, a tavern, an inn, and a church, as well as many small homes. There isn't much in the way of equipment in the city, unless said equipment would also be useful for a farmer in his daily business. The townspeople have mixed feelings about Sir Timothy. Some regard him as a kindhearted scholar. Others are fearful of his power, considering him a catastrophe waiting to happen.

THE GENERAL STORE

Timothy frequently ordered books from distant libraries at great expense. The three latest volumes — *On the Veracity of Elemental Distinctions*, *Kordian's Theurgy*, and *The Tome of the Eighteen Realms* — are still waiting to be picked up at the general store. For a few silvers, the shopkeeper allows the characters to browse through the books. A Knowledge (arcane) roll (DC 15) or a Knowledge (the planes) roll (DC 8) and a night of reading reveal the three books are texts describing planar theory.

The shopkeeper refuses to sell the books for less than 500 gold each. After all, Sir Timothy may yet return looking for them. If added to a wizard's research library, the three books reduce the gold piece cost of researching any spell involving teleportation or planar travel by 10%.

If the characters think to ask, the general store also has a list of the most common supplies Sir Timothy ordered. The list is as follows: cheese, flour, bread, milk, mutton, salt, mercury, orpiment, sal ammoniac, sulfur, powdered gold, powdered silver, powdered iron, powdered lead, powdered tin, and powdered copper. These last 10 items are a mystery to the shopkeeper and were shipped a long distance, paid for in advance by Sir Timothy at great expense. He assumes they're "some sort of wizard rubbish." Indeed, anyone with the Spellcraft, Alchemy, or Knowledge (arcane) skills can instantly tell that these are alchemical components.

The Local Stonemason

Sir Timothy summoned Johann to the castle every three months and paid him well to work on a 9-foot-tall statue of a warrior. Johann was always brought into the castle blindfolded, so he knows nothing about the interior of the castle except that he was led downstairs. He never finished the statue or learned why Timothy wanted it. He hasn't been to the castle in over four months.

ENTERING THE CASTLE

The castle is about four hours' ride from the village, and sits in the midst of a thick, oak forest. It's a squat, dome-shaped, single-story affair. While there are many windows, there is seemingly only one entrance. Looking through the windows from the outside reveals nothing but smoky, gray mist. Attempts to bludgeon down a wall or break a window accomplishes nothing other than to prove that the entire castle seems to be indestructible, resisting all attempts to enter save through the front doors.

The front doors are large, wooden, and bound in steel (hardness 5, hit points 20).

An elaborate brass knocker hangs on either door. The doors are unlocked, and close inspection reveals that the lock was recently picked. (This is the work of Gareb, the thief who entered the castle two days ago.)

Once inside the castle, many of the rooms are much larger than they should be, given the apparent size of the castle. This is due to the dimensional distortions caused by Sir Timothy's experiments. Since each room occupies a different pocket dimension, teleportation devices or spells (such as *dimension door*) only function within the house if they take the character to another location within the same room — unless those effects are capable of breaching the gap between planes (such as *teleport without error*).

As the PCs enter each area, read or paraphrase the boxed text aloud to the players.

1. Stable

This small outbuilding seems built to house a single beast of burden, but there's nothing in it now but a mule cart.

Soon after Timothy stopped coming out to feed the mule, it kicked open the stable doors and wandered out to find food on its own. The mule still comes home to sleep, but it spends most of the time wandering around the woods outside the castle.

2. Entrance Hall

You walk through the front door and into a large, semicircular chamber tiled in marble. Along the walls bordering the doorway stand four statues. Each one depicts a beautiful, smiling goddess bearing a goblet.

RUMORS

Anyone trying to dig up personal stories or gossip about Sir Timothy (running rampant through a town this size) may uncover any of the following through the use of Diplomacy, Gather Information, or Interrogation Spells.

1. Sir Timothy was once a member of a powerful wizard's guild, but he was kicked out for his crackpot theories. (This is false. Timothy has always been far too reclusive to join such a group.)
2. Odd noises often come from Timothy's castle, and strange things happen thereabouts. Farmer Jared's entire wheat crop died two years back, and Timothy was to blame. (This is true. If Jared is asked about it, he admits that Sir Timothy apologized profusely and paid him 10 times what the crop was worth.)
3. A thief named Gareb breezed through town a few days ago, bragging that he planned to break into the wizard's house. He hasn't been seen since. This is no surprise. Timothy was always paranoid about thieves and made no secret about the fact that his castle is heavily warded by magic. (True. Gareb got inside, but he soon fell to the monsters in the castle.)
4. Timothy is a decent man, but a forgetful one. Sometimes he would come to town, load up his cart with supplies, and be halfway back home before he realized that he had forgotten his cart. (This is true.)
5. Timothy experiments a lot with the weather. Maybe he hopes to improve the crops hereabouts for everyone. (This is false. Timothy's experiments just happen to affect the weather occasionally.)
6. There used to be quite a problem with ghouls wandering the woods to the north, but Timothy got rid of them. (True. In fact, Timothy took the ghouls home and made a deadly trap out of them.)

Close inspection reveals that each goblet bears an inscription in Draconic and contains a small amount of an alchemical material. The first reads "The First Spirit" and contains a silver liquid (quicksilver). The second reads "The Second Spirit" and contains a red powder (orpiment). The third reads "The Third Spirit" and contains a white crystal (sal ammoniac). The fourth reads "The Fourth Spirit" and contains a yellow mineral (sulfur). A successful Craft (alchemy) check (DC 10) or Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15) can identify these substances at a glance. They are the four "spirits" of traditional alchemy.

3. Study

As you enter the room, you smell charred flesh. The entire room has been scorched, but no part of it so badly as the blackened corpse lying on a couch in the center of the room. The edges of the room are burning.

Encounter: A low table stands in the center of the room, surrounded by a couch and several plush chairs. Though this room can be entered normally from either door, it frequently shifts back and forth into a hellish lower plane. Once, it brought back a hell hound. The corpse is Gareb the thief, killed by the hell hound. The hound is currently sleeping under the table amidst a cloud of ash, but quickly awakens and attacks when the party approaches.

☠ **Hell Hound:** CR 3; Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, fire, lawful); HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 fire, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 fire, bite); SA Breath weapon, fiery bite; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, scent, vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +13, Jump +12, Listen +7, Move Silently +13, Spot +7, Survival +7*; Improved Initiative, Run, Track.

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-foot cone, once every 2d4 rounds, damage 2d6 fire, Reflex DC 13 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Fiery Bite (Su): A hell hound deals an extra 1d6 points of fire damage every time it bites an opponent, as if its bite were a flaming weapon.

Skills: Hell hounds have a +5 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

* They also receive a +8 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent, due to their keen sense of smell.

Treasure: If the characters search Gareb's body, they find a set of masterwork thieves' tools, two scrolls of knock, and a +2 dagger with the name "Thornquist" etched into the blade with fine gothic lettering.

4. Falling Up

The walls of this large closet are painted jet black. The floor is covered with chains, and a large chest sits against the rear wall. The ceiling is open to a starless night sky.

This closet is much larger on the inside than it should be. There is no ceiling. The walls only extend 15 feet before giving way to endless space. Secured to the floor at the rear of the room is a large treasure chest. On the wall beside it is a switch labeled with an arrow pointing up and down. (It's currently in the "down" position.) Ten 100-foot coils of chain lie attached to iron rings in the floor. Except

for a six-inch path around the edge of the room, the entire floor is an enormous trapdoor, covering a four-foot drop onto steel spikes. Yanking hard on a chain sets off the trap.

If the chest is opened, the switch abruptly shifts to the "up" position, and a *reverse gravity* spell cast at the 10th level of ability takes effect upon the entire room. Everything except the chest falls up, including the chains. A character may make a Reflex save (DC 20) to grab a chain, but this then causes the pit trap to open. If two chains are pulled, the switch flips again, and gravity returns to normal. Everything falls back into the room and onto the now-exposed spikes. Characters capable of flight or levitation can navigate these fluctuations with ease, but everyone else is at the whim of gravity.

Characters who miss the chains and fall up into space are not lost. They merely hover about at the edge of the spell's range (100 feet up) and can try to swim for a chain or otherwise hope for a rescue. After all this trouble, the only item inside the chest is a *robe of powerlessness*.

☠ **Reverse Gravity Trap:** CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (10-ft. area); automatic reset; spell effect (*reverse gravity*, 10th-level wizard, 4d6 fall [upon hitting the ceiling of the 40-ft.-high room], then 4d6 fall [upon falling 40 ft. to the floor when the spell ends], DC 20 Reflex save avoids damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. Cost: 45,500 gp, 3,640 XP.

5. Hallway

Opening this doorway reveals a wood-paneled path leading off into an expanse of desert. There are no walls, no ceiling save blue sky.

This hallway has actually been projected into a remote desert thousands of miles away. Walking out and looking back at the doorway reveals no other parts of Zadrian's home, only the door. Circling around doesn't even reveal the door, just the wooden path meandering into the distance.

Encounter: Those who dare to enter the desert can easily follow the wood-paneled pathway as it tracks across the dunes. It takes roughly 12 hours to travel from one end of the hallway to the other. At nearly the halfway point, the path passes through a deep depression in the sand. Two skeletons lay on the path marking an ankheg nest. PCs crossing through disturb it, and the hungry ankheg attacks.

☠ **Ankheg:** CR 3; Large magical beast; HD 3d10+12; hp 28; Init +0; Spd 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +12; Atk +7 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d4 acid, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d4 acid, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved grab, spit acid; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 6.

CASTLE ZADRIAN

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Listen +6, Spot +3; Alertness, Toughness.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an ankheg must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the ankheg is damaged after grabbing its prey, it retreats backward down its tunnel at its land speed (not its burrow speed), dragging the victim with it.

Spit Acid (Ex): 30-ft. line, once every 6 hours; damage 4d4 acid, Reflex DC 14 half. One such attack depletes the ankheg's acid supply for 6 hours. It cannot spit acid or deal acid damage during this time. The save DC is Constitution-based.

An ankheg does not use this ability unless it is desperate or frustrated. It most often spits acid when reduced to fewer than half its full normal hit points or when it has not successfully grabbed an opponent.

Treasure: The skeletons belong to a pair of curious adventurers who wandered into the nest. Searching their bodies reveals 230 gp, a +1 *greatsword* named "Hellrender", and a *bead of force*.

6. Kitchen

This room features a small table, an iron stove, and several wooden cupboards containing cutlery and a cornucopia of rotting food. The walls have been gouged deeply by knives, several of which are still jammed into the plaster.

Encounter: A small flock of seven chaos spirits live here (see New Monsters — Appendix B). They eagerly attack the party with knives, frying pans, and other cutlery.

☛ Chaos Spirit: CR 1; Small outsider (chaotic, incorporeal); HD 2d8–2; hp 10, 9, 9, 8, 7, 7, 6; Init +8; Spd Fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +7 melee (1d3, book) or +7 melee (1d4, knife) or +7 melee (1d6, short sword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d3, book) or +7 melee (1d4, knife) or +7 melee (1d6, short sword); SA—; SQ Possess item, incorporeal traits, natural invisibility, flight; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str —, Dex 19, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Spot +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +7; Improved Initiative

Possess Item (Su): A chaos spirit can possess any object within its size limit with a standard action. While inside a physical body, the chaos spirit gains a natural armor bonus to its AC equal to half the hardness of the object, rounded down. It also gains a damage bonus as if its Strength score is equal to the object's hardness +7.

While possessing a physical body, the chaos spirit is no longer incorporeal, though any damage sustained is first absorbed by the possessed creature's body. If an attack does enough damage to destroy the chaos spirit's body, any excess damage is done to the chaos spirit.

Natural Invisibility (Su): While outside a physical body, the chaos spirit is always invisible. This ability is not subject to invisibility purge.

Flight (Su): A chaos spirit possessing an object of small size or smaller can fly about at full speed. Any chaos spirit possessing a body of medium or larger size can still drag itself about at 20 ft. per round. If the body has limbs that can be utilized as legs, this speed is doubled.

7. Dining Room

This room contains a dining table surrounded by four chairs. A kobold dressed in a sorcerer's robes stands atop the table, looking over the shoulders of three burly hobgoblins who grunt menacingly at you. "You have entered the presence of Gurlzick the Magnificent, short in stature but tall in talent!" shrills the kobold in thickly draconic-accented Common. "Show me some respect, and I will show you mercy!"

Encounter: Gurlzick, a kobold sorcerer, wandered here from the desert (area #5). He was attacked by the chaos spirits in the kitchen (area #6) and fled here to recuperate. He's been hiding in this room for a day and a half, afraid to explore the rest of the house.

While not evil, Gurlzick does have a strong sense of self-preservation. If he hears any sort of commotion in the other rooms, he casts a *ghost sound* spell, followed by *silent image*, creating the illusion of three burly, grunting hobgoblins. He then introduces himself as "Gurlzick the Magnificent" to anyone who enters, using *Bluff* to impress the party if possible. If that doesn't work, and combat ensues, he tries to flee into the kitchen, hoping that the chaos spirits and the characters kill each other. If it seems hopeless, he begs for his life. If all else fails, he hits everyone (himself included) with his *wand of fireball*.

Tactics: If the characters do negotiate, Gurlzick is reasonable and honorable. He offers to join the party if they can get him out of the accursed house. He doesn't want to go back to the desert. His tribe cursed him as a coward (he wasn't quite ruthless enough), so he stole the chieftain's wand and ran for his life. When he saw the kitchen door in the midst of the desert, he jumped through and has regretted the move ever since.

He is utterly convinced that the gods hate him and that he has wandered into hell.

If the characters negotiate peaceably with Gurlzick, give them full XP as if they defeated him. If they attacked him, they earn no XP.

▲ Gurlzick the Magnificent, Kobold Sor 4: CR 4; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 4d4+4; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17*, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp –4; Atk +0 melee (1d6–2, club) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6–2, club) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Light Sensitivity; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 6, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Knowledge (arcane) +10, Spellcraft +9, Move Silently +8, Hide +8, Bluff +7, Craft (trapmaking) +5, Profession (mining) +2, Search +5; Still Spell, Armor Proficiency (light)

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Skills: Kobolds have a +2 racial bonus on Craft (trapmaking), Profession (miner), and Search checks.

CASTLE ZADRAN

Sorcerer Spells Known: (6/6*/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st—*mage armor, magic weapon, ray of enfeeblement, true strike*; 2nd—*invisibility, web*.

Possessions: Master work studded leather armor, club, light crossbow, 7 bolts, *potion of cure moderate wounds, wand of fireball* (caster level 5th, 12 charges), 35 sp.

* Gerzlack has already used one of his 1st level spell slots casting *mage armor* (figured in his statistics above).

8. Library

This large room is lined wall to wall with books, but what's more interesting is what's falling gently from the ceiling and covering everything in a blanket six inches thick... of snow.

Encounter: The room is freezing cold. The books, some of which were Sir Timothy's lesser spell books, have been warped and destroyed by the snow and chaos spirits. The seven chaos spirits in this room enjoy possessing books and fluttering about like clumsy butterflies, but they remain still when the characters arrive. The hero in the rear is attacked first with a book to the back of the head. After this, combat begins in earnest as the whole flock dives in.

• **Chaos Spirit:** CR 1; Small outsider (chaotic, incorporeal); HD 2d8-2; hp 10, 9, 9, 8, 7, 7, 6; Init +8; Spd Fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +7 melee (1d3, book) or +7 melee (1d4, knife) or +7 melee (1d6, short sword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d3, book) or +7 melee (1d4, knife) or +7 melee (1d6, short sword); SA—; SQ Possess item, incorporeal traits, natural invisibility, flight; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str —, Dex 19, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Spot +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +7; Improved Initiative

Possess Item (Su): A chaos spirit can possess any object within its size limit with a standard action. While inside a physical body, the chaos spirit gains a natural armor bonus to its AC equal to half the hardness of the object, rounded down. It also gains a damage bonus as if its Strength score is equal to the object's hardness +7.

While possessing a physical body, the chaos spirit is no longer incorporeal, though any damage sustained is first absorbed by the possessed creature's body. If an attack does enough damage to destroy the chaos spirit's body, any excess damage is done to the chaos spirit.

Natural Invisibility (Su): While outside a physical body, the chaos spirit is always invisible. This ability is not subject to invisibility purge.

Flight (Su): A chaos spirit possessing an object of small size or smaller can fly about at full speed. Any chaos spirit possessing a body of medium or larger size can still drag itself about at 20 ft. per round. If the body has limbs that can be utilized as legs, this speed is doubled.

Treasure: A wooden chest can be found with a Search check (DC 17). The lock has a poison needle trap. The chest contains three scrolls of *protection from chaos* and two scrolls of *magic aura*.

• **Poison Needle Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

9. Alchemy Closet

You pull aside a bookcase and uncover a secret door that conceals a closet. Inside, there are shelves containing four-dozen crystal spheres the size of grapefruits.

The secret door leading to this closet can be found with a successful Search check (DC 20). A handful of the spheres inside are cracked, as if by extreme heat. Some contain residues of alchemical compounds.

10. Sepulcher

The walls of this large, ill-kept room are covered with arcane sigils that ignite a sense of dread. The centerpiece is a book on a pedestal surrounded by seven stone coffins, each engraved with runes and decorated with a different source of metal.

The runes on the walls detail death and destruction, although a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) identifies them as gibberish to frighten the unwary.

The runes on the coffins number them 1 through 7, and the metals are as follows:

- gold
- silver
- iron
- lead
- quicksilver
- tin
- copper

These are the seven "bodies" of traditional alchemy; a successful Craft (alchemy) check (DC 10) or Knowledge (arcana) (DC 15) is the key to this knowledge.

Encounter: Disturbing or opening the coffin triggers a powerful magic ward. This arcana opens all the coffins, releasing the ghouls inside.

• **Opening Coffins:** CR 1; Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27).

• **Ghoul:** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite) and +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

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Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoulish fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treasure: Sir Timothy stored several valuable possessions in silver boxes within the coffins. Cumulatively, the coffins contain the following treasure: 2,500 sp, 1 bit of polished amber (100 gp), 1 pink pearl (100 gp), *gauntlets of ogre power*, and two potions of cure light wounds. The silver boxes are worth 25 gp each.

The book on the pedestal is Sir Timothy's journal. It's written in Common and has no wards or protections on it. (Timothy figured the rest of the castle was protection enough from thieves.) A quick read of the journal reveals what is going on in the house. The details of Zadrian's experiments are here in great detail, but only an extremely skilled wizard could make use of them. (A character must make Craft (alchemy), Spellcraft, and Knowledge (arcane) checks, (DC 35 each), to understand how the dimensional web really works.)

Timothy's handwriting seems increasingly frantic toward the end. He often refers to the "strange, homewrecking spirits" that have wandered in through the cracks in the dimensional web. He apparently has tried several means of tightening the web, to no avail. The final entry is the most illuminating.

"If the web cannot be fixed, then it must be closed. I will regret the loss of what I have created here, but I cannot risk these creatures of chaos escaping into the village. I know now what must be done to bring the heart of the web to peace. The first spirit and the fourth body. That is the solution.

"The creature in the basement, the chaos spirit that has taken the body of my unfinished golem, is the only thing that concerns me. He seems to be stronger than the rest, and he keeps me from entering the laboratory safely. The helm I have created should deal with the troublesome creature in a most humane way. After all, even spirits must rest some time. I just hope I can find a way to make him wear it."

The last part of the first paragraph is a clue to how to break down the dimensional web, banish the chaos spirits, and restore the house to normal: quicksilver (the first of the alchemical spirits and the fourth of the alchemical bodies). A successful Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15) can easily determine this. Careful study of the statues in the hall (area #2) and the coffins can also provide the answer.

11. Armory

Sir Timothy has never been a warrior, but he does like the trappings. This room features six antique longswords and two suits of masterwork full plate flanking a trap door that apparently leads downstairs.

The armor would be a great treasure if the chaos spirits hadn't found it first. Two larger chaos spirits have possessed these suits, and they attack as soon as the characters investigate the trap door. The suits of armor each effectively have 30 hp and a hardness of 5. The armor also gives the chaos spirits an effective AC of 21 (+1 Dex, +8 armor, +2 deflection).

Chaos Spirit: CR 1; Small Outsider (Chaotic; Incorporeal); HD 7d8-7; hp 27, 27; Init +8; Spd Fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d4-2, book or 1d4+1 knife or 1d6+3 short sword); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4-2, book or 1d4+1 knife or 1d6+3 short sword); SA—; SQ possess item, incorporeal traits, natural invisibility, flight; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +3; Str —, Dex 19, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +12, Spot +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +12; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Stealthy

Possess Item (Su): A chaos spirit can possess any object within its size limit with a standard action. While inside a physical body, the chaos spirit gains a natural armor bonus to its AC equal to half the hardness of the object, rounded down. It also gains a damage bonus as if its Strength score is equal to the object's hardness +7.

While possessing a physical body, the chaos spirit is no longer incorporeal, though damage is absorbed by the creature's body first. If an attack does enough damage to destroy the chaos spirit's body, any excess damage is done to the chaos spirit. However, the chaos spirit renders the possessed items unstable, reducing the hardness of a possessed item by half (round down).

Natural Invisibility (Su): While outside a physical body, the chaos spirit is always invisible. This ability is not subject to invisibility purge.

Flight (Su): A chaos spirit possessing an object of small size or smaller can fly about at full speed. Any chaos spirit possessing a body of medium or larger can still drag itself about at 20 feet per round. If the body has limbs that can be utilized as legs, this speed is doubled.

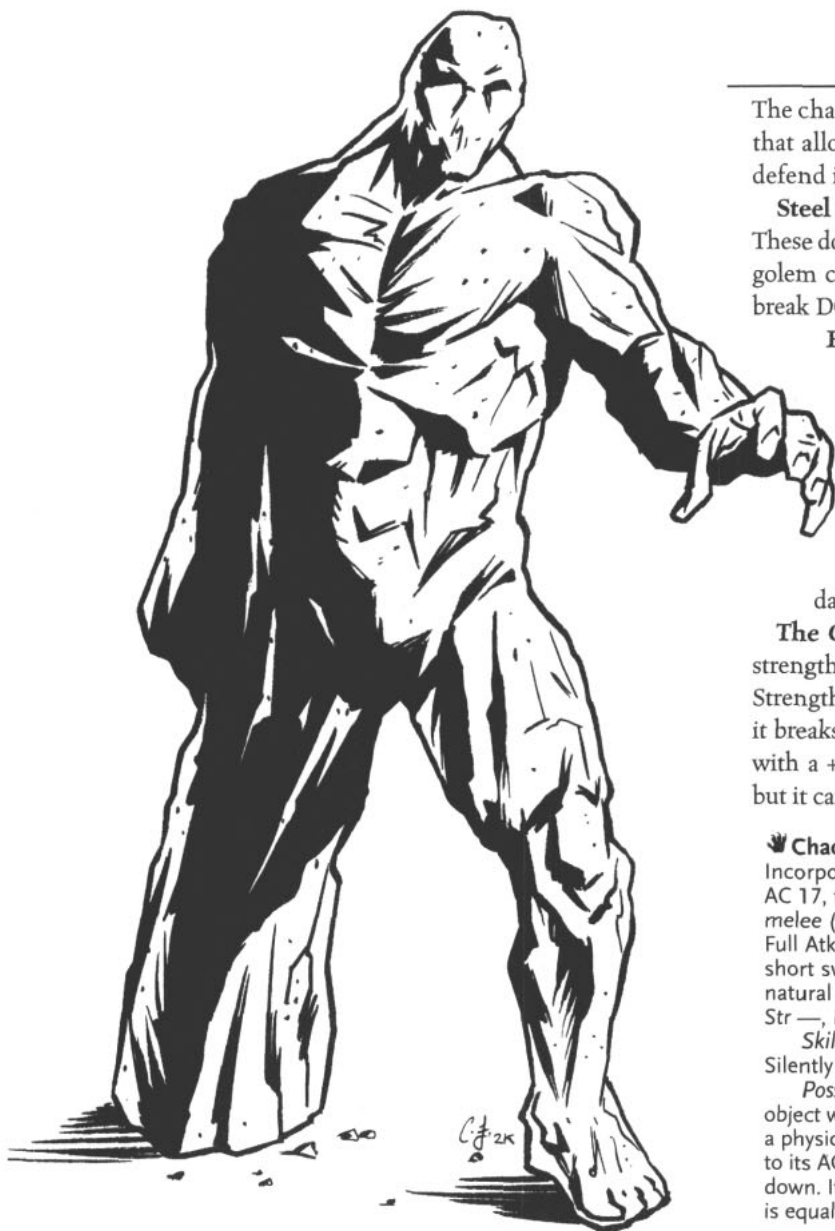
Treasure: The antique swords are still serviceable weapons, worth about 50 gp each.

12. Laboratory

A darkened stairwell leads to a large basement laboratory. As you approach, you hear strange music coming from the lab: thumping bass beats mixed with crystalline tinkling. In the room, you see a massive, stone statue romping around the room as bits of lab equipment rattle in reply. At the far end of the room, you see a five-foot-high metallic hemisphere with a crystal sphere resting atop it. The sphere rotates slowly and radiates sparking, blue electricity. The room is illuminated by the spooky glare of this crystal, and a limp, half-naked body lies on the floor nearby.

Encounter: This laboratory is the only room that currently exists in the real world and is the size that it should be. The dimensional web does not affect it. It is the web's source. The laboratory is infested with chaos spirits, and they've decided to pass the time with a bit of impromptu music. A dozen chaos spirits (hp 6 each) have possessed Sir Timothy's alchemical equipment and a single large chaos spirit (10 HD; hp 40) has possessed Timothy's half-finished stone golem. (One arm and one leg are still a solid slab. The creature can still limp about and attack with the other leg and arm.)

The sleeping man is Sir Timothy Zadrian. When he attempted to shut down the dimensional web, the chaos spirits put his own *helm of sleep* on his head and left him on the floor.



THE FINAL BATTLE

The chaos spirits know the crystal is the source of the web that allows them to exist in the house. They are ready to defend it with the following bodies.

Steel Chains: Two chains lay on the floor near the stairs. These do no damage, but they can entangle characters so the golem can finish them. Chains: hardness 10; hit points 5; break DC 26.

Flasks: Flasks do 1d4 damage and break on impact, leaving them unusable as bodies. Some may be filled with acid, alchemist's fire, or other dangerous chemicals.

Torches: Some chaos spirits may grab torches from the shelves, light them in the electric arc, and club adventurers with them.

These do damage as a club (1d6), plus 1d4 fire damage.

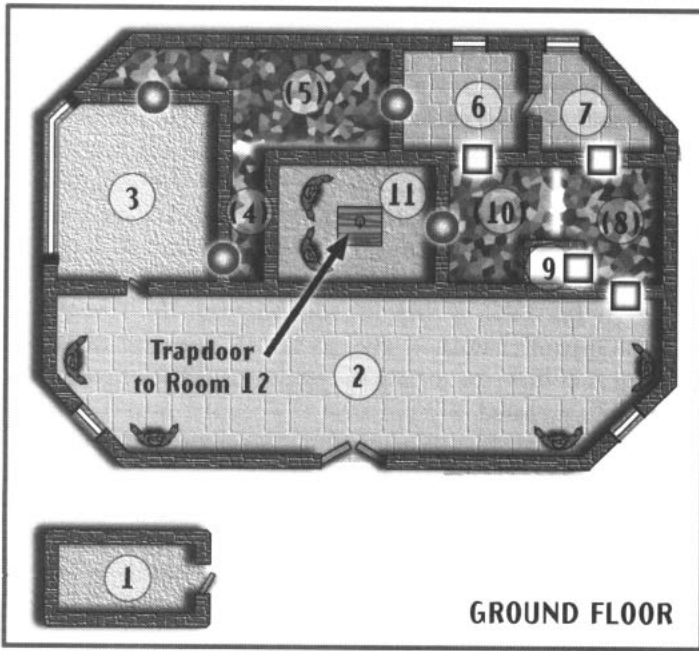
The Golem: The unfinished golem bestows incredible strength upon the chaos spirit. The body effectively has 23 Strength, AC 26, and can take 77 hit points of damage before it breaks apart and the chaos spirit must leave it. It attacks with a +16 melee punch attack that does 1d10+6 damage, but it can only limp about the room at a Speed of 10 ft.






Chaos Spirit: CR 1; Small Outsider (Chaotic; Incorporeal); HD 2d8-2; hp 7; Init +8; Spd Fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +7 melee (1d4-2, book or 1d4+1 knife or 1d6+3 short sword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4-2, book or 1d4+1 knife or 1d6+3 short sword); SA—; SQ possesses item, incorporeal traits, natural invisibility, flight; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str —, Dex 19, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Spot +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +7; Improved Initiative

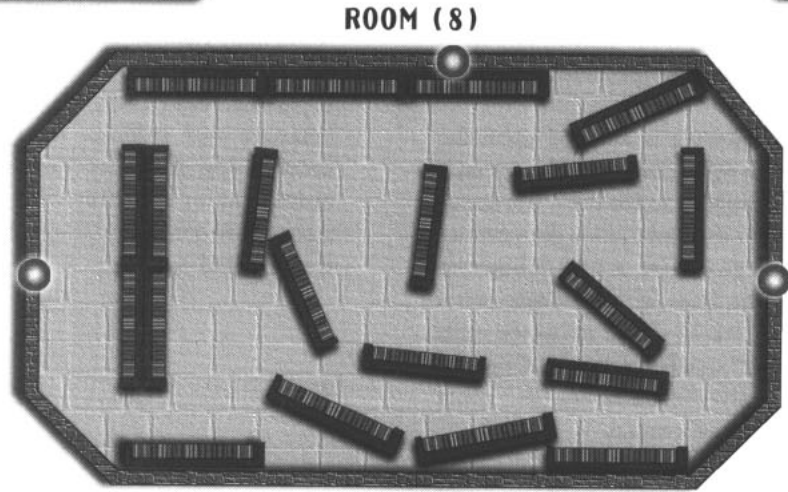
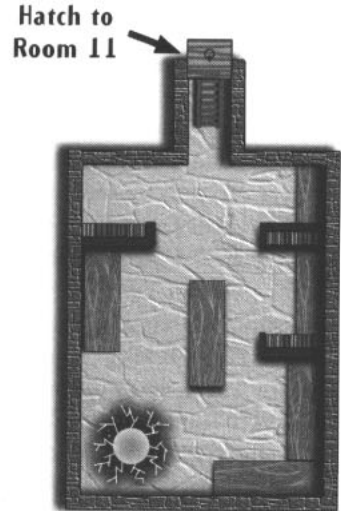
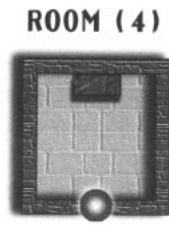
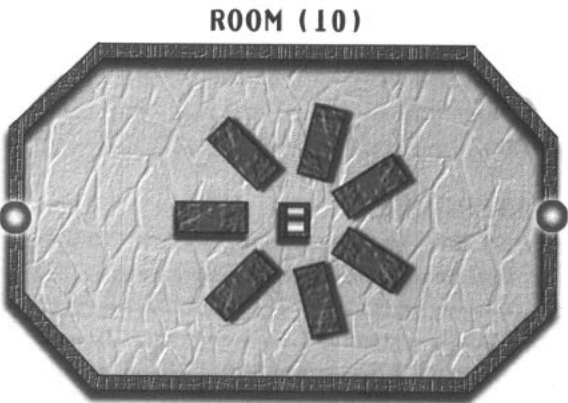
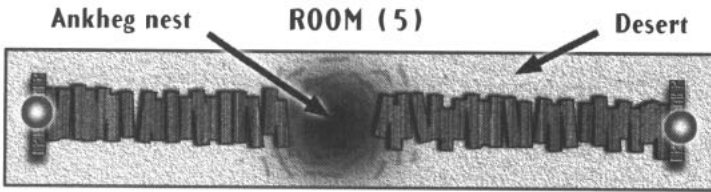
Possess Item (Su): A chaos spirit can possess any object within its size limit with a standard action. While inside a physical body, the chaos spirit gains a natural armor bonus to its AC equal to half the hardness of the object, rounded down. It also gains a damage bonus as if its Strength score is equal to the object's hardness +7.

CASTLE ZADRIAN



-  Dimensional distortion
-  Door to extra-dimensional room
-  Door locked with arcane lock spell
-  Extra-dimensional room – see below
-  Window

5 10 15 20
 Scale in Feet



While possessing a physical body, the chaos spirit is no longer incorporeal, though damage is absorbed by the creature's body first. If an attack does enough damage to destroy the chaos spirit's body, any excess damage is done to the chaos spirit. However, the chaos spirit renders the possessed items unstable, reducing the hardness of a possessed item by half (round down).

Natural Invisibility (Su): While outside a physical body, the chaos spirit is always invisible. This ability is not subject to invisibility purge.

Flight (Su): A chaos spirit possessing an object of small size or smaller can fly about at full speed. Any chaos spirit possessing a body of medium or larger can still drag itself about at 20 feet per round. If the body has limbs that can be utilized as legs, this speed is doubled.

✦ **Damaged Stone Golem:** CR 11; Large construct; HD 14d10+30; hp 77; Init -1; Spd 10 ft.; AC 26; touch 8, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +10; Grp +23; Atk +16 melee (1d10+6, slam); Full Atk +16 melee (1d10+6, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —

A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows a stone golem (as the slow spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but negates its damage reduction and immunity to magic for 1 full round.

Note: This is only the shell of a golem. It has none of the powers or abilities of a stone golem.

DEFEATING THE CHAOS SPIRITS

Defeating these chaos spirits is a daunting prospect.

A better bet is to disable the dimensional web. To do so, the characters must pour quicksilver over the crystal sphere. Wizards or sorcerers may have some quicksilver in their spell component pouch. Otherwise, a successful Search check (DC 20) turns up a flask of quicksilver on a shelf. A character with the Craft (alchemy) skill gains a +4 circumstance bonus to this roll.

The next obstacle is getting the quicksilver on the sphere. The sphere's sparks do 4d10 damage to anything within 10 feet (Reflex half, DC 18). A character who takes more than 20 damage must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be pulled into another dimension. This may lead to the character being deposited harmlessly outside, lost forever, or sent on a whole different adventure. Throwing a flask of quicksilver is a safer option, but the crystal presents a small target (AC 18).

Once any amount of quicksilver is dumped upon the sphere, the dimensional web shuts down. All chaos spirits vanish, their stolen bodies crashing to the floor. The upper levels of the house also vanish, trapped in alien dimensions. If heroes are still upstairs, give them a few minutes to escape. A warning along the lines of "The house starts shaking, and weird, glowing cracks spread across the walls from the corners of the room!" should be enough. Once the web fully breaks down, only the basement, the room directly above, and the stables still remain.

RESCUING TIMOTHY

When Sir Timothy tried to shut down the dimensional web months ago, the chaos spirits bound him in chains and put him to sleep with his own magic helm. They also stripped him of his gear, hurling the items into the electrical field, where they were lost to random dimensions. One item, Timothy's *ring of the ram*, still lies on the floor. It has 28 charges left.

If the *helm of sleep* is removed from Sir Timothy, he instantly awakens. Though he is a powerful wizard, he is of little use during the battle. He doesn't have any spells prepared, and he's a bit of a coward. It took every ounce of his bravery to confront the chaos spirits in the first place, and now — bereft of his powers — he'd rather hide behind the strongest looking hero than fight.


Timothy gladly advises the characters how to disable the dimensional web, and he can even help them find some quicksilver. Once the web begins to shut down, Timothy warns the party that the upper levels of the house will vanish, giving them a chance to rescue friends.

EPILOGUE

Once the battle is over, Sir Timothy is thankful and apologetic that the characters had to go through so much trouble. While he doesn't have much to give in the way of reward, he offers to let the PCs keep anything they found in the upper levels of the house, gives them his *ring of the ram*, helps remove the *robe of powerlessness* if one of the party members is cursed with it, and offers his friendship.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Wandering through the marketplace of Cuthder, the PCs find many food prices are skyrocketing, and other food is just plain scarce. They soon learn a village the city depends on named Darbin for a large number of its foodstuffs has mysteriously broken all contact. The PCs are asked to investigate (see the adventure "Kurishan's Garden").
- A passing bard named Tinnemaeron learns of the PC's heroism, and informs them that the lord of the neighboring realm of Tirna'cel is actively seeking champions to aid them with trouble at the tomb of a great hero of the land (see the adventure "Out of Body, Out of Mind").



Chapter 6:
Dead Man's Cove

Levels 3 to 5

by Ken Carpenter

Many a merchant has made his fortune sailing the high seas, transporting goods from one port to another, trading things that are needed for the one thing he most requires: gold. One such man is the powerful sea-trade merchant Cedric Mornstar, master of a fleet of cargo-laden ships.

When the shipping lanes Mornstar depends on become infested with human sharks, the well-heeled merchant casts about for some brave souls to take care of the problem — and permanently. After numerous attempts by hired scoundrels to deal with the pirates on their own watery turf fail miserably, Cedric decides that the best way to put an end to the problem is to catch the thieving sailors off-guard, hitting them where they expect it least: at their land base. Like the town crier Mornstar hired shouts, this is a job for stalwart and competent adventurers, but mostly for adventurers who aren't afraid to use their heads. After all, when you're dealing with scurvy dogs like these, it's use 'em or lose 'em.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5. PCs with stealth and knowledge of traps will aid a group through this adventure. This adventure contains some Renaissance-level technology (cannons, explosives, etc.) which may need to be changed to magical equivalents in some campaigns.

Cedric Mornstar is a rich and powerful sea-trader with a fleet of nearly two dozen ships. At least, he once was. In the past year, pirates have appeared in the nearby waters, costing Cedric five ships from his fleet and a fortune in gold and trade goods. He's just begun to take it all personally.

Cedric has already hired specialists to help deal with the problem — a highly skilled cannoning crew, top-notch marine mercenaries, and the best scout ships — but every attempt to deal with the pirates at sea has met with failure. That's where a bunch of hardy adventurers like your players' heroes comes in.

Cedric has obtained a map to what he believes is the pirate's base. Unfortunately, it is located in a particularly dangerous portion of the coast, surrounded by dangerous reefs and sheer cliffs. In addition, it's almost unapproachable by land — almost. While a large body of men would surely be spotted miles away by the pirates, allowing them ample time to launch an escape, a small group of adventurers could slip past outer defenses and into the base proper. Guess who's been nominated for the job?

A JOB OFFER

As you walk through the port city, you can't help but see that notices seeking the aid of a "hearty band" are posted in most every public venue. You even hear the piercing voice of a town crier over the crashing waves, shouting "Cedric Shipping seeks dangerous help for a dangerous task! Great rewards for the right group! See Cedric Mornstar today."

Stopping the crier or reading one of the posted parchments provides directions to a large warehouse near the docks. After working your way past a couple of officious and thin-skinned scribes, you eventually get to see Mornstar, a robust man whose beard and mane are fast going gray. He is dressed elegantly, but his eyes betray concern.

With solemn intent, the wealthy merchant unfurls a map and pins down the corners with anchor-shaped weights. He points to a marked location some 200 miles away, "The job involves traveling overland to a small cove hidden along the coastline here. Once there, you're to sneak into the base and deal with the pirates — if, in fact, there are any there to deal with.

"The map came from an excellent source — the nature of which must remain private, I'm afraid — but you never know how these things will go. There are probably over a hundred pirates based in the cove, but there should be considerably fewer when their ship is out to sea, which — if they are true to form — they should be now, harassing my ships once again.

"Put an end to this, and you'll earn yourself my undying gratitude — and a more than handsome reward."

Mornstar didn't get wealthy and powerful by accident. He's a brilliant man who leaves as little as possible to chance. He has investigated every likely respondent to his ads, including many skilled mercenary and adventuring groups. When the adventurers approach him, he already knows of many of their past exploits. As they speak together, he throws in a few admiring comments about any of their past deeds that may be known to the public.

The fact is he was hoping that this group would pursue the task. He's quick to offer them the job. Assuming the party has a good reputation — and at least a couple characters of good alignment — Mornstar makes them a handsome offer. Upon discharging their duties, they can either take 10,000 gp as payment or keep the pirates' treasure, less certain trade goods (in particular, some rare

silks and spices pirated from one of his ships less than a fortnight ago) — and they can decide after they complete the task. If the party insists on an upfront payment, Mornstar offers no more than 1,000 gp total to help the group get outfitted for the journey.

The map points to a cove along the coast, some 200 miles away. The direction is up to you to decide to best fit your campaign. The actual distance isn't that important either, as long as it's at least 100 miles and out of the jurisdiction of the city.

JOURNEY TO THE COVE

Traveling to the pirate hideout — marked "Dead Man's Cove" on the map provided by Mornstar — is dangerous, but not because of the pirates. The heroes must work their way through a thick jungle or forest and over a small range of mountains. The first day is glum and the sky is filled with clouds from an approaching storm.

It would not be inappropriate to work in some random encounters along the way. The table below gives you a number of possible encounter ideas.

1d20	Encounter
1	A black orc arrow is stuck in a nearby tree.
2	A discarded woodman's cap lays in the trail.
3	A field of wildflowers and other plants provide an unusual aroma.
4	A flock of seagulls arcs overhead.
5	A group of gnoll brigands have felled a tree across the path to challenge all travelers.
6	A half finished bottle of unmarked brown liquid is sticking out of the sand.
7	A hawk circles overhead.
8	A pirate ship can be seen out on the horizon.
9	A recently abandoned campfire is still smoldering off to the side.
10	A small farming community is in the area.
11	A standing circle, cracked and weathered from age rests by the road.
12	A wide footbridge crosses a small stream.
13	Goblin bandits lay in wait to attack passersby.
14	Merchants heading toward the city.
15	Near the surf, a driftwood pile has gathered.
16	Ranger's signs are carved into a stone beside the road.
17	Signs that battle magic was employed in the vicinity are evident.
18	The road forks, and the wrong path leads to an ettin's cave.
19	The road perches atop a rocky outcropping over a sandy beach.
20	Three inexperienced dwarven mercenaries are looking for work.



Finally, after a long journey, your group crests a hill near the sea to overlook a small bay beyond. Across the bay, you see a natural wall of rock — cliffs really — that jut up between the lagoon and the raging sea beyond, sheltering the narrow inlet from the elements' fury. Some distance away, a break in the cliffs allows water access to the small bay.

A ship would have to sail about 800 yards from the cove to the gap in the cliff wall to gain access to the sea. Furthermore, according to the map provided by Mornstar, there are many treacherous reefs to threaten ships that brave this portion of the coast. These pirates must have nerves of steel to brave such a narrow entry to the cove.

Atop the far cliffs, you can make out two huge fire pits and two waving, red flags. Around the small bay, between the swaying palms and low brush, stand three buildings. One structure is obviously a bunkhouse, long and slender with doors at each end. Another appears to be a kitchen and mess hall, complete with a metal triangle hung by the front steps. The last place is built in the shape of a huge aft-deck — obviously the quarters of the group's leader, possibly including any senior staff and guards. Less impressive in both stature and appearance than the other structures, a small wooden shack crouches against the red hues of the cliff immediately behind the captain's quarters.

Presently, there is no ship at the cove's only pier. There is obvious activity around the cove, as men with the distinct bearing of sailors move about the place, performing common tasks, but that activity slows as the sun seeks shelter behind the horizon.

The PCs can make out figures traveling between all three structures, but no one goes into or leaves the shack.

ASSAULTING THE COVE

If the group attempts to descend the hill to the cove in the daylight they face many obstacles, as there is precious little chance of approaching unseen. Many pirates are active and about. If the PCs are spotted, a general alarm (the triangle at the mess hall) is sounded. There are 30 pirates in the cove at present, so this isn't a great idea for a small band of adventurers, but if they insist, let them deal with the consequences. They have to take on all of the pirates, each one ready and spoiling for a fight.

Always looking for a chance to barter with hostages, the pirates won't kill unconscious characters outright, and will accept the PCs surrender only if it comes to that. Captured PCs will be stripped of all weapons and equipment (divvied up among the pirates) and bound at the wrist, set in a circle and guarded at all times by half as many pirates as there are PCs.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check.

- DC 10** Mornstar is a successful merchant, not through trickery or deceit but a good business sense.
- DC 15** Pirates that operate along the coast are ruthless and vary their targets, but poor Mornstar's ships seem to be especially selected targets as of late.
- DC 20** Many criminals have joined the pirates in the past year. The cove may be populated by dozens of pirates, but many of them are not experienced warriors.
- DC 25** The captain of the pirates, Thonagael One-Eye, is a wily and crafty pirate who always keeps a sorcerer talented in water magic on board his vessels.

An evening approach would be far safer for the PCs. Another storm is moving in, and the winds begin to howl after about 8 p.m.; there is little chance of the pirates spotting the heroes moving in under the cover of darkness (40% miss chance for ranged attacks and +10 circumstance bonus to Hide checks).

These pirates are not disciplined. The men posted to handle the night watch are either asleep at their post, gambling with a mate, or just didn't bother to take their post at all. To make the adventure more challenging, add more guards, or place the guards in pairs rather than individually.

The guards may make a Listen check (DC 13). However, due to their arrogance concerning their hideout's safety, the pirates suffer a -6 modifier to their roll unless someone sounds the alarm. If given the opportunity, a guard shoots his crossbow at the nearest enemy, drops it, and then draws his rapier and attacks.

▲ Pirate Guards, Human War 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10; hp 14 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Jump +2, Listen +1, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +5; Dodge, Weapon focus (rapier).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, rapier, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

QUESTIONING THE PIRATES

Throughout this adventure, if one or more pirates are interrogated or enchanted into giving the party information, here are bits of information that the adventurers might learn. A pirate won't divulge any information until a PC succeeds at changing the attitude of the pirates with Diplomacy or Intimidation (see the section on changing NPC attitudes in chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook*). Each pirate knows a maximum of two pieces of information.

1. The ship is due in sometime after midnight.
2. No one goes to the captain's private treasure hoard, which you get to through the shack at the cliff.
3. "Rolf" (presumably another pirate) is to light the cliff fires and keep them lit for the returning ship at about three bells (3 a.m.).
4. Dead sailors guard the captain's personal wealth underground. A pirate mate once attempted to steal the captain's treasure, and now he stands guard with the others.
5. The flags guide the ship in during the daylight, and the fires guide the ship in at night.
6. The captain has an accurate map of the coral outside the cove, but any ship veering off course by more than 80 yards would be holed and sunk by the coral.

THE APPROACHING SHIP

By the time the PCs deal with all of the pirates in the cove, they should be aware that the pirate ship is returning almost immediately. Hopefully they also know that someone is supposed to light the fires to guide the ship in.

If no one lights the fires, the ship anchors offshore and waits until morning. At that point, they are aware that something is wrong in the cove, so they approach carefully.

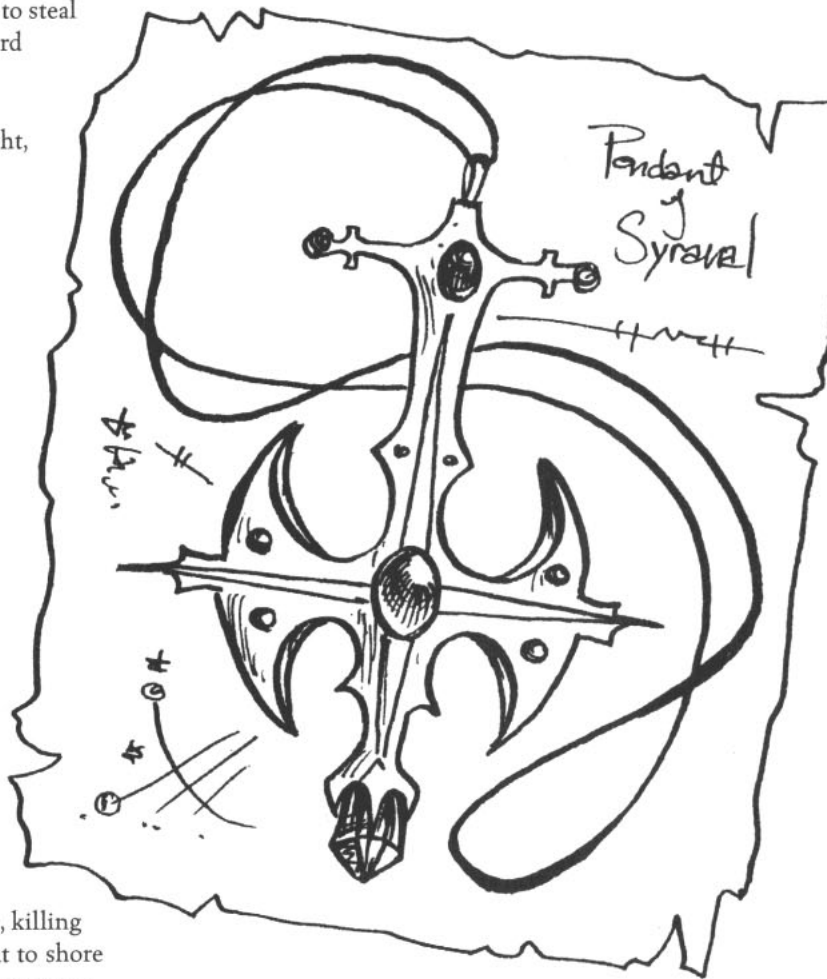
A narrow path leads to the top of the cliff where the PCs can gain access to the firepits and flags.

If the heroes light the fires, the captain assumes everything is fine, and the ship comes in. If the fires are moved and then lit, the pirate ship then sails into the reef and sinks, killing nearly everyone aboard. Those few who make it to shore are heavily fatigued and unable to harm the adventurers.

If the characters move the flags and wait for morning, the captain instantly realizes that something's wrong. ("The flags don't look right!") In that case, he sends in longboats.

The adventurers should not attempt to take on the whole ship of pirates alone. There are 65 pirates, the captain, the first mate, and a sorcerer that the captain hired to help out with difficult targets. The boat has eight cannons per side. These are primed and ready to fire (5d6 damage to everything in a five-foot radius, Reflex save for half damage.)

The pirate captain wears the *pendant of Syrenal* (see New Magic—Appendix A) at all times. If the ship sinks, the captain's body conveniently washes up in the cove the following morning. This allows the adventurers to get their hands on the pendant. Whether they have the ability to figure out what it is and make use of it when investigating the captain's treasure cave is another question.



DEAD MAN'S COVE

The description below assumes the heroes enter at night. Otherwise, you should rephrase descriptions to fit the correct time of day and lighting conditions.

1. Bunkhouse

Approximately 40 ft. by 120 ft., the bunkhouse is made from the same wooden planks used in ship construction. There is a door centered in the 40-ft. walls at each end of the building, but they don't appear to have locks. Portholes are spaced along the walls serving as windows.

Inside, a cacophony of snores welcomes you. It seems incredible that any of the 20-odd pirates here can sleep through the noise, but they're all dozing peacefully, if not silently.

The room isn't one long hall as it appears from outside. Each interior corner of the building has a 10-ft. by 20-ft. section walled off, with a door leading into each smaller room. The rest of the building is a long hall filled with dozens of low bunks, each with a small locker at its foot and a hammock overhead. The place could easily sleep 100 men.

Tactics: If an alarm has already been sounded, the pirates are all awake and out scouring the grounds for invaders.

How the heroes deal with the sleeping pirates is up to them. A *fireball* or other large-area spell would fill half the building and allow no Reflex save. That same fireball would also turn the dry wood of the structure into a large bonfire. Casting a *silence* spell on a rogue who then walks the room slitting throats would also be effective, but a good-aligned party might not stand for such tactics.

If the heroes perform any actions that produce more noise than a healthy snore, roll three Listen checks for nearby pirates (DC 15). For each success, one pirate begins to wake up. Nearby party members may make a Spot check (DC 10) to notice.

It takes a moment or two for each pirate to wake up. (The pirates generally do some drinking before going to sleep, so they don't spring to alertness.) If given two rounds to wake up, a pirate becomes fully alert, automatically spots the intruders, and lets out a yell. If attacked, he becomes alert immediately (adrenaline does that) but doesn't manage to let out a yell until the end of the round — if he's not killed.

Any alert pirates continue to shout as they yank out their cutlasses to fight. As long as a pirate is conscious, make Listen checks (DC 5) for all sleeping pirates in the same room at the end of each round. Pirates in other rooms have a harder time with the Listen check (DC 20).

CREATIVE ALTERNATES TO KILLING PIRATES IN THEIR SLEEP

If your players have a paladin or other do-gooder in their ranks that objects to killing the pirates in their sleep (despite the murderous scum the pirates may be), then the PC are going to have to come up with alternate means of taking on a superior force. Some of these options include:

- Setting the barracks on fire. While this too isn't heroic, paladins or others could still be allowed to shout a warning, letting the pirates flee the burning building, probably unarmed and unarmored, and much more willing to surrender.
- Luring the pirates away in small groups. Using the elven sorcerer as bait, she could dance for a select few pirates while her companions ambush them. Of course any lure like this wastes valuable time.
- Sniping. Once guards are shot, their replacements are next, and they can be shot, slowly whittling down their numbers down to a manageable level.

There are 21 pirates in the main room and another two pirates in each of the corner rooms, for a grand total of 29 pirates. A search of all the pirates and footlockers yields a total of 203 gp, 342 sp, 567 cp, three bottles of whiskey, and four gold rings (10 gp each). Apparently pirates go through gold as quickly as they can.

▲ **Pirate Guards, Human War 2:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10; hp 14 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Jump +2, Listen +1, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +5; Dodge, Weapon focus (rapier).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, rapier, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

2. Mess Hall

As you enter the unlocked building, you see a number of tables and benches ahead and to your right. To the left, you see a long counter, behind which are two huge, upright stone fireplaces and an open-bed fireplace with frames and spits for cooking large animals. A few portholes are used as windows in the outer wall.

The building appears to be empty at the moment.

Treasure: There is quite a bit of food in the kitchen portion of the building, as well as a trap door that leads down into the root cellar. A successful Search check (DC 15) turns up a purse with the cook's personal savings (the cook is among those sleeping in the bunkhouse.) The purse contains 80 gp, 15 sp, 23 cp, and a diamond worth 50 gp.

3. Captain's Quarters

▣ **Stuck Wooden Door:** The only door for this structure is locked (2 inches thick, hardness 5, hit points 20, stuck DC 18, lock DC 20).

A talented rogue can quietly pick the door lock. Alternatively, it could be battered down, waking everyone in the small outpost.

If the heroes make a lot of noise getting in, everyone in the captain's quarters will be armed and ready (assuming they have time to properly put on their armor), and everyone in town is awake and alert within three rounds. The descriptions below assume the heroes manage to enter the place silently.

4. Entry

This is a sitting area with elaborately upholstered sofas, two large bookcases filled with tomes, and a small writing table. There are numerous charts on the walls, some of which depict local areas, while others appear older and more on the decorative side.

There are also two guards in here playing a dice game on a low table in front of a sofa. As the door opens, they turn to look at you, then jump to their feet and attack.

Tactics: Given the opportunity, the 2 pirates shoot their crossbows at the nearest enemy, drop them, and draw their rapiers and attack.

Treasure: Giving the room more attention, the heroes notice that the writing table has a lantern and ornate compass (worth 400 gp), a navigator's tool made of gold (worth 200 gp), and a stack of papers with all manner of nautical writings. A Search check (DC 10) reveals a schedule, which indicates that the pirates' ship should return at approximately 3 a.m. this very day — in only a few hours.

The bookcases hold great writings generally uncommon among the undereducated. Either there is a knowledgeable person among the pirates, or they have simply lined the shelves with nice-looking texts from raids. With a Search check (DC 20), a hero can find a *manual of gainful exercise* among the books.

The hallway to areas 5, 6, and 7 has wood-paneled walls, is narrow (barely 4 ft. wide) and has three doors, each leading to another part of the dwelling.

5. First Officer Quarters

Once inside, you can see that this room is large, especially from a sailor's standpoint. About twice the size of a captain's shipboard cabin, this room holds a table covered with sea charts and shipping schedules, a bed with a thick mattress, a sea chest, and a few nautical decorations. There is a large porthole in the outer wall, covered with a tapestry.

This is the room of the pirates' quartermaster, also the ship's first mate.

The shipping schedules on the mate's table indicates the planned away times for three powerful shipping companies in the region. These are obviously provided from within the various companies by highly placed informants. This information would prove invaluable to Mornstar, or it could be used to spin-off another adventure in which the heroes are charged with discovering who the spies are. (The grunts in the port wouldn't know.)

The sea chest is locked but can be opened with an Open Lock check (DC 20). It is also trapped with poison. If the chest is opened before the trap is disarmed, the area fills with a noxious cloud.

♣ **Ungol Dust Vapor Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); poison (ungol dust, DC 15 Fortitude save resists, 1 Cha/1d6 Cha plus 1 Cha permanent drain); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16.

Treasure: Within the strongbox are 140 pp, 1,040 gp, 800 sp, 230 cp, and a three vials: a *potion of neutralize poison*, a *potion of sneaking*, and a *potion of haste*.

6. Quartermaster's Storage

▣ **Locked Door:** The door to this room is locked and must be picked or knocked down to gain entry to the room (3 inches thick, hardness 6, hit points 30, stuck DC 23, locked DC 25).

This room's walls are lined with racks filled with weapons. The place is fairly large, but it's so cluttered with weapons and equipment (hardened leather, ropes, chains) that it's difficult to move about.

Treasure: Only by spending a good deal of time here (at least an hour) can the players search thoroughly enough to locate something in particular or of superior quality. After that time, each character may make one Search check (DC 20) to locate one weapon or piece of equipment from the following list. Under no circumstances can the heroes find more than three of the items listed below. The room is just too big a mess.

1. Masterwork leather armor
2. Masterwork longsword
3. Masterwork thieves' tools
4. Masterwork spear
5. Mighty composite longbow (+2 Strength bonus)
6. Quiver of silver tipped arrows (20)

7. Captain's Quarters

▣ **Locked Door:** The door to this room is locked and must be picked or knocked down to gain entry to the room (2 1/2 inches thick, hardness 5, hit points 25, stuck DC 20, locked DC 23). Alternatively, the group can break the windows at the back of the room and climb in from the outside, but the windows are 10 ft. above the ground.

This room is almost 30 ft. by 40 ft. It contains a huge, four-poster bed, a large, wood table around which sit six chairs, a large rolltop desk, some fine tapestries and three paintings hung along the walls, and three huge, silver candelabra.

The candelabra are worth 50 gp each. The art and tapestries are worth a total of 700 gp, but they're hard to transport out of the cove without a ship or a bag of holding.

The desk is locked, but an Open Lock check (DC 15) foils that. Within are mostly writing supplies (parchment, quills, and ink) but there are also a few letters from someone named Korvahl talking about "targets." The letters infer that this Korvahl provides information to the pirates and then buys most of the trade goods looted from their targets — at a very good price — to be sold at distant ports. At least one reference confirms that Korvahl is a merchant competitor of Mornstar and the other merchant "targets" of the pirate ship.

Again, this might be a good hook for another adventure, or at least good info for Mornstar to put to use.

8. The Shack (The Captain's Treasure Cave)

▣ **Locked Door:** The door to the shack is locked and must be picked or knocked down to gain entry. It is also trapped. 2 inches thick, hardness 5, hit points 20, stuck DC 20, locked DC 23).

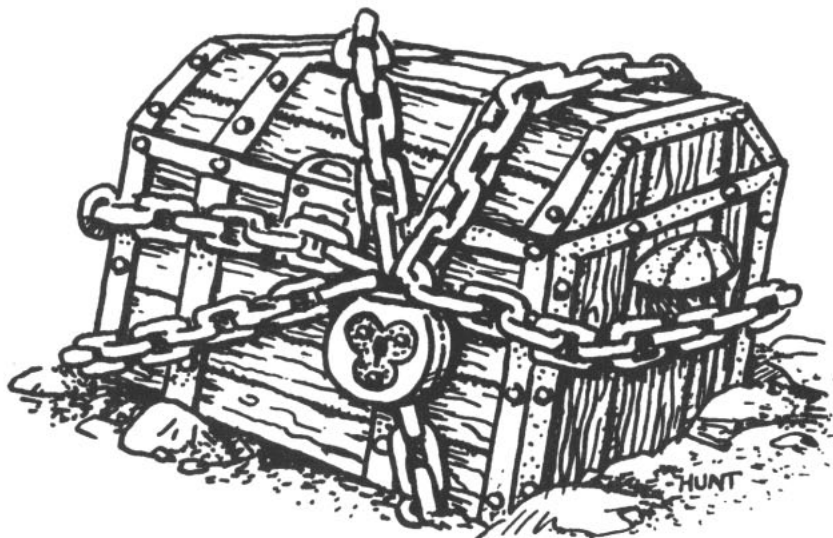
As you move cautiously down this corridor, your light illuminates a rough barricade barring the passage ahead. Suddenly, a pair of javelins whiz out of the darkness, directly toward you.

♣ **Javelin Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +16 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18.

If the trap is not disarmed when the door opens, there is a forlorn wail, and a great deal of banging, and those standing in or near the doorway see a gray, shadowy shape moving rapidly towards them. While the figure may look a lot like a ghost, it's actually just a dummy. The wailing sound is made by the dummy's harness as it slides along the metal cable it's suspended by. The banging comes from a number of metal pieces hanging from the dummy's harness. As the contraption slides down the cable, the metal pieces clang against each other all the way.

The combination of movement, wailing, and banging start so suddenly that all characters must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to react. The others are surprised. The dummy slides toward the door so fast that only those characters who succeed at the saving throw can take an action before the dummy reaches the door.

♣ **Fake Ghost Trap:** CR 3. No attack roll necessary (5d6 to all within 10 ft., partial blindness to all within 20 ft.); Reflex save DC 20 for half damage, Will save (DC 20) to avoid partial blindness (-2 to all attack rolls and Reflex saves for 1d6+6 hours); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 15.



DEAD MAN'S COVE

When the dummy reaches the door, it comes to the end of its harness, pops off, flies through the door, and lands a few feet outside. When the thing hits the ground, the makeshift bomb inside it goes off.

9. Entry Cavern

You open the door to find a tunnel sloping steeply down into the base of the cliff. After a moment of climbing downward, you find yourself in a large natural cavern. Something toward the back of the cavern glimmers faintly in what little light reaches it.

The glimmering item is a small pile of gold pieces at the back of the cavern. It was put there to attract would-be robbers into the pit trap that is right in front of the pile of gold. There are 15 gold pieces in the pile, and these can be reached easily and safely by someone who sees the pit.

☛ **Pit Trap:** CR 2; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

10. Shimmering Cavern

As you enter this cavern, your light sources glimmer off almost everything inside. There are crystalline formations throughout the cavern that shoot multicolored rays all about the room in a prism effect.

The crystal in this room is brittle and therefore susceptible to vibrations. If the PCs say they are taking particular care to be quiet, roll 1d20 each round they are in the room. If the roll is greater than 12, they may disturb the crystals — with disastrous consequences. If the PCs are particularly noisy while in this room, you only need to get 8 or more on the roll.

If noise in the room disturbs the crystal, a single stalactite bursts, sending crystal shards everywhere. That minor explosion sets off a chain reaction through the entire chamber, filling the room with flying daggers of crystal. Everyone within the room takes an amount of damage equal to 20 minus his AC. Each PC may make a Reflex save to reduce the damage suffered by half.

The crystal shards, if hauled out, are worth 1 gp per pound. There are about 1,000 pounds of shattered crystal lying about after the explosion.

11. Underwater Cavern

This huge cavern is divided by a small lake running wall to wall across its center. At the edge of the water on your side is a small rowboat able to hold up to four passengers comfortably, but six may cram into it.

There are seven sunken sailors (see Appendix B) in the murky waters of the cavern, which connect to the sea through an underground network of tunnels. As the group crosses over — either in the boat, swimming, or by some other method — the sunken sailors attack. If the party is in the boat, the sunken sailors climb onto the sides of the boat and try to capsize it, with a 25% chance of success per round. If the heroes have crammed more than four people into the boat, everyone in the boat suffers a –2 penalty to attack rolls and Reflex saves. This is cumulative with any penalties for partial blindness.

☛ **Sunken Sailor:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 17, 16, 15, 15, 14, 13, 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Bast Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws); SA Create spawn, drowning touch; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Spot +5; Weapon Focus (claws)

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to zero hit points by any sunken sailor's drowning touch becomes a sunken sailor under the control of its killer within 48 rounds.

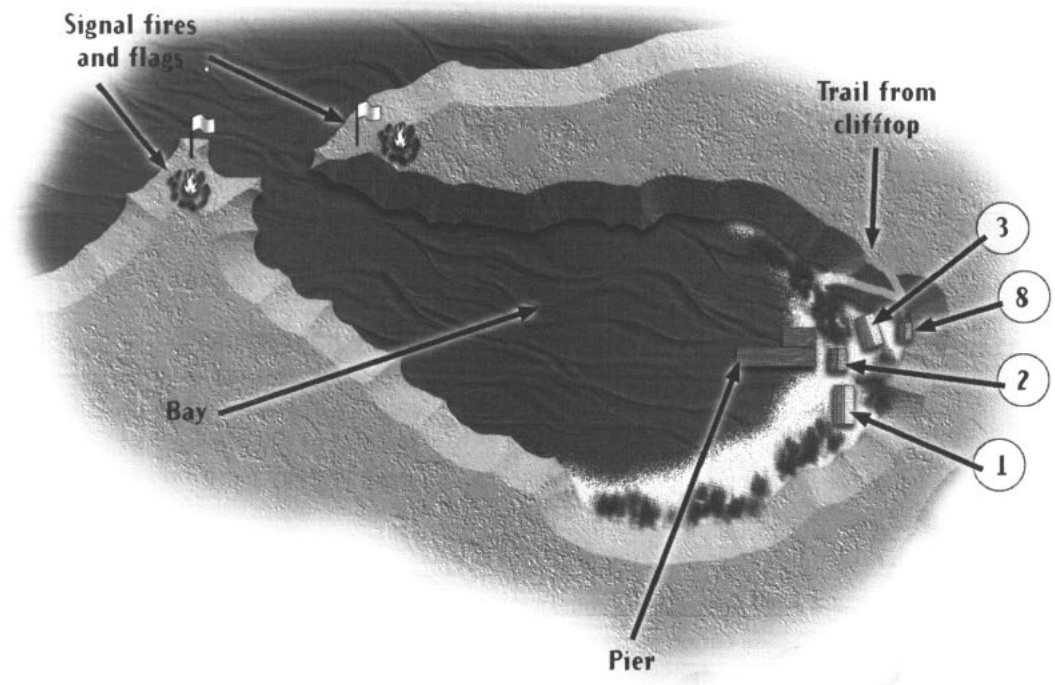
Drowning Touch (Su): When a sunken sailor hits an enemy, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or take an additional 1d4 damage as fluid (sea water) builds up in his lungs, slowly drowning him. The save DC is Wisdom-based. This damage is in addition to the normal damage done by the strike.

12. Treasure Cave

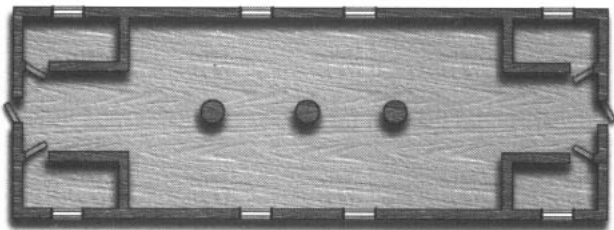
As you enter this cave, a chill wind cuts through. As you investigate, you realize a series of small chimneys in the stone creates a breeze through this cave. You also notice a large amount of trade goods along one wall (bolts of cloth, barrels, and crates) and a number of rocks piled in the corner.

Treasure: There are three dozen bolts of cloth, all of them fine. Some of them are Mornstar's coveted silks. The barrels and crates contain rare spices, scented oils, and even some fine brandy.

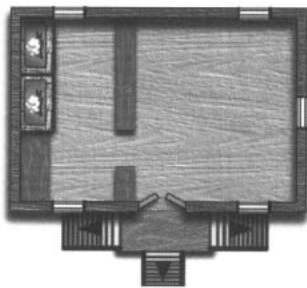
DEAD MAN'S COVE



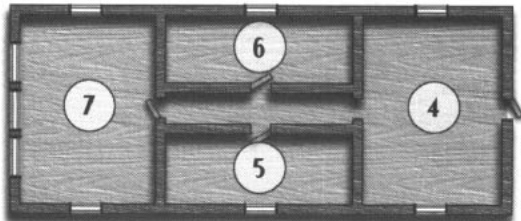
1. BUNKHOUSE



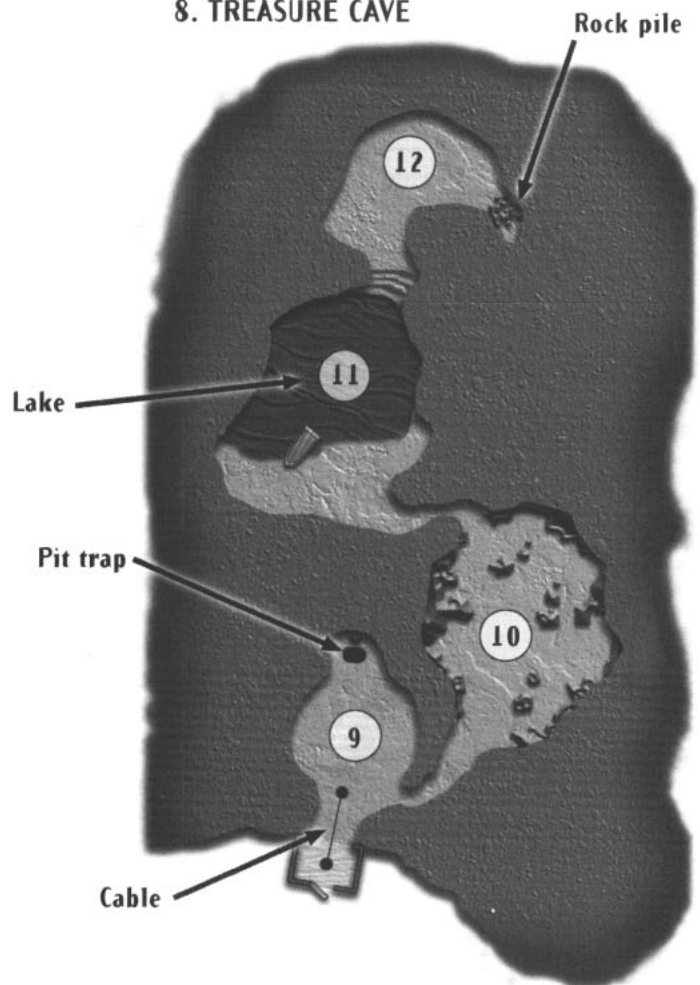
2. MESS HALL



3. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS



8. TREASURE CAVE



Though it would take quite a while — at least six hours of analyzing and calculating — a character with the Appraise skill may attempt to determine the value of the trade goods (DC 18, since many of them are rare). If successful, the value is estimated to be near 60,000 gp (enough to replace all of Mornstar's lost ships and still have a few coins to rub together).

As the PCs move the rocks, a small pocket in the cave wall is revealed. A chest rests within the pocket. After the PCs remove the rest of the rocks, they can extract the chest. The chest has a trap that goes off if the chest is moved or opened without the trap being deactivated.

◆ **Poison Needle Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

Treasure: The chest contains 8,000 gp in various coinage, 6,000 gp in assorted gems, a diamond tiara worth 4,000 gp, three *scrolls of silent image* (1st level), *hold person* (3rd level), and *hold monster* (5th level), two vials (a *potion of charisma* and a *potion of protection from elements (electricity)*), and one richly decorated, ornate robe worth 3,000 gp. It is in fact a *robe of scintillating colors*.

EPILOGUE

If the PCs return with some (or all) of Cedric's valuables and proof the pirates have been dealt with, he is pleased with the PCs and makes it no secret that his friendship is theirs now in the future. If the PCs decide to fund themselves with a ship of their own with the treasure they liberated from the pirates, Cedric will stop at nothing to hire mercenaries to take the PCs down for their traitorous act.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Cedric asks the PCs to escort one of the Cedric's finest ships, lead by Captain Daniels, making its way to the port of Galishor. Daniels has had to fight off many a pirate to get Cedric's goods through, and the party's presence would be appreciated by both Cedric and the captain as security. Besides, the PCs get a free cruise and additional pay to boot (see the adventure "The Red Isle").
- The party comes across the same young town crier that lead them to Cedric once again. This time he's giving word that the city's count is offering a great reward in return for his missing daughter (see the adventure "Honor Amongst Thieves").



Chapter 7


 An illustration of a hand in a patterned sleeve holding a small pile of coins. The background is a dark, textured wash. The title 'Kin and Kinsmen' is overlaid on the illustration.

Kin and Kinsmen

Levels 3 to 5

by Andrew Getting

The King is dead...

Hidden in frozen wastelands and surrounded by untold treasures is the Kingdom of the Seven-Day Sun, home to wise King Jarrod. But times have changed. At the peak of the winter festivals, the head of Jarrod's guard finds his lord dead upon his throne — murdered. As the castle and its grounds closed in by both snow and suspicions, Crown Prince Hess and his council, the Table of Lords, begin an investigation.

During his coronation, Hess is also targeted and everyone is suspect. Even his own kin, the Table of Lords, is not above suspicion, for each is a potential heir to the throne. Fingers point and old rivalries return as the truth is sought.

In the dead of winter, among murderous alliances and old bonds of blood, regicide looms large. The greatest terror the land has ever seen grows terrifyingly close to the throne, and all that stands between the Kingdom of the Seven-Day Sun and its fate is a band of foreign warriors untrusted by all.

...long live the King!

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5.

This adventure is extremely interactive, requiring a great deal of investigation. It easily adapts to any existing campaign and works especially well if you replace the characters herein with the nobility from your own campaign. It takes place in a small mountain realm, the Kingdom of the Seven-Day Sun, home both to miners and traders.

During a winter festival, the last before the passes freeze up and the harsh winter forces leaner times, an assassin slays old King Jarrod upon his throne in the dead of night. Jarrod's son, Crown Prince Hess, orders the castle grounds sealed immediately, then consults the parliamentary Table of Lords, made up of lesser kinsmen. The Table of Lords ratifies Hess' claim to the throne, and his coronation is announced within hours. When Hess' own life is threatened and the Lords implicated, Hess and the Table of Lords turn to the PCs to investigate.

The truth of the matter is simple — Hess is himself the traitor, and desires both absolute rule and the assured dynasty for his children. As the Table of Lords has the legal power to remove a king from his throne, as well as its own ties to the royal lineage, Hess has come to the conclusion the Lords and their families must be destroyed.

The adventure begins with the PCs arrival on the palace grounds during the final day of the Festival of the Last Sun. The revelry is short-lived, however, as the guards close the gates to the city in the middle of the night.

The following morning, the populace nearly revolts when they find themselves trapped within the city walls. The mood grows uglier when Hess announces both his father's death and his own coronation later that day. It is during this coronation a man in the crowd fires a crossbow bolts at Hess, striking the captain of the guard instead. The would-be assassin is brought down by the PCs and the palace guard and on his body is found a letter offering 10,000 gp for the assassination of Hess — and a wax seal bearing the signet of one of the Table of Lords.

The palace guard escorts the PCs, the Table of Lords, and King Hess into the palace. Here the Lords and Hess ask the PCs to find the traitor. As the PCs investigate, they find an assassin also hunts the Lords. Once they catch the killer, the evidence implicates not only the Lords, but also King Hess himself. The King flees when confronted, disappearing into a secret passage.

In the twisted lair hidden within the castle walls, Hess unleashes the Slayer of Dreams, the beast his ancestor trapped centuries ago, earning the right to this land and delineating the kingdom. The Slayer, unbound by Hess' will, first attacks him and then the PCs, sapping their hopes and wills. Once the creature is defeated and Hess' body is recovered, the Lords reward the PCs and promote one of their own to lead the kingdom out of this bloody reign. PCs may even find themselves with honorary titles of nobility.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The following NPCs are vital to the plot and the DM should familiarize himself with the details of each, replacing characters with his own where possible.

King Hess: The newly-crowned king and technical head of the Table of Lords, he has long plotted to betray his fellows so that only he and his may rule the Kingdom.

Lord Rigel: Though Rigel's blood ties to Rince are the weakest of the Lords, he is the actual leader of the Table of Lords. Rigel has misgivings about Hess' suitability for the throne, and knows of his affair with Lord Martin's daughter, but keeps these and other secrets for the good of the nation.

Lord Dugal: Though part of a conspiracy against the throne, Dugal is worried the assassinations are from his cabal, which has advanced their plans without him. Unable to trust anyone, he will attempt to leave the city at the earliest opportunity.

Lord Martin: Also part of the conspiracy, Lord Martin believes killing Hess would only save the country from the heartache he himself received from Hess. He realizes that Dugal and Fain are both after the throne themselves, and plans to turn himself and his cohorts in to Rigel once Hess is destroyed.

Lord Fain: Hess' first cousin, Lord Fain was heir before Hess was born, and views the child as an upstart. He and Hess are otherwise very much alike, right down to their plans for the Table of Lords.

RUNNING A MYSTERY

Running a true mystery under the d20 system can be a bit difficult. As soon as there's any question the culprit could be anyone, paladins start *detecting evil* wherever they go, arcane casters use *detect thoughts* and high-level divine casters have *discern lies*.

It would be nice if published adventures could just resort to non-mechanical reasoning, painting Hess as a neutral individual with a selfish streak and a passion to rule alone. However, he hired an assassin to kill his father and all of his relatives; he's bad to the bone, quite evil indeed. Therefore in order to add a level of mystery to the adventure, he wears a *ring of mind shielding* (see his statistics at area #9).

Lord Jordan: An elderly man who was technically closer to the throne than old King Jerrod, Jordan is also inbred to the point of idiocy. He is quiet, however, and does as he is told, and so he sits on the Table of Lords as a pawn of Fain protected only by Lord Martin.

Lady Allain: The only lady on the Table of Lords is also the only former peasant, the fruit of King Jerrod's childhood romance. Though she has no designs on the throne, both Hess and Fain believe otherwise, and wish her dead.

THE FIRST MURDER

It is the last night of the Festival of the Last Sun; the final celebration of the Kingdom of the Seven-Day Suns before winter sets in. Under the shadow of old King Jerrod, the town of Rovedgaard bustles with foreign merchants packing their wares or selling their final goods at any price they can fetch. Some traders, already packed, are leaving even now; guessing the snow will bury the mountain passes early this year. The townspeople no longer take part in the festival, save for some last-minute purchases of furs and spices. People shout, laugh and sing with misty breath amid the early frost and stone gray sky. In the morning, the wintry lean times begin.

Let the PCs make the rounds for a couple hours of game time. Many of the merchants happily sell their fine goods far below the going price (particularly if the items are bulky or perishable), bearing in mind that many customers have already picked over the wares and chosen the best items for themselves.

KIN AND KINSMEN

MERCHANTS

1d20	Merchant Wares
1	Armor/barding
2	Boots and leggings
3	Ceramics
4	Cloaks and capes
5	Coffee
6	Craftsmen tools
7	Dried foods
8	Flour and salt
9	Glass trinkets and baubles
10	Incense and herbs
11	Lamps and lanterns
12	Leather goods
13	Map and scroll cases
14	Musical instruments
15	Perfume, scented oils and soap
16	Rugs and tapestries
17	Saddle bags
18	Tents and blankets
19	Tobacco and pipes
20	Woodworking tools

MERCHANT DEALS

1d20	Deal
1-5	5% off PHB prices
6-9	10% off PHB prices
10-11	15% off PHB prices
12	20% off PHB prices
13	Buy one get one free
14	Buy two get one free
15	Buy two get two free
16-20	Free belt pouch or small sack with purchase

When the PCs are done, read or paraphrase the following:

Soon, too soon, the shopkeepers and traders close down their carts and wagons, and as the sky darkens, the streets fall silent. Though the taverns and inns remain as boisterous as ever, it is as though the town itself were bedding down for the winter ahead.

Without much to purchase or carouse about outside their inn, the PCs retire for the night. Some PCs, particularly those who watch the rooms in shifts during the night, or those rogues on the rounds for unseemly profits, notice the night's happenings even before the townspeople do:

At the stroke of midnight, the town guard pours from its barracks, quickly and silently with their chainmail and swords. Within moments, the town guard has three men at every exit to the city, and another dozen at both the main entrances and the castle's vast doorway. In minutes, the city is sealed, and no one can leave without challenging the guard.

TOWN GUARDSMEN

Note that not all town guardsmen are 3rd level fighters. The training and experience necessary to rise in the ranks of a true fighter don't match up to the hundreds of guardsmen on the city payroll. However, these guards represent the cream of the crop...and happen to be at any location where a nosy PC starts causing trouble. If anything, it's known King Jerrod's training programs were among the best in many realms, and there are indeed a larger number of full-fledged fighters on this town guard than in many major settlements.

Here is an average guardsman of the city.

▲ Average Town Guard, Human War 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.
Skills and Feats: Jump +3, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +5; Alertness, Dodge
Possessions: Studded leather armor, heavy mace, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

Canny PCs may later note that this action is not consistent with the hunting of an assassin, normally performed through closing the castle itself, rather than the town around it.

▲ Experienced Town Guard, Human Ftr 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+3; hp 20 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (in chainmail); AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword); SA—; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.
Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Jump +6, Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Spot +2; Cleave, Dodge, Power attack, Run, Weapon Focus (longsword).
Possessions: Chainmail armor, light wooden shield, masterwork longsword.

If any Town Guardsmen are left alive or conscious at the beginning of their initiative, they call for reinforcements — 1d6 additional guards arrive in 1d4 rounds. PCs who subdue the guards and escape the town find a large bounty upon their heads as Hess frames them for the assassination of his father. If the PCs ask the guards or other citizens questions, the guards say everyone will find out soon (meaning even them) and other city folk have no idea what is going on. The guards' only orders are to prevent anyone from entering or exiting the city.

A NEW DAWN IN THE SEVEN SUNS

Morning arrives with the shouts and clamor accompanying daybreak in most towns, but there is something different today. Outside, the people are shouting at the guardmen; some are even throwing rotten food. A mob has formed and armed city guardsmen hold back the angry citizenry. The gates to the city are closed, and despite the protests of tradesmen and townsmen alike, the guards allow no one to leave.

A town crier, his face red and sweaty, stands on a corner, shouting "Crown Prince Hess and the Table of Lords demand the attention of all persons before the castle at noon to address the foul treason upon old King Jerrod's person. After which, is the coronation!"

At this, the townspeople grow pale and quiet, the traders return to their packing.

Should anyone attempt to escape the city, they find six guards at the side gates and twenty-four at the main gates. Assuming the PCs maintain their composure and go to the coronation as was demanded, read or paraphrase the following:

At noon the people convene before the castle. The cool air chills you to your bones. A raised platform, the night before a host to bands and dancing, now acts as a stage for the eight regents of the Table of Lords and the Lords' cousin, Crown Prince Hess. A large man in chain mail stands at Hess' side, his eyes darting through the crowd. Young Hess, barely 17, wears enough dyed furs to double his size. Finally the prince speaks:

"It is an unbearable pain that forces me to hold you, my loyal subjects and honored guests, here against your will. Our kingdom is beset, and this past night a man did murder my father upon his throne. This treason, this affront to us all, cannot go unpunished, and I fear I must keep you all within these walls until the assassin is caught. I am truly sorry."

The audience mumbles. The foreign traders are clearly unhappy about the delay. The townspeople, however, are genuinely worried. Murmurs spread through the crowd as one of the Lords steps forward, bearing a fist-sized, uncut ruby in his hand.

"Old King Jerrod is dead! By the will of the Table of Lords and the commandment of the gods, his son, Hess, shall succeed the throne."

The Lords glance between themselves, and more than one openly glares at Hess. Though the Table approved Hess' rise, it was clearly not a unanimous decision. The Lord bearing the stone raises it to the sky.

"Long ago, King Rence saved us from the heart of despair, from the Slayer of Dreams. In doing so, he earned both his throne and our undying devotion. The heart of Loyalty demands no less.

"Will you, Hess, take up your ancestor's role, and lead us from the winters of body and soul?"

The Lord lowers the stone and presents it to Hess. As he takes it, a brilliant white light burns within the Heart. He, too, then holds it to the sky.

"The true King of the Seven Suns can do no less."

The assembled throng and lords kneel before their new king.



THE TABLE OF LORDS

"Who are those guys?" a PC may ask. Any PC with ranks in Knowledge (nobility and royalty) who succeeds at a skill check (DC 18) knows the tale:

As the first King, and the undisputed ruler of the Kingdom of the Seven Suns, Rence knew well the frailties of the heart. Though he selected his first son as heir, he formed a council of his other children to advise and watch over the King. King Hess is the descendent of Rence's first son, and the Table of Lords is descended from Rence's other children.

Have the PCs make a Listen or Spot check (whichever is easier, DC 20; do not reveal the difficulty). The PC who rolls highest sees a figure in the crowd raise a small crossbow towards the new king. If none of the PCs makes the roll, the King's guardsman does, and throws himself in front of the bolt.

▲ **Lepzig Os, False Assassin, Human Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d6+7; hp 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Sneak Attack: This rogue's attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Possessions: Leather armor, short sword, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

Once the "assassin" is brought low by either the guard nearby or the PCs and is still alive or conscious, read or paraphrase the following:

As soon as the man throws up his hands in surrender, the crowd lunges for him. Though the guard quickly pushes them back, it is too late. The assassin lies dead. Guards pick over the dead man for clues, retrieving his possessions.

King Hess steps down from the platform. He looks at each of the immediate witnesses in the eye, before coming to rest on the lot of you. His hands still grasp the Heart of Loyalty, its light practically blinding you.

"You have witnessed the second affront to oust sovereignty. Be so kind as to join us tonight, at dinner in the castle, and tell us what you have seen. If you are helpful in thwarting this threat, we shall see that you are suitably rewarded."

Clever PCs will not only pick up on the poor quality of this assassin, but will also note that a royal's invitation to dinner is rarely anything short of an order.

A TABLE DIVIDED

The castle of the Seven Suns is a simple affair of solid walls jutting from the base of a mountain, surrounding and protecting the entrance to the castle proper. The wall of the mountain above the entrance is encrusted with a series of sculptures, depicting a young warrior with a short sword and a chest wound fighting an indistinct figure wielding two daggers.

The Table of Lords and King Hess convene with the party and other witnesses over dinner in the dining room (area #7). During supper, King Hess eats heartily (another clue — for a man who just escaped an assassination, he is quite cavalier about the only marginally more subtle method of poison), and engages in small talk. The *heart of loyalty*, now on a chain around his neck, has faded to an inert black-red.

The PCs, during this time, may ask any number of questions of both the King and the Lords (who eat sparingly). General topics, such as economics, military and crime come and go quickly — despite the veneer of civility neither the Lords nor the King are interested.

Should a PC ask of the old King, Hess replies:

"My father was...a good man. Tired, perhaps, since my mother's untimely death, but a good man. The Kingdom of the Seven Suns mourns his passing. He brought us wealth and peace. He will be missed."

KIN AND KINSMEN

Should a PC speak of the *heart of loyalty*, Hess defers to Lord Rigel as to the stone's history.

"Long ago, these mountains were home to nothing more than tiny villages built around the mines. Soon enough, as often happens in such dark places, one of the miners broke through a vein of iron, and opened a door to a cavern. The miner ventured in, then fled screaming mere moments later. The mine was shut down soon after.

"Thieves and smugglers soon infested the shaft, searching for cheap loot. One thief stole his way into the heart of the mine, but did not leave.

"This rogue died of fright in the mine, but not before telling all he knew to the mine's denizen. This beast, the Slayer of Dreams, was left over from before the creation of the world. The gods banished it here, to sleep below these mountains. Though the miner unwittingly woke it, it was the thief who gave it power: the Slayer knew where to find victims, and soon it feasted on fears.

"Whole villages went to sleep at night, and all died in nightmares by morning. The mountains grew quieter.

"Rence was but a boy when the Slayer fell upon his family in the night. From his hiding place, he watched as the Slayer took the life of his grandparents, his parents, his brothers and sisters, his uncles and aunts, and all his cousins. With each death, the Slayer howled in unholy glee. With each death, Rence felt more of his hope die, until there was nothing left but hatred.

"The Slayer, finally sated, retreated to the caverns. Rence watched, and followed, armed only with a short sword and his vengeance. Into the earth he followed the creature, until he attacked the beast in its lair.

"It has been untold centuries since anyone laid hands upon the Slayer of Dreams, yet Rence cut it twice before it fought back. Using its daggers, the Slayer pierced Rence's heart, to feed upon the man's fear.

"But Rence had no fear, only hate. The daggers locked into Rence's chest. Their bloods mingled and soon, the demon was trapped.

"Rence survived. When he emerged, the remaining villagers chose Rence as their king. It is from him that King Hess and the Table of Lords draw their heritage. The *heart of loyalty*, Rence's own heart, determines how strong his lineage is, even as the Table of Lords casts its favor or doubt upon the royalty's own hearts."

If the PCs speak of the assassination of King Jerrod, or the attempt on Hess' own life, King Hess speaks:

"I...we have discussed the matter in private chambers, and come to a conclusion. The assassin had certain evidence on his person, and the Table and I have agreed to reward you handsomely if you were to investigate this matter on our behalf. We shall speak of this in private, as matters of state are involved."

The other witnesses take the hint, finish their meals quickly, and leave in the company of the Lords. Lord Rigel and King Hess remain. As last, Lord Rigel speaks:

"Whatever secrets you find within these walls, remains within them. The Kingdom of the Seven Suns is closer to peril than we previously thought."

Hess lays out some maps and letters. "The guard found these on the body of my would-be killer," he says. Though the letters are in code, the maps are clear — they are of the castle. At the base of each letter is a wax seal. Noticing your eyes upon it, Hess continues, "That is the seal of the Table of Lords. My friends, there is a traitor in this castle, and this is a primary reason we have chosen outsiders such as yourselves to aid us.

"You are hereby given leave to interview each of the Lords. After I depart, you may begin with Lord Rigel. The rest of the Lords are waiting in their chambers in the west end of the castle. Once you have ferreted out the traitor, return to me with proof."

With that, Hess leaves the room, and Lord Rigel sits at his place at the table, waiting for you to begin...

At this and each successive interview in a location marked #5 (a-h), roll 1d6 and add the number of interviews with a Lord the party has already held. If the result is greater than seven, the party enters a room with the assassin (see room #6 for details).

Rigel is Lawful Good, and despite his distant tie to Rence, views his position as the head of the Table of Lords as the only honor he needs. While not lacking ambition, he also does not trust Hess, but will not volunteer such information unless specifically asked. Hess, he feels, is not only too young for the throne, but also views it as a birthright, rather than as a responsibility.

The following are encounters related by the room numbers and events that transpire as the PCs go about their investigation. Some room encounters change depending on what has transpired elsewhere.

THE PALACE

1. The Courtyard

The first time the PCs come here, read or paraphrase the following:

Above the gate is the magnificent sight of King Rence battling the Slayer of Dreams. The carvings are over fifty ft. high, and unworn by continuous winds and freezing ice. All about you, by the gates and on the sentry points along the walls, the guards watch and wait.

If the PCs did not ask, or have previous knowledge about the *heart of loyalty*, a guard tells the story. PCs attempting to leave find the gates to the castle blocked by six palace guards.

▲ Palace Guards, Human Ftr 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+12; hp 45 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (in banded mail); AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword); SA—; SQ—; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Jump +11, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +4; Cleave, Dodge, Power attack, Run, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Masterwork banded mail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

2. The Throne Room

The throne room sprawls before you. Guards line the halls. The east side of the room bears three doors, and the left side only two and a hallway.

At the north end, King Hess sits on the throne, a rather simple affair of stone, cut from the mountain like the carvings of the palace face. Behind the throne is another carving of King Rence, his arms enfolding the throne. Rence's eyes are closed and there is a fist-sized hole in his chest.

If the PCs have evidence proving Hess is the traitor, read or paraphrase the following:

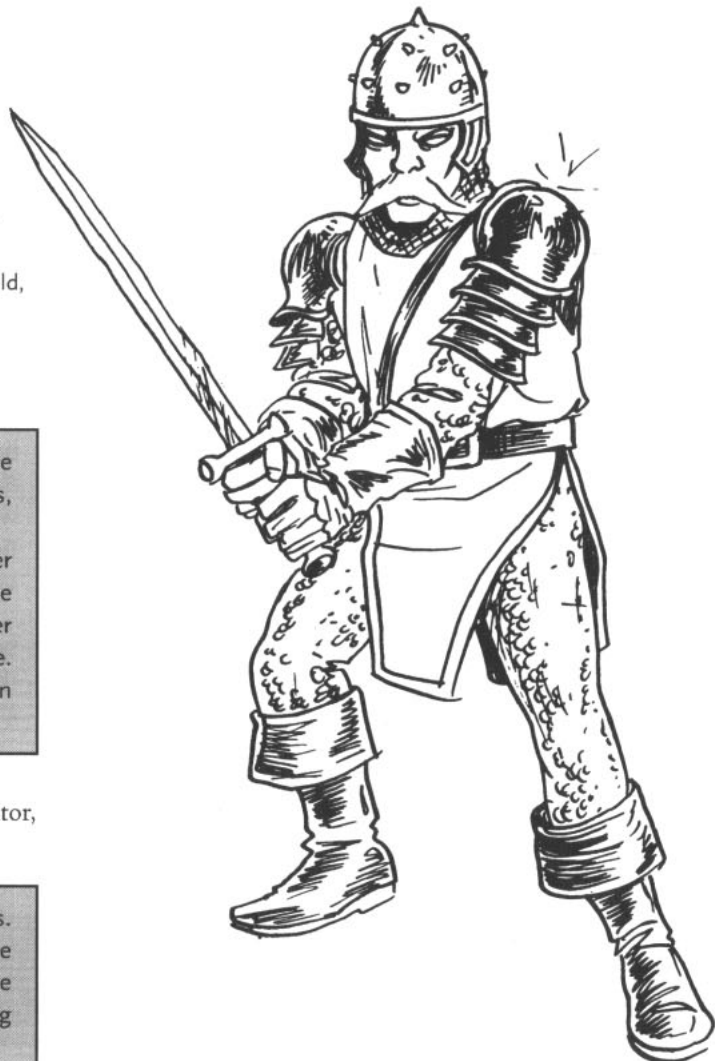
As you approach, Hess looks into your eyes. He knows. Before you can raise the alarm, he stands and thrusts the *heart of loyalty* into the hole in Rence's chest. The statue opens its eyes as the floor beneath Hess gives way, pulling Hess and the *heart* with it.

At this point, the PCs are free to follow the trap door to area #11. If the PCs do not have proof of Hess' guilt, he merely waves them on with a vague gesture and does not answer them. There are ten palace guards and two town guards in the throne room, all reporting information to King Hess.

▲ Palace Guards, Human Ftr 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+12; hp 45 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (in banded mail); AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword); SA—; SQ—; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Jump +11, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +4; Cleave, Dodge, Power attack, Run, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Masterwork banded mail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.



▲ **Experienced Town Guard, Human Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+3; hp 20 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (in chainmail); AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword); SA—; SQ—; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Jump +6, Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Spot +2; Cleave, Dodge, Power attack, Run, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Chainmail armor, light wooden shield, masterwork longsword.

3. Kitchen and Storeroom

This room is filled with pots, pans, and cutlery. A cook and her two stewards, who served you at dinner, look up from scrubbing.

“Milords?” says the cook.

The crew do indeed know quite a bit about Hess, Jerrod, and the Table of Lords — up to and including how everyone feels about everyone else (see area #5). They did not see the murder of Jerrod, however. They answer any and all other questions about the castle, including the nature of the secret doors and the indiscretions of Hess. They are unlikely, however, to divulge anything dangerous such as the cabal of Lords who truly are attempting to assassinate Hess. To such questions, they reply vaguely, with responses such as “Between you an’ me, I ne’er trusted ‘im. Not a bit.”

The servants know Lord Fain hates Hess because Hess seduced and abandoned his daughter. They do not think much of this information and only reveal it if the PCs steer the questioning in that direction.

4. Palace Guard Barracks

As you enter this room, the small platoon of guards looks up at you from their bunks or their benches. Many are sharpening their weapons. One man, a clean-shaven fellow, stands at attention.

“I am acting Sergeant-at-Arms Harrison. In what way may we be of service?”

The guards know nothing of the actual conspiracy against Hess — if they did, they’d have taken matters into their own hands by now, and arrested any conspirator the PCs provide testimony on. Neither were they witness to Jerrod’s murder, though they volunteer some speculation: the killer was no common assassin, but rather someone Jerrod trusted enough to meet in private in the throne room, eschewing a guard. The guards also know secret

passages line the castle, but do not volunteer this knowledge unless the PCs have chased the assassin through the encounters in area #8 and #9.

There are ten Palace guards in the barracks.

▲ **Palace Guards, Human Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+12; hp 45 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (in banded mail); AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword); SA—; SQ—; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Jump +11, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +4; Cleave, Dodge, Power attack, Run, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Masterwork banded mail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

5. Private Offices of the Lords

Remember to roll 1d6 plus the number of interviews conducted to determine whether the assassin strikes. If the total of the roll is greater than seven, the assassin is present and has struck already in all rooms marked 5a through 5f. Use the descriptions of encounter 6 from here on out.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 5a: Lord Rigel (empty) | 5e: Lord Jordan |
| 5b: Lord Dugal | 5f: Lady Allain |
| 5c: Lord Martin | 5g: Empty Office |
| 5d: Lord Fain | 5h: Privy |

Lords Dugal, Martin, and Fair are co-conspirators. Though minor compared to their dead allies, these Lords are less than helpful, resenting any questioning and behaving like ill-tempered children. Lords Dugal and Fain plot for personal gain; Lord Fain hates Hess because Hess seduced and abandoned his daughter. Fain admits to his part in the conspiracy if confronted with this information. He flatly denies responsibility for Jerrod’s death, however, as he believes Jerrod was a good, honorable man who served the kingdom well.

Lord Jordan and Lady Allain, are loyal members of the house. While they, too, do not care for Hess, they feel that the stone proves his heritage, and hope the Table can guide him toward a better rule.

If the assassin hasn’t struck yet, then the Lord is still alive, awaiting an interview as ordered.

If the assassin struck, see the text from area #6.

6. The Assassin Revealed

Before you stands a man dressed head to toe in black leathers. He pulls a blood-stained knife from the back of Lord [name], and smiles at you.

KIN AND KINSMEN



Tactics: The assassin waits for the first opportunity to flee, charging and tumbling through the corridor to area #8, through the (now open) secret passages into area #9. The assassin dumps the bag of caltrops behind him immediately after passing into the secret passageway, hoping to delay pursuit. Anyone struck by a caltrop may think he is poisoned because of the obvious sap on the tips. A successful Knowledge (nature) or Survival check (DC 14) helps the PCs realize that it is harmless.

▲ Gellcor the Assassin, Human Rog 6/Asn 1: CR 7;

Medium humanoid; HD 7d6+7; hp 35; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19*, touch 14*, flat-footed 15*; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword); SA Sneak attack +4d6, death attack, spells; SQ +1 *defending longsword*, evasion, poison use, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Climb +10, Disable Device +8, Disguise +10, Hide +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +12, Search +12, Spot +10, Tumble +13, Use Magic Device +11; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Death Attack: If this assassin studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (assassin's choice). While studying the victim, this assassin can undertake other actions so long as his attention stays focused on the target and the target does not detect the assassin or recognize the assassin as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 14) against the kill effect, she dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6+2 rounds. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the assassin completes the 3 rounds of study, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds.

Evasion (Ex): This rogue can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead take no damage.

Poison Use: Assassins are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Sneak Attack: This rogue's attacks deal an extra 4d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): This rogue gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): This rogue retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Assassin Spells Prepared: (1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st—*true strike*.

Possessions: +2 *studded leather armor*, +1 *defending longsword*, a bag of caltrops with pine sap on their tips.

7. The Dining Room

The dining room still contains Lord Rigel, who is pouring over the evidence with great sadness. He continues to answer any questions posed. He knows of the affair Hess had with Fain's daughter, and confirms their suspicions if they ask. If someone asks him about Jerrod's death, and offers the guard's speculation, he reluctantly acknowledges Hess himself might be suspect.

8. The Table Meeting Chamber

This room is the Table meeting chamber, a long table with the King's seat on one end, a total of nine seats in all. On the eastern wall is a carving of Rence and his children.

If the assassin has entered this room already, the secret door is open. Otherwise, the PCs can find the secret door on the successful Search check (DC 20).

9. Hess' Chambers

Entry is forbidden from the north. The only entry is through the secret door. If the PCs are chasing the assassin do not read the following.

The assassin stands in Hess' bedroom, the former chamber of his father. The door on the north wall has just closed, and the assassin yells as he throws his dagger at the door.

"Damn you, we had a deal!"

He then pounds on another carving of Rence, this one of him watching over his family's death. This carving, too, lacks a heart.

Tactics: If the PCs chase the assassin into this room, he puts a knife to Hess' throat and tells the PCs to drop their weapons. He tries to escape through the secret door into the caves, taking the heart of loyalty with him. If the PCs reduce the assassin to ten hit points (or less), he surrenders and testifies against Hess.

The secret door on the west end is concealed and found only on a successful Search check (DC 20).

▲ **King Hess, Human Ari 7:** CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 7d8+7; hp 41; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (in chainmail); AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +9 melee (1d6+2/18–20, rapier) or +8 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+2/18–20, rapier) or +8 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); SA—; SQ—; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Forgery +12, Gather Information +12, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +12, Listen +9, Sense Motive +12, Spot +14; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Possessions: +1 chainmail armor, +2 rapier, masterwork dagger, ring of mind shielding.

10. The Treasury

■ **Locked Door:** The treasury door is locked (DC 28) with two palace guards always standing at the ready. Entry is forbidden.

▲ **Palace Guards, Human Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+12; hp 45 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (in banded mail); AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword); SA—; SQ—; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Jump +11, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +4; Cleave, Dodge, Power attack, Run, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Masterwork banded mail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

11. Hidden Chamber

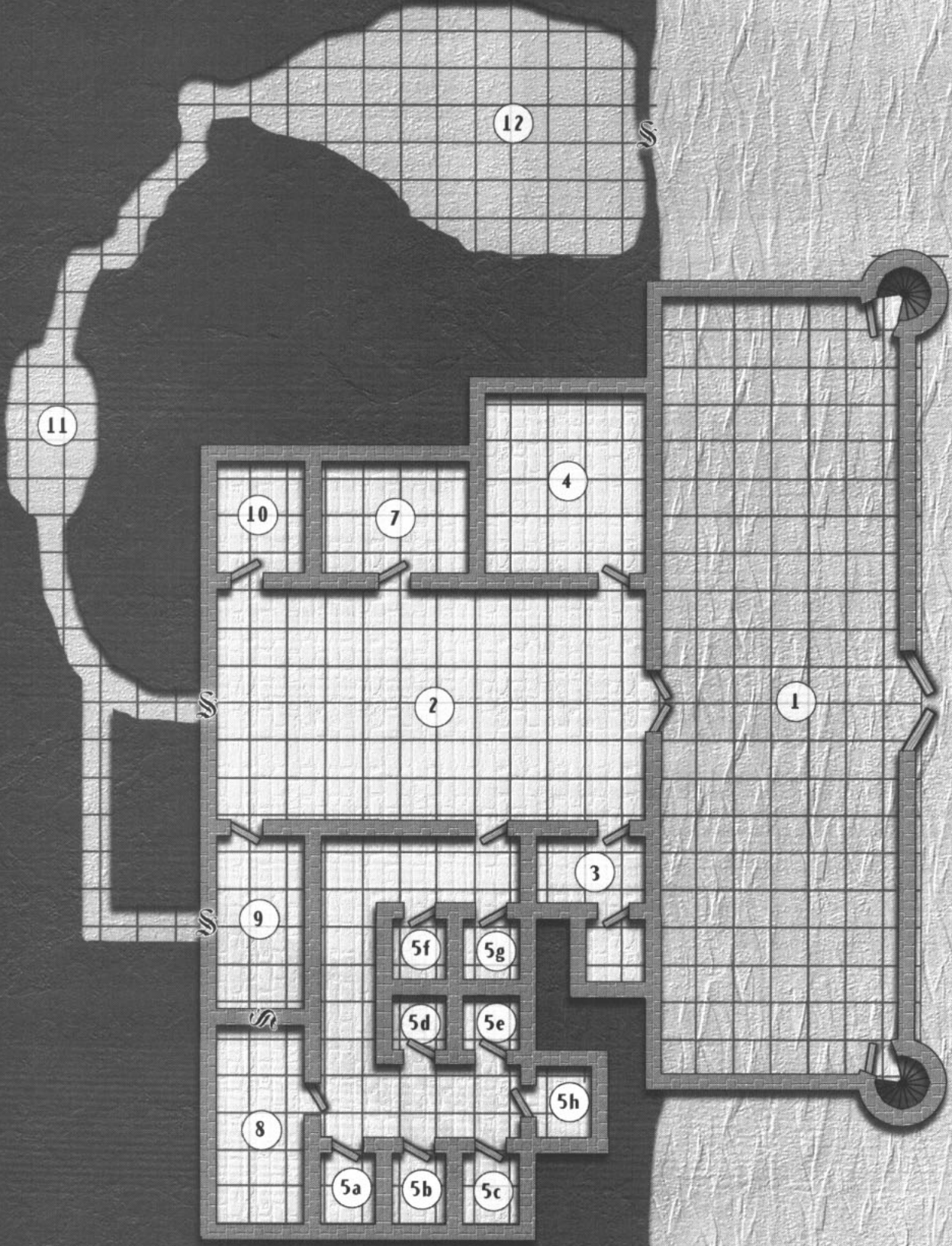
The ground descends and the smooth rock makes it hard to walk. As the slide stops, you find yourself in a rough-hewn cavern. A large pool of light just ahead and to the right draws you in. Something lies at your feet.

The object at the party's feet is either Hess' body or the assassin's (depending on who ran in here). His chest is cut open, and he holds in his hands the *heart of loyalty*.

Treasure: Hess' stash of embezzled funds (and the records to trace them thus) totaling 10,000 gp, is strewn about the room in large coffers.

KIN AND KINSMEN

THE CASTLE OF THE SEVEN-DAY SUN



12. The Slayer of Dreams

A large, natural cavern yawns widely before you, lit from within by the unholy light of two crimson daggers. A creature the shape of a human holds the daggers, demonic features dotting its face. Behind it is another carving of King Rence, a gaping hole in his chest. Still-wet blood and a rainbow liquid streaks the body of the statue. The demon beckons you to come in closer.

This creature is the Slayer of Dreams. The carving is another clue as to the Slayer's weakness — players who smear the *heart of loyalty* with Hess' blood, the blood on the carving, or their own blood, and the blood of the Slayer, can entrap it once again.

☛ **Slayer of Dreams:** CR 6; Medium outsider; HD 7d8+14; hp 45; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d4+5 plus wounding/19–20, infernal blade); Full Atk +10/+10/+5/+5 melee (1d4+5 plus wounding/19–20, infernal blades); SA Infernal blades, fear; SQ Emotional resistance, vulnerable to turning; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Hide +12, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Spot +3; Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting

Infernal Blades (Su): The slayer wields two +2 daggers of wounding. These daggers are comprised of infernal energy. They fade to smoke and cinders when the slayer is banished or destroyed.

Fear (Sp): Those damaged by the slayer's *infernal blades* fall into despair. Such a character is considered cowering (see Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) unless he succeeds at a Will saving throw (DC 15). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Vulnerable to Turning: Though not actually undead, the slayer is vulnerable to the strong force of will associated with undead turning, and is vulnerable as though it were an undead with 9 HD. Attempts to rebuke the slayer, however, affect it as if it were an 18 HD undead creature.

Emotional Resistances (Su): The slayer is immune to all means of swaying its emotions, both magical or otherwise. Spells or spell-like effects that attempt to charm, enchant, or sleep the slayer automatically fail. Bluff or Intimidate skill checks automatically fail as well.

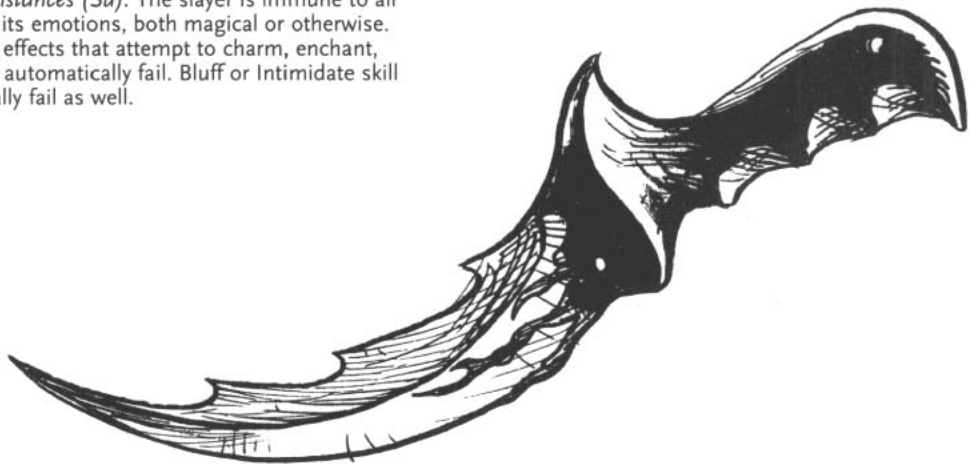
EPILOGUE

With King Hess dead, the remaining Table of Lords convenes after the return of the Heart. If Rigel is the only survivor, he reluctantly takes power. Otherwise, the remaining Table of Lords elects him as the new king. Depending on the depth of your campaign, develop a complicated process of determining who takes power, throwing the city into temporary panic, while the regents discuss the appropriate measures. It could go to a vote, or merely political and economic support for one regent over another.

In the days (or weeks) that follow, the newly crowned King Rigel speaks with the PCs in private, offering them honorary positions in the palace guard and free travel through his lands. He also offers his city's hospitality should they wish to stay the winter.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The party stays in the city for a while longer and a few days later hears of a town crier asking for heroes for a reward to find a missing girl (see the adventure "Honor Among Thieves", except replace the count with Lord Martin or whoever assumes the throne, and Princess Alexandria with Alexandria, Lord Martin's Daughter (and Hess' conquest) from this adventure).
- The beautiful and alluring Noble Lady Elena Zadrian hears of the PC's heroic efforts and sends word for them to come to her small keep to discuss a possible rescue mission (see the adventure "Castle Zadrian").



Chapter 8:

Princes, Thieves, and Goblins

Levels 3 to 5

By Marcelo & Kat Figueroa

Your search for adventure led you directly to the sleepy town of Crow's Watch in the kingdom of Kethera currently under the reign of King Kessel V.

In the few days you have spent here, you have found the people of Kethera were once prosperous and proud of their king, but recent events have brought low the spirits of these vibrant people. Hezak, court wizard and trusted advisor to King Kessel V, left the court for unknown reasons two years ago. Then from the last spring planting to the autumn harvest, raids by renegade bands of goblins plundered the border communities of Kethera. Only the onset of winter stopped the goblins from further destruction, and all efforts to track and run the goblins to ground have resulted in failure.

But instead of the promise of rebirth the spring thaw brings, this new year has brought only more disturbing news... the infant heir of King Kessel V, his only child, has been kidnapped from within the castle.

The people of Kethera are slowly becoming discontented with a King who cannot even protect his own family...

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5. PCs with good direction sense or a desire to explore dungeons will have fun here. should feel free to expand the dungeon complex or embellish the encounters.

All is not well in the kingdom of Kethera. Two years ago, the wizard Hezak was a respected and trusted advisor to young King Kessel, as he was to the previous king. His only failing to the crown was that he fell madly in love with the queen, whom he believed shared his affection. His emotion got the better of him, and one day in a private audience with the queen he made improper advances toward Her Royal Highness. Without making a scene, she discreetly made it clear to him her love was for no other but the king, and their heir.

This came as a shock to Hezak, for no formal announcement had been made to the court that the queen was with child. Hezak politely apologized, and asked the queen to keep this between the two of them, for it would never happen again. But the queen could not keep this a secret from her husband. In a private meeting the following day, King Kessel banished Hezak for his affront to the Queen's honor.

Consumed by his passion and angered by this break of trust, Hezak cast a rare and ancient ritual which would change the paternity of the queen's unborn child to his own.

Hezak fled to the Silverbray Mountains for solace. There he allied himself with the Goblin King, Narsh, whom he soon overthrew and replaced as the Goblin King (goblins are not exactly picky about whether their king is actually a goblin), claiming the symbol of rulership among the goblins... the *scepter of the goblin king*. As legend has it, the owner of this marvelous item is revered as the ruler of all goblins residing within the Silverbray Mountains.

Upon taking his new throne, Hezak set out to weaken and eventually overthrow King Kessel in a secret war of pure mayhem. Thus, for the past year, bands of Hezak's goblins have been raiding the border communities of Kethera, looting and pillaging as much as possible.

Meanwhile, the Queen gave birth to a healthy and happy son, heir to throne of Kethera... Prince Kessel.

The plea of Kessel's people for action did not go unheard, but the King was unwilling to commit his army to what would amount to a fruitless search through a treacherous mountain range just to root out what he determined to be no more than a renegade band of goblins. Thus, just after the last autumn harvest, he sent a wily master rogue named Tolicas and his band into the mountains to find and dispatch the goblins. They returned with the *scepter of the goblin king*, and reported that the goblins would no longer be a problem as long as he possessed the scepter. They also bore word the goblins were under the rule of a human wizard: Hezak. To protect this information from getting out, King Kessel ordered Tolicas and his rouges executed.

The truth behind the legend of the Scepter is the item itself does not make someone the Goblin King, but it is imbued with great magical powers. Hezak's goblin spies reported it being in the possession of King Kessel... an affront that would not go unanswered.

"Bring back what is mine!" he yelled.

Goblins are not renowned for their intelligence, and Hezak had long forgotten the spell he cast upon the Queen, altering the unborn heir to be his own son. Thus, having only been ordered to bring back what was Hezak's, the goblin thieves stumbled into the child's room. Perceiving this child was his, they escaped with the infant as quietly as they had entered.

PLAYER'S BACKGROUND

In the 7th year of the reign of King Kessel V, in the kingdom of Kethera, in the shadow of the Silverbray Mountains, at the south end of Druna Pass, your search for adventure has led you to the sleepy town of Crow's Watch.

In the few days you have spent here, you have found the people of Kethera were once prosperous and proud of their king, but recent events have brought low the spirits of these vibrant people. It all began when Hezak, court wizard and trusted advisor to King Kessel V, and his father before him, left the king's court for unknown reasons two years ago. Then, from the last spring planting to the autumn harvest, raids by renegade bands of goblins plundered the border communities of Kethera. Only the onset of winter stopped the goblins from further destruction, and all efforts to track and run the goblins to ground have ended in failure.

But instead of the promise of rebirth and renewal the spring thaw brings, this new year has brought only more bad news... the infant heir of King Kessel V, his only child, has disappeared from within the castle. The people of Kethera are slowly becoming discontented with a King who cannot even protect his own family.

As you sit around the hearth of the Oak Leaf tavern, five men wearing tabards bearing the crest of King Kessel enter the room, all but one carrying weapons and hiding armor under their royal garments. The unarmed man steps to the barkeep, and engages in a short, but private conversation. You also note the man passing the barkeep a coin purse.

"Bar's closed. Everyone have a restful night," the barkeep announces. As the unarmed man approaches your table, his guards remain by the door.

As the tavern patrons make their way out, the unarmed man says to you, "No, don't get up. Do please join me for a drink, won't you? Your exploits are known throughout this town, and I have matters of great importance to discuss with you on behalf of His Majesty, King Kessel V.

"My Lord requests your presence in a private audience at his summer cottage, one day's ride south of here. You are to be his guests until he arrives three days hence. My men will be happy to escort you to the cottage.

"As a token of good faith, please accept this gift." He places a large coin purse on your table.

"My men will meet you here at dawn. I must advise you it is considered uncouth to not accept an invitation from a king. I bid you goodnight."

With that, he leaves, and two of the guards leave with him.

As certainly as could be expected, the following morning all four guards are awaiting your arrival in front of the tavern. They stand, preparing two royal carriages and a wagon for your trip. The coin purse contains 100 platinum pieces.

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The guards are not experienced fighters, and do little talking. They will not answer any touchy questions about the current political climate or the king and his family. The journey takes an hour or two. If the party has its own mounts, they can be hitched to walk alongside the wagon.

Your arrival at the spacious summer estate of the king is met with little of the pomp expected for royal guests, but the estate's caretaker, Nullis, is there to greet you at the gate.

Nullis greets you warmly, and invites you in. Each of you is assigned your own valet, who shows you to your room, while your personal belongings are brought from the wagon, and your mounts stabled.

For the next two days you have full run of the grounds. You are invited to hunt the king's forest, fish the king's lake, stroll his gardens, study in his library, etc. Your only restrictions are that you must eat at the scheduled meal times, and you may not carry weapons (save while hunting) while on the grounds.

On schedule, the king and his entourage arrive. Nullis informs all of you your audience with the king will take place after tonight's dinner banquet. Each of you is provided with individually tailored formal dinner wear as a gift from the king. You are requested to sport these outfits at the dinner.

On your way into the dinner hall, you are presented to the king and queen. They smile and greet you warmly, but appear weary and sorrowful.

Any request to leave the grounds until the party has met with the king, is denied, and is enforced by the guards by any means necessary.

As the dinner concludes, the king and queen share a glance, which signals it is time to tell you what is behind this visit.

"Our humble apologies for bringing you here without a reasonable explanation. I trust your stay has been satisfactory?"

"We have called you here to ask your assistance on a matter of grave urgency. Recently our child was abducted from his very crib. Those responsible with his security have been appropriately dealt with. My court seers have performed divinations, and determined your group has the necessary skill and courage to rescue my son.

"We have good reason to believe our child was abducted by a band of goblins, and taken back to their king in the mountains north of here. We know this because it has recently come to our attention the goblin king is our former court wizard, Hezak. His affection for my queen became a nuisance and an embarrassment, so I cast him out. The abduction of my son is clearly an act of retribution meant to deny my people a true heir.

"We beseech you to undertake an operation that will bring about the safe return of our son. We are prepared to offer you land and title, as well as a fee of 300 platinum pieces for expenses incurred during your mission. Maps and guides are provided to the extent of my kingdom. I am also including a letter of marque granting you ownership rights to anything of value you recover from the Goblin King's lair.

"What say you? Will you save our son?"

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check.

- DC 10** The monarchy demands respect and patience from their guests.
- DC 15** The queen is quite a beauty; the king can be jealous of the attention she receives at times.
- DC 20** It's a shame the old court wizard isn't still around; word is he's highly skilled with divination spells.
- DC 25** Wasn't Tolicas the master rogue and his gang said to have taken a job for the king a while back? Wonder what ever happened to them?



INTO THE MOUNTAINS

Once the party has had a chance to equip themselves for the journey, they set out with their armed escort, and two guides take them back through Crow's Watch into Druna Pass. They stay with the party for one more day within the pass, and then declare themselves at the edge of the kingdom. They give the party leader a map to the approximate entrance to the Goblin King's Labyrinth, and wish them luck. They await the party's return in Crow's Watch for eight days, and then return to the King with news of the party's failure.

The map is surprisingly accurate, and it takes the party only two more days to arrive at the entrance to the Goblin King's Labyrinth. Twice each day, roll on the encounter chart below to see if any encounters occur or choose a suitable encounter.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d20	Encounter
1-10	No encounter
11	Displacer beast
12	Half-elven bard NPC (4th level)
13	Hill giant
14	Ogre zombie
15	Prismatic goblin patrol (2d4)
16	Prismatic goblin scout (3rd level rogue)
17	Rock slide
18	Torrential rainstorm
19	Troll
20	Wyvern

For rock slides, rainstorms, and other dangers of the road see Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. All creature encounters are in the *Monster Manual*.

1. Oubliette

A staircase leads down 50 ft. into a crudely worked room, with rough walls and a sandy floor. There is a large stone idol of a goblin in the center of the room. You notice something glittering in its eyes. Dark shadows cloak the rest of the room from sight.

The last step of the staircase is trapped with a spell meant to dissuade intruders from continuing.

♦ **Fire Trap:** CR 3; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 5th-level druid, 1d4+5 fire, DC 13 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

Encounter: This room is guarded by two manticores, who lurk in the shadows. Hezak payed a powerful mercenary team of hobgoblins to capture the beasts to act as his guards. Over time he has made various arrangements for mutual protection should the creatures mate, and they are

content to agree to guard the goblin's lair for now. Their uncooperative sibling is in area #11, caged (he did not agree to the deal Hezak offered and the goblins are trying to 'condition' him). The manticores here watch the entrance regularly and are not surprised by the PCs. If the group relies totally on low-light vision or darkvision these creatures are seen right away, as without the shadows, there's nowhere to hide.

♦ **Manticore:** CR 5; Large magical beast; HD 6d10+24 (57 hp); Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy); AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d4+5, claw) or +8 ranged (1d8+2/19-20, 6 spikes); Full Atk +10 melee (2d4+5, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d8+2, bite); or +8 ranged (1d8+2/19-20, 6 spikes); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Spikes; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +9, Survival +1; Flyby Attack, Multiattack, TrackB, Weapon Focus (spikes).

Spikes (Ex): With a snap of its tail, a manticore can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 ft. with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 ft. of each other. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in any 24-hour period.

Skills: *Manticores have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

Treasure: Back where the creatures were in waiting, the PCs will find a *wand of magic missile* (3rd level), a suit of masterwork scale mail armor (made specifically for a Medium humanoid), and a suit of +3 *leather armor*. The eyes of the goblin idol are actually diamonds (worth 1,750 gp and 1,000 gp respectively).



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2. Garden Room

Exotic plants lay about this underground chamber like some sort of twisted garden. A luminous wizard-marked rune partially completed on the wall gives some clue to the identity of the dead wizard whose bones lie in a tangled heap upon the floor. There are five small, oddly colored goblins tending the garden.

Encounter: All five goblins are the same color. Roll to determine their color.

👁 **Prismatic Goblins:** CR 1; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 7, 7, 6, 5, 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SA By color/trait; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. prismatic effect; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Prismatic Effect (Su): Each goblin pack has its own unique supernatural abilities determined by color (ignoring Charisma minimums for spell level):

1d20	Color/Trait
1-6	Red: Can cast <i>bull's strength</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day, on itself.
7-10	Orange: Can cast <i>haste</i> , as a 7th-level sorcerer, once per day, on itself.
11-12	Yellow: Can cast <i>charm person</i> (DC 11) twice per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.
13-14	Green: Can cast <i>bless</i> , as a 1st-level cleric, 3/day, on itself.
15-18	Blue: Can cast <i>mirror image</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day.
19-20	Purple: Purple prismatic goblins gain a +2 bonus to damage with all melee and unarmed attacks and the Toughness feat.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.

Treasure: Hidden in the robes of the dead mage is a masterwork jeweler's kit.

3. Gallery

The uneven ceiling of this room is painted sky blue. The center of the room features a plate in the floor painted to represent the sun.

Encounter: Six prismatic goblins protect this gallery. All are the same color. Roll to determine their color.

👁 **Prismatic Goblins:** CR 1; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 8, 7, 7, 6, 5, 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SA By color/trait; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. prismatic effect; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Prismatic Effect (Su): Each goblin pack has its own unique supernatural abilities determined by color (ignoring Charisma minimums for spell level):

1d20	Color/Trait
1-6	Red: Can cast <i>bull's strength</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day, on itself.
7-10	Orange: Can cast <i>haste</i> , as a 7th-level sorcerer, once per day, on itself.
11-12	Yellow: Can cast <i>charm person</i> (DC 11) twice per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.
13-14	Green: Can cast <i>bless</i> , as a 1st-level cleric, 3/day, on itself.
15-18	Blue: Can cast <i>mirror image</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day.
19-20	Purple: Purple prismatic goblins gain a +2 bonus to damage with all melee and unarmed attacks and the Toughness feat.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.

Trap: Any PC who stands on the disc in the center of the room for one round is teleported to the center of room #8.

4. Master Bedroom

This room is fairly large and open, the only furniture is the master bed, which is carefully carved from granite. Apart from this, the room seems to be empty.

The first PC to step in the room likely sets off the trap, a *reverse gravity* spell effect set on both the floor and ceiling of this 20-foot high room.

👁 **Reverse Gravity Trap:** CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*, 10-ft. area); automatic reset; spell effect (*reverse gravity*, 10th-level wizard, spinning and tumbling as the spell fluctuate, those failing the save become sickened [character takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks] plus falling if trap is disabled [1d6], DC 20 Reflex save avoids effect); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

Special: If a PC is in the trap more than 5 rounds, they must pass a Constitution Check (DC 20) or become unconscious.

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5. Blacksmith Foundry

This room is taller than it is wide, with vaulted ceilings disappearing upward into the darkness. Mold-covered bricks — fallen from the ancient roofing arches — are scattered about the floor. The smell of ore wafts here, and the tools and accoutrements clearly label this as a foundry. Three small, oddly-colored creatures are working here!

Encounter: Three prismatic goblins protect this foundry. All are the same color. Roll to determine their color.

☛ **Prismatic Goblins:** CR 1; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 5, 4, 3; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SA By color/trait; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. prismatic effect; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Prismatic Effect (Su): Each goblin pack has its own unique supernatural abilities determined by color (ignoring Charisma minimums for spell level):

1d20	Color/Trait
1-6	Red: Can cast <i>bull's strength</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day, on itself.
7-10	Orange: Can cast <i>haste</i> , as a 7th-level sorcerer, once per day, on itself.
11-12	Yellow: Can cast <i>charm person</i> (DC 11) twice per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.
13-14	Green: Can cast <i>bles</i> , as a 1st-level cleric, 3/day, on itself.
15-18	Blue: Can cast <i>mirror image</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day.
19-20	Purple: Purple prismatic goblins gain a +2 bonus to damage with all melee and unarmed attacks and the Toughness feat.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.

Treasure: Hidden among the debris is a set of masterwork thieves' tools, which can be found with a Search check (DC 20).

6. Armory

This room is loaded with weapons manufactured by goblins, including armor and shields, enough to supply an army of goblins. Six colorful goblins are currently working in this room. There is also arcane writing on the door on the north side of the room.

The inscription on the door is actually a trap, one the goblins themselves are instructed never to look at.

☛ **Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 5th-level cleric, 2d8 acid, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Encounter: Six prismatic goblins protect this armory. All are the same color. Roll to determine their color.

☛ **Prismatic Goblins:** CR 1; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 7, 7, 5, 5, 4, 3; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SA By color/trait; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. prismatic effect; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Prismatic Effect (Su): Each goblin pack has its own unique supernatural abilities determined by color (ignoring Charisma minimums for spell level):

1d20	Color/Trait
1-6	Red: Can cast <i>bull's strength</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day, on itself.
7-10	Orange: Can cast <i>haste</i> , as a 7th-level sorcerer, once per day, on itself.
11-12	Yellow: Can cast <i>charm person</i> (DC 11) twice per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.
13-14	Green: Can cast <i>bles</i> , as a 1st-level cleric, 3/day, on itself.
15-18	Blue: Can cast <i>mirror image</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day.
19-20	Purple: Purple prismatic goblins gain a +2 bonus to damage with all melee and unarmed attacks and the Toughness feat.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.

In a velvet bag in the corner of the room is a *potion of aid*, a *potion of intelligence*, a *potion of tongues*, and a *potion of wisdom*. The smallest goblin swiped them from Tulesh Magor (the witch, see area #19) a few weeks ago but doesn't know what they do.

7. Bed Room

The walls of this room are painted aquamarine, a disconcerting image in this dark place to say the least. The furniture consists of a bed, an armoire, and a chest with four drawers. Eight large red-skinned humanoids are currently using this room as a camp, and seem eager to join you in mortal combat!

There is a pit trap 5 ft. north of the hallway door.

☛ **Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 15.

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Encounter: This room is guarded by eight hobgoblins who form the mercenary company called The Raging Hand. They make idle camp in this room, awaiting Hezak's next well-paid mission.

👤 **Hobgoblin:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6, 7, 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +2 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +2 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Treasure: Under the mattress of the bed is a wand of invisibility (with 13 charges remaining). In one of the drawers is a small cloth bag containing 1,210 cp and a large metal shield is shoved behind the armoire. No search check is required to find these; all a PC need do is mention he is searching the correct location... they can't be missed.

8. Bath

Approaching this room you can clearly make out the sound of running water. An underground river cuts through the middle of this room, running southeast. A glowing orange disc floats above the water in the center of the room. From the opposite side, three giant, hairy goblins are on watch.

PCs teleported in from Room #3 appear upon the disk. The disc does not reach to either side of the river, but any PC taking a step which would take them off of the disc will result in the disc expanding itself to keep the PC from falling in the river. Alternatively, the disc elongates itself to take on anyone who approaches it from the river's shore on either side, and teleport them to Room #3. Apart from this, the disc does not (and cannot) be moved in any way.

The river is only 3 ft. to 4 ft. deep. PCs who follow the river in either direction find an iron grate at either end of the room. These grates are magically warded, and cannot be removed for any reason. Should the DM wish to extend the adventure, the grates come off with an Open Lock check (DC 25), a *knock* spell, or a Strength check (DC 20).

Encounter: This room is guarded by three bugbears on the opposite side of the river. These are brutes often employed by the Hobgoblin mercenary team, but who prefer to camp separately while in the caves.



Tactics: They make ranged attacks first, using their javelins, of which each bugbear has three. Once their supply is exhausted, they engage in melee combat.

👤 **Bugbear:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+3 (14, 16, 20 hp); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

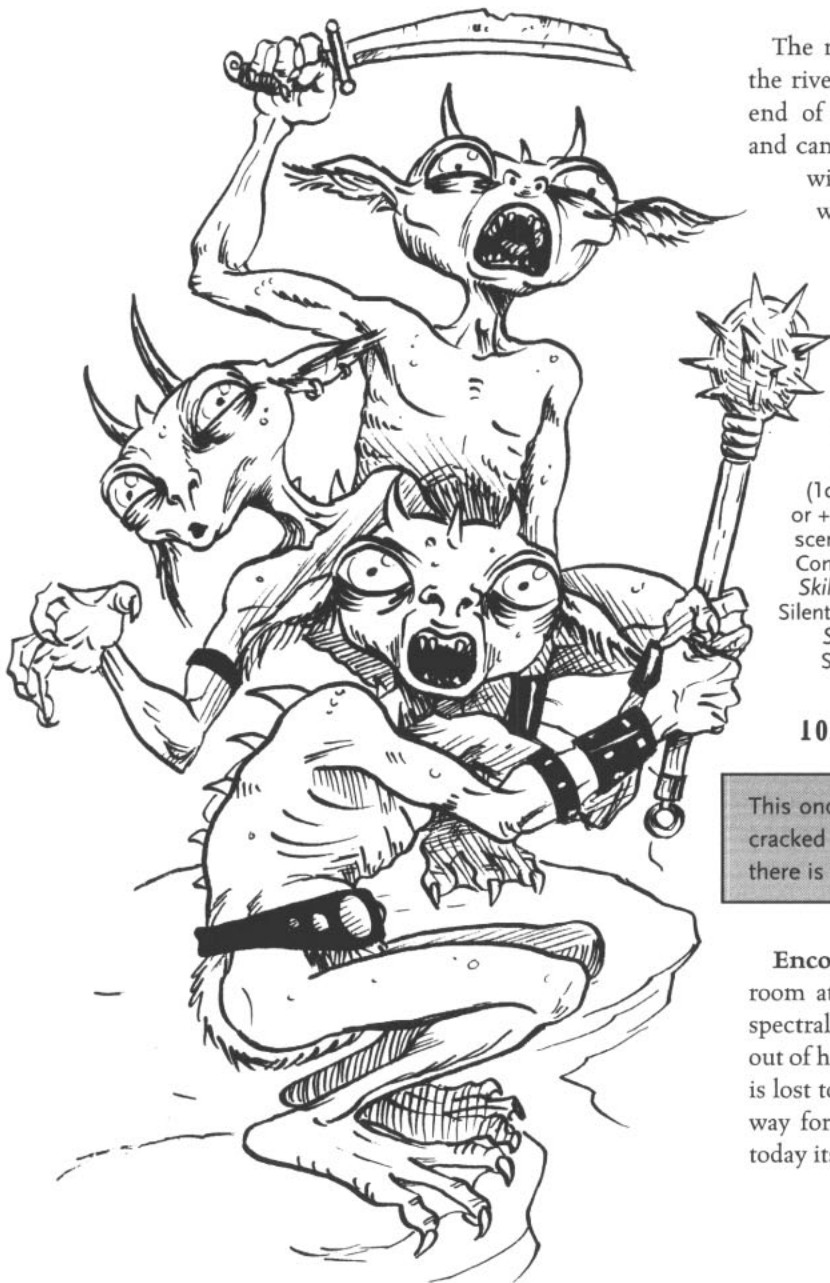
Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Skills: Bugbears have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

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9. Shrine

An underground river cuts through the middle of this room running north to south. On the opposite side of the room, on the other side of the river, stands another idol of a large goblin similar to the one encountered at the labyrinth entrance. Like the first, two glittering objects are in the statue's eye sockets. There are also two huge hairy goblins guarding this chamber.



The idol is a clever teleporting device. The glittering objects in the statue's eyes are simple crystals of little value. The teleporting device in the statue is activated when someone touches the eyes in a particular pattern:

- **Left Eye then Right Eye:** PC is teleported to the center of Room #3.
- **Right Eye then Left Eye:** PC is teleported to the center of Room #8.
- **Both Eyes simultaneously:** PC is teleported to the center of Room #10.

The river is only 3 ft. to 4 ft. deep. PCs who follow the river in either direction find an iron grate at either end of the room. These grates are magically warded, and cannot be removed for any reason. Should the DM wish to extend the adventure, the grates come off with an Open Lock check (DC 25), a *knock* spell, or a Strength check (DC 20).

Encounter: This room is guarded by two bugbears, more brutes from the Raging Hand mercenaries.

♣ **Bugbear:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+3 (20, 18 hp); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.
Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (morningstar).
Skills: Bugbears have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

10. Ball Room

This once opulent room has a marble floor, now severely cracked with age and neglect. It seems abandoned and there is a pallor of cold that permeates the chamber.

Encounter: The inhabitants of this place avoid this room at all costs. All of them know the legend of the spectral figure that frequently appears to chase intruders out of here. Whoever or whatever this poor soul once was is lost to time; no doubt a victim of whatever cleared the way for the current inhabitants. What is known is that today its shadow haunts this chamber.

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Tactics: The shadow attacks without mercy, but does not pursue anyone outside of the room.

☛ **Shadow:** CR 3; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12 (19 hp); Init +2; Spd Fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); SA Create spawn, strength damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge.

Strength Damage (Su): The touch of a shadow deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Skills: Shadows have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks.

*A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

11. Armory

As you enter this room, you are struck by the sight of eight goblins antagonizing a mantichore that is stuck in a cage hanging from the ceiling. In one corner of this room is an over-turned table and a broken stool. The floor has a large crack running down the middle. One side of the cracked floor has dropped a couple of ft., as the foundation appears to have given way.

Tactics: Once the goblins notice the PCs, which is almost immediately, they turn to attack the party. If only three goblins remain, one of them attempts to free the Manticore (an uncooperative, and now mistreated sibling of those guarding this place). Should the creature be freed, it immediately attacks every living thing in the room. It is extremely enraged from the treatment given to it by the goblins, thus it gains a +8 circumstance bonus to all Will saves until everyone in the room is dead.

A magical door blocks the way out the west exit with a riddle. Scrawled on this door in the language of goblins are the symbols for the numbers 1 through 9, and an obvious blank space. In order to open the door, the PC's must figure out what goes into the blank. Allow any PC who possesses the skill Knowledge (arcana) to make a check (DC 30, DC 20 if the PC speaks goblinoid). Success reveals the final inscription must be made using a silver dagger. Success by 5 or greater indicates that a "0" must be scrawled into the black space. The door does not open by any other means.

☛ **Prismatic Goblins:** CR 1; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 8, 8, 7, 6, 5, 5, 4, 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SA By color/trait; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. prismatic effect; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Prismatic Effect (Su): Each goblin pack has its own unique supernatural abilities determined by color (ignoring Charisma minimums for spell level):

1d20	Color/Trait
1-6	Red: Can cast <i>bull's strength</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day, on itself.
7-10	Orange: Can cast <i>haste</i> , as a 7th-level sorcerer, once per day, on itself.
11-12	Yellow: Can cast <i>charm person</i> (DC 11) twice per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.
13-14	Green: Can cast <i>bless</i> , as a 1st-level cleric, 3/day, on itself.
15-18	Blue: Can cast <i>mirror image</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day.
19-20	Purple: Purple prismatic goblins gain a +2 bonus to damage with all melee and unarmed attacks and the Toughness feat.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.

☛ **Manticore:** CR 5; Large magical beast; HD 6d10+24 (57 hp); Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy); AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d4+5, claw) or +8 ranged (1d8+2/19-20, 6 spikes); Full Atk +10 melee (2d4+5, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d8+2, bite); or +8 ranged (1d8+2/19-20, 6 spikes); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Spikes; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +9, Survival +1; Flyby Attack, Multiattack, TrackB, Weapon Focus (spikes).

Spikes (Ex): With a snap of its tail, a manticore can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 ft. with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 ft. of each other. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in any 24-hour period.

Skills: *Manticores have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

Treasure: One of the goblins is wearing a rune carved necklace, which glows brightly until the goblin is slain. Any PC casting *detect magic* or some similar spell upon the amulet will reveal the amulet glows whenever the wearer is danger. However, as soon one of the PC's puts the amulet on, it immediately begins to glow. For the next 1d20+5 minutes the amulet slowly glows brighter and heats up (not enough to harm the wearer) until, at the end of that time, the amulet detonates! The wearer takes 1d10 damage immediately. If the wearer takes off the amulet before this time runs out, the amulet resets when it is worn again.

PRINCES, THIEVES, AND GOBLINS

13. Temple

There is a large stone altar in the center of this otherwise unassuming room. An ancient temple, the murals of the deity it originally served are long faded. Along the wall, near the shadows, is a row of old ceremonial cloaks.

Encounter: Two cloakers lurk in the shadows of this chamber posing as ceremonial robes, waiting for adventurers to approach the altar. The cloakers surprise the PCs (if possible), attacking the PCs flat-footed if possible.

☛ **Cloaker:** CR 5; Large aberration; HD 6d8+18 (45, 45 hp); Init +7; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +13; Atk +8 melee (1d6+5, tail slap); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+5, tail slap) and +3 melee (1d4+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (5 ft. with bite); SA Moan, engulf; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., shadow shift; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +13, Move Silently +12, Spot +13; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Moan (Ex): A cloaker can emit a dangerous subsonic moan as a standard action. By changing the frequency, the cloaker can cause one of four effects. Cloakers are immune to these sonic, mind-affecting attacks. Unless otherwise specified, a creature that successfully saves against one of these effects cannot be affected by the same moan effect from the same cloaker for 24 hours. All save DCs for moan effects are Charisma-based.

Unnerve: Anyone within a 60-foot spread automatically takes a -2 penalty on attack and damage rolls. Those forced to hear the moan for more than 6 consecutive rounds must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or enter a trance, unable to attack or defend themselves until the moaning stops.

Fear: Anyone within a 30 ft. spread must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or become panicked for 2 rounds.

Nausea: Anyone in a 30 ft. cone must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be overcome by nausea and weakness. Affected characters fall prone and become nauseated for 1d4+1 rounds.

Stupor: A single creature within 30 ft. of the cloaker must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be affected as though by a *hold monster* spell for 5 rounds. Even after a successful save, the creature must repeat the save if the cloaker uses this effect again.

Engulf (Ex): A cloaker can try to wrap a Medium or smaller creature in its body as a standard action. The cloaker attempts a grapple that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and bites the engulfed victim with a +4 bonus on its attack roll. It can still use its whip-like tail to strike at other targets.

Attacks that hit an engulfing cloaker deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim.

Shadow Shift (Su): A cloaker can manipulate shadows. This ability is effective only in shadowy areas and has three possible effects.

Obscure Vision: The cloaker gains concealment (20% miss chance) for 1d4 rounds.

Dancing Images: This effect duplicates a *mirror image* spell (caster level 6th).

Silent Image: This effect duplicates a *silent image* spell (DC 15, caster level 6th). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treasure: The cloakers guard a small locked chest (Open Locks, DC 30) in the corner of the room containing eight rubies (500 gp each) and 340 gold pieces.

14. Training Room

The floor of this room is inlaid with 5-ft. squares of red and black, in a classic checkerboard pattern. Hooks protrude from the walls where training weapons once hung. There are a number of ancient tapestries hanging from the walls in various states of decay, each depicting martial combat between two humanoid figures wielding exotic weapons.

Treasure: There are a total of six tapestries, two of which, while dusty, are in fine shape and have weathered the years well. Any collector easily pays up to 250 gp for the tapestries, while a fighting academy or guild would pay twice this amount. The other four tapestries contain similar scenes to the others, but are damaged either from age or abuse at the hands of goblins, and barely fetch 10 gp apiece for their materials.

15. Garden Room

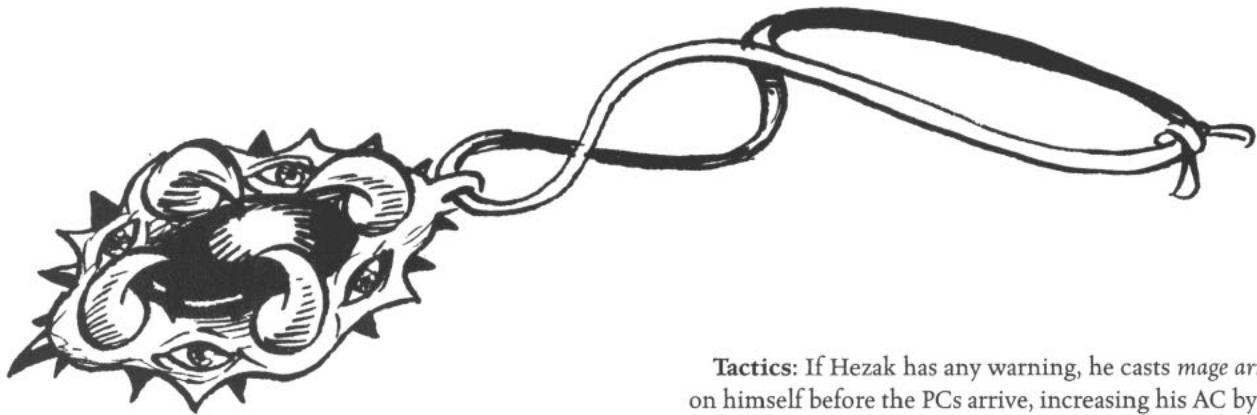
As you open the door, a blast of humidity causes you to immediately begin perspiring. Upon closer inspection, you see this room is used to grow a species of toadstool, a main staple of the goblin diet.

Trap: The room's heat comes from its placement over an underground hot water source, and the mushrooms in here give off their own warmth. Eating a goblin mushroom isn't a pleasant experience for non-goblins. Any PC who takes a bite must make a successful Fort save (DC 20) or become sickened. Additionally, if any PC attacks a mushroom, it explodes into a cloud of spores that quickly fills the room, and everyone in the room is treated as if having eaten a mushroom (must make a successful Fort save (DC 20) or become sickened).

16. Bed Room

This room is decorated with a desk and chair, a sofa, and a bed.

Treasure: The desk contains a hidden, un-trapped compartment (Search, DC 20) containing a *potion of cure serious wounds*.



17. Council Chamber

The crying of an infant can be heard as you move down the hallway into this chamber. Upon entering the room you see a human with dark robes and a black iron crown sitting on a throne holding a crying human infant in his arms. His face isn't twisted, and a small black goatee hangs in contrast to his pale yellow hair. You also notice you are surrounded by colorful goblins.

"I was wondering when you would get here," the Goblin King says, eyes open wide. "Do please have a seat, won't you. I know why you're here, and I am prepared to make you... a counter offer."

Hezak (The Goblin King) explains how the child came to him, by accident, of course. He details his side of the story, and how King Kessel sent a previous band of rogues to steal his scepter. He only gives up the child upon the return of his scepter. DM's are encouraged to role-play this encounter if the party is sympathetic to Hezak's story. They may also feel free to negotiate a price for their services in getting the scepter back for Hezak or mediating the return of the child and the scepter to their respective owners.

Although Hezak would much rather avoid battle against the PCs, he is prepared to defend the child and let his goblins take care of the PCs. He will not actually harm the child, but is more than willing to threaten harm to the child if it gets him out of trouble.

Encounter: Hezak is guarded by twice as many Prismatic Goblins as there are PCs. Every pair of goblins is the same color. Roll for their colors.

Tactics: If Hezak has any warning, he casts *mage armor* on himself before the PCs arrive, increasing his AC by +4. Otherwise, he casts it on round 1, bumping each spell below by one round.

Round	Spell Casted
1	Hezak casts <i>blink</i> on himself
2	Hezak casts <i>haste</i> on himself and nearby goblins.
3	Hezak casts <i>slow</i> on the party.
4	Hezak casts <i>magic missile</i> at opposing spell-casters.
5	Hezak casts <i>reduce</i> on healthiest PC fighter.
6+	If goblins are defeated or losing, <i>expeditious retreat</i> on self.

The goblins have been trained to fight against wizards and such and know to take them down quickly. The rest "dog-pile" the strongest fighter attempting to pull him to the ground.

▲ Hezak, "the Goblin King," Human Wiz 7: CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d4+14; hp 36; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, quarterstaff); SA —; SQ —; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Craft (alchemy) +10, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Arcana) +10, Knowledge (Aungeoneering) +9, Listen +3, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Dodge, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Transmutation), Spell Penetration.

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/4/4/3/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*mage hand, mending, message, open/close*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, jump, magic weapon, reduce person*; 2nd—*bull's strength, fox's cunning, levitate, pyrotechnics*; 3rd—*blink, haste, slow*; 4th—*polymorph*.

Spellbook: 0—*detect magic, mage hand, mending, message, open/close, read magic*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, jump, magic missile, magic weapon, reduce person, true strike*; 2nd—*alter self, bull's strength, fox's cunning, levitate, pyrotechnics*; 3rd—*blink, haste, slow*; 4th—*polymorph*.

Possessions: Ring of protection +2, amulet of natural armor +5, wand of magic missiles (5th level caster, 18 charges), masterwork quarterstaff, spellbook, wizard's robes, 76 gp.

PRINCES, THIEVES, AND GOBLINS

♣ **Prismatic Goblins (twice as many as there are PCs):** CR 1; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SA By color/trait; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. prismatic effect; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Prismatic Effect (Su): Each goblin pack has its own unique supernatural abilities determined by color (ignoring Charisma minimums for spell level):

1d20	Color/Trait
1-6	Red: Can cast <i>bull's strength</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day, on itself.
7-10	Orange: Can cast <i>haste</i> , as a 7th-level sorcerer, once per day, on itself.
11-12	Yellow: Can cast <i>charm person</i> (DC 11) twice per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.
13-14	Green: Can cast <i>bleed</i> , as a 1st-level cleric, 3/day, on itself.
15-18	Blue: Can cast <i>mirror image</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day.
19-20	Purple: Purple prismatic goblins gain a +2 bonus to damage with all melee and unarmed attacks and the Toughness feat.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.

goblin shamans can be trained. As a matter of fact many of the rituals they have recently performed here have gained the attention of the goblin god.

Any cleric spell cast by a goblin within this room is cast at a +1 caster level. If Tulesh knew the PCs were coming, he has already cast *protection from law* (effectively at level 4). The spell lasts for 4 minutes, whether he is killed or not, due to the presence of their god.

18. Torture Chamber

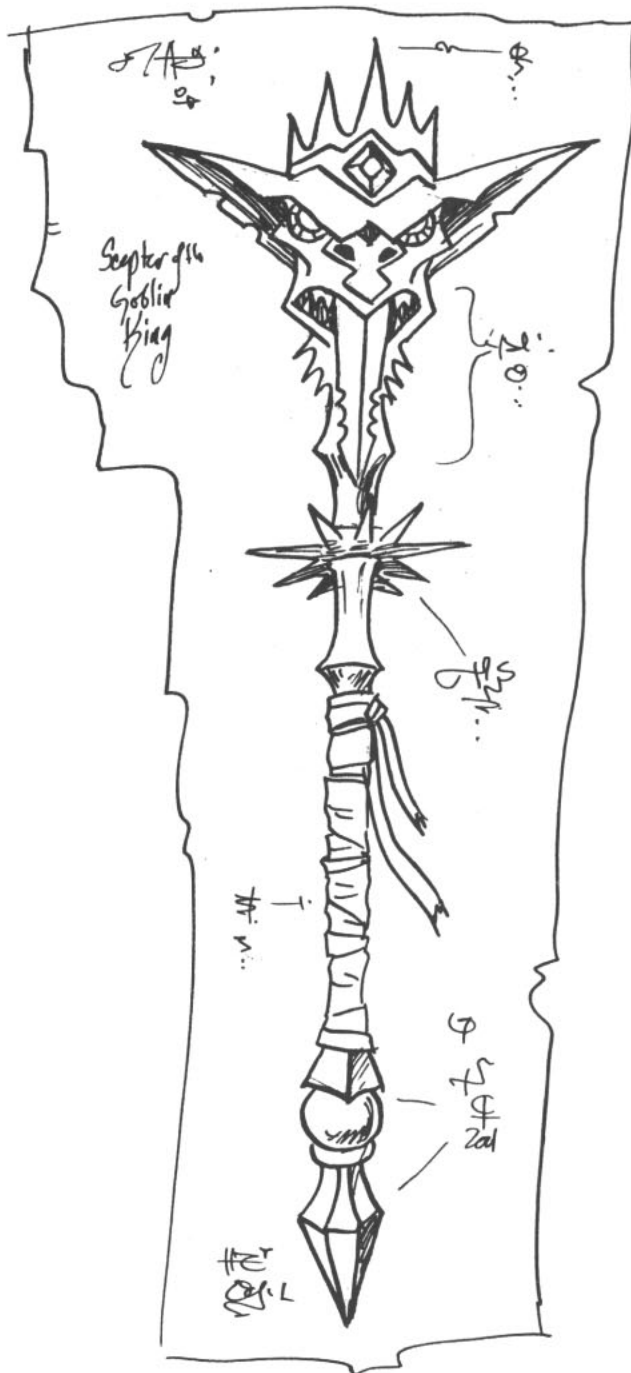
This is obviously the torture chamber. Various tools to ensure pain and suffering are scattered about... ceiling cages, a rack, an iron maiden and thumb screws are just a sampling of the horror found here. Paintings of goblins line the walls giving no comfort to victims who find themselves here. The eyes of the paintings seem to follow as you move about the room.

Treasure: Apart from torture devices that aren't meant to travel, PCs can uncover a masterwork whip, a light spiked shield, and an executioner's sword (a masterwork greatsword).

19. Well

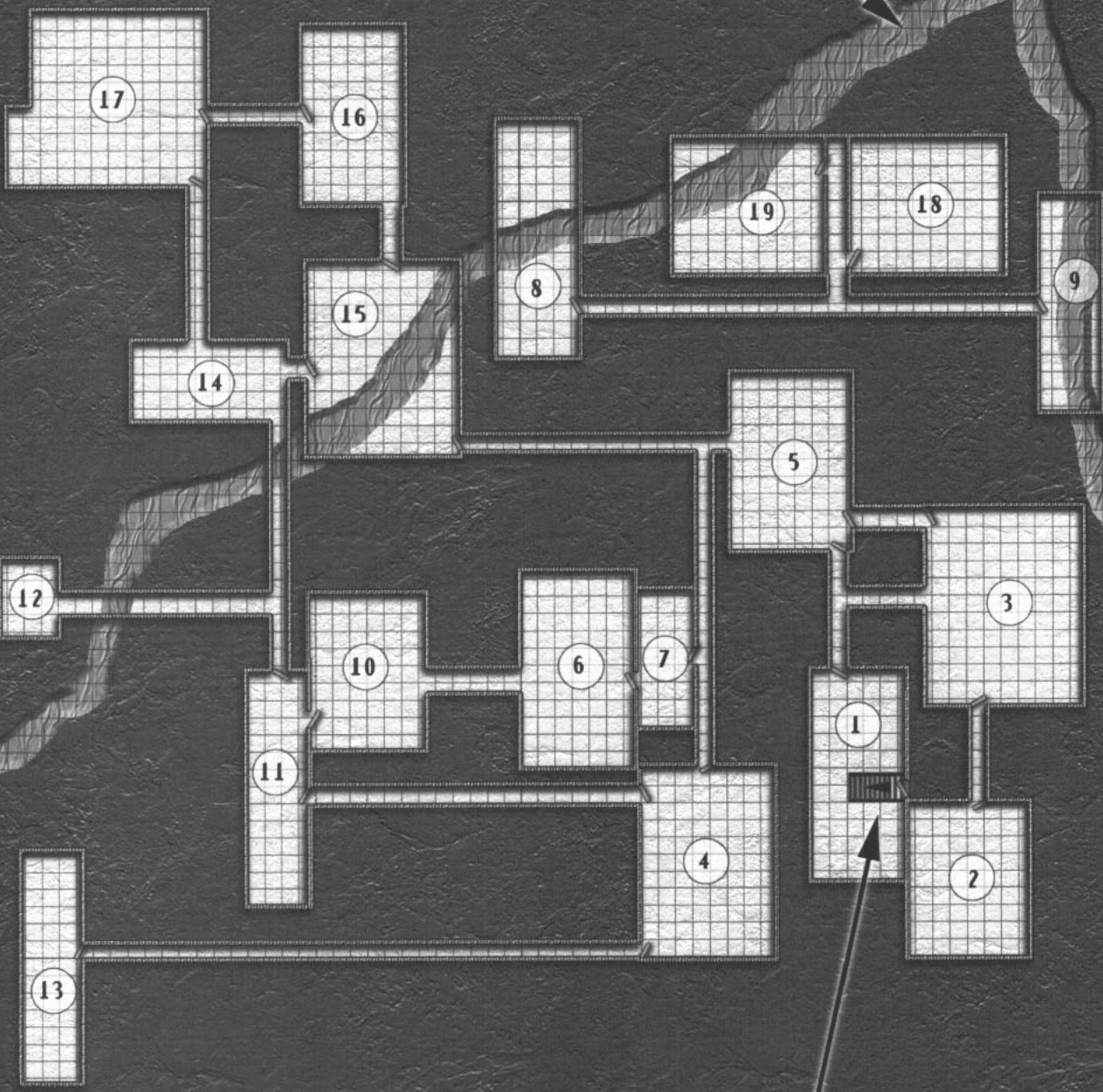
This room has been cleared of all debris and scrubbed clean. The walls and ceiling are painted black. In the center of the room is a stone well. A colorful goblin with a bizarre selection of robes stands near the well, chanting to himself with two other goblins.

The water is clean and fresh, as it is a tributary of the underground river passing through Rooms #8 and #9. However, the goblins have a number of superstitions about the well. It is being prepared as a place where



PRINCES, THIEVES, AND GOBLINS

River



Entrance

EPILOGUE

☛ **Tulesh Magor, the Azure Witch, Prismatic Goblin Clr 2:** CR 1; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 2d8; hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SA By color/trait, turn undead 3/day; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. prismatic effect; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +3, Hide +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Prismatic Effect (Su): The Goblin Shaman is blue and can cast *mirror image* (as a 3rd level sorcerer) twice per day.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (4/3; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, inflict minor wounds, resistance*; 1st—*command, obscuring mist, protection from law*.*

*Domain spell. **Domains:** Chaos (cast chaos spells at +1 caster level), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Chain Mail Armor, Morningstar, 4 javelins, unholy symbol, *potion of cure light wounds*, 14 gp.

☛ **Prismatic Goblins:** CR 1; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 6, 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SA By color/trait; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. prismatic effect; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Prismatic Effect (Su): Each goblin pack has its own unique supernatural abilities determined by color (ignoring Charisma minimums for spell level):

1d20	Color/Trait
1-6	Red: Can cast <i>bull's strength</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day, on itself.
7-10	Orange: Can cast <i>haste</i> , as a 7th-level sorcerer, once per day, on itself.
11-12	Yellow: Can cast <i>charm person</i> (DC 11) twice per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.
13-14	Green: Can cast <i>bles</i> , as a 1st-level cleric, 3/day, on itself.
15-18	Blue: Can cast <i>mirror image</i> , as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day.
19-20	Purple: Purple prismatic goblins gain a +2 bonus to damage with all melee and unarmed attacks and the Toughness feat.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.

The PCs could wind up making or breaking interesting relations with both Hezak and the royal family, depending on how they approach the problem. The worst part, perhaps, is that while Hezak does agree to give the child back in return for his scepter, it isn't likely, knowing his alignment, that he'll cease other torments on the kingdom once the PCs are gone. The return of the young prince to the king and queen will leave the PCs champions of the realm, but they are asked not to go boasting about the situation, as they don't want the fact the prince was taken so easily to get out. If the PCs managed to make the roll under the Bardic Knowledge sidebar giving them the clue about Tolicas the master rogue and his gang and they discover the king had them killed, they might not look upon the sovereign as an ally but a treacherous foe!

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The King's cousin, a wealthy and powerful merchant named Cedric Mornstar from the realm's coastal city Desburg, is asking the king to send troubleshooters to help him take care of some marauders that plague his shipping (see the adventure "Dead Man's Cove").
- While the PCs are relaxing following the adventure, they hear of the woes of a foreign merchant who ran into many troubles in a stop he made while crossing the desert to the east with his wares (see the adventure "The Lash of Malloc").

Chapter 9:

The Ice Caves of Azinth

Levels 3 to 5

by James Macduff

Your party has received a royal decree from the kingdom of Azinth, a small but prosperous principality on the edge of a huge mountain range known as the Brathmoor Mountains. King Ezred of Azinth has heard tales of your exploits and wishes to speak to you on “a matter of some urgency.” You have all heard rumors of a war brewing between Azinth and an aggressive neighbor, the kingdom of Carrvakk.

After an uneventful journey, you arrive at King Ezred’s palace. The imposing keep looks dressed up for war: The ramparts have been reinforced and the guards are all clad in utilitarian mail — not the ceremonial armor one usually sees in peacetime. Ezred smiles as you enter the throne room and beckons you to take a seat near him. He’s a tall, robust man with a graying beard, and though you can see worry lines creased across his face, he greets you as if you had just dropped by for tea.

“I have a task which needs completion,” he begins, “and I feel you have the proper mettle to see it through. Five years ago, the snow began to fall in our northern mountains. It has not stopped since. Our northern border has been cloaked in ice for all this time, blocking the passes to our northern neighbors. We sent parties up to clear them, but none ever returned. I believe Carrvakk instigated this magical winter. Normally, it wouldn’t have been a problem — we had trade routes through other nations, and our ports remained busy enough to support the economy — but this looming war has cut off many of our supply lines. We need the passes open to get supplies and equipment from our allies.

“A few days ago, I received a message from an unknown party who claims he knows how to end this five-year winter. He has arranged a meeting at an abandoned inn near the highest mountain pass. I would send my own troops, but I cannot afford to pull any from the front lines.

“Will you help me end this unnatural freeze? You must meet this man and do whatever it takes to clear those passes. If you perform this task for me, you will have the eternal gratitude of the Kingdom of Azinth.”

Hope you brought your mittens.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 2 to 4. PCs with wilderness as well as arcane knowledge are very useful in this adventure.

The mountainous terrain on the northern side of the kingdom of Azinth has been frozen in ice for over five years. Passes have been blocked, snow has fallen in the height of summer, and no one venturing into the northern mountains has ever returned. King Ezred thinks these circumstances were caused by his nation’s enemy, the Kingdom of Carrvakk, in preparation for war. He has asked the party to investigate a message from an unknown person who claims to know how to end the seemingly eternal winter.

Azinth’s trouble is being caused by a feud — but not the feud Ezred thinks. Five years ago, a pair of reclusive wizards in the mountains — Magal the Undying and Kavon Deralia — had been squabbling over esoteric

THE ICE CAVES OF AZINTH

matters and arranged a meeting in the caves beneath Magal's tower to resolve their differences. Unfortunately, tempers flared rather than cooled, and their argument became an open duel. Powerful explosions shook the earth for miles around, and arcs of magical power rose in frantic bursts from Magal's tower as the two unleashed their awesome powers at each other.

After several hours of blistering magic, the duel reached its apex: Magal summoned a water elemental from a nearby spring, which enveloped Kavon in an effort to drown her. As a last-ditch effort to defeat her rival, Kavon activated a magic necklace known as the *Circle of Ice*. The artifact placed her in a magical sleep, but it had an unforeseen reaction with the elemental in which she was encased.

The elemental froze solid, and the *Circle* unleashed a wave of magical winter. Snow began falling in a 100-mile radius, and temperatures dropped to well below freezing. The sudden atmospheric change caused the ceiling above the two combatants to collapse. Magal was crushed beneath a ton of rock (rendering his name somewhat fallacious), and Kavon remained trapped in suspended animation within the frozen elemental. The ice and cold will remain until she is released from her frigid prison.

The letter comes from Primus, an artificially created servitor of Kavon. Primus has searched vainly for his mistress for five years. He finally determined her location, but he cannot free her himself. He needs help from outsiders (i.e., the PCs) to get to her. King Ezred is willing to provide the party with any nonmagical equipment they need, including winter clothes, torches, and mountain ponies for climbing the treacherous mountain pathways. The inn specified in Primus's note lies some 60 miles from Ezred's castle.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard about the situation. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check.

DC 10 The snowfall in the northern mountains started suddenly and never stopped... it is certainly an unnatural occurrence.

DC 15 The tension between Carrvakk and Azinth is palpable, but how could Carrvakk have the power to blanket an entire mountain in perpetual winter?

DC 20 The mountains were once the stomping ground for a talented wizard.

ASSAULT ON THE ROAD

The road into the mountains winds through a gorgeous vista of hillocks, hollows, and pine-covered woodlands. Although it is summer, the temperature drops steadily the further you ride — far more quickly than normal. Snow begins falling on the afternoon of the first day's travel, and by sunset it completely covers the countryside. The village and farmhouses of Azinth slowly drop away, leading to dilapidated structures which have been abandoned to the cold. The north end of the kingdom feels like a frost-shrouded ghost town.

As light begins to fade, you can see an empty farmhouse up the road, on the far side of a small copse of trees. It looks like a good place to spend the night.

Encounter: Though the people of Carrvakk have nothing to do with the perpetual snow, they have no desire to see the mountain passes reopened. A spy informed them of King Ezred's plan, and they dispatched a squad of 6 guerilla fighters to stop the PCs before they reach the inn. These soldiers are waiting in the trees to ambush the PCs once they pass. The men are all skilled fighters. They dress in nondescript clothing with no discerning marks, and wear chain mail with short bows and bastard swords.

Tactics: Their only job is to impede and/or stop the PCs from getting to the inn. However, they will not fight to the death. They keep their distance, peppering the PCs from afar. If more than half of the guerillas are killed, the survivors flee. Captured soldiers reveal who they are working for and why, and they swear not to molest the party any further if released. They are good to their word — if the party is willing to accept it.

▲ Carrvakk Guerilla Fighters, Human Rgr 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword (used two-handed)) or +3 ranged (1d6/19-20, shortbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword (used two-handed)) or +3 ranged (1d6/19-20, shortbow); SA: —; SQ: 1st favored enemy (aberrations), combat style (archery), wild empathy; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Hide +4, Jump +7, Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Search +2, Spot +3, Survival +6; Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, TrackB, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Favored Enemy (Ex): These rangers have selected aberrations as their favored enemy. They gain a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against creatures of this type. Likewise, they get a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against such creatures.

Wild Empathy (Ex): These rangers can improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of a person. These rangers roll 1d20+2 to determine the wild empathy check result.

Possessions: Chain shirt, bastard sword, short bow, 20 arrows, traveler's outfit.

THE ICE CAVES OF AZINTH

OTHER ENCOUNTERS

It's possible the trip could be even more interesting for the PCs, if you wish to roll on the following encounter chart or choose a suitable encounter.

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No encounter
11	Dire wolf
12	Ghoul pack (1d3)
13	Ice mephit
14	Ogre out hunting for food
15	Owlbear
16	Polar bear
17	Troll skeleton
18	Wererat merchant
19	Wolf skeleton pack (1d4)
20	Wyvern zombie

THE MAN AT THE INN

It takes another day's travel after the ambush to reach the inn where the party is to rendezvous with Primus. The snow flies more rapidly as they travel north, and by midday the PCs need to bundle up in warm clothes or suffer the effects of exposure to the cold. See the effect of snow, sleet and hail under weather in chapter 3; and cold dangers in chapter 8, both in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The hills rise higher and higher, leading to imposing mountain peaks which dominate the horizon. The wilderness from here on in is covered in snow and ice, and the path becomes treacherous at points.

The snow eventually tapers off (making travel easier), and the party comes across the inn just after sunset.

The inn stands at the crossroads of a pair of trails, one heading deeper into the mountains the other running parallel to the taller peaks, presumably circling back toward Azinth. The place has clearly been abandoned for some time, though there are signs of recent use. It is a huge, cavernous building, with multiple gables. A rotting stable stands nearby. Empty windows gape out at the road, and a huge snowdrift rests in the open doorway. A sign bearing the inn's name — The Owl's Roost — hangs by rusty chains over the awning, creaking in the wind. As you approach the inn, the sputtering flame of a candle can be seen within.

As the party enters the inn, read or paraphrase the following passages:

The abandoned main room is scarcely warmer than the snowy road outside. Icicles hang from the rafters, and the few remaining pieces of furniture are covered in drifts. A long bar extends along the length of the right-hand wall, warped and twisted by exposure to the elements.

The candle burns on a wobbly table in the center of the room, filling the inn with yawning shadows. The light illuminates a hulking form wrapped in a hooded cloak and standing in an open doorway. The figure stands almost eight ft. tall, but you cannot make out its face.

"You come from Ezred?" it asks in a lisping voice.

"I am Primus, first servitor to Kavon Deralia, Mistress of Magic, Lady of the Mountains, my all-knowing creator, and blessing unto the world. I bid you welcome in her name and thank you for making such a harrowing journey."

Primus steps into the light and pulls his hood back. His face is a nightmarish jumble of disparate parts sewn together by what appear to be leather stitches. His right eye is clearly reptilian, while his left is a bright, elfin blue. An oversized hand wrapped in crude bandages extends openly as he gestures for you to gather around the table. Once you have settled, he begins:

"Five years ago, my mistress vanished while on a journey to visit a fellow celestial. At the same time, this cursed cold descended upon the world, doubtless a sign of mourning the Lady of the Mountains had passed from our lives. But I would not accept such a bright light would ever dim. For five years, I searched for signs of her. I traveled every inch of these mountains; saw things that would drive lesser creatures mad. I endured pain and suffering, the likes of which you can scarcely conceive. Finally, after all of my trials, I discovered what I had sought so long: My mistress yet lived!

"Alas, I could not reach her, for she remained trapped deep beneath the earth, and my form could not squeeze into the tiny entrance. I despaired of saving her. I could not show my face in Azinth, and I knew the king would deny my request for aid, for a monster I must seem to one such as he.

"Then I heard news of a war brewing between Azinth and her neighbor. I knew King Ezred would need the eternal winter to end if he wished his kingdom to survive. With my guidance, he would send people to help me free my lost mistress. And here you are!

"I can lead you to the caves where the Lady of Mountains is imprisoned, and I can tell you how to free her once you find her. Then the winter will end and your king will have his passes open again. We leave in the morning."

The last sentence comes across as an absolute fact rather than a suggested plan.

How the PCs deal with Primus is up to them. He wants nothing more than to free his mistress and, he assumes the party desires it as badly as he does. He defends himself if attacked, but otherwise he's as helpful as he can be. He is happy to answer questions, although his knowledge is limited. He knows Kavon lies beneath the ruined tower

“of a fellow celestial” and she has been trapped in ice. Primus seems to believe the mountains are mourning for the loss of his mistress and the snow will stop if she is returned. He is unshakable in the belief Kavon is a perfect goddess, and he becomes confused (though not hostile) if the PCs suggest otherwise. They clearly don't understand.

If the PCs express concerns about sleeping in the inn, he offers to stand guard for them (“My mistress wisely built me so as not to require sleep,” he explains). If they mention the cold, he excuses himself without a word and returns several hours later with enough firewood to roast an ox. The next morning, the PCs presumably take the golem at his word — while keeping a careful eye on him, of course — and allow him to take them to Magal's tower. Otherwise, their mission may well be at an unsuccessful end.

▲ Primus, Enlarged Homunculus: CR 7; Large construct; HD 8d10+20; hp 64; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +12; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4 plus poison, bite); SA Poison; SQ Construct qualities; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 13, Con —, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Listen +6, Spot +6, Use Magic Device +3; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage sleep for 1 minute, secondary damage sleep for another 5d6 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Berserk (Ex): When Primus enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that his elemental spirit breaks free and he goes berserk. The uncontrolled Primus goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. Primus' creator, if within 60 ft., can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to him, which requires a DC 19 Charisma check. It takes 1 minute of inactivity by Primus to reset his berserk chance to 0%.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): Primus is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against him, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals cold or fire damage slows Primus (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage breaks any *slow* effect on Primus and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause Primus to exceed his full normal hit points, he gains any excess as temporary hit points.

PRIMUS

It might help to keep the suspension of disbelief alive if you avoid falling prey to using the Hunchback of Notre Dame or Frankenstein's Monster as inspiration for roleplaying Primus. Imagine instead, the intelligence of a practical young adult mixed with the certainty and innocence of a child's mind. To him, Kavon is his literal creator. Imagine playing a cleric walking around in his deity's domain and then suddenly losing that deity. Primus should come to not really be pitied by the PCs, but respected for loyalty and helpfulness.

JOURNEY TO THE TOWER

In the morning, Primus leads the PCs off the established path and onto a barely visible game trail leading straight into the wilderness. It becomes quite treacherous, ascending to a series of perilous mountain ledges before finally terminating at a small snow-covered vale. You can make the journey as simple or as hazardous as you wish, but be sure to emphasize the dangers inherent in the territory. Multiple parties from Azinth have died in these mountains, and the PCs should feel it. The cold gnaws mercilessly at their extremities, and unprotected PCs should suffer the effects of exposure. Luckily, Primus leads them through with surefooted assurance. He seems unconcerned by the precipitous drops and perilous ledges and moves like a mountain goat through the snow and ice.

When you feel the party has had enough, read or paraphrase the following passage:

Though it seems like the cliffs and ledges will never end, they finally give way to firmer ground. Primus leads you down a slippery slope to the opening of a wide vale. It must have been a beautiful place once, but some dreadful catastrophe seems to have stricken it. A small forest of dead trees rise up out of the snow, and here and there you can spot skeletons in the drifts — not all of which are human.

At the far end of the vale, you can see a dark finger of stone pointing into the air, a massive tower, the top of which has been sheared off and now lies broken on the icy ground around the building.

“There,” Primus gestures. “There is the resting place of my benevolent mistress.”

REMORHAZ

The skeletons are the result of a remorhaz who has taken up residence nearby. It considers the valley a private hunting ground and has dined well on Magal's surviving minions in the area. The party's vibrations attract its attention, and it attacks when they are about halfway across the vale. It rises up out of the ground with a colossal crash and attempts to grab the nearest PC and scurry off with him or her.

Normally such a creature could prove too strong for inexperienced PCs. However, Primus leaps valiantly to aid them, and the polar worm retreats from the encounter after losing a third of its hit points. It was looking for an easy meal and already fought a losing battle earlier with a cryo-hydra, and it can be driven off by a fierce counterattack. The PCs might assume they've seen the last of it.

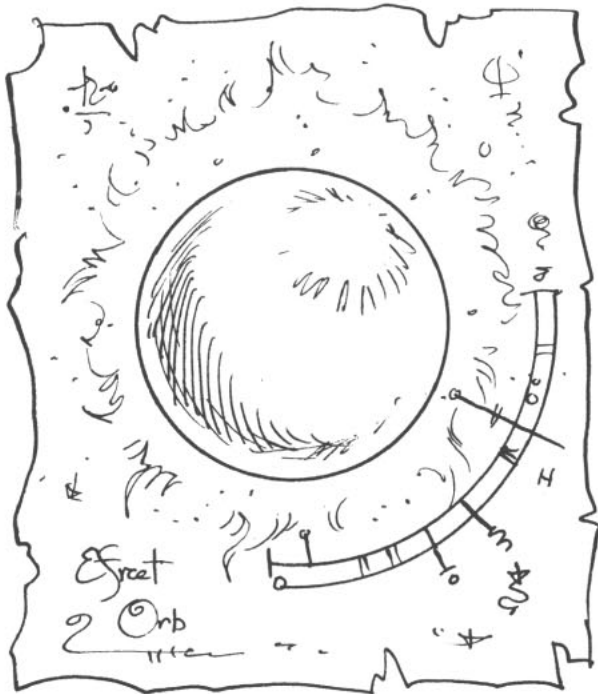
The tower stands buttressed up against the rising peaks at the far end of the valley. Stones and debris from the ruined top can be found over 100 ft. away. It appears as if the building exploded from the inside.

THE ICE CAVES OF AZINTH

Huge cracks and fissures in the earth spread out from the tower's foundations. Some of them hiss with jets of steam, and all of them look unstable. (One of them, in fact, killed Magal the Undying as it opened.) Primus leads the party to the edge of a particularly large crack, one big enough to allow man-sized or smaller creatures to pass through, but not the golem. A PC looking close enough (Spot, DC 10) can see marks on the edges of the crevasse: the places where Primus attempted to force his way down the crack.

"Somewhere down there, my lady lies trapped," Primus rumbles. "I hear her mind calling to me, but I can move no closer. The crevasse is too narrow for my body to pass. You must find her and free her using this." He holds out a strange glowing ball radiating heat when touched. (This is an *efreet orb*, see *New Magic—Appendix A*). "When you find her, you must clench this ball in your right hand, lay it as close to my mistress as you can, and say the word 'sun'. Do not do this until you have located the Mistress of Magic, for its powers may only be used once. I will wait here until you return, my friends, and beware: The other celestial had servants of his own, who doubtless lurk in the caves beneath."

Primus can carefully lower the party one by one into the crevasse, then hand them down their equipment as they wish.



☛ **Remorhaz:** CR 7; Huge magical beast; HD 7d10+35; hp 73; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +23; Atk +13 melee (2d8+12, bite); Full Atk +13 melee (2d8+12, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, swallow whole; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., heat, low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +8; Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a remorhaz must hit an opponent at least one size category smaller than itself with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the opponent the following round.

Swallow Whole (Ex): When a remorhaz begins its turn with a grappled opponent in its mouth, it can swallow that opponent with a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+12 points of bludgeoning damage plus 8d6 points of fire damage per round from the remorhaz's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 15). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A Huge remorhaz's interior can hold 2 Large, 4 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, 128 Diminutive, or 512 Fine or smaller opponents.

Heat (Ex): An enraged remorhaz generates heat so intense that anything touching its body takes 8d6 points of fire damage. Creatures striking a remorhaz with natural attacks or unarmed attacks are subject to this damage, but creatures striking with melee weapons do not take damage from the remorhaz's heat. This heat can melt or char weapons; any weapon that strikes a remorhaz is allowed a DC 18 Fortitude save to avoid destruction. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Remorhazes have a +4 racial bonus on Listen checks.

THE ICE CAVES

1. Entrance

The crevasse empties into a huge cavern. Your torches illuminate a mirror surface of ice coating every inch of the walls, floor, and ceiling. You can slide harmlessly along the slick surface from the crack to the floor. Gigantic icicles hang down from the corners, and small eddies of snow blow merrily across the area. The crevasse runs lengthwise across the surface, illuminating the chamber with harsh sunlight from above. The east and west ends stretch off into the darkness, beyond the reach of your torches.

The east end of the cavern gradually narrows into an icy passageway. It also contains a pile of frozen bones (human and otherwise) stacked crudely against the wall. The most recent samples are cool but not frozen, suggesting something has fed recently.

THE ICE CAVES OF AZINTH



If the PCs move east past the bones, read or paraphrase the following passage to them.

The cavern gradually grows narrower; shrinking into a rough-hewn passage extending east-southeast. The formation looks entirely natural, with stalactites and stalagmites competing for space with the icicles. As you move forward, you can hear a series of grunts and growls coming from further down the passage.

2. Snow Apes

The passageway eventually widens into a large, natural chamber much like the entrance. It is occupied by a small tribe of 5 snow apes, a variant of dire apes with white fur to match the climate.

Encounter: There are two males and three females in the band. They have built a crude nest in the center of the chamber, and one of the males always watches the nearby passageways.

Tactics: The party's scent has alerted the apes to the presence of interlopers, and they aggressively defend their territory. They hurl chunks of ice at long range (1d6+5 damage per chunk), then use their claws and teeth at close range. The apes retreat if they suffer more than 50% casualties or witness a significant display of flame-based magic (fireball or the like), pulling back into the northern passageway toward room #3. The apes are aware of the deadfall there and know how to pass it without harm.

They do not pursue retreating adventurers, but they eagerly devour any bodies left behind.

❖ **Snow Ape:** CR 2; Large animal (cold); HD 4d8+11; hp 29; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +12; Atk +7 melee (1d6+5, claws); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+5, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d6+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Immunity to cold, low-light vision, scent, vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6

Skills: Apes have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

3. Deadfall

This chamber opens up naturally from the great central cavern. It appears much the same as the rest of the area, though there is more ice and debris littering the floor here than elsewhere.

The southeastern portion of this great cavern has collapsed, but a thin sheet of ice has developed over the open pits. Anyone weighing more than 50 pounds who steps on the indicated area ("X") of the map breaks through, dropping to the stone floor some 60 ft. below.

❖ **Camouflaged Pit Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 50 ft. deep (5d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 17.

Luckily, a huge stalactite has fallen across the pit, forming a solid walkway to traverse it. Though it is hidden by ice and debris, careful PCs who make a Search roll (DC 20) should be able to spot it. In addition, observant PCs pursuing the snow apes from room #2 can avoid the deadfall by following their path. You should mind the PCs' attitude during such a scenario. If they're madly charging after the apes, they should fall through. If they're proceeding carefully or watching the apes closely, give them a Spot roll (DC 15) to notice how precisely the apes chose their path.

Treasure: The bottom of the pit contains a pair of dead snow apes and a frozen, human corpse wearing a wizard's robes. (This is Magal's assistant, who was killed in the collapse while rushing to his master's aid). The body is wearing an ornate necklace worth approximately 2,000 gp, and it has two *potions of healing* and a set of *boots of elvenkind*.

4. The Ice Mephit

The areas north of the main cavern seem smoother and more artificial. The passages have a uniform feel to them. Unlike the natural formations further south, these were clearly shaped by human hands and are probably the underground levels of the wizard's tower.

As you enter a small room, the impression becomes crystal clear. The straight walls consist of neatly laid stone, and the frost cannot hide the arcane symbols etched into the floor. A set of bookshelves lines the walls, filled with all manner of frozen scrolls and icicle-lined tomes. The books have apparently been replaced haphazardly, some piled in stacks, others shoved into corners. A strange, winged creature — about four ft. tall with blue translucent skin — is perched atop one of the bookshelves. He's reading a small book, and as you enter, he throws it grumpily upon a growing pile of texts in the corner.

THE ICE CAVES OF AZINTH

The creature was originally a water mephit, a small, elemental creature who Magal convinced to serve as his helper. The magical reverberations of the wizards' duel transformed the creature into an ice mephit, a fact which has caused it no end of consternation. It has tried for some time to reverse the process, but so far has been unsuccessful. The PCs have caught it futilely poring through Magal's old spellbooks in its umpteenth effort to glean some vital clue.

The PCs' presence surprises the mephit, but unless they attack, the creature quickly takes on a friendly countenance and attempts to engage the PCs in conversation. It appears particularly interested in any wizard PCs. Magicians represent a potential "cure", and if the PCs seem receptive, the mephit attempts to bargain with them in exchange for helping it transform back to its natural state.

The mephit claims it knows how to restore Kavon (it's lying), and it makes any number of outlandish promises to get the help it desperately needs. None of the thing's words are true, and the spirit intends to backslide out of the bargain as soon as it can assume its natural form again. If the PCs agree to assist the creature, it wishes to begin immediately and pesters them to drop all their other concerns in order to "make it better." If the PCs don't agree, it pesters them to reconsider, following them out of the area if necessary.

It becomes a source of constant annoyance for the remainder of the adventure, flitting around the PCs' heads, asking irksome questions, and ruining any chance of surprising any of the caves' other monsters.

If attacked, the mephit attempts to escape, flying high to avoid melee weapons and holding off the party with its cold breath. If it escapes, it continues to plague the PCs throughout the adventure, using its high mobility and icy breath to hamper their every effort.

Use of the *efreet orb* reverts the mephit to its original form, but then the item can't be used to help Kavon — not before recharging leastways, and the PCs have no idea the orb is reusable.

Treasure: The books in the room are seriously damaged by the cold, but careful reconstruction can produce a few spell scrolls: *dispel magic*, *sleet storm*, *fog cloud*, and *shocking grasp*. Reconstructing each scroll requires the services of a good scribe (charging at least 200 gp per scroll), and 1d4+2 days of work per scroll. It requires a Profession (scribe) skill check (DC 18) to determine which scrolls can be saved.

☞ **Ice Mephit:** CR 3; Small outsider (air, cold, extraplanar); HD 3d8 (13 hp); Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk +4 melee (1d3 plus 1d4 cold, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3 plus 1d4 cold, 2 claws); SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, *summon mephit*; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, immunity to cold, vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Escape Artist +9, Hide +13, Listen +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings); Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-ft cone of ice shards, damage 1d4 cold, Reflex DC 12 half. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by frostbitten skin and frozen eyes unless they have immunity to cold or are otherwise protected. This effect imposes a -4 penalty to AC and a -2 penalty on attack rolls for 3 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour—*magic missile* (caster level 3rd); 1/day—*chill metal* (DC 14, caster level 6th). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Fast Healing (Ex): An ice mephit heals only if it is touching a piece of ice of at least Tiny size or if the ambient temperature is 32°F. or below.

5. Den of the Hounds

A stout doorway with a huge padlock once blocked the entrance to this chamber, but the barrier has long since been smashed. Frost coats the tattered remnants of the door, which hang from the wall by a rusty pair of hinges.

The room beyond is almost bare save for an assortment of cages laying in pieces against one walled a few remnants of what may have once been laboratory equipment. The cages originally looked big enough to each hold a creature the size of a large wolf. Several huge snowdrifts have built up in the corners of the room, and the wind whistles through a set of tiny cracks in the ceiling.

Encounter: Magal originally used this room as a lab, performing gruesome experiments on living subjects. The cages once held a group of seven hellhounds, bound magically while Magal poked and prodded them. The duel with Kavon and resulting magical backlash reacted strangely with the beasts' essence, transforming them into hounds of winter (see Appendix B). Four of the transformed creatures escaped into the nearby woods, where they have been breeding, but three Hounds of Winter remained in the complex and currently wait in ambush. They have buried themselves in the snowdrift closest to the door (undetectable by normal means), and they wait until the PCs have all entered the room before attacking. They fight to the death.

Treasure: The cracks in the room's ceiling lead to the surface, but they are too small for anyone to squeeze through. Most of the lab has long since been destroyed; a few magic items remain intact. A careful search produces a *potion of elemental resistance: fire* in a shatterproof bottle and a +1 *frost short sword*.

THE ICE CAVES OF AZINTH

🐾 **Hound of Winter:** CR 3; Medium Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Cold, Lawful); HD 4d8+4; hp 22, 20, 18; Init +5; Spd 40ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 cold, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 cold, bite); SA breath weapon, freezing bite; SQ darkvision 60 ft., icewalking, immunity to cold, scent, vulnerability to fire; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6, *Skills and Feats:* Hide +13, Jump +12, Listen +7, Move Silently +13, Spot +7, Survival +7*; Improved Initiative, Run, Track

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-ft. cone, once every 2d4 rounds, damage 2d6 cold, Reflex DC 13 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Fiery Bite (Su): A hound of winter deals an extra 1d6 points of cold damage every time it bites an opponent, as if its bite were a frost weapon.

Icewalking (Su): The hounds are able to move across ice and snow as if it was solid, stable, dry ground. This is partially due to their vicious claws, but it's mostly owed to their magical nature.

Skills: Hounds of winter have a +5 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

*They also receive a +8 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent, due to their keen sense of smell.

6. Festung Bugbear

As you move cautiously down this corridor, your light illuminates what appears to be a rough barricade barring the passage ahead. Suddenly, a pair of javelins whiz out of the darkness, directly toward you.

Encounter: This section of the dungeon houses a group of 7 bugbears who moved in following Magal's demise. They have managed to eke out a sizeable territory. The javelins come from a pair of sentries ensconced behind the barricade.

Tactics: After hurling the javelins, they alert their fellows. By the time PCs reach the barricades, the entire band is prepared for them. The bugbears fight defensively, but do not retreat. They wish only to drive the party out of their territory.

Treasure: If the entire clan is slain, the party may investigate the area beyond. There's not much to find — a few filthy, straw mats, a battered dart board, the skulls of several enemies (including a pair of snow apes), and a locked chest containing the bugbears' treasure: 1,000 gp and a ring worth 500 gp.

🐾 **Bugbear:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+3 (16, 16, 16, 15, 14, 12 hp); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Skills: Bugbears have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

7. The Living Tomb

This high-vaulted chamber contains the shattered remnants of what appears to be a wizard's laboratory. Smashed bottles and furniture are spread throughout the room, and several ruined diagrams hang on the walls. The ice on the floor forms patterns of concentric circles, like ripples on a pond suddenly frozen over. The walls and ceiling have fallen in places, and chunks of masonry litter the floor. A stairway in the corner — presumably leading to the now-missing tower above — has completely collapsed. A skeleton in wizard's robes lies crushed beneath a particularly large stone.

The far wall is covered in ice, like a huge waterfall. In the center sits a bizarre sight: a huge, translucent, vaguely humanoid shape rising up out of the surrounding ice. The crude face has a look of anger on it, and the sculpture's primitive arms thrust up toward the ceiling. A female form hangs suspended in the center of the outcropping, as unmoving as the rest of the chamber. You can see blonde hair and blue robes through the distorted ice, and the figure's hands seem to grasp at her throat.

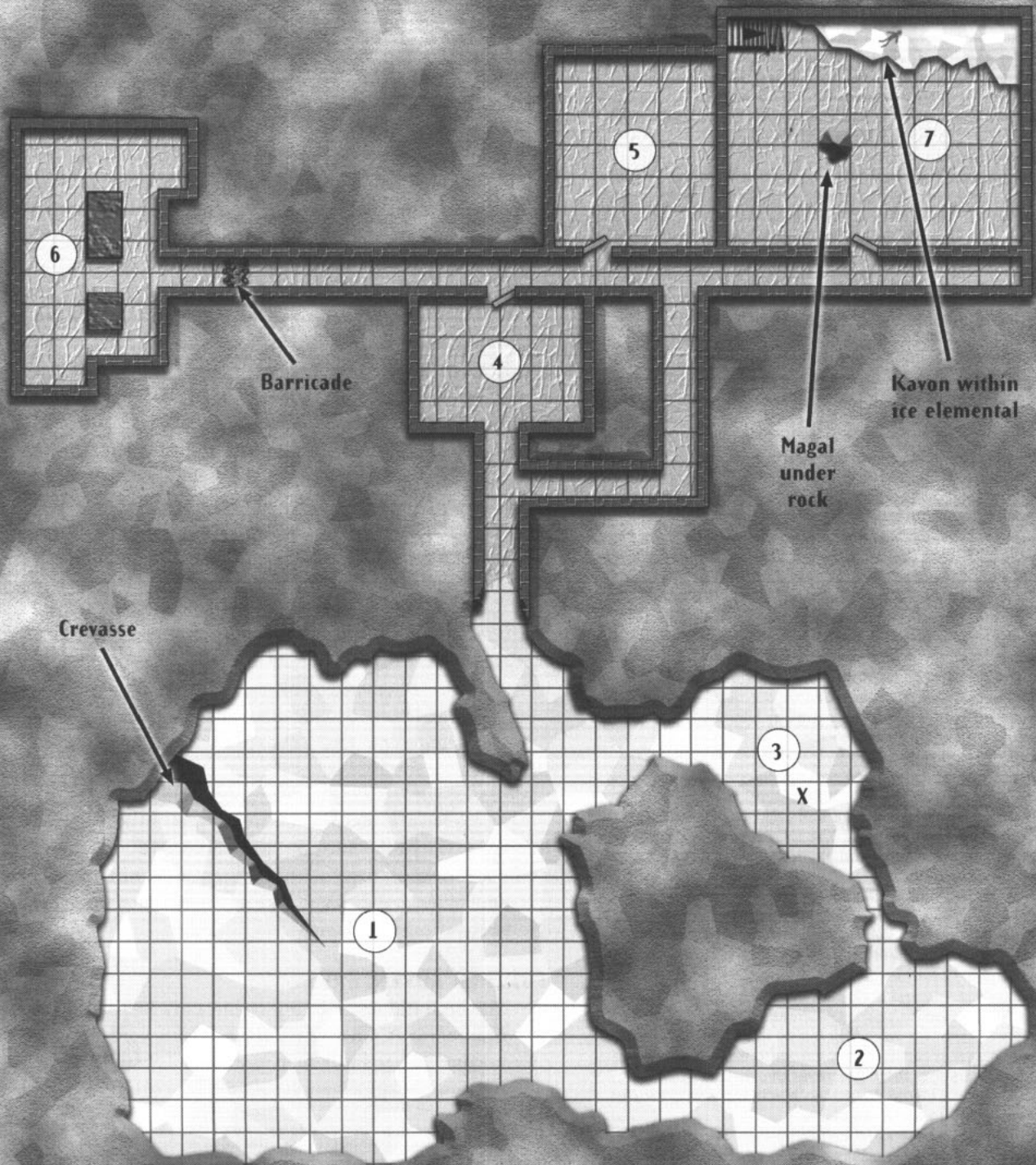
This former laboratory of Magal now contains the bodies of the two duelists: one dead beneath the rubble, one sealed within the ice. The woman in the outcropping is Kavon Deralia, trapped by her own magic in the frozen body of a water elemental. The party has reached its goal.

Treasure: Magal is long dead, but thorough PCs can still find a clutched *wand of fire* (caster level 7th, 12 charges) in his bony digits with a little excavation work.

The *efreet orb* has the magic to break the spell. The PCs must simply follow Primus' instructions: clench it in a right hand, place it within two ft. of the frozen elemental, and say the word "sun" aloud. Activated, the ball explodes in a brilliant burst of fiery power, instantly melting the ice and releasing the trapped magician. A *contingency* spell she had in effect *teleports* her away the moment she is free.

Unfortunately, the magic frees the water elemental as well. Two rounds after the *efreet orb* detonates, the elemental reforms. The elemental, enraged and confused, turns on the PCs as soon as it reforms. The ice in the chamber is considered water for purpose of combat. (Everyone is touching water, although no one is underwater.)

THE ICE CAVES OF AZINTH



THE ICE CAVES OF AZINTH

☞ **Water Elemental, Large:** CR 5; Large elemental (water, extraplanar); HD 8d8+32 (68 hp); Init +2; Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Water mastery, drench, vortex; SQ Damage reduction 5/–, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; AL N; Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +6; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

Water Mastery (Ex): A water elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its opponent are touching water. If the opponent or the elemental is touching the ground, the elemental takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

A water elemental can be a serious threat to a ship that crosses its path. An elemental can easily overturn small craft (5 ft. of length per Hit Die of the elemental) and stop larger vessels (10 ft. long per HD). Even large ships (20 ft. long per HD) can be slowed to half speed.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as dispel magic (caster level equals elemental's HD).

Vortex (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlpool once every 10 minutes, provided it is underwater, and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In vortex form, the elemental can move through the water or along the bottom at its swim speed. The vortex is 5 ft. wide at the base, up to 30 ft. wide at the top, and 10 ft. or more tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 ft.

The elemental's movement while in vortex form does not provoke attacks of opportunity, even if the elemental enters the space another creature occupies. Another creature might be caught in the vortex if it touches or enters the vortex, or if the elemental moves into or through the creature's space.

Creatures one or more size categories smaller than the elemental might take damage when caught in the vortex (see the table below for details) and may be swept up by it. An affected creature must succeed on a Reflex save when it comes into contact with the vortex or take the indicated damage. It must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful currents, automatically taking damage each round. An affected creature is allowed a Reflex save each round to escape the vortex. The creature still takes damage, but can leave if the save is successful. The DC for saves against the vortex's effects varies with the elemental's size. The save DC is Strength-based.

Creatures trapped in the vortex cannot move except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind. Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + spell level) to cast a spell. Creatures caught in the whirlwind take a –4 penalty to Dexterity and a –2 penalty on attack rolls. The elemental can have only as many creatures trapped inside the vortex at one time as will fit inside the vortex's volume.

The elemental can eject any carried creatures whenever it wishes, depositing them wherever the vortex happens to be. A summoned elemental always ejects trapped creatures before returning to its home plane.

If the vortex's base touches the bottom, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the vortex's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 ft. Creatures 5 ft. away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment.

Those caught in the cloud must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell.

An elemental in vortex form cannot make slam attacks and does not threaten the area around it.

Skills and Feats: A water elemental has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

EPILOGUE

If all goes well, the party defeats the elemental and rescues Kavon. The sorceress is extremely grateful, and once she has recovered, she can take them out of the caves with no further incident. Even if the PCs do not succeed in saving Kavon from the elemental, releasing her from her frozen prison still breaks the magical spell. The snow tapers off almost immediately, and within a week the ice and frost have melted, freeing the passes for Azinth to bring in supplies.

Outside, Primus patiently awaits the PCs' return. He is startled when they come out alone, and may approach the situation differently depending on how the PCs treated him before. Once the PCs explain the situation, Primus surmises she must have returned to her tower. He informs the PCs to return to the abandoned inn where they first met him and await his return. Primus returns to his mistress' tower to report. Kavon plans on visiting the PCs at the inn to reward them for her rescue.

Kavon greets them personally when they arrive, and allows the party to keep the *efreet orb*. Her presence in the mountains is still a secret, and she wants to keep it this way, and asks the PCs to help her keep this secret. If the promise to not reveal her existence, she provides them each with one magic item apiece from her collection: anything listed in the DMG and valued at 7,500 gp or less (single items only; no enhancements to existing weapons or magic items).

In addition to Kavon's rewards, a grateful King Ezred rewards the party with 5,000 gp and a Medal for Valor in the Defense of Azinth. The entire kingdom considers them heroes, and they should find their reputation in the area significantly enhanced.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The beautiful and alluring Noble Lady Elena Zadrian hears of the PCs' heroic efforts and sends word for them to come to her small keep to discuss a possible rescue mission (see the adventure "Castle Zadrian").
- Wandering through the marketplace, the PCs find many food prices are skyrocketing, and other food is just scarce. They soon learn a village the city depends on named Darbin for a large number of its foodstuffs has mysteriously broken all contact. The PCs are asked to investigate (see the adventure "Kurishan's Garden").

Chapter 10:

The Lash of Malloc

Levels 3 to 5

by Travis Heermann

A not so formidable oasis lies along a major trade route through the desert, and *The Desert Scarab Inn* is not only the most popular establishment in the area, it is the only one! A favorite of merchants and travelers alike, anyone with gold to spare can explore a complete range of desires.

Most travelers fail to notice the small items which have gone missing during their visit. They manage to ignore the strange sounds in the surrounding desert. And the twisted footprints occasionally seen near the water hole mean nothing to them. Hushed tales of missing children are laughed off. That is, until an important girl disappears somewhere along the trade route. She is the teenage daughter of a wealthy merchant. With gold and the will to find his missing child, he will stop at nothing to secure her safety.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5. No particular skills are required for this adventure, but knowledge of how to travel safely in the desert would have made it easier for the characters to arrive at this point.

Deep in the desert along a major trade route lies a small oasis, the only open water to be seen for miles. At this oasis can be found *The Desert Scarab Inn*. This bastion of civilization in the middle of a scorching wasteland is a popular resting-place for merchants and travelers crossing the expansive desert. At the oasis they can refill their water supplies, and at *The Desert Scarab* they can enjoy a pint of ale, sleep in a soft bed, or pay for the attentions of a lady. The walled compound of the inn makes it a safe place to defend precious wares from desert bandits.

Malloc, the owner and innkeeper, is involved in several other underhanded activities, the most profitable is slavery. He sells young slaves to some of the merchants who pass through. These children — stolen from their families or captured as runaways — end up at *The Desert Scarab* as servants, or are sold to the highest bidder in secret underground auctions.

However, there are other unexplained occurrences around the oasis and the surrounding desert: nocturnal thefts of livestock, valuables, and sometimes even of children from right under their parents' noses. A small tribe of desert goblins (see Appendix B) lives in caverns under *The Desert Scarab*, making larcenous forays to the surface

at night. They move like ghosts, striking and fading away. Some victims even report seeing little mummies disappearing into the sand.

Only Malloc knows the true nature of these desert ghosts. He has formed a mutually beneficial alliance with this tribe of desert goblins. Malloc provides them with an environment rich in slow-moving targets, as long as they do not steal from anyone at the oasis itself. The goblins then trade their loot directly to Malloc, who can turn around and sell it at a tremendous profit.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check.

- DC 10** The Desert Scarab is a hotbed of activity and sees hundreds of visitors each month.
- DC 15** It is said some exotic items can be purchased from the proprietor.
- DC 20** Small creatures are sometimes spotted around the compound, but the owner and the guards deny any knowledge of these sightings.
- DC 25** The owner, Malloc, is said to dabble in the slave trade.

THE OASIS

Nestled in the shade of several prominent rock outcroppings is a large pool of water, surrounded by palm trees and flowering bushes, a welcome sight after so many long days of nothing but wasteland.

During the day, the party finds 1d4 merchant caravans of 2d20 wagons each. They have stopped to replenish their water supply and take a short rest. As nightfall approaches, the band of desert nomads described below arrives at the oasis and sets up camp near the water hole.

If the party arrives after nightfall, they see several fires burning. Torches burn on either side of the closed gates of the inn, all the better for the guards within to see who approaches.

Encounter: A band of 5d6 desert nomads is camped near the large water hole, and if the hour is not too late they sit around their campfires singing stories, puffing on their pipes, and enjoying their own company. Anyone who approaches the nomads in a non-threatening manner may be invited to join their camp.

▲ Desert Nomad, Human Com 1/War 1: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+2 + 1d8+2; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/18–20, scimitar); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/18–20, scimitar); AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +2, Listen +2, Ride +5, Spot +2; Endurance.

Possessions: Scimitar, desert robes, merchant's scale, 2d8 gp.

Anyone who approaches the nomads may overhear them speaking in hushed tones (Listen check, DC 20) of little mummies who steal trinkets, water, goats, or sometimes small children and then disappear. One of the nomads spotted some strange footprints in the mud near the water hole this morning. He describes the footprints as similar to those of a camel, only with small toes like a child, and talons. The nomads prefer to sleep under the stars. They do not trust Malloc or his henchmen.

If the PCs raise the subject of slavery, the nomads find it to be a perfectly acceptable practice, as long as the slaves happen to be enemies captured in battle. They find the practice of enslaving children distasteful.

THE DESERT SCARAB INN

The structure is the only symbol of order in the vast, scorching wasteland. It looks like a solid block of stucco rising out of the sand. The entire building is a walled compound with heavy wooden gates facing the east and the west. Both gates bolt only from the inside. The walls stand twelve ft. high, with a second story visible standing above the back, and the roofs of some interior buildings just visible over the walls. A four-foot sign stands above the south wall facing the water hole, reading:

The Desert Scarab

The Coldest Water!

The Finest Spirits!

The Best Bread Anywhere!

During the day both gates are open, with wagons passing through either east to west or west to east. Camels and horses are watered in the courtyard, while many of the travelers step into the inn for a meal or a drink. Some stay for a short time before moving on, while others stay the night.

During the night, the gates are closed and a Saracen Guard stands guard at each one. Each gate has a small view port. The Bouncers stand guard in four-hour shifts. They admit any travelers they deem reputable or wealthy enough. Those who appear short on cash or likely to cause trouble are directed to camp near the water hole.

THE LASH OF MALLOC

▲ **Saracen Guards, Human Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 32 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (chain); AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+5/18–20, scimitar); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+5/18–20, scimitar); SA —; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Power attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar).

Possessions: Banded mail, light shield, masterwork scimitar.

1. The Courtyard

The Courtyard is hard-packed sand. A stout wooden rail about 3 ft. high encircles the courtyard so guests may hitch their horses or camels. Two young girls stand drawing water from the well in the center, filling the water trough for the travelers passing through. The girls are dressed in layered white robes for protection from the sun, and their eyes are downcast, their faces noticeably sullen.

These girls are two of Malloc's slaves. They are polite and subservient, not to mention quite pretty, and they look to be roughly seventeen years old. They are not allowed to say they are slaves but that is, in fact, their status. They are merely under contract. (This twisting of words is one of the ways he manipulates them.) If pressed, they claim they are free to leave at any time.

A Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals they are covering something up. A Sense Motive check (DC 25) reveals that they are terrified of Malloc, but do their best to hide their fear.

▲ **Slaves, Human Com1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

Possessions: None

2. The Stable

At any time 2d4 horses may be found here, along with their tack and saddles. The stable fee is a steep 1 gp per night.

3. Common Room

Tables, benches, and chairs fill the empty space. The light-colored tile floor is heavily worn and scratched by constant foot traffic. The air is redolent with the scents of smoke, spirits, and food. There is also another scent, like bread baking, only slightly different. An enormous

cask rests behind the bar. Standing behind the bar is a tall, lean man, with a hairless pate polished to a high sheen, a face like a hatchet, and deep-set black eyes. He wears the layered white robes of desert folk. Nailed to the wall behind him is a large wooden placard with the bill of fare chalked upon it, and a note at the bottom which reads in Common, "For special goods and services, speak to the bartender." Serving girls circulate among the patrons, bearing platters of food and drink. A large, well-armed man lounges in a chair beside each entrance, clubs and shields prominently placed beside them.

The prices for food and drink are triple the rates listed in the Player's Handbook. The Desert Scarab has six guest rooms, all of good quality with sturdy locks on the doors. Each costs 10 gp per night. Sleeping in the common room on a bench, table, or parcel of floor costs only 2 gp.

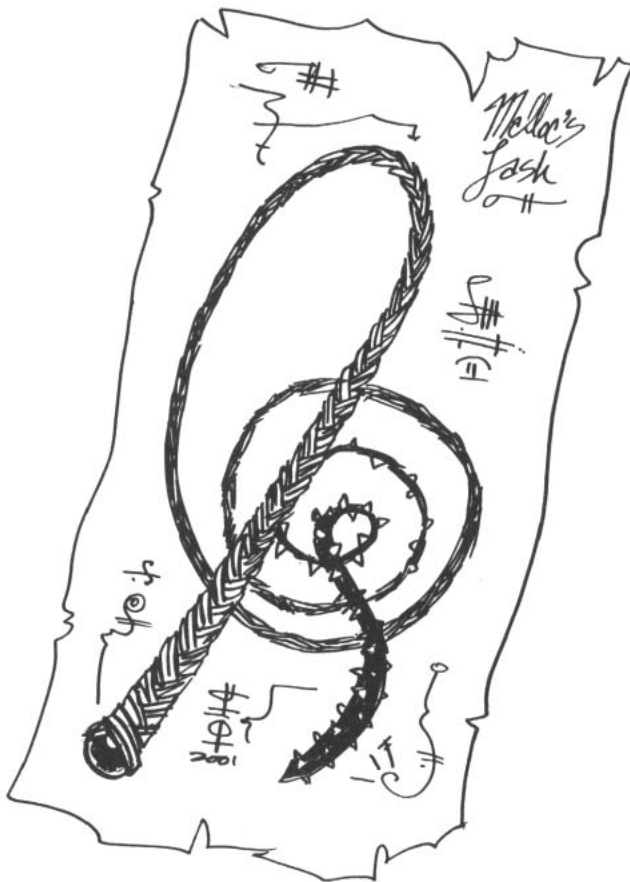
Encounter: The men beside the doors are Saracen Guards, seemingly at ease, but alert for any and all trouble brewing in the inn.

The man behind the bar is Malloc himself. It is the best place for him to keep an eye on things. He works here from 9 am to midnight, taking occasional breaks to oversee his "other activities."

Under his robes he wears his armor and hides his whip (see New Magic Item — Section A for further details), and his sap is always within arm's reach.

He is an ugly man, trying to cover a scarred and misshapen face with a scraggly beard. Yet, he is always pleasant and deferential to customers unless they cause trouble. His light tan robes are simple fare though his fingers veritably glisten with multiple rings (8, each worth between 10 and 20 gp). He has a short temper with his





girls, and corrects them if they misbehave. He keeps a ring of keys to all the locks on his person at all times. He trusts absolutely nothing in this world except himself.

The “Special Goods” referred to on the placard means the stolen loot Malloc sells to passing merchants and traders, and the “Services” it mentions are those of his slave girls, as company for the evening.

To anyone who appears to be of sufficient means accompanied by weak morals, he may even try to sell one of his slaves. “Untrained” slaves — like Julira, the merchant’s daughter — are generally kept locked in cells on the second floor, but he does not reveal this unless he has an interested buyer. He never makes this offer to anyone who appears to be altruistic or kind-hearted. He chooses his clients carefully, seeking those who won’t interfere with his plans.

The “Special Goods” are kept in the Emporium on the second floor (see Area L). Malloc charges an up-front fee of 100 gp just to look around in the Emporium, which is refunded toward any purchase.

PCs who make a Spot check (DC 15) notice one of the three serving girls is moving very stiffly and awkwardly, as if in great pain. Yesterday, Malloc flogged her for openly defying him when a patron got fresh with her. The bruises and cuts have been carefully placed so they cannot be seen. Malloc has not yet broken her will, so she has not yet been

forced into complete slavery, but she fears her day is coming soon. If the PCs attempt to speak to her, she says her name is Padrea. She has only been here about a month. Her stepfather sold her to Malloc to repay a debt, and her mother is dead. She has no family who can help her, and nowhere to run. Padrea would do anything to escape. However, she has no friends here. The other girls have ostracized her for resisting Malloc (this makes it difficult on all of them). If they know she was trying to escape they betray her to Malloc. PCs who try to help Padrea attract attention quickly.

▲ Malloc, Human Rgr 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d8+6; hp 46; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +11 melee (1d3+4* subdual, *Malloc’s lash*) or +7 melee (1d6+1*, club); Full Atk +11/+7 melee (1d3+4* subdual, *Malloc’s lash*) or +7/+2 melee (1d6+1*, club) or +9/+4 melee (1d3+4* subdual, *Lash of Malloc*) and +5/+0 (1d6+0*, club); SA Combat style, enhanced disarm, shocking grasp (see *Malloc’s lash*, in Appendix A, page 262); SQ Favored enemies (monstrous humanoids, humans), improved combat style, wild empathy, AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Profession (innkeeper) +7, Search +7, Spot +9, Survival +9; Dodge, EnduranceB, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, TrackB, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon focus (whip)

Combat Style (Ex): Two-weapon combat.

Favored Enemy (Ex): This ranger gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival checks and weapon damage rolls against monstrous humanoids. This ranger gains a +4 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival checks and weapon damage rolls against humans.

Wild Empathy (Ex): This ranger can improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of a person. The ranger rolls 1d20+6 to determine the wild empathy check result.

Ranger Spells Prepared: (2; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st—jump, resist energy.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, *Malloc’s slash*, club.

Tactics: Malloc is a despicable weasel. He’ll fight without honor or pride, yelling for his guards and verbally abusing PCs who accost him. Four guards arrive within 1d3 rounds, but cease hostilities if Malloc surrenders or dies. In the event he’s about to be killed, he surrenders and begs for mercy. He is an irredeemable lout, willing to lie and say anything to spare his own life, only to betray the PCs or attack at the first opportune moment time and again.

4. Kitchen

This is a typically stocked kitchen for a busy establishment. A fat, sweaty man with a broken nose and a lazy eye is working a large grinding wheel. The smells of roasting goat, dried figs, and baking bread are strong. In the southwest corner of the room, a wooden ladder climbs up to a small trap door set in the ceiling.

Encounter: The cook's name is Brudge. He's a quiet, territorial man. Malloc likes to keep him around because he's compliant and listless. He knows about Malloc's dealings but is too stupid and lazy to change anything. Instead, he keeps to his work and keeps his mouth shut. He is more afraid of Malloc than any threats the PCs may offer. He receives a +4 morale bonus to any Will saves if the betrayal of Malloc is in question.

▲ Brudge, Human Com 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d4+4; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3+2, unarmed); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3+2, unarmed); AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +2, Profession (cook) +5, Spot +5; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).
Possessions: Leather apron, 14 sp.

5. Storage Room

This room is full of sacks of food stores. Several large coils of rope (6 coils of 100 ft each) are stacked near the door.

6. Slaves' Room

Six crude pallets of straw and rags are arranged in this small room. After business hours, the six slave girls sleep here. The door is kept locked whenever they are inside.

PCs who look through the room with a successful Search check (DC 15) find more than a half dozen bloodstained bandages someone has tried without success to hide. This is another clue the slaves are being treated poorly.

7. Guest Rooms

Two comfortable beds and a basin filled with clean water are the only accoutrements filling these rooms. If the rooms have windows, they can be latched shut. Each door has a good lock (DC 18) and an individual key.

Malloc keeps the security of his customers high on his list of priorities. Thievery is harshly dealt with. He has not built The Desert Scarab's reputation by allowing such displays of casualness.

8. Back Door

There is no opening mechanism on the outside of this door. Inside, the door is triple-bolted, with a stout lock on the latch.

Malloc uses this door for supply deliveries, and as a possible escape route.

9. Trap Door

At the end of this hallway, a large cask of wine sits on a small table.

A Spot check (DC 20) reveals this cask is empty, and there are faint scrape marks on the floor indicating the table can be moved. The wall behind the cask is a false one, concealing a trap door leading to the Desert Goblin Den.

10. Malloc's Room

The walls of this chamber are covered with fine paintings and wall hangings. A solid silver tea set of exquisite workmanship rests on a polished mahogany table, surrounded by four over-stuffed chairs. An enormous feather bed dominates one wall, swathed in red silk sheets. Delicate golden chains and manacles hang from the footboard posts. An elegant rug, woven with golden filaments depicting a fiery battle between djinni and efreeti covers the floor.

Encounter: During business hours, Malloc is rarely found here. Between midnight and sunrise, he is here 75% of the time. The rest of the time he spends going through fresh loot in the goblin den or negotiating underhanded deals with disreputable merchants. When Malloc is here, there is a 50% chance 1d3 slave girls (not including Padrea) are chained to the foot of the bed.

Tactics: If a superior force ever corners Malloc, he shows no fear, but tries to bribe the PCs into letting him go. He says he has a vast treasure, but it is hidden. It can't be found without his help.

Treasure: The silver tea set is valued at 500 gp, the four over-stuffed chairs are valued at 50 gp each, and the rug is valued at 700 gp.

11. Saracen Guards' Room

This is a plain, undecorated room with six comfortable beds. The room stinks of sweat and unwashed clothing, which lies scattered around the room. A small square table with four chairs sits along one wall.

Sitting on the table is a cup full of dice. A thorough search of the room turns up 2d6 gp of dropped coinage. The guards spend their pay as quickly as they make it. They have no accumulated wealth. Malloc keeps promising them a cut of some of his ill-gotten take, but has yet to follow through.

Encounter: Two Saracen guards may be found here 90% of the time. All six of them rotate through their shifts, with four guards always on duty, and the other two resting.

Tactics: They obey Malloc because he does not mistreat them (mutiny is bad for business) and he has promised them great wealth. They will not lay down their lives for him, however. They may choose an expeditious time to move on, if necessary. Any guards here rush to join a fight if one occurs.

▲ **Saracen Guards, Human Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 32 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (chain); AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+5/18–20, scimitar); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+5/18–20, scimitar); SA—; SQ—; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Power attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar).

Possessions: Banded mail, light shield, masterwork scimitar.

12. Emporium

This room is filled with dozens of fine items, crystal decanters, bolts of fine silk, goblets of silver, gold...

The total value of the items present amounts to roughly 2d10 x 100 gp. In addition, magical items, special goods, and whatever else the DM desires are for sale. Malloc is a wily trader and chances are he stores exotic items the PCs would not normally find. If the PCs ask for something exotic (like a *flying carpet* or a spice not found in this region), provide a 5% chance for the item to appear in this room after 1d4 minutes of searching.

POSSIBLE LOOT ITEMS

1d20	Item
1	Bejeweled evening robe
2	Bolts of fine silk
3	Cask of fine coffee
4	Crystal decanter
5	Electrum necklace
6	Exotic carpet
7	Exotic tapestry
8	Golden headband
9	Masterwork manacles
10	Masterwork scimitar
11	Masterwork whip
12	Medium random magic potion
13	Minor random magic ring
14	Minor wondrous magic item
15	Platinum serving plate
16	Random magic scroll
17	Ring of sustenance
18	Silver bracelet
19	Silver goblet
20	Solid gold statuette of a camel

13. Bedroom

This room is used when one of the downstairs guest rooms is unavailable for a liaison between a patron and a slave girl. There is a 50% chance during business hours this room is occupied. It is presently being used to store overflow from the Emporium.

14. Cells

A single oil lamp burns at one end of this dark hallway, revealing six tightly locked doors. The doors are stout, ironbound wood, and the locks look to be well used and freshly oiled.

▣ **Cell Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 6; hit points 25; stuck DC 20, lock DC 23.

Encounter: PCs can make a Listen check (DC 15) to hear weeping coming from one of the locked cells. This is Julira the merchant's daughter, a pretty fourteen-year-old. The keys to the cells can only be found on Malloc's person. A successful Open Lock check (DC 25) will open the lock. The PCs will find her bruised and beaten, but bearing no life threatening injuries. Once she realizes the PCs are not Malloc, she throws herself at the first rescuer she sees, crying with joy, loudly thanking him for saving her.

DESERT GOBLIN DEN

The tunnels leading into the goblins' lair slope sharply downward. Curved lines in the tunnel passages denote a downward drop of about 2 ft. The long passageways leading off the map to the northeast and the south both extend for about 200 yards and are blocked at the end by two of sand concealing the hole.

The ceilings of the connecting passageways are only about five ft. high, so taller characters have to stoop. These passageways also slope sharply. Only the natural roughness of the rock makes it possible to traverse these without a Climb check. However, if combat occurs in these sloping areas, characters must make a Climb check (DC 15) every round of combat or slide 2d10 down the slope. The goblins are not subject to these Climb checks.

The angle of the slope and small size of the passageway blocks line of sight into the larger chambers unless the PC is within 10 ft. of the cavern opening. This also applies to ranged attacks and spells. PCs lying prone on the slope have line of sight within 20 ft. of the opening.

There is no light here. The goblins are happy to use their Darkvision, and they do not use fire for cooking, preferring to eat everything raw.

Tactics: The goblins fight fiercely to defend their home. If a fight breaks out, all the goblins in adjoining chambers come to join the fight. The goblins in area #5 fight only if necessary. They are not skilled with weapons and most of the women defend their children rather than leap into the fray. If the sounds of combat in area #3 and area #4 grow loud, the goblins in area #5 race to the escape tunnels.

Should the PCs attack the goblins in area #5 first; the goblins in area #3 and area #4 come to the rescue, fighting fiercely to defend their kin.

The walls of the passages appear to be natural, not cut from the rock. The air is cool and moist, but reeks with a strange fetid odor.

15. Meeting chamber

This chamber is empty except for a small equipment rack containing all manner of desert survival gear, goblin weapons and tools.

This room is where Malloc conducts all his business with the tribe of desert goblins living in these caverns. He prefers not to venture deeper into their caves. He is nevertheless aware of the den's two other exits, and their locations above ground.

Tactics: This room is also Malloc's fallback position. If things get too hot in the inn upstairs, he attempts to flee here, using his men to guard his escape. On the equipment rack also hangs a composite longbow and quiver of 20 arrows, a masterwork longsword in a scabbard, a lantern half-filled with oil, and a small pouch containing two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, which he uses if wounded.

The goblins do not come here unless they are expecting a meeting with Malloc.

16. Male Living Quarters

The far end of this chamber is lost in the darkness. The ceiling looks to be about 10 ft. high. The cavern is littered with refuse: gnawed bones, countless random bits of cloth, and small weapons, all rusted and broken. The room reeks of death, decay, and unwashed goblins.

Encounter: During daylight hours, forty male desert goblins can be found here. 2d20 of these are sleeping. During the night, only 2d10 are here. The rest are out looking for food and loot. They have never had an incursion into their domain, so they are not expecting one.

Treasure: A thorough search of this chamber yields 2d20 cp, 2d10 sp, and 2d6 gp.

☛ **Desert Goblin:** CR 1/3; Small humanoid (hoblinoid); HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk +1 melee (1d6, short sword) or +3 ranged (1d4, sling); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, short sword) or +3 ranged (1d4, sling); SA —; SQ Burrowing, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Survival +4; Alertness

Burrowing (Ex): Desert goblins also have a unique ability to burrow quickly into desert sand. They can reach a depth of 4 ft. in two rounds. They cannot travel this way, however. This ability is used only to conceal themselves or avoid capture. They can slow their breathing while under the sand so they need no breathing tubes to the surface, and can remain buried for about two hours before needing to return to the surface to breathe.

Skills: Desert goblins gain several racial bonuses which apply only in a desert or underground environment: +8 to Hide checks, +8 to Move Silently checks, +4 to Survival checks.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, sling, 20 sling stones, 1d4 sp.

17. Sub-chief Living Quarters

Encounter: During daylight hours, all of the tribe's sub-chiefs can be found here: four 3rd level Fighters and one 5th level Fighter. There is a 35% chance each of them is sleeping (in which they will be out of their armor). At night this room is completely empty.

☛ **Desert Goblin Sergeants, Ftr 3:** CR 3; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d10+3; hp 22, 22, 20, 18; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +1; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, short sword) or +6 ranged (1d4+1, sling); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, short sword) or +6 ranged (1d4+1, sling); SA —; SQ burrowing, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Survival +4; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Burrowing (Ex): Desert goblins also have a unique ability to burrow quickly into desert sand. They can reach a depth of 4 ft. in two rounds. They cannot travel this way, however. This ability is used only to conceal themselves or avoid capture. They can slow their breathing while under the sand so they need no breathing tubes to the surface, and can remain buried for about two hours before having to return to the surface to breathe.

Skills: Desert goblins gain several racial bonuses which apply only in a desert or underground environment: +8 to Hide checks, +8 to Move Silently checks, +4 to Survival checks.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, sling, 20 sling stones, 2d6 sp.

☛ **Desert Goblin Lieutenants, Ftr 5:** CR 5; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 5d10+5; hp 34; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +3; Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, short sword) or +7 ranged (1d4+2, sling); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, short sword) or +7 ranged (1d4+2, sling); SA —; SQ Burrowing, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Survival +4; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword).

Burrowing (Ex): Desert goblins also have a unique ability to burrow quickly into desert sand. They can reach a depth of 4 ft. in two rounds. They cannot travel this way, however. This

ability is used only to conceal themselves or avoid capture. They can slow their breathing while under the sand so they need no breathing tubes to the surface, and can remain buried for about two hours before having to return to the surface to breathe.

Skills: Desert goblins gain several racial bonuses which apply only in a desert or underground environment: +8 to Hide checks, +8 to Move Silently checks, +4 to Survival checks.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, sling, 20 sling stones, 1d10 gp.

18. Goblin Chief's Chamber

Encounter: The Goblin Chief's name, Gedroogde, roughly translates into Common as "Desiccated Sand Spider". He's a hulking brute busting out of his desert armor and adorned with jewelry made from the bones of small animals. He can be found here 75% of the time with his three favorite concubines. Any intrusion by any non-goblin except Malloc enrages him, and he'll attack without question. His concubines do not engage the PCs directly, but if one happens near one they attack with concealed daggers.

Treasure: The tribe's accumulated wealth is kept here, claimed by the chief—723 gp, two large black pearls worth 200 gp each, and a gold ring worth 150 gp. Most of their stolen loot they trade to Malloc for food, water, and information on targets.

♣ **Gedroogde, Desert Goblin Chief, Ftr 7:** CR 7; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 7d10+7; hp 50; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +5; Atk +11 melee (1d6+3, short sword) or +10 ranged (1d4+1, sling); Full Atk +11/+5 melee (1d6+3, short sword) or +10 ranged (1d4, sling); SA —; SQ Burrowing, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Survival +4; Alertness, Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword).

Burrowing (Ex): Desert goblins also have a unique ability to burrow quickly into desert sand. They can reach a depth of 4 ft. in two rounds. They cannot travel this way, however. This ability is used only to conceal themselves or avoid capture. They can slow their breathing while under the sand so they need no breathing tubes to the surface, and can remain buried for about two hours before having to return to the surface to breathe.

Skills: Desert goblins gain several racial bonuses which apply only in a desert or underground environment: +8 to Hide checks, +8 to Move Silently checks, +4 to Survival checks.

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, masterwork light steel shield, masterwork short sword, sling, 5 sling bullets +1, potion cure light wounds.

♣ **Desert Goblin Concubines:** CR 1/3; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk +1 melee (1d6, short sword) or +3 ranged (1d4, sling); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, short sword) or +3 ranged (1d4, sling); SA —; SQ Burrowing, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Survival +4; Alertness

Burrowing (Ex): Desert goblins also have a unique ability to burrow quickly into desert sand. They can reach a depth of 4 ft. in two rounds. They cannot travel this way, however. This ability is used only to conceal themselves or avoid capture. They can slow their breathing while under the sand so they need no breathing tubes to the surface, and can remain buried for about two hours before having to return to the surface to breathe.

Skills: Desert goblins gain several racial bonuses which apply only in a desert or underground environment: +8 to Hide checks, +8 to Move Silently checks, +4 to Survival checks.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, sling, 20 sling stones.

19. Living Quarters

Encounter: 45 desert goblin females are found here, along with 40 young goblins of various ages. All of them fight in the defense of their home if they are attacked, but will leave the PCs alone if they know the chief and other warriors are dead. There are no valuables to be found.

Tactics: If the PCs make enough noise, the females and young race to the surface using the escape tunnels (area #7).

♣ **Desert Goblin Females:** CR 1/3; Small humanoid (hoblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d4-1, sling); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d4-1, sling); SA —; SQ Burrowing, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Survival +4; Alertness

Burrowing (Ex): Desert goblins also have a unique ability to burrow quickly into desert sand. They can reach a depth of 4 ft. in two rounds. They cannot travel this way, however. This ability is used only to conceal themselves or avoid capture. They can slow their breathing while under the sand so they need no breathing tubes to the surface, and can remain buried for about two hours before having to return to the surface to breathe.

Skills: Desert goblins gain several racial bonuses which apply only in a desert or underground environment: +8 to Hide checks, +8 to Move Silently checks, +4 to Survival checks.

Possessions: Dagger, sling, 20 sling stones.

♣ **Desert Goblin Young:** CR 1/3; Small humanoid (hoblinoid); HD 1d8-1; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -5; Atk -1 melee (1d3-1, unarmed); Full Atk -1 melee (1d3-1, unarmed); SA —; SQ Burrowing, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 6.

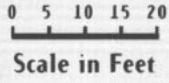
Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +5, Survival +4; Alertness

Burrowing (Ex): Desert goblins also have a unique ability to burrow quickly into desert sand. They can reach a depth of 4 ft. in two rounds. They cannot travel this way, however. This ability is used only to conceal themselves or avoid capture. They can slow their breathing while under the sand so they need no breathing tubes to the surface, and can remain buried for about two hours before having to return to the surface to breathe.

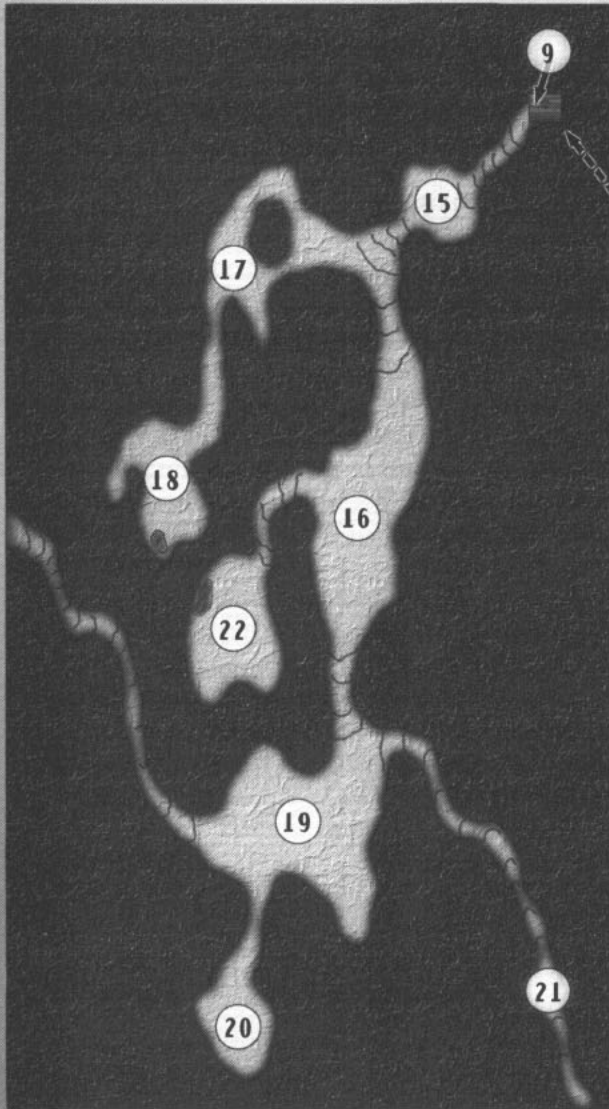
Skills: Desert goblins gain several racial bonuses which apply only in a desert or underground environment: +8 to Hide checks, +8 to Move Silently checks, +4 to Survival checks.

Possessions: Dagger.

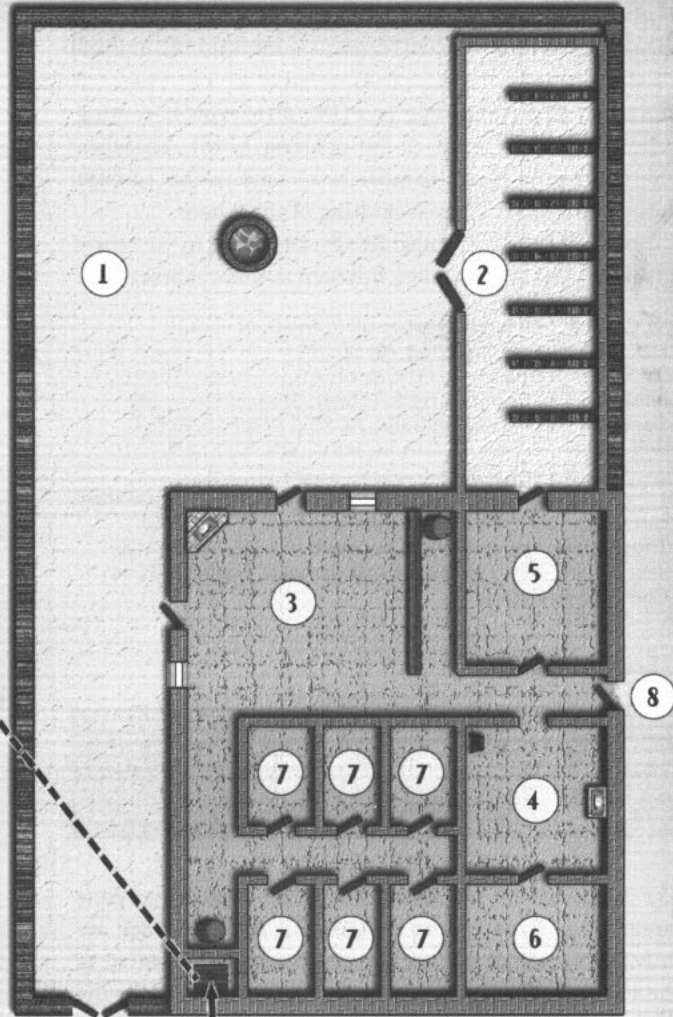
THE LASH OF MALLOC



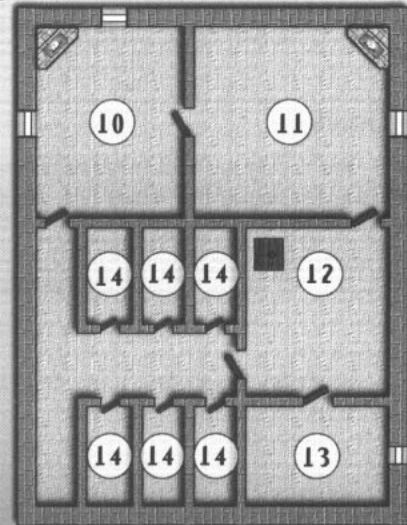
DESERT GOBLIN'S LAIR



THE DESERT BEETLE INN – GROUND FLOOR



2ND FLOOR



20. Refuse Chamber

The stench coming from this room is overpowering, even 20 ft. from the opening.

PCs must make a Fortitude Save (DC 20) to avoid becoming nauseous within 20 ft. of the opening to this chamber. The goblins use this chamber as a combination garbage dump and latrine. There is nothing of value here.

Encounter: Four bombardier beetles living in the refuse attack anyone who spends a full turn in this chamber.

🐛 **Giant Bombardier Beetle:** CR 2; Medium vermin; HD 2d8+4; hp 13 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, bite); SA Acid spray; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int—, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: —

Acid Spray (Ex): When attacked or disturbed, the creature can release a 10-ft cone of acidic vapor once per round. Those within the cone must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or take 1d4+2 points of acid damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

21. Escape Tunnels

Winding up through the rock, this tunnel is short and its steps narrow and steep. It is hard to navigate past anything larger than small creatures.

The tunnels here are short, steep, and hard for anyone larger than small size to navigate. In addition, they are only wide enough for one person at a time. It is 80 ft. to the surface and the steps are worn from years of use by the desert goblins.

Tactics: Medium-sized creatures move at a maximum of 10 ft. per round, and have a –4 penalty to Dex while on the steps.

22. Clay Chamber

A trickle of water seeps from a small fissure in the ceiling clinging to the wall as it cascades over the rock. Drinking water gathers in a hollowed-out cavity in the chamber floor.

The hollow cavity holds a little over one gallon of water, and refills five to ten times per day, depending on the season. It is always half-full when the PCs find it, as the goblins draw their water from here.

Over the years, the amount of water and sand trickling through the cracks has created an inordinate amount of clay deposits. So much so, the goblins make crude clay sculptures out of it. However, since they lack a kiln, they have no pottery.

Because the water supply is so limited, the men have first rights of access to the water and baths are a luxury for those who find an over ground oasis.

EPILOGUE

With the evil Malloc put down, the oasis is once again free and the merchants who depend on it heap rewards of coffee and praise on the PCs in a nightlong celebration beneath the stars. Many merchants offer to help the young girl Padrea become the new owner and operator of the Inn. The PCs help in this regard would ensure them of a comfortable stay in the future.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Padrea is flattered with the offer to run the Inn, but she wants nothing more than to find her way home, to the west. She asks the PCs to escort her there, where she promises to sing their praises to the bards and skalds to herald their reputation. Along the journey, the desert gives way to hills and eventually forest. They spot a welcoming campfire ahead of them and urge their steeds forward only to find the camp occupants turned to stone (see the adventure “Dawn of the Serpent”).
- A particular wealthy caravan leader, Meleager, asks the PCs to escort him and his valuable cargo of spices and silk on it’s journey to the nearby port and then to the city of Galishor. The PCs will escape the sand for the sea, and the ship Nora’s Grace and her fine Captain Daniels, will be their ticket (see the adventure “The Red Isle”).

Chapter 11:

Honor Among Thieves

Levels 4 to 6

By Ree Soesbee

DM BACKGROUND

No one ever said the job of a hero wasn't a tough row to hoe...

The young daughter of a local Count is missing, kidnapped by unknown forces. Her young life hangs in jeopardy, and her father cannot pay the impossible ransom demanded for her return. Desperate to find his daughter, he has promised gold, riches, magic treasures to anyone who can rescue her from her captors. She is only twelve years old.

You prowl the streets of Desburg by night, seeking anyone who might know the whereabouts of Princess Alexandria. Her caravan left only three nights ago, filled with retainers and servants, and guarded by her father's own men. The wreckage of the caravan was found one day's ride south of the city, destroyed and bloodied. Only the body of the Princess was missing.

Suddenly, there is a scream. A terrified young girl in torn garments races toward you from the darkness, pleading for her life. Behind her, five black-garbed figures spring from the shadows in pursuit. Hurlled from a distance, a dagger pierces the young woman's leg and she falls. "Please help me," she cries out. "My name is Lady Alexandria, Princess of Desburg..."

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 4 to 6.

The adventure begins as the party searches the grand city of Desburg, looking for clues to the whereabouts of Count Sebastian's young daughter, Alexandria. She is the only daughter of the widowed Count, and he is desperate for her return. The PCs know the daughter's caravan set out three days ago, but was attacked just one day south of the city. The caravan was found, torn into pieces, and everyone traveling with the Princess was dead. Only the Princess was missing. A ransom note was delivered by anonymous courier to the Count's palace, demanding the heads of all the nobility in the region in exchange for the Princess's safe return. Unable to comply, Count Sebastian has sent a call to any adventurers in the area: "Bring back my daughter safely, and you can have baskets of gold — nearly anything you desire — as your reward."

Princess Alexandria is twelve years old, and had been traveling to her aunt's manor house in the country. She has made the journey several times, without incident, and although she had guards with her, the caravan was completely decimated. There were no survivors. Her servants and guards seemed to have died from multiple stab wounds — they were killed swiftly, and professionally. The PCs search the area, and find only a faint trail leading back into the city of Desburg, away from the slaughtered caravan.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately the information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check of the same DC as a Bardic Knowledge check.

- DC 10** The local Thieves' Guild (the Minutemen) has been acting strangely lately.
- DC 15** The Minutemen are holed up beneath the city, armed to the teeth and quite paranoid.
- DC 20** A local wizard, Favrnal, is missing.
- DC 25** A beggar at the south gate saw two members of the Minutemen sneaking into the city just two days ago (the night of the attack), carrying a large, wrapped bundle of cloth which could easily have been the Princess's body.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The city of Desburg can be any known city within your campaign world, or it can be a new location for the PCs to visit. Design the upper areas of the city as you see fit, and you can easily slip the map in this module into the location. All this module requires is an inn, a fortified palace, and an as-yet-undefined sewer system.

After the PCs have spent some time searching through the area, and speaking to the local peasantry about the kidnapping, they are ready to begin the events of this adventure as detailed in area 1, below. Until then, you may liven up their exploration of the crowded city with a roll or two on the following table.

CITY ENCOUNTERS

1d20	Encounter
1	Acolyte preaching local church's belief
2	Aranea
3	Barbarian street brawler looking for challengers
4	Bat swarm
5	Beggars (1d3)
6	Children playing
7	Cornerstreet bard playing flute
8	Druid visiting the city
9	Drunken fops (1d6)
10	Drunken workers (2d4)
11	Inexperienced thugs (2d3)
12	Lady of the evening
13	Merchant with cart of goods
14	Messenger runner
15	Old woman fortuneteller
16	Rabid dog
17	Small city patrol, 2 guards
18	Stray cat
19	Street crier
20	Yuan-ti halfblood spy

I. A Pitch Black Alley

A terrified young girl in torn garments races toward you from the darkness. Behind her, five black-garbed figures spring from the shadows in pursuit. Hurling from a distance, a dagger pierces the young woman's leg and she falls. "Please help me," she cries out. "My name is Lady Alexandria, Princess of Desburg... please." Behind her, the five men draw wicked-looking short swords, and move swiftly forward to attack.

Behind you, you hear the distant whistle of the Town Watch... but they are still far off, and there is no time to wait for their arrival.

Encounter: If the PCs get involved, this is their hook into the adventure. If the PCs ignore her and move on, the guards should get a description of the PCs from witnesses and be harassed later. Whatever happens, it's important that the PCs get a meeting later with Ishan. While they may not be offered a reward, they can be lured into the events in a number of ways. In any case, PCs who do not help the princess skip events 2 and 3, [needs editing]

Tactics: The Minutemen (identified by a double 'M' tattoo on their left shoulder) have four rounds before the Town Watch arrives. They seek to kill the Princess and are willing to offer up their own lives in the attempt. They, however, will not die needlessly and only fight to the death if it offers them a possible "final strike." The PCs should learn two things from this fight—first, these men are good fighters, and secondly, they are fanatical about Alexandria's death. The DM should ensure, however, the Minutemen do not succeed.

When the Town Watch arrives, the Minutemen flee, cursing those who detained them. Along with the Watchmen comes the Captain of the Guard, Sir Ishan. Use this fight as an opportunity to cut the PCs down a peg, without crippling them, before the real adventure begins. If the PCs do not intercede, the Town Watch miraculously step in and the minutemen are subdued (off camera).

▲ Minuteman, Human Rog 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6+6; hp 30; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword); SA Sneak attack +3d6; SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Climb +10, Disable Device +12, Hide +17, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Search +11, Spot +9, Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +8; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Evasion (Ex): These rogues can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If they make a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, they instead take no damage.

Sneak Attack: These rogue's attacks deals an extra 3d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): These rogues gain an intuitive sense that alerts them to danger from traps, giving them a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): These rogues retain their Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if they are caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, *cloak of elvenkind*, masterwork short sword.

▲ Ishan, Human Ftr 14: CR 14; Medium humanoid; HD 14d10+28; hp 109; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +14; Grp +17; Atk +20 melee (1d8+8/17–20, +3 *longsword*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+8/17–20, +3 *longsword*); SA —; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Craft (woodworking) +13, Intimidate +12, Jump +14, Ride +14, Swim +14; Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (*longsword*), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Run, Spring Attack, Weapon Specialization (*longsword*), Weapon Focus (*longsword*).

Possessions: +2 *full plate mail*, +2 *shield*, +3 *longsword (named vindicator)*.

▲ Town Watch, Human War 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10; hp 14 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d10+1/x3, *halberd*); Full Atk +4 melee (1d10+1/x3, *halberd*); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Jump +2, Listen +1, Profession (*guardsman*) +4, Swim +5; Dodge, Weapon Focus (*halberd*).
Possessions: Studded leather armor, *halberd*.

Sir Ishan, a tall, muscular man with a long moustache, kneels respectfully before Alexandria and kisses her small hands. "My lady! Thanks be to the gods you are alive!"

"I am alive," the little Princess says gratefully, "Because of the intervention of these brave heroes. My father must be told of their deeds, and reward them for their valor."

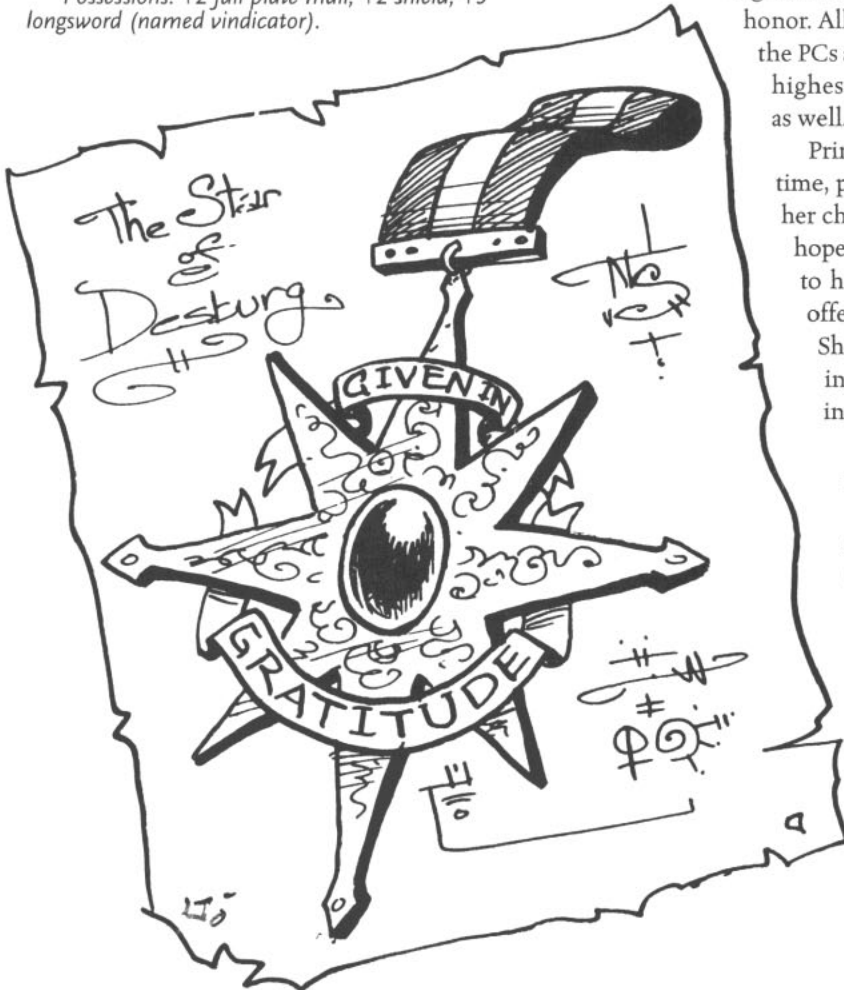
"By your will, my lady," he adds gladly.

2. The Count's Reward

The PCs are brought to the palace and greeted by an extremely relieved and thankful Count. To celebrate his daughter's return, Sebastian announces he is holding a grand ball in his daughter's name and the heroes' honor. All of the local nobility are invited. At the gala, the PCs are awarded the Star of Desburg, the nation's highest honor. A reward of gold is bestowed as well.

Princess Alexandria only remains for a short time, pleading weariness and shock. She retires to her chambers as soon as it is comfortably possible, hopefully without drawing too much attention to herself. When she leaves, her nurse Matilda offers to go with her, but Alexandria refuses. She is sharp at first, but then, as if remembering herself, speaks to the old woman kindly, inviting her along.

After Alexandria leaves, Count Sebastian provides the PCs with rooms in one of the city's best inns (the Golden Goblet). He gives them each a purse of gold (150 gp) in order to get appropriate garb for the celebration. In the morning he sends their formal invitation. His guards escort the heroes to their suite at the Golden Goblet, and a Herald announces the news of Princess Alexandria's return to the city of Desburg. The rooms at the inn are lovely, the city is at peace, and the remainder of the evening is joyous.



3. During the Day

During the next day, the PCs are treated like heroes, allowed the run of Desburg, and have the honor of being greeted and thanked by the local nobility (Barons, etc) as they arrive for the evening's gala event. If they try to see Alexandria, they are told the Princess is resting after her ordeal, and cannot be disturbed. Should the PCs ask for Matilda, she is nowhere to be found.

Throughout the city, the Town Watch begins an active assault on the Minutemen at the Count's command. The Thieves' Guild is publicly declared the cause of the kidnapping, and its members are ruthlessly hounded and imprisoned. Many leave the city. Most are incarcerated. Anyone in the city known to be a sympathizer, suspected of dealing with the Minutemen, or even accused of being involved with the local Thieves' Guild, are taken to the local prison by the Town Watch.

If interrogated, none of the prisoners knows anything about the events of the last few days. They know nothing about the Princess' kidnapping. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) verifies the men appear to speak the truth. The assailants are not among those in prison.

4. As Darkness Falls

When you enter your room, arms laden with packages, you are surprised to find a middle-aged man sitting in the chair by the mahogany desk. "Before you scream, or attack me," he says. "I'm not here to fight you. I'm here because you've condemned over a hundred people to die tonight, and I think you're the sort who can set things right before it happens. If I'm wrong about you, tell me now. I'll leave peacefully, and you can watch Desburg bathe in blood at the stroke of midnight. Your choice."

"But before you make a decision, hear me out. I'm called John Swift, one of the Masters of the Minutemen's Society. The girl you've 'rescued' isn't a girl at all. The real Princess Alexandria is dead. Congratulations," he says sarcastically, "You've rescued a Terror Fiend. A type of vampire, but not undead. Terror Fiends can only feed on noble blood... and guess who's been invited to the party they're giving for the 'little Princess'. Nobles? A real feast of rich blood for the fiend to take... courtesy of the heroes of the city." He bows sarcastically.

"Let me give you the real story. A wizard named Favrnal summoned the thing. It escaped, murdered the Princess's entire caravan, and took her form after it destroyed her. We captured it and brought it back. We had it locked in our freehold under the city so Favrnal could send it back to wherever it came from. But, it attacked him. It nearly killed him, actually, and the rest of us as well. It escaped, then you arrived."

"Favrnal's too weak to send it back now and all my men are either dead or in prison. The Count isn't going to believe my story, but I can prove it to you. I have the body of the girl, and the wizard — but he's too hurt to be moved. If this party goes on, the fiend will feast on the blood of every noble there." John looks earnest, clenching his fist.

"When this happens, we'll have anarchy in Desburg. I don't have the men to send in there. My men are in chains, as you well know. You must help, or we're doomed."

After the party has had time to deliberate and talk to John Swift, he takes them to meet with Favrnal. If the party refuses, he leaves them unmolested. Either way, a member of the Town Watch (Ishan's son) sees John Swift leave the PC's room. He quickly runs to tell his father. At this point, the DM's trap is closed. The players should be encouraged to work with John — he is telling the truth, and can substantiate his statements.

▲ John Swift, Human Rog 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6+6; hp 30; Init +7; Spd 30ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword); SA Sneak attack +3d6; SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Climb +10, Disable Device +12, Hide +17, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Search +11, Spot +9, Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +8; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Evasion (Ex): This rogue can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead take no damage.

Sneak Attack: This rogue's attacks deals an extra 3d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): This rogue gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): This rogue retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, *cloak of elvenkind*, masterwork short sword

5. Refused Entrance

The party attempts to enter the palace by the front gate, but is in for a rude surprise. Twenty members of the guard escort the Captain of the Town Watch, Sir Ishan. They force the PCs to halt, and Ishan addresses the PCs formally, but angrily. The party is not allowed to pass.

As you approach the gate, Sir Ishan steps forward and commands you to stop. "You have been accused of consorting with the Minutemen," he says angrily. "And frankly, I believe my son's word over anything you might have to say. You were visited by John Swift, and for all I know, you worked for the Minutemen, just to get the reward. Until I can prove something, though you are not allowed to pass. The Count will meet with you in the morning to sort this out. Until then, I recommend you wait in your rooms. My guards will escort you to the palace in the morning." His men rest their hands on their swords warningly, and Ishan continues. "Move along."

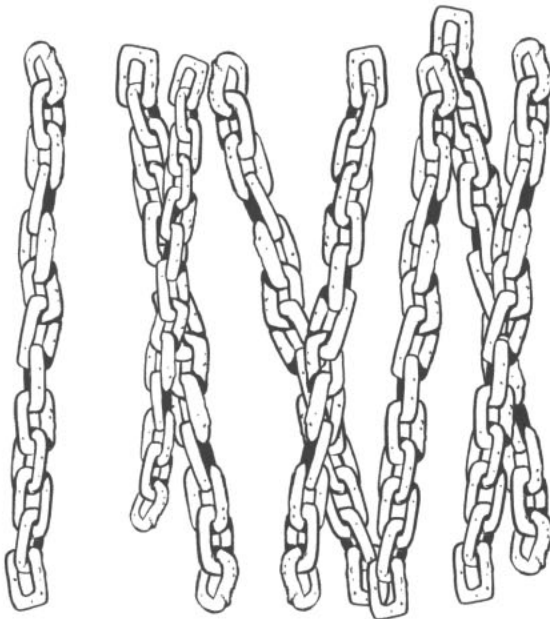
This event is more harrowing if the PCs did not help the princess.

6. Help from the Shadows

After the party leaves the Town Watch behind, John Swift comes out of the shadows with one of his men. He explains there is no other way into the palace — with all those nobles inside, security has gone up threefold. There is only one way into the palace now, and it is through the sewers.

John can't go with the party because the Town Watch is planning on executing three of his best men in the town square tonight. He can provide them a map of the sewers, however, and even show them the entrance, but from there the party must continue on their own.

As DM, encourage the party to trust John. He's genuine, and honestly believes the Terror Fiend is going to butcher the noble court. He wants the party to trust him, and will do whatever is necessary to gain their alliance for the sake of the city.



7. Into the Sewer

The opening into the sewer beneath Desburg is a small storm cellar in the lower area of the city. There is an abandoned building which was once an inn, but is now nothing more than a half-standing wreck. Nevertheless, it has a stone foundation, and the storm cellar is in good condition. After skillfully picking the lock on the outside door, John shows the party how to open a hidden trap door in the floor of the room below. By torchlight, the party sees swiftly moving water and a small ledge runs alongside the thick waste of the sewer system. John's map shows a route north, under the city and toward the foundation of Count Sebastian's palace.

"This is the best map we have," says John. "But be careful. Things have changed, and there are some creatures left down there from Favrna's 'experiments'. It could be dangerous, but I know you can handle yourselves. Watch for this mark on the wall," he draws a symbol on the edge of the map. "When you see it, you'll know there's a trap ahead. Be safe, good luck... and thank you.

From all the innocent people — noble and peasant — whose lives you'll save tonight... thank you." And with those last words, he is gone. There is nothing to do except enter the fetid water below as it slowly sludges past.

8. Entrance to the Sewers

The trapdoor leads into the sewers, a dank, slimy place filled with the stench of refuse. If the PCs managed to hurry along to this point, they have on their best clothing, and only a minimum of equipment.

The sewer is high enough for a normal human male to stand, and is over six ft. wide. Four feet of it however, is taken up by the stream of sewage passing by in a deep trench. There is a two-ft. wide path along the right side of the passage, and the PCs can walk down the slippery stone path in order to follow the sewer.

It is dark in the sewers, any natural flame lit there sputters and flames up irregularly because of the dampness and the gases which permeate the air. The map given to the party can be found on page 121 of this book. You should notice while the Minutemen have indicated on the map the places where traps can be found, they did not indicate what those traps entailed. The following traps are scattered throughout the dungeon at appropriate locations, denoted where a marker is located on the map. If the DM wishes, further markings or traps can be added to the map, to keep the party occupied. Also, traps or creatures not indicated on the map can be found, added by rival gangs in the city. Two creatures have been included below to indicate they

wander through the sewers by night; these beasts can 'discover' the party at any time, but are drawn to their location by any loud noise or strange smell.

Lastly, the sewer water moves fairly rapidly. Anyone who enters the stream must make a Reflex save (DC 14) in order to avoid being swept along by the current. Characters who fail immediately proceed to the next sewer grate (refer to the map for this adventure), and suffer 2d6 points of damage from inhaling sewage and slamming into the slippery stone sides of the channel. These grates cannot be removed without actually breaking apart the masonry of the sewer. Players will have to travel around them, and cannot go through them.

9. Bridged Passage

Encounter: A bridge, crossing the sewer channel, has been sabotaged. At any cross-passage on the map, the PCs should find one of these 'sabotaged' bridges. Add more, if the party is getting on too swiftly.

The passage stops at a 15-ft. gap in the passage where a grate above pours water down a chute into the sewer. The path the PCs have been following ends, and they must cross the sewer channel to continue. There is a small bridge on the far side of the sewer water, and a valve beside the path. The stone is slippery, and almost impossible to jump across without falling (apply a -10 circumstance penalty to any Jump checks). There is not enough room to get a running jump.

If the PCs choose to turn the valve, the bridge on the far side will extend until it reaches the stone beneath their feet. However, the bridge itself has been sabotaged. It collapses if more than 40 pounds of weight rests on it at any point. Hidden in the water below are a series of sharp iron spikes, pointed upward.

☛ **Collapsing Bridge Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 15.

A similar valve on the other side retracts the bridge.

10. Chains

In the sewers is a large room, the floor completely washed out by time and its wearing waters. In the center, covered by raw sewage, are the twisted iron remains of a catwalk that once crossed this room. It is now useless and covered in rotting filth.

Thirty chains of various lengths and sizes hang from the ceiling. In order to cross the chamber without falling into the water, PCs must use the chains to swing to the other side. While this sounds easy, some of the chains are attached to traps set by the Minutemen. These traps trigger when any weight beyond 40 pounds is placed on the chain.

Three Climb checks (DC 16) are necessary to make it across the chamber on the chains. For each chain a PC uses to cross the water (three in all) roll a 10d20 once on the following chart. Because the chains swing so much and because so many look the same, trying to grab a chain someone else just used is impossible.

▣ **Chain:** 1/2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 15; AC 7; break DC 28.

☛ **Chain Trap:** CR 3; No attack roll needed; damage varies, Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 30).

1d20	Effect
1-5	This chain is safe.
6-7	The chain is a fake and rips from the ceiling. A Reflex save (DC 16) is necessary to grab another chain while falling. If the PC fails this roll, they fall into the water (see below).
8-9	A crossbow bolt fires from the ceiling (ranged +10; damage 1d10) striking the PC when he pulls the chain.
10-11	The chain is covered in small blades. A Fortitude save (DC 15) is required to hold the chain. Otherwise, the PC instinctively releases his grip and falls into the water.
12-13	A gout of flame shoots from the ceiling. The fire ignites the gases around the PC. Damage 3d6. A Reflex save (DC 20) saves for half.
14-15	The chain is covered in a painful contact poison. The PC suffers 1d6 points of damage immediately and must make a Fortitude save (DC 12 + damage dealt) or let go of the chain.
16-18	This chain is magically trapped. Should the PC grab it he becomes affected by fear. The character refuses to release the chain or moves further while affected. He simply hangs from the chain, petrified. The spell lasts for one minute. A Will save (DC 18) negates the effects. The spell is triggered every time this chain is touched.
19	The chain is covered in small hooks which imbed themselves into the PC's clothing and flesh. If the PC fails a Reflex save (DC 16) the hooks snag, binding her to the chain as if affected by a snare spell.
20	This chain is actually an illusion. A Reflex save (DC 20) allows the PC to safely grab another chain (rolling again). If the save fails or the PC rolls another 20 on this chart, he tumbles into the water below.

If for some reason a PC enters the water (5 ft. deep here), a Reflex save (DC 15) is required to avoid being slammed against the catwalk (1d6 points of damage). In addition, an otyugh has adapted to the sewage, waiting in the filthy water for a meal to come its way.

👤 **Otyugh:** CR 4; Large aberration; HD 6d8+9; hp 36; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +8; Atk +4 melee (1d6, tentacle); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6, 2 tentacles) and -2 melee (1d4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with tentacle); SA Constrict 1d6, disease, improved grab; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide -1*, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle).

Constrict (Ex): An otyugh deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 14, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an otyugh must hit with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: *An otyugh has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in its lair, due to its natural coloration.

Tactics: Because the Crawler has been living in sewage with filth for so long, its paralytic attack is much weaker than it once was. The Fortitude save is at DC 12 and its effects only last for 2d6 rounds instead of minutes. Paralyzed PCs must still contend with drowning, but at least they have a fighting chance.

11. Lair

This bend in the sewer system looks natural and should not cause the PCs any concern. At this point make secret Spot checks (DC 20) for each of them.

Tactics: A chaos beast, another of Favrnell's mistakes, has just ambushed the PCs. Those failing their Spot checks may only take a standard action during the surprise round. The chaos beast is hard to fight, moving every round, using mobility, and tumbling to its advantage when possible.

👤 **Chaos Beast:** CR 7; Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar); HD 8d8+8; hp 44; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d3+2 plus corporeal instability, claw); Full Atk +10 melee (1d3+2 plus corporeal instability, 2 claws); SA Corporeal instability; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to critical hits and transformation, spell resistance 15; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Escape Artist +12, Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +11, Search +11, Spot +11, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks), Tumble +14, Use Rope +1 (+3 with bindings); Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility.

Corporeal Instability (Su): A blow from a chaos beast against a living creature can cause a terrible transformation. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or become a spongy, amorphous mass. Unless the victim manages to control the effect (see below), its shape melts, flows, writhes, and boils. The save DC is Constitution-based.

An affected creature is unable to hold or use any item. Clothing, armor, rings, and helmets become useless. Large items worn or carried — armor, backpacks, even shirts — hamper more than help, reducing the victim's Dexterity score by 4. Soft or misshapen feet and legs reduce speed to 10 ft. or one-quarter normal, whichever is less. Searing pain courses along the nerves, so strong that the victim cannot act coherently. The victim cannot cast spells or use magic items, and it attacks blindly, unable to distinguish friend from foe (-4 penalty on attack rolls and a 50% miss chance, regardless of the attack roll).

Each round the victim spends in an amorphous state causes 1 point of Wisdom drain from mental shock. If the victim's Wisdom score falls to 0, it becomes a chaos beast.

A victim can regain its own shape by taking a standard action to attempt a DC 15 Charisma check (this check DC does not vary for a chaos beast with different Hit Dice or ability scores). A success reestablishes the creature's normal form for 1 minute. On a failure, the victim can still repeat this check each round until successful.

Corporeal instability is not a disease or a curse and so is hard to remove. A shapechange or stonesskin spell does not cure an afflicted creature but fixes its form for the duration of the spell. A restoration, heal, or greater restoration spell removes the affliction (a separate restoration is necessary to restore any drained points of Wisdom).

Immunity to Transformation (Ex): No mortal magic can permanently affect or fix a chaos beast's form. Effects such as polymorphing or petrification force the creature into a new shape, but at the start of its next turn it immediately returns to its mutable form as a free action.

12. False Grate

The PCs notice on the map this grate is false. With the right answer, they can move it and continue toward the palace. It is the only path to the palace entrance, so the PCs have no choice but to find a way through.

To the right of the grate, at eye level, is an alcove with a small silver dagger lying in it. Written on a small plate on the back of the alcove wall is the following sequence of letters, written in the common tongue:

"T N E S S F F T T _ "

In order to open the false grate, the PCs must decide what letter to write in the blank (_). The plate is sensitive to the touch of silver, and will respond to the dagger or any silver item. If they scratch in the correct letter ('O'), the grate opens. The letters stand for: Ten, Nine, Eight, Seven, Six, Five, Four, Three, Two, and One.

Should the PCs enter the wrong letter three times in a row, the magic of the plate shuts off for one hour, stopping further attempts to open the grate. This failsafe is designed to stop someone from trying every letter in the alphabet.

🧱 **Grate:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 15; AC 7; break DC 28.

13. Pitted Passage

A wide section of this passage is trapped with a spiked pit. The thieves are used to this particular passage. So much so, that they can run at near full speed, by skirting the sides of the passage (just a few inches wide) while being pursued. A simple Balance check (DC 10) allows PCs that know where the ledge is to navigate the passage, safely.

♣ **Wide-Mouth Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 25. Market Price: 7,200 gp.

14. The Palace

No matter what time they entered the sewers, the PCs should arrive at the palace only a few minutes before midnight to heighten tension.

The hidden door from the sewer into the palace leads between the castle's stonework. It eventually empties into a dark corridor fairly near the main ballroom. Through a slit cut in the stone, you can hear the laughter and revelry of the Count's gala. The party is taking place in a huge ballroom with large stone pillars and cloth draping scattered artfully around the opulent room. From the far end of the chamber, you hear the high-pitched voice of Princess Alexandria as she rises to give a speech to the assembly.



HONOR AMONG THIEVES

Sewage Basin

8 Entrance under inn

9






10

11

12

13

Exit to palace

	Sewage
	Ledge
	Access Hatch
	Gate
	Valve Bridge

As you push the door aside, you hear her say, "...and thank you, noble guests, for your final gift. The gift of..."

The Princess's features change and sharpen, as her body twists and grows like a possessed tree. Her skin blackens and her mouth grows rows of long teeth as she continues, "...your lives!" Screams break out among the gathered throng, and the creature attacks gleefully, killing the surrounding palace guards with a mere swipe of its terrible hand.

The Terror Fiend feeds on the blood of nobility, and is in a frenzy of hunger and lust with so many nobles about. The guards in the room are dead. It is several minutes before more arrive, providing the Fiend enough time to kill the nobles assembled here.

Tactics: Although several of the nobles try to help, the general panic of nearly a hundred people is certainly going to affect the fight. The Terror Fiend has no problem using the nobility as hostages, putting them in danger, or even slaughtering them outright (most die from a single strike). It gets stronger as more nobles die in the grip of its claws. Use this to the creature's advantage during the fight. Put your PCs in positions where they must save the lives of nobles instead of directly battling the creature. The fight is more interesting this way.

☠ Terror Fiend: CR 6; Large monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+18; hp 37; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +6; Grp +14; Atk +10 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+4, bite), +8 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws), +8 melee (2d4+2, barbed tail); SA silent Scream, tail entangle, polymorph; SQ Fast Healing 2; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Hide +6, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Move Silently +11, Spot +7; Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Multiattack.

Silent Scream (Sp): The Terror Fiend can create a circle of silence in a ten-ft. radius around its body. No sound can exit this shield, although those inside the field can still hear the normal sounds of the world outside.

Polymorph Self (Su): Similar to the wizard's spell *polymorph*, the Terror fiend can take the form of the last creature it killed. Once assumed, the Terror Fiend can retain this form indefinitely. This form is not an illusion; while in the new form, the Terror Fiend has no access to its physical abilities, although it may still manifest its Silent Scream. The fiend may return to its original form at any time, and may return to its current 'attained form' at will.

Improved Grapple (Ex): To use this ability, a terror fiend must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a tail attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action with out provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict. Terror fiends receive a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks, which is already included in the statistics block.

EPILOGUE

After the battle is finished and the Terror fiend is defeated, Count Sebastian calls together the nobility and listens to the PCs' story. Once he is convinced of the truth, he commands the Minutemen in his prison be released. He asks his daughter's body be brought to the palace for proper burial. It is a sad day in Desburg.

A few days should pass before the grateful count awards the PCs with the Star of Desburg (funerals and all). After the ceremony, John Swift approaches the party to thank them for their efforts. He rescued his men while the party was in the sewers. He and his men are truly grateful. Swift shakes their hands and says, "You have a friend in Desburg." He smiles and adds, "and a few Minutemen as well. But don't worry about the sewer map, it's already useless." He gives the PCs a broad wink, and then leaves them to celebrate their well-earned victory.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- A few days later, a terrible earthquake hits Desburg. Not many are injured initially, but soon reports of sewer workers turning up murdered spells new trouble for the city. Count Sebastian is assembling a group of interested persons to investigate these murders (see the adventure "Sundered Faith").
- Count Sebastian asks the PCs if they could help him troubleshoot yet another difficulty he's been having of late, the problems merchants are reporting taking Genmarr Pass from the northern mountains, and asks the PCs to investigate the cursed gateway (see the adventure "The Last Defender").

Chapter 12:

Kerishan's Garden

Levels 4 to 6
by Ken Carpenter

As you take a well-deserved break in a friendly enough city, you quickly notice an unusual amount of activity around the marketplace, as well as the unreasonable cost for meals at all the inns. You soon discover many food items are scarce in the city, forcing prices to soar and resulting in a mild panic.

Having heard of your party of bold adventurers, Marrick, a leader among the local merchants, approaches you on behalf of her fellows.

"Over the past few years," Marrick explains, "our fair city has become dependant upon a village named Darbin, about five day's travel to the west. The village's farms yield a great harvest each year, and they are a major supplier of our city's produce."

"The problem is this: no deliveries have been made by the farmers of Darbin in over two months. Twice messengers have been sent to Darbin, but neither has returned. Their seasonal harvest should be complete by now, and a single wagon has yet appear. If they don't send their goods soon, we will have to cast our nets farther abroad and pay even higher sums to meet the demands of our citizens."

"We ask you go to Darbin and speak with Brock Gnath, the head of the village's farmers, and find out what needs to be done to rectify this situation. A few of us have collected what we hope is a reasonable sum in payment for your services.

"Please accept our offer. We desperately need your help."

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 4 to 6. A druid or other naturalist would be extremely useful in this adventure. The DM should review the brain vine (see *New Monsters* — Appendix B) and its abilities before running this adventure.

The village of Darbin rests in the center of an idyllic valley near a peaceful river. The soil of the valley is rich and encourages the growth of lush vegetation. A community consisting mainly of farms, Darbin has flourished — until now.

A few years ago, an old woman by the name of Kerishan moved into a large house at the southern end of the village. She kept to herself, refusing to associate with the other villagers, though many tried to befriend her. Still, the villagers accepted her presence, content with her quiet character. Shortly after arriving at the village, Kerishan planted a large garden of beautiful though somewhat strange flowers and vines. Despite her advanced years, she spent a good portion of each day tending to the thick garden behind her home.

What the villagers didn't know was Kerishan was a powerful wizard. Her advanced age and ongoing experiments had warped her sensibilities beyond reason. Madness corrupted her formidable intellect into giving herself another life. Because she was not familiar enough with necromancy to attempt becoming a lich, she turned to plants and nature, her wizardly specialty. Kerishan's studies led her to believe that, through a series of powerful and complex spells, she could reincarnate herself as a plant.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately the information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check of the same DC as a Bardic Knowledge check.

- DC 10** Darbin has always had exceptional luck with abundant crops.
- DC 15** The road to Darbin isn't particularly rough, and bandits are not common in the area.
- DC 20** It is said a wise old druid or wizard talented with plants and magic help Darbin's crops grow.
- DC 25** Some say the old woman who lives outside Darbin isn't friendly at all, and has nothing to do with the village or its crops.

The process involved a rare gem in which she planned to place her soul, by means of a magic jar spell, upon her death. When her spirit entered the gem, a number of contingency spells would immediately be activated to finalize the process. Kerishan obtained the gem, prepared the spells, and waited for her impending death.

The day finally came. The old wizard died and as planned her spirit entered the gem she had prepared, triggering a dozen or more contingency spells. Unfortunately, as is the case with most mad wizards, her calculations were off. Instead of being reborn as a beautiful eternal lily, a rootless plant and one of her favorite species, she regained consciousness trapped within a mass of mold, decomposing vegetation, and other debris. She had become a shambling mound.

To further infuriate the insane wizard, she discovered she could no longer cast spells. It didn't take long, however, for the reborn Kerishan to discover she was able to control the plants in her garden, in their growth and in their behavior, even cause them to mutate into new forms.

Within a few weeks, during which the death of Kerishan's human body remained undiscovered, the wizard created a new kind of horror she called "the brainvine" (see Appendix B). Then, in the dead of night, she unleashed her new creation on the village, taking control of every man, woman, and child... If she was to spend eternity in torment, she should make those around her suffer too.

OVERLAND ENCOUNTERS

As the trip takes 5 days, there are a number of encounters that may befall a party as they travel forth.

1d20	Encounter
1	Adult arrowhawk
2	Assassin vine (most likely during camp)
3	Brown bear
4	Centaur rangers patrolling village outlands
5	Dire boar
6	Dryad
7	Ettin skeleton
8	Giant ant workers (2d3)
9	Gnoll rangers (1d6) stalking the territory
10	Herd of four wild horses grazing
11	Hobgoblins (1d10) heading home to mountains after a failed raid
12	Large patch of wildflowers and grass
13	Locust swarm
14	Old wooden road sign pointing the way to Darbin, vines crawling up its length
15	One escaped, dead villager (with strange puncture wound at base of spine)
16	Pack of hungry, vicious wolves (slaughtered animals in the village and surrounding lands means lack of prey)
17	Sassone Leaf and Black Lotus patch (growing together...at this time of year?!)
18	Small viper
19	Treent who may warn the PCs that the local vegetation is acting strangely
20	Young elven druid on his way to investigate the village

THE VILLAGE OF DARBIN

As you crest the low hills at the northeast edge of the valley home of Darbin, you are taken in by the beauty of the valley. Journeying deeper, you see fields and orchards of vegetables and fruits, all of which are very ripe. If they are not harvested soon, the crops will be worthless.

Finally you reach a small rise and look down upon the village. What should appear as a rustic, even quaint farming village is instead gives you a sense of. The streets are overgrown with grass and shrubs, and many of the buildings, though in good condition, are surrounded with brush and overgrown with vines, as if having been abandoned for years.

In the distance, at the southern edge of town, you can see a large and beautiful garden.

If you'd like to increase the tension, one of the adventurers may spot a villager moving from one building to another, probably into the Green River Inn (area #6). Have them each make a Spot check, with the highest roller getting

a quick glimpse, just enough to make the PCs wary. As the group continues down the slight slope into the town, any movement within the village ceases.

NOTES ON THE VILLAGERS

The villagers are awake and alert, but for the most part they do not control their bodies. They can speak, however, so whenever they see strangers they scream or moan things such as: "Please, help me!" "Beware the plant creature. Run while you can!" "Don't let me live like her!" and so on. They even say such things when fighting. The vines have already learned that the women and children are not useful fighters. As a result, the ones it controls back away, cower, or hide from the PCs. Children whimper and cry while the women give the best warnings they can if spotted or found. The brainvines use the village men to attack those that would disrupt Kurishan's plans.

Encounter: The PCs aren't assaulted by brainvines until they are deep within the village. After the PCs have either been in the Green River Inn or gone past it, one to three brainvines attack. Once the PCs beat back the brainvines, roll 1d20 for every 10 minutes of game time. On a 17 or higher, the PCs are attacked by an additional 1d4 vines. For more on the brainvines see New Monsters — Appendix B.

Tactics: If the PCs appear to be defeating the brainvines too easily, give them more vines to fight with.

✚ **Brainvine:** CR 2; Medium plant; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 0 ft., vines 20 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, vine); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, 1d4 vines); SA motor control; SQ low-light vision, plant traits, electricity immunity; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +7; Great Fortitude, Stealthy

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Brainvines take no damage from electricity.

Motor Control (Ex): After each successful attack made against a mammal by a brainvine, the target must make a Will save (DC 14). The save DC is Wisdom based. If the save fails, a vine has entered the target's body and attacked its central nervous system. When this happens, the target becomes paralyzed for 10 minutes. Then the target's body is under the control of the brainvine, which uses the attached vine to send commands to the target's nervous system.

THE VILLAGERS' TALE

If the party is able to free any of the villagers from the control of the brainvines, they each tell variations of the following tale. They have a hard time getting through it without breaking out with an occasional sob or grimace of disgust.

"Several months ago, I awoke in the middle of the night, to a sharp pain, but I couldn't move! I heard shouting outside and could see the flicker of firelight through the window. It was Harned's house. I could hear her family screaming, but I couldn't get up.

"Over the next couple of minutes, my whole body became numb. I couldn't feel anything! Then I jerked upright in bed and started walking. I saw my family nearby and they were walking like puppets, with a trailing vine attached to each of their backs.

"We walked to the garden, where this great heap of rotting plants was moving around. It was alive! It looked us over without saying a word, and then we walked back out to the village. We wandered around the village for a while, doing its bidding.

"We dragged some of our livestock to the garden, where the creature ate them. A few strangers showed up in the village. We captured them for the creature in the garden and it ate them too!"

LOCATIONS

1. Small Rock Hut (Storage Shed)

After opening the heavy, wooden door, you see a single, small room, about 10 ft. by 10 ft., filled with farming equipment: plows, scythes, sickles, bags of seed, shovels, picks, etc.

If a character brings a scythe or sickle into the village, the first few attacks of the villagers and brainvines are directed at her. Thereafter, the vines ignore or avoid the character, having learned to be wary of the implements the PC carries.

2. Log House

This medium-sized house has a small, covered porch. A few flowers are planted in front, but thick growth at the base of the flowers is choking them out.

The door is ajar and opens easily with a slight touch. The house appears lived in, but no one is currently in the two-room home at the moment. Its furniture and decorations are modest.

Treasure: If the characters search for anything of interest (DC 10), they find only a small pouch of coins containing 15 gp and 34 sp.

3. Small Wooden Shack

This hut is heavily overgrown and in a horrible state of disrepair. As you cautiously approach, you detect the odor of decaying flesh.

You have to push away vines and shrubs to reach the door, which resists your attempts to open it.

▣ **Heavy Wooden Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hit points 20; stuck DC 23; no lock.

Immediately after breaking down the door, your nostrils are assaulted by an overwhelming stench of decay and the unnerving buzz of insects. In the center of the single, cube-shaped room lays a dead man, a dagger clenched tightly in his right hand. He's been dead for some time. Flies swarm about the room, concentrated on the corpse. Some of the man's bones are exposed. In other places, his skin crawls with the maggots and insects living in the carcass.

The inside of the hut is in shambles. The sparse furnishings — a rickety bed, a small table, and a three-legged stool — have been tossed about. In the corner, a fire in the small fireplace has long since burned to nothing, and a toppled pot lies in a long-dried puddle of porridge untouched even by the insects. In another corner is a pile of broken bottles from which the scent of strong liquor can be detected, even over the stench in the hut.

Further investigation of the corpse requires a Will save (DC 12). Success means the PC has the fortitude to stay and investigate; failure means leaving the area or become nauseated (see Condition Summary in Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Upon closer examination, the cause of death seems to be strangulation, but the odd thing is the same sort of rope or cord used to strangle him left deeply gouged marks not only around the neck, but also his arms and legs.

Treasure: There are no other items of interest in the hut.

4. Stone-Faced Farmhouse

Constructed mostly of wood, this farmhouse has a stone face. Atop the roof sits a weathervane in the shape of a rooster. There is a slightly overgrown gravel path leading from the road to the front porch. The door has a nice lock on it.

The lock, however nice, is not engaged. If the PCs decide to enter, the door offers no resistance.

The door opens with little resistance, and it is immediately apparent the owners of the house are fairly affluent for this small farming community. The furniture and decorations are of good quality, and some appear moderately valuable. There are also some books on a small shelf above the hearth; an indication an educated person lives here.

Treasure: The furnishings are worth a total of 250 gp, but they would have to be hauled away in a wagon and sold back in the city. The books are diverse, but not important to the adventure. Feel free to embellish, or use AEG's *Toolbox* (tables 2–87 and 2–88) to roll up a few book names.

A search of the house (DC 20) reveals a small, hidden niche under a brick in the fireplace. Within the niche is a small, iron lock-box. It is locked, but can be foiled with an Open Lock check (DC 18) or by breaking it open (hardness 3; hit points 15). Within is a pouch containing 23 pp, 58 gp, and 17 sp.

5. Livery Stable (Barn)

On the west side of the road, you see a huge barn with two adjacent corrals. The doors stand wide, as do the stalls inside the barn. A quick inspection reveals there is a loft full of hay and the stalls show signs of being used not long ago.

A character with the Handle Animal or Survival skill can make a check (DC 15) to determine the stable was last used about one week ago. This is where the animals were kept that were led to the garden to be devoured.

While in the barn, make Listen checks for each character (DC 20). If a character specifically announces they listen while inside or in front of the barn, the DC is 10. Characters who succeed at the check hear some sort of noise from the inn across the street (area #6). If someone succeeds by a margin of 5 or greater, he thinks it sounded like a chair scraping across a floor.

6. Green River Inn

The sign outside this two-story, brick building reads "Green River Inn." A covered porch welcomes visitors to a double door made of heavy wood.

The doors are unlocked and there appears to be no movement within.

Upon opening the doors, you see a large room, about 40 ft. by 30 ft., containing eight roughly-hewn tables bordered by benches and chairs. A short bar lines the back of the room. Scattered around the place are seated half a dozen adult villagers. As you enter, they start crying for help, shouting warnings, making threats, and so on. Then they leap to their feet.

Encounter: The villagers attack. Their yelling inadvertently creates an atmosphere of confusion giving them +4 to their initiative during the first round as they leap to attack the party, using daggers and clubs hidden alongside them.

As fighting ensues, party members may make a Spot check (DC 20) to see vines trailing behind the villagers, attached to them. Each turn, characters who failed the check can try again. Being alerted to the fact by other party members grants +10 to the check.

Tactics: If the PCs figure out the villagers' plight and attack the vines, they should still get the XP award for the villagers, for saving them instead of killing them. As each vine is destroyed, the villager attached to the vine faints. He can be revived easily enough, by light slaps or a bit of water. When questioned, they tell the party another version of "The Villagers' Tale," as described above.

In the unlikely event the villagers win the combat or the party surrenders, the villagers remove all weapons from the adventurers and take them to Kerishan in her garden (area #11).

▲ **Villager, Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

7. Brick and Wood Farmhouse

A brick and wood farmhouse is set back from the road a bit, and the dirt path to its door is covered with tall grass and other ground cover.

Within the grass are three brainvines which attack the party with a total of three vines during the first round, and add two additional vines each round thereafter until a total of 10 vines have attacked and been destroyed. Further vines won't be risked since they are attached to the inhabitants of the house.

▼ **Brainvine:** CR 2; Medium plant; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 0 ft., vines 20 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, vine); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, 1d4 vines); SA motor control; SQ low-light vision, plant traits, electricity immunity; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +7; Great Fortitude, Stealthy

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Brainvines take no damage from electricity.

Motor Control (Ex): After each successful attack made against a mammal by a brainvine, the target must make a Will save (DC14). The save DC is Wisdom based. If the save fails, a vine has entered the target's body and attacked its central nervous system. When this happens, the target becomes paralyzed for 10 minutes. Then the target's body is under the control of the brainvine, which uses the attached vine to send commands to the target's nervous system.

If the party searches through the grass they should be able to locate the central mass of the vines and destroy them, thus freeing the inhabitants of the house (who are unconscious for several minutes after the plants are killed).

If the PCs fail to kill the vines, read the following:

When you enter the house, you find three young men, sitting in a room that's a complete mess of broken or mistreated belongings and furniture. Moving oddly, the children pick up small objects about the room and begin to hurl them at you.

The children are controlled by the three brainvines outside, and attack. The PCs have a chance to spot this, just as they did with the women in the Green River Inn (area #6).

Once freed, the older children have their own version of "The Villagers' Tale," described above. The younger ones tell the same tale, but with a lot of confusion, imaginings, and tears thrown in.

There is nothing of value in the house.

8. Large Wooden House

Once a fine wooden house, this structure is now riddled with holes large enough to drive a small wagon through. The place appears ready to collapse at any moment. In fact, it seems the only thing holding the house up is the mass of vines covering nearly every outside surface.

Looking into the house from outside, little can be seen due to the shadows and large amount of plants within.

Encounter: Luckily, there are only two brainvines in this huge mass of mundane vines. As the group moved toward the house or pause to look in, the brainvines attack with three vines. They add three vines per round for the next two rounds, totaling 9 vines.

Brainvine: CR 2; Medium plant; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 0 ft., vines 20 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, vine); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, 1d4 vines); SA motor control; SQ low-light vision, plant traits, electricity immunity; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +7; Great Fortitude, Stealthy

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Brainvines take no damage from electricity.

Motor Control (Ex): After each successful attack made against a mammal by a brainvine, the target must make a Will save (DC14). The save DC is Wisdom based. If the save fails, a vine has entered the target's body and attacked its central nervous system. When this happens, the target becomes paralyzed for 10 minutes. Then the target's body is under the control of the brainvine, which uses the attached vine to send commands to the target's nervous system.

Providing the vines are beaten, the brainvines don't offer any more resistance, trying to blend in with the other vines on the house. If the house is burned, the brainvines are destroyed. If the party enters the house, and the surviving brainvines have not been found and destroyed, the vines covering the house constrict, causing the house to collapse around them. This does 3d6 damage (Reflex save, DC 15, for half damage) to anyone caught inside.

9. Burned Ruins

These ruins, the charred remains of a wooden structure, were created only a few months ago. There is no vegetation within 20 ft. of the house. By using Search around in the ashes (DC 10), the party discovers three bodies — those of a man, a woman, and a young girl — all burned to death. There are also the remnants of plants, including what appears to be hundreds of feet of blackened vine.

Treasure: A character with Survival can make a skill check (DC 15) to determine the structure burned down about two months ago. Poking around in the ruins for 1d4 hours (Search, DC 15) turns up a gold ring (15 gp) and two semi-precious stones (35 gp total). If the PCs retreat here when attacked by vines, they discover the brainvines (their vines and any villagers controlled by them) refuse to get within 20 ft. of the ruins. They learned the lesson of fire the hard way once before.

10. Great Stone House

This large, two-story stone structure is covered in hanging plants and vines. As you approach, a slight breeze causes some of the plants hanging near the front door to sway.

This was Kerishan's home until she died a couple of months ago. It is also the only easy way into the garden (area #11), since the perimeter of the garden is made up of foliage too thick to cut through and too damp to burn.

The vines do not prevent the party from entering the house. The ground floor consists of the entryway with two closed doors, leading to two rooms, and a staircase leading up.

The door opens easily to present a small entryway with doors on either side — left and right — and a narrow staircase leading up to the second floor. A smell of peat moss and compost envelops the house.

If the PCs go in the door to the right:

The right door opens into a den or library. There are three cabinets and a desk with a chair. The room smells of decay. Moving around the room, you see what's left of an old man's decomposing corpse. The woman is dressed in fine robes and wears a couple of expensive-looking rings.

Treasure: A *detect magic* spell reveals one of the rings as magical — a *ring of plant growth*. This allows the wearer to cast *plant growth* once per day. (Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Forge Ring, *plant growth*; Price 2,250 gp; Cost 1,125 gp + 90 XP; Weight —.)

If the PCs go in the left door:

The door on the left side of the entry leads into a kitchen and dining area. The food in the kitchen has long since rotted and become insect bait. Stacks of dirty pots and pans line the kitchen, but oddly enough, no plates or eating utensils accompany them.

In the kitchen, a door leads out into the huge garden behind the house.

Upstairs there is a narrow landing and two doors. If the PCs go in the first door:

The first door leads into a laboratory. In the lab are two tables covered with all manner of beakers, tubes, burners (all extinguished), vials of various colored liquids and powders, and so on. On one of the tables is a large, thick book.

To a wizard character, this looks like a treasure trove of spell components. A thorough search (Search check, DC 15) of this room yields 1d3 castings worth of any plant-based spell component the wizard may want. Flipping through the book, the group discovers Kerishan (the name on the book's cover) has been experimenting with exotic plants for a number of years. By studying the last 31–50 pages, a wizard or druid character can determine Kerishan was attempting to create a process through which a human could be reincarnated, at death,

into a form of sentient plant life she refers to as an "eternal lily". It should be able to move, cast spells, and handle a number of other things.

If the PCs go in the second door:

This door leads to a bedroom. The centerpiece of the room is a thick, luxurious mattress with fine quilts. A fine rug covers the stone floor, and a large, ornate candelabra sits atop a strong wooden desk.

Treasure: After a thorough Search (DC 15), the party finds a section of the wall which slides aside to reveal a small niche with Kerishan's most prized possessions: a large sack of gold with 11,200 gp, a wand (*wand of magic missiles* at 5th level with 13 charges left), and a *cloak of resistance* +2. The candelabra could be sold for up to 50 gp.

11. Kerishan's Garden

The only way into the garden is through the great stone house (area #10), as the garden surrounds the rear of the structure and is so overgrown around the outside it is impenetrable.

Stepping out of the great stone house and into the garden, your first reaction is awe. Immediately before you is what appears to be a cathedral of living plants, arching 40 ft. overhead to form silhouettes of leaves filtering the sun's light into a stream of delicate rays falling upon the soft grass of the clearing.

The edges of the living cathedral are solid walls of bushes and trees, with the exception of three openings, which lead farther into the thick garden.

The only way into Kerishan's garden is through her house. The back door to the house leads into the garden maze's only entry point. See below for full details on Kerishan's garden.

THE GARDEN

All of the walls of the garden are thick as an equatorial jungle with plant life. The humidity here approaches the likes of a rain forest, so it's nearly impossible to start a fire using any of the plants (though not so to light a torch or lantern).

The paths through the garden vary from 5 ft. to 10 ft. wide. Even these are filled with calf-high grass and ground cover. Moving around in the garden is difficult, so players must make a Reflex save (DC 10) every 10 minutes or so to avoid tripping. They take no damage, but it slows them down for a few moments. Roll for characters at different times so two or three don't fall down each time rolls are made.

12. Blue Clearing

As you enter there is a large chamber in the garden maze, you notice the increased light filtering through the vaulted ceiling. There are hundreds of blue flowers and leaves along the walls, springing from dozens of different types of plants.

As you move across the clearing, a clump of plants at the edge of the chamber erupts, and four adult male villagers covered in a chitinous mold charge at you with pitchforks and shovels. As they do so, they yell warnings, beg for death, and cry for help.

The party may attack the vines protruding out the villagers' backs. All four vines come from a single brainvine at the edge of the clearing. The brainvine uses its remaining vines (4 of them) to assist the villagers as they attack.

☛ **Brainvine:** CR 2; Medium plant; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 0 ft., vines 20 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, vine); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, 1d4 vines); SA motor control; SQ low-light vision, plant traits, electricity immunity; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +7; Great Fortitude, Stealthy

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Brainvines take no damage from electricity.

Motor Control (Ex): After each successful attack made against a mammal by a brainvine, the target must make a Will save (DC14). The save DC is Wisdom based. If the save fails, a vine has entered the target's body and attacked its central nervous system. When this happens, the target becomes paralyzed for 10 minutes. Then the target's body is under the control of the brainvine, which uses the attached vine to send commands to the target's nervous system.

The mold growing on the villagers has fused with their skin and is not easily removed. If the villagers are spared (by severing the vines which control them) they feint for a few minutes, then reawaken and give their version of The Villagers' tale. They add, however, they were forced to watch as the 'plant monster' ate people who visited the village after she took over. After telling their tale, they want to leave the garden, but only if escorted (there are more vines about).

13. Red Clearing

As you approach a clearing ahead, you notice there is a reddish hue to the increased light within. As you enter, you experience a feeling of euphoria. Any sense of urgency departs, and you are overcome with a peaceful glow.

Each character must make a Will save (DC 15) or suffer the effects of this intoxicating clearing. Those who fail the test have all of their Ability Scores reduced by 2 for the next hour (this affects all attribute-based bonuses), during which time the victims are slow and sluggish (-5 to Initiative). Those who successfully make the save fight off the effects.

14. Purple Clearing

Walking into a widening area, you find yourselves in a large clearing surrounded by plants bearing purple flowers and leaves. Deep within the leaves on the far side of the clearing are two shapes, which look humanoid.

Encounter: The two shapes are plant constructs — dummies — made to attract the attention of invaders. If the party approaches or attacks these constructs, three adult male villagers spring from the bushes at either side of the PCs and attack, all the while moaning and begging for help. These villagers are also covered in a mold, but it has a spongy look.

The party may attack the vines controlling the three villagers, all of which originate in one brainvine at the edge of the clearing. Either way, the brainvine uses its remaining vines (five of them) to assist the villagers as they attack.

✚ **Brainvine:** CR 2; Medium plant; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 0 ft., vines 20 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, vine); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, 1d4 vines); SA motor control; SQ low-light vision, plant traits, electricity immunity; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 5.
Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +7; Great Fortitude, Stealthy

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Brainvines take no damage from electricity.

Motor Control (Ex): After each successful attack made against a mammal by a brainvine, the target must make a Will save (DC14). The save DC is Wisdom based. If the save fails, a vine has entered the target's body and attacked its central nervous system. When this happens, the target becomes paralyzed for 10 minutes. Then the target's body is under the control of the brainvine, which uses the attached vine to send commands to the target's nervous system.

If the villagers are killed or freed, the mold on them immediately shrivels and dies. Freed survivors tell yet another version of "The Villagers' Tale" and know the monster was Kerishan who lives somewhere in the center of the maze, but they haven't been there often enough to provide directions.

15. Yellow Clearing

As you enter this well-lit clearing, you notice its walls are a mass of yellow flowers. At one side stands a single villager. From the description of the merchant Marrick, you recognize this man as Brock Gnath, the leader of the villagers. He is wearing a full suit of chainmail and carrying a sword and shield...

He yells a single warning to you, telling you to flee while you still can. Then he leaps to attack.

Encounter: Brock was once an officer in a warlord's army and is a dangerous warrior. The party may attack the vine controlling Brock, which comes from a single brainvine at the edge of the clearing. The brainvine uses its five remaining vines to assist Brock as she attacks. If freed, Brock echoes "The Villagers' Tale," but she also tells the party how to get to Kurishan's hoard (#F).

✚ **Brainvine:** CR 2; Medium plant; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 0 ft., vines 20 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, vine); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, 1d4 vines); SA motor control; SQ low-light vision, plant traits, electricity immunity; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +7; Great Fortitude, Stealthy

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Brainvines take no damage from electricity.

Motor Control (Ex): After each successful attack made against a mammal by a brainvine, the target must make a Will save (DC14). The save DC is Wisdom based. If the save fails, a vine has entered the target's body and attacked its central nervous system. When this happens, the target becomes paralyzed for 10 minutes. Then the target's body is under the control of the brainvine, which uses the attached vine to send commands to the target's nervous system.

▲ **Brock Gnath, Human Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d10+10; hp 39; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/18-20, longsword); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/18-20, longsword); SA—; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Power attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

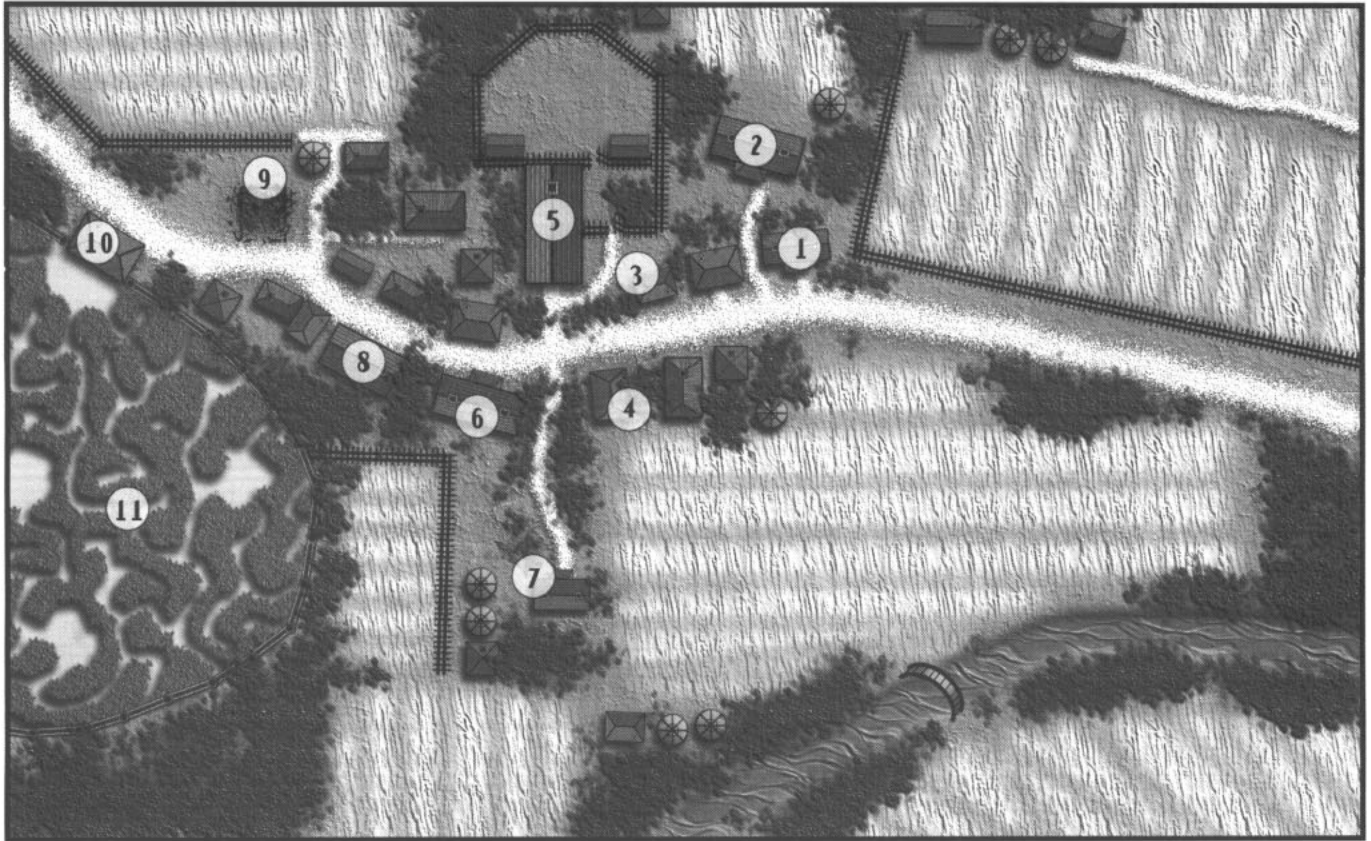
Possessions: +1 chain shirt, shield, masterwork longsword.

16. Kurishan's Clearing

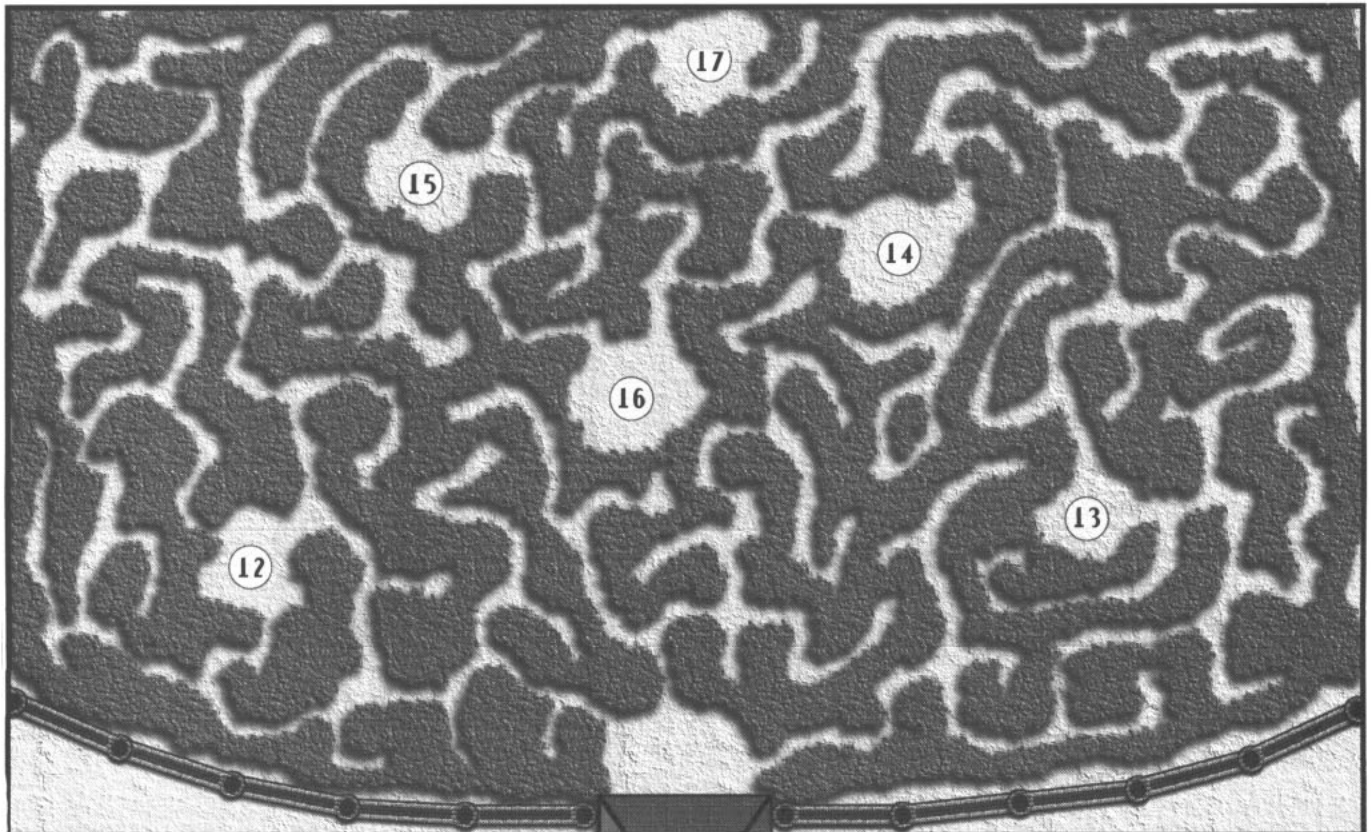
As you enter this clearing, you note it is dimly lit because it is beneath a thick canopy of growth. You see only the thick green plants making up the thick wall of the area.

KERISHAN'S GARDEN

THE VILLAGE OF DARBIN



THE GARDEN



Encounter: Kerishan tries to ambush the heroes. She is completely insane at this point, but her great intellect is intact. She fights to the death, unwilling to discuss surrender or her plight. When in trouble, she rushes into the bushes — where the party cannot travel — then reappears on the group's flank, leaping out of the other side of the clearing.

When Kerishan is killed, all of the brainvines release their control of the villagers and become dormant for a few days.

▲ Kerishan, Shambling Mound: CR 6; Large plant; HD 8d8+24 (60 hp); Init +0; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +11 melee (2d6+5, slam); Full Atk +11 melee (2d6+5, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, constrict 2d6+7; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity, low-light vision, plant traits, resistance to fire 10, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +12, Move Silently +12; Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam).

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a shambler must hit with both slam attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A shambler deals 2d6+7 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Immunity to Electricity (Ex): Shamblers take no damage from electricity. Instead, any electricity attack used against a shambler temporarily grants it 1d4 points of Constitution. The shambler loses these points at the rate of 1 per hour.

Woodland Stride (Ex): Kerishan may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas) in her garden (only) at her normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion still affect her.

Skills and Feats: Shamblers have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Move Silently checks. *They have a +12 racial bonus on Hide checks when in a swampy or forested area.

17. Kerishan's Hoard

Treasure: Within this small pocket in the vegetation, you discover a finely crafted chest. It is locked (Open Lock check, DC 25). Once opened, you find platinum (64 pp), gold (468 gp), and a gem (*symbiotic magic jar*, see Appendix A — New Magic Items). There is also a letter addressed to Brock and signed by Marrick. It asks the villagers of Darbin to contact him with all haste to resolve the details of purchasing the village's harvest.

▲ Villager, Human Com1: CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

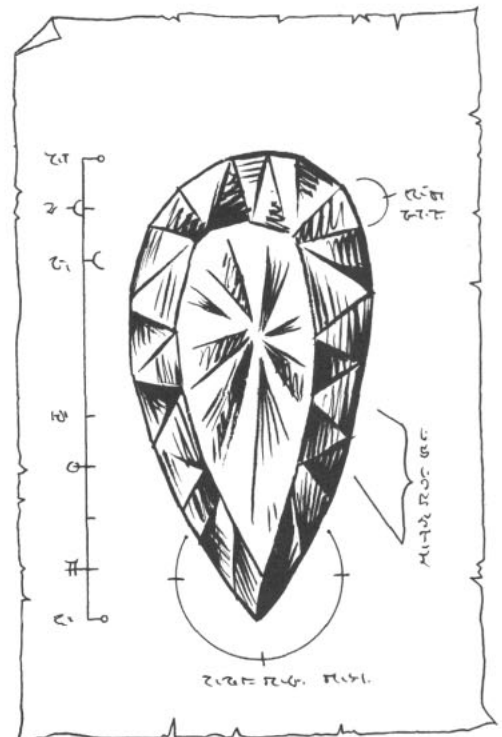
Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

EPILOGUE

PCs who defeat the dangerous plants and free the village are touted as heroes. PCs who didn't exercise caution and managed to kill a few villager men during combat, the celebration is much more somber... Actually, it is a funeral. While the villagers do not despise the PCs (they did save the village from certain doom, after all), they receive no hero's reward.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The druid Larian comes to the town from the nearby woods to help set things right. He asks the PCs to check out some disturbing sounds and suspicious activity he's heard in his woods of late. The PCs head off into the wood, and spot a welcoming campfire ahead of them only to find the camp occupants turned to stone (see the adventure "Dawn of the Serpent").
- The king's men finally arrive to help, better late than never, but receive little sympathy from the population. They try to explain that this village is on the outer edge of their kingdom, and while this was happening the core of the kingdom came under attack from the Barbarians of Beloran Gorge. They approach the PCs and ask them (since they did such a fine job here) if they would care to undertake a mission for Kaylin, elven advisor of the kingdom, involving a matter of importance with his majesty (see the adventure "The Lost King").



Chapter 13:

Out of Body, Out of Mind

Levels 4 to 6

by Patrick Kapera

Welcome to the youngest and most turbulent of the realms, a mountainous expanse known as Tirna'cel. This place was once well known for its power-mongering warlords, magic-wielding sorcerers, and archfiends from the deepest pits of the Abyss. But in the last 600 years, this has all changed. Tirna'cel is a peaceful and welcoming land now, due in no small part to the efforts of the warlord Tirna'gael, a member of the land's founding nobility.

Tirna'gael turned against the other rulers without warning, attacking and overwhelming them without remorse. He is said to have grown stronger and more powerful without warning. The reasons for his remarkable gain in power are unknown; though they are routinely connected to items said to have been entombed with him by the then newly formed paladin's Order of Garadon.

After his death, Tirna'gael's body was interred in his central citadel, a large stone fortress suspended over an immense lava pit. There he has rested for nearly 600 years, protected by the surrounding hostile environment and a small cadre of supernatural guardians summoned and permanently bound by the Order of Garadon.

But recently, rumors reach the corridors of Tirna'cel's capital city saying invaders have struck the fallen PC's burial place, in search of one or more of his legendary magic items. So far what is known of these foul creatures is they are native to the environment, thus resistant to the fiery dangers of the area.

Your party is summoned by the lord of the realm, who has charged you with ending the threat to Tirna'gael's tomb and the potential destruction of the land's long-enduring peace. If the sources of Tirna'gael's power were to fall into the wrong hands, it could mean the end of the nation as you know it.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 1 to 3. Wilderness skills (used to get to the tomb) and then the ability to spot and disarm traps (once the PCs arrive) are both important to this adventure.

The rumors of the threat are in error, but the PCs don't know this. There is a truth behind the legend of Tirna'gael which is the most carefully guarded secret of the Garadon paladins. They knew the warlord for what he really was: a human shell possessed by an ancient, destructive force from the Abyss.

Demonic in nature, this creature, known as a nescent, is usually both incorporeal and invisible (see New Monsters — Appendix B). Further, it is apparently immortal, hopping from body to body to acquire material power and territory. The nescent used Tirna'gael's body to lash out at the other warlords, capitalizing on the element of surprise and a special ring it acquired from a dretch. This ring is

now known as the signature accessory of the fallen warlord, and is believed to be the source of Tirna'gael's great power.

The paladins of Garadon recognized the demon's true nature, however, and waylaid it within its citadel. There they murdered the Tirna'gael shell and trapped the nescent inside an antimagic field. They transformed the fortress into a tomb, and, once the building was secure, summoned and bound mephits to act as eternal guardians against future incursions.

TIRNA'GAEL'S TOMB

For 600 years, the tomb sat silently as a reminder of the "great deeds" performed by a demonic being intent upon dominating the races of the Material Plane. Reaching the location is not difficult; the tomb isn't on a regularly trod path. It's high in a mountain range whose paths have become more dangerous over the years as they go unused and wild. Any number of pitfalls could befall a hapless band of characters on their multi-day travel to the tomb. For avalanches, caves, chasms, and other mountain difficulties, consult Chapter 3: Wilderness Adventures, Mountainous Terrain of the DMG.

MOUNTAIN ENCOUNTERS

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No encounter
11	Avalanche
12	Cave entrance
13	Chasm across trail
14	Fire Elemental
15	Fire Giant
16	Fire Mephit
17	Salamander
18	Tomb Raiders
19	Trail collapses underfoot. Reflex Save DC 15, or slip and fall 1d6×10 ft.
20	Trail ends, restarts up small cliff. Climb DC 15, 1d6×10 ft. tall

1. Entries and Suspension Anchors

After rounding a section of trail, you feel the full force of the heat of lava far below. The citadel-tomb of Tirna'gael is suspended some 100 feet above a bubbling molten lava pit by enormous iron chains embedded in the rock of the crater's edge. At the far side, the chains are connected to enormous mooring platforms at which doors enter the tomb's interior. It appears to gain entrance to the tomb; you will have to climb across.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check with the same DC of a Bardic Lore check.

- DC 10** The path to the ancient tomb leads through treacherous mountains.
- DC 15** Magic was only partially responsible for Tirna'gael's amazing rise in power.
- DC 20** Some say he had extraplanar blood, or carried with him the destiny of kings.
- DC 25** It is said that Tirna'gael did not die peacefully as some have said, but rather he was murdered.

Two sides of the octagonal tomb are open to the acrid air above the lava pit at the guardian chambers (room #10), but unless the PCs can fly, there's no way they're getting in that way. Peering in through these openings, the PCs can make out pillars with what appear to be sculpted statues chiseled up and down along them, and doors leading further into the structure. Outside of these features and the thin arrow slits banded around the tomb, the tomb's exterior is rough and unbroken rock.

The chains are rough but have no hand or footholds. Climbing across the chains requires two Climb checks (DC 10 each — one to reach the halfway point and another to reach the mooring platform). Failure by 5 or more results in the character slipping off the top half of the link he's on, toward the bottom half. Catching himself on the bottom of the link requires another Climb check (DC 15). Should the character fail both of these checks, he plunges to his death in the lava below. Remember that another nearby character can attempt to catch a falling character by making a touch attack, and that the victim may forgo his AC bonus from Dexterity for this.

At the mooring platform, the PCs find two reinforced iron doors, which are unlocked but not opened easily.

■ **Iron Doors:** hardness 10, hit points 60, stuck DC 28.

2. Siege Corridors

The outside wall of this corridor is flush with the outside of the tomb, and pierced regularly with arrow and siege slits. Presumably, these areas were the second line of defense when this was a fortress, but they are quiet now, as a tomb should be. Your footfalls echo in the distance.

These corridors were originally designed to allow ranks of archers and wizards to lay siege to anything making it across (or over) the chains. Traps are built into the inner corridor walls, but they must be triggered manually from the secret passages (room #5 and #6). Only rogues have any chance of finding them, though anyone may note the floors subtly dip away from the boulder traps (room #3) with a successful Spot check (DC 25).

Each of these corridors also contains at least one secret door, which can only be found if the PCs Search (DC 30) the proper section of the corridor.

3. Boulder Traps

Each of these traps contains two boulders, one poised to roll in each direction away from the trap mechanism. The boulders themselves are sculpted to be nearly flush with the corridor walls, and the hallway floors are gently sloped to speed the boulders along once they are released.

The mechanisms themselves have fallen into disrepair, and fail often. Roll a 1d20. A roll of 1–6 means the hidden doorway opens but the boulder jams in the mechanism.

♣ **Rolling Boulder Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (6d6, boulder); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 26. Roll one attack for every character in the corridor. If the attack is unsuccessful, the PC is assumed to have dodged the boulder by ducking through one of the doors in the hallway.

4. Blast of Cold Traps

When triggered, these traps fill a 10-ft.-wide area (targeting two characters, at most) with a “flash-freeze” effect. Like the boulder traps in the same area, the mechanisms for these magical attacks fail on 1–6 on 1d20.

♣ **Blast of Cold Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger (floor area); automatic reset; 10-ft. cold aura (6d6, cold nonlethal); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 27.

5-8. Secret Passages

These rooms cannot be reached without finding one of the secret doors located throughout the structure. The doors are well hidden and are found only by a careful Search check (DC 30).

The secret door opens to reveal a new layer within the tomb, between the outer corridors and the inner rooms. This area was obviously built as a staging point for defending the tomb from invaders. Weapon racks line the walls, spy-holes open into the outer corridors, and trap mechanisms are visible along the outside wall. Two corridors are visible at the interior corners of this irregularly shaped room, leading into the heart of the tomb.

Each room has five secret teleportation portals, which connect the various rooms of the tomb. The mephit guardians (room #15) and the architect’s ghost (room #17) are aware of these passages and use them once they are awakened to cut off, ambush, or contact the party.

Besides the siege corridor (room # 2) trap mechanisms, these rooms are lined with racks of weapons. Most have also fallen into disrepair. If the PCs search through the weapons, have them name off in order the weapon types they are checking for. For each type, roll on the chart below (once).

1d20	Weapon Search Result
1–8	No serviceable weapon of the type sought
9–13	1 serviceable weapon of the type sought
14–16	1d4 serviceable weapons of the type sought
17–18	1d6 serviceable weapons of the type sought
19–20	1 masterwork weapon of the type sought

These rooms are numbered 5 through 8 on the map. Hidden in room 5 (among the other swords on the racks) is a +2 *greatsword* (Search check, DC 20) named *siegebreaker*. This weapon is obviously magical by its appearance. Unfortunately, the weapon still bears the soldier’s family seal, which means no one in Tirna’cel would dare buy it, as all such items are considered religious relics. Removing the family seal requires one week of work, but it reduces the value of the sword unless a Craft (weaponsmithing) check is made (DC 20).

9-10. Foyers

This 30-by-30-ft. chamber is decorated with regal tapestries featuring several of Tirna’gael’s greatest conquests, hung from high rafters of heavy wood. Between the tapestries, long-unused torches are fitted within simple sconces, and simple though sturdy benches dot the floor. Another wooden door is located directly across from you.

Encounter: The high rafters above the party have been animated and charged with protecting the inner rooms of the tomb. Any who pass through this room without the seal of Garadon (as found in room #27) clearly visible on their person are attacked. The rafters magically reach down to curl around the intruders, lifting them off the ground and squeezing them until they stop moving.

Tactics: The rafters cannot distinguish one intruder from another. Also, they ignore all immobile targets, including those already in their grip. A PC could play dead to convince a rafter to let go, but would have to deal with the rafters’ attacks once more when he started to move again. There are two rafters in each room, each of which can attack a single PC each round.

✦ **Rafters, Animated Object, Large:** CR 3; Large construct; HD 4d10+30; hp 52 hp; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., 30 ft. legs, 40 ft. multiple legs, 60 ft. wheels; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, slam); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (long), 10 ft./10 ft. (tall); SA See text; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; also see text; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —

Blind (Ex): A sheetlike animated object such as a carpet or tapestry can grapple an opponent up to three sizes larger than itself. The object makes a normal grapple check. If it wins, it wraps itself around the opponent's head, causing that creature to be blinded until removed.

Constrict (Ex): A flexible animated object such as a rope, vine, or rug deals damage equal to its slam damage value plus 1-½ times its Strength bonus with a successful grapple check against a creature up to one size larger than itself.

An object of at least Large size can make constriction attacks against multiple creatures at once, if they all are at least two sizes smaller than the object and can fit under it.

Hardness (Ex): An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated.

Improved Speed (Ex): The base land speed given in the statistics block assume that an animated object lurches, rocks, or slithers along.

Objects with two legs (statues, ladders) or a similar shape that allows faster movement have a +10 ft. bonus to speed. Objects with multiple legs (tables, chairs) have a +20 ft. bonus to speed. Wheeled objects have a +40 ft. bonus to speed.

Objects might have additional modes of movement. A wooden object can float and has a swim speed equal to half its land speed. A rope or similar sinuous object has a climb speed equal to half its land speed. A sheetlike object can fly (clumsy maneuverability) at half its normal speed.

Trample (Ex): An animated object of at least Large size and with a hardness of at least 10 can trample creatures two or more sizes smaller than itself, dealing damage equal to the object's slam damage + 1½ times its Strength bonus. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the object can attempt Reflex saves (DC 10 + ½ object's HD + object's Str modifier) to halve the damage.

11. The Front Doors

Upon entering this 10-by-10-ft. room, you are assaulted by a foul stench. The floor and lower walls are coated in age-old gristle and bloodstains to a height of about six feet.

This chamber is a crushing wall trap. PCs find it easily (Search check, DC 15), discerning the nature of the trap.

The floor is a pressure plate; it triggers the lower six feet of the walls to crash inward, crushing anything between them.

Unlike the common crushing wall trap, this can be avoided through simple speed, but the act requires a Reflex save (DC 20). Success indicates the PC makes it through the trap before the walls snap closed. PCs can also avoid this trap by somehow confining themselves to the top four feet of the room when the walls close, or by not touching the floor as they move through the room.

This trap can be disarmed, though it is difficult. This requires the PCs to tunnel through to the trap mechanism buried inside the 10 ft. by 10 ft. areas flanking the trap. This is only possible through the eastern wall of the training room (room #23) or western wall of one of the storage rooms (room #24). The attempt requires an appropriate weapon (such as a hammer or pick) and a Strength check (DC 15). Failure by more than 5 by anyone trying to break through causes the walls to crash shut permanently, blocking the corridor for good.

✦ **Collapsing Wall:** CR 6; mechanical; proximity trigger; no reset; Atk +20 melee (8d6, stone blocks); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area); Search DC 14; Disable Device DC 16.

12-13. Vaults of Tirna'gaeil

This 30-ft. by 30-ft. room contains many delicately arranged pedestals and glass viewing boxes. The place is lined with floor-to-ceiling shelves, all containing the wondrous personal possessions of Tirna'gaeil. Weapons, armor, scrolls, books, and many other marvelous items remain precisely where the Order of Garadon laid them to rest over 600 years ago.

The doors into these rooms are reinforced and barred.

✦ **Strong Wooden Door:** hardness 5, hit points 20, stuck DC 23.

Treasure: These vaults contain Tirna'gaeil's most cherished items acquired during his lifetime. Most are items of exotic craftsmanship. Some are magical, and all are showcased independently.

Room 12 contains:

- 70 pp bearing the original seal of the realm. Due to their rarity and mint condition, these coins are worth twice their face value.
- 4 perfectly cut tourmaline gems, worth 125 gp each.
- 6 porcelain cats, each with a hand-painted fur theme and jeweled eyes. Each is worth 750 gp to interested collectors.
- 1 precise replica of the realm's original capital city. It's heavy — over 100 pounds — but worth approximately 10,000 gp.

Room 13 contains:

- 1 set of +1 studded leather armor of silent moves.
- 1 +2 gauntlet of shock.
- 1 +1 light crossbow.
- 1 +1 dagger of petrification. When this weapon scores a critical hit, damage is tripled (instead of doubled), and the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer the effects of a *flesh to stone* spell.

- 1 *identify* scroll (3rd-level caster) and 1 *lightning bolt* scroll (5th-level caster).
- 12 gilded darts (worth 50 gp each).

Encounter: In addition, room 13 contains a dretch desperately seeking a ring he traded to the nescent 600 years ago. This dretch, you see, was in dire trouble after accidentally insulting the human warlord Tirna'gael (its master at the time). The dretch summoned the nescent, hoping it would possess the warlord and end his troubles. The nescent complied, but it demanded a bloodline heirloom from the demon in exchange. Now the dretch searches for its ring here where the nescent – and all its world belongings – were laid to rest.

The dretch is convinced his ring is located somewhere in the tomb. It's in the tomb proper (room #14), which he has not yet entered for fear of encountering the nescent. The PCs represent an opportunity to check whether the ring is hidden with Tirna'gael's remains, and the dretch tries to cut a deal with them to bring the ring to him. The most valuable thing the dretch has to offer the PCs is his service for a specified time.

Tactics: The dretch always flees combat, no matter the odds. Ashamed of the circumstances which brought him here, he refuses to summon other dretches to his aid.

☞ **Dretch:** CR 2; Small outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil); HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp –1; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d4, bite); SA Spell-like abilities, *summon demon*; SQ Damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, telepathy 100 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Search +2, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks); Multiattack.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*scare* (DC 12), *stinking cloud* (DC 13). Caster level 2nd. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day a dretch can attempt to summon another dretch with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 1st-level spell.

Telepathy (Su): Dretches can communicate telepathically with creatures within 100 ft. that speak Abyssal.

14. The Tomb of Tirna'gael

The space within this barrier is impervious to most magical effects, including spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities. Likewise, it prevents the functioning of any magic items or spells within its confines. Effectively, this is a stable *antimagic field* as cast by a 20th level caster.



☛ **Tomb Trap:** CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; floor collapses (drop 200 ft. into molten lava; instant death); multiple targets (all targets in room); Reflex save 15 to dive out; onset delay (1 round); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

A PC might attempt to take something from inside the sarcophagus. This requires a full action, of which the PCs only have two. A PC could grab *Tirna'gael's ring* or *longsword*. Those who persist in trying to steal his armor are doomed to plunge into the fiery depths below.

The spell was focused in the room's doors, making them material components in the casting. All four doors are physically locked, though up to two people can attempt to open one at once. If any of them are opened, the effects of the *antimagic field* are negated, and the nescent is released.

☛ **Strong Wooden Door:** hardness 5, hit points 20, open lock DC 26, break DC23.

If the PCs cancel the spell and enter the room, read the following:

The heart of Tirna'gael's tomb is an immense, gothic chamber decorated with tall, arched alcoves on all sides, towering to the roof some 80 ft. above. The room's only occupant seems to be a heavy, black marble sarcophagus lying upon a wide dais adorned with ancient carvings. The lid of the sarcophagus is chiseled into a likeness of the fallen warlord, his mighty broadsword resting atop his still form.

Encounter: Besides the nescent, the only items of interest in this room are inside the sarcophagus. Should the lid be opened (Strength check, DC 20; up to five characters may assist a single character), the tomb's failsafe trap mechanism is sprung, the sound of metal grinding on stone is heard, and the floor begins to shake and wobble. The PCs have two rounds of action before the entire floor of the room (along with the sarcophagus and Tirna'gael's remains) falls through the bottom of the suspended tomb and into the lava pit below.

This trap is linked to the wards placed upon the mephits in the guardian chambers (room # 15), who awaken after this room is disturbed. DCs for finding and disarming the trap can be found under "Tomb Trap Mechanisms" (room #29).

Characters may attempt to dive out of the room before it collapses (Reflex save, DC 15). They might also stand within one of the arched alcoves around the room, but they're then trapped in front of a gaping hole through the bottom of the tomb.

Any who look inside the sarcophagus are entitled to a simple Spot check (DC 5) to notice something is wrong. Tirna'gae's remains exhibit signs he was brutally murdered. Many of his torso bones are cleaved in two, and the back of his skull has been crushed. This information should come as a surprise to PCs who know the PC's legend, in which he presumably grew old and died of natural causes.

Once released, the nescent immediately moves to inhabit a body — likely one of the mephits, unless one of the PCs is suitable. Afterwards, it uses the available bodies to drive away or kill intruders and reclaim its possessions.

The nescent always attempts to possess the strongest creature it can. It ultimately hopes to murder all the invaders it cannot control, and then retake its stronghold. Having winked out of existence when the antimagic field was created, the nescent is unaware any time has passed, and it still fears Garadon reprisal. It tries to prevent anyone from leaving, lest they inform its old enemies. It flees the area if anyone escapes.

For details about the ring and sword, see New Magic — Appendix A. As for the nescent, it is a template that must be added to whichever creature it decided to inhabit, see New Monsters — Appendix B for details. Because the most likely target is a mephit, here is a sample nescent using a fire mephit host.

🔥 Fire Mephit Nescent: CR 5; Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 3d10; hp 17 hp; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 fire, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 fire, 2 claws); SA Augment, breath weapon, command lesser creatures, nescent possession, spell-like abilities, *summon mephit*; SQ Body destruction, damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, incorporeal traits, invisibility, invulnerable, immunity to fire, *know alignment*, vulnerability to cold; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +23; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +9, Knowledge: Other Planes +10, Search +5, Speak Language: Common, Spot +5, Tumble +5; Blind-Fight, Endurance, Power Attack.

Augment (Su): The body of a host possessed by a nescent grows stronger, tougher, and faster the longer the nescent remains within it. Starting on the first day, the nescent chooses one physical ability (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to increase by 1 (to a maximum of 30). The nescent may increase one such ability per day.

Body Destruction (Su): For every day a host is possessed, it loses 1 hit point permanently, and its maximum hit point potential is reduced by 1. This is unavoidable and irreversible. When the host body reaches 0 hp, it crumbles into smoldering ash, leaving the nescent to find a new host.

Breath Weapon (Su): 15-ft. cone, damage 1d8 fire, Reflex half DC 12. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial adjustment.

Command Lesser Creatures (Su): While possessing a host, the nescent can control other creatures with fewer HD than those of its host. Any creatures the nescent targets must succeed at a Will save or follow the nescent's commands as though affected by a *dominate person* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer. This ability has a range of 50 yards, although it's telepathic, so line of sight is not required.

Damage Reduction (Su): The body of a host slowly grows tougher the longer the nescent remains within it. Each day of possession, the base creature gains 1/- points of damage reduction, up to a maximum value of 20/-.

Fast Healing (Ex): A fire mephit heals only if it is touching a flame at least as large as a torch.

Incorporeal: When not possessing a target creature, a nescent may only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. It can also pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. It always moves silently.

Invisible (Su): While incorporeal, a nescent is invisible. Since the nescent has no body, this prevents the use of mundane Spot or Listen checks to find it.

Invulnerable (Su): While incorporeal, a nescent can only be attacked physically if found on its home plane — which has never been located, even by the Tanar'ri.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour—*scorching ray* (DC 14) as the spell cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer; 1/day—*heat metal* (DC 14). Caster level 6th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Summon Mephit (Sp): Once per day, a mephit can attempt to summon another mephit of the same variety, much as though casting a *summon monster* spell, but with only a 25% chance of success. Roll d%: On a failure, no creature answers the summons that day. A mephit that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Know Alignment (Su): A nescent sees alignments as physical elements and automatically knows the true alignment of any creature it spies.

Nescent Possession (Su): Once per round, a nescent can enter a new host of evil or neutral alignment, on the Material Plane. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 15 + nescent's Charisma modifier). A creature that successfully saves is immune to the nescent's possession effect for one day. If the save fails, the nescent enters the host's body and seizes control of its physical functions. The host immediately gains the effects of the Augment and Damage Reduction abilities, which it retains until the nescent leaves. The host is also affected by Body Destruction (see below).

Resistance (Su): A nescent has fire resistance 20.

15. Guardian Chambers

Rows of sculpted pillars line this long hall, which opens into the air above the lava pit. Each is a miniature depiction of an enemy Tirna'gae's toppled. Each also bears the likeness of a tiny demon, etched in startlingly realistic detail.

Encounter: Each of the center six pillars in each of these rooms contains one of 12 mephits bound to the site and linked to the magical wards placed upon the tomb proper (room #14). These are released from their confinement (but not their obligation to protect the tomb and vaults) if any of the tomb's doors are opened. Note, however, the forces guiding this magical trap have become somewhat sluggish over the centuries; once the tomb is opened, only two of the mephits awaken every three rounds (one from each room) until they are all moving about.

Tactics: The mephits immediately attack anyone responsible for opening the crypt. Otherwise, they demand all intruders vacate the place immediately. The mephits are bound to this purpose through an ancient bargain with the Order of Garadon and are incapable of negotiating on the matter.

Once the mephits are released, the adventure changes, both in pace and purpose. The nescent may possess one of these creatures, and — even if it doesn't — it attempts to control as many as it can using its command lesser creatures ability. This splinters the mephits, leaving those not under the nescent's control to seek aid in eliminating their fellows. The PCs may be able to capitalize upon this good fortune and gain several important allies.

☛ **Fire Mephit:** CR 3; Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 fire, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 fire, 2 claws); SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, *summon mephit*; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, fast healing 2, vulnerability to cold; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Escape Artist +7, Hide +11, Listen +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Move Silently +7, Spot +6, Use Rope +1 (+3 with bindings); Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Breath Weapon (Su): 15-ft. cone, damage 1d8 fire, Reflex half DC 12. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial adjustment.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour—*scorching ray* (DC 14) as the spell cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer; 1/day—*heat metal* (DC 14). Caster level 6th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Summon Mephit (Sp): Once per day, a mephit can attempt to summon another mephit of the same variety, much as though casting a *summon monster* spell, but with only a 25% chance of success. Roll d%: On a failure, no creature answers the summons that day. A mephit that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Fast Healing (Ex): A fire mephit heals only if it is touching a flame at least as large as a torch.



16. Crypts of the Fallen

This dark room is cramped, but affords a sense of intense reverence. From the light spilling in from outside the tomb structure, you can make out several vertical crypts lining the rear and flanking walls. Each crypt bears the symbol of Tirna'gael's reign. These are his finest warriors, buried with him for all eternity.

The doors to these rooms are all locked.

☛ **Strong Wooden Door:** hardness 5, hit points 20, open lock DC 26, break DC 23.

Should any of the crypts be opened, the PCs find nothing but a skeleton clad in simple plate armor, with a personal weapon, all of which spills out onto the floor. None of the armor or weapons in these crypts is special in any way. In fact, most are pitted and useless from centuries of neglect.

17-20. Living Quarters

Except for room #17, these areas are mundane, filled with mundane furnishings, and liberally coated with dust.

17. Barracks

This room is home to a long-standing "guest": the ghost of Theodore Biggs, the architect who converted it into a tomb. Biggs knows the awful truth behind Tirna'gael. He

is bound here by his guilt over misleading the people of the realm about Tirna'gael, as well as what he sees as the paladins' failure to permanently deal with the nescent. He seeks the PCs' aid in reconciling these misdeeds, though only after they have proved to him they are both good and noble. Evil characters find themselves targets instead. Good PCs should desire to destroy the nascent once they know what it is, and what it's done. Biggs informs them this is impossible, as the Order discovered firsthand. Their best option, he explains, is to trap the nescent permanently within a body, as with a flesh to stone spell. Fortunately, Biggs was working on just such a solution when the Order decided to trap the nescent here. He consigned a wizard to enchant a special weapon (a *dagger of petrification*) to use against it. This weapon is now in the vaults (room #13), where the ghost gladly leads allied PCs to obtain it.

As the architect for the tomb, Biggs can also guide the PCs around the various traps (and — if you like — even show them how to use them against the monsters and guardians in the tomb). He also informs the PCs they should all acquire seals of Garadon from the guard stations (room #27) if they intend to venture through the foyers (rooms #9 through #10)

▲ Theodore Biggs: Human Exp 7: CR 8; Medium humanoid (undead, incorporeal); HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +6; Spd fly 30ft. (perfect); AC natural 11, manifested 15, touch natural 11, touch manifested 10, flat-footed natural 10, flat-footed manifested 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d3+1, ethereal only); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+1, ethereal only); SA Frightful moan, manifestation, telekinesis; SQ incorporeal traits, rejuvenation, turn resistance +4 undead traits; AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 15, Con —, Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Craft (carpentry) +5, Craft (locksmithing) +3, Craft (stonemasonry) +5, Craft (trapmaking) +9, Hide +8, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +11, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +8, Profession (architect) +11, Profession (blacksmith) +3, Search +8, Spot +8; Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill Focus (Knowledge (architecture and engineering)), Skill Focus (Profession (architect)).

Frightful Moan (Su): A ghost can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-ft. spread must succeed on a Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

Manifestation (Su): A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon (see Ghostly Equipment, below). A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane,

where is it not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

Rejuvenation (Su): In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. This ghost, who would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + 7) against DC 16. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a ghost for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

Telekinesis (Su): A ghost can use *telekinesis* as a standard action (caster level 12th or equal to the ghost's HD, whichever is higher). When a ghost uses this power, it must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

18. Mess Hall

Also occasionally used as a war room, this chamber contains one large table surrounded by several high-backed chairs. The rest of the room is devoted to smaller, lower tables surrounded by simple benches.

19. Workshop

This room was once devoted to the conception, construction, and maintenance of weapons, armor, and siege machines. It contains three large forges, several worktables, and a large drawing board, though all of the tools have long since been removed.

20. Barracks

This room is intentionally sparse. The only furnishings in the room are two rows of heavy wooden beds with footlockers, only one of which contains anything of interest (a gilded bracelet worth 250 gp).

21-24. Communal Rooms

Each of these areas is filled with completely mundane furnishings, all liberally coated with dust.

21. Storage Room

All the miscellaneous accouterments removed from the other rooms when the fortress was converted into a tomb are crated and stacked neatly toward the edges of the room. These crates contain nothing of true value.

22. Kitchen/Pantry

A huge oven and wood-burning stove consume the back half of this room. Iron shelves stand on either side. Cooking utensils, pots, and the like are crated up and can be found in the storage room.

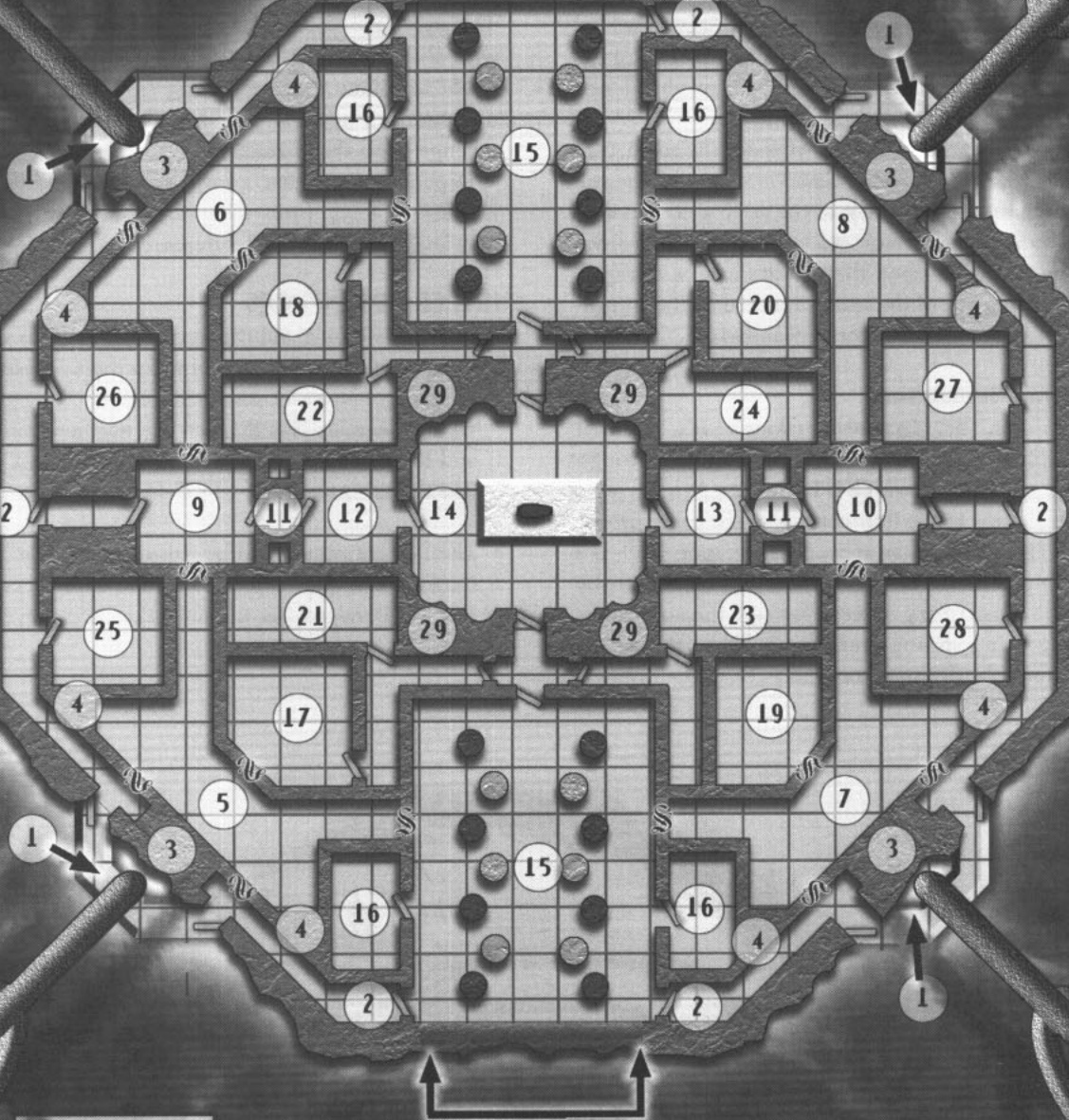
OUT OF BODY, OUT OF MIND

FORTRESS TOMB OF TIRNA'GAEL

Lava

Lava

No wall or rail



 Secret Door

 Pillar

 Sculpted Pillar

No wall or rail

Lava

0 10 20
Scale in feet

23. Training Room

The center of this room consists of a sunken arena where various competitions and martial lessons took place. Surrounding this pit are a wide variety of bars, ladders, swings, and other training equipment.

24. Storage Room

Same as room #21.

25-28. Guard Stations

This room contains a long officer's desk along with several chairs. These are simple guard posts, where Tirna'gae's troops were stationed round the clock. All are abandoned now. Only one contains anything of interest.

In room #27, several skeletons sit about the room, clad in full plate bearing the seal of Garadon. These are the paladins who trapped the nescent in the tomb and then died with the secret. Their armor and weapons are long-since useless, but the seals upon their tunics can be salvaged. Anyone wearing one of the seals is ignored by the animated guardians in the foyers (rooms #9 and #10).

29. Tomb Trap Mechanisms

This trap can be disarmed, though it's difficult to accomplish. The PCs must first tunnel through to the trap mechanism, which is buried inside the irregularly shaped areas at the four corners of the tomb proper (room #9). This requires an appropriate weapon (such as a hammer or pick) and a Strength check (DC 15). Failure by more than 5 when trying to break through the wall results in the trap being sprung prematurely. Once the trap is reached, it may be disarmed normally (DC 20).

EPILOGUE

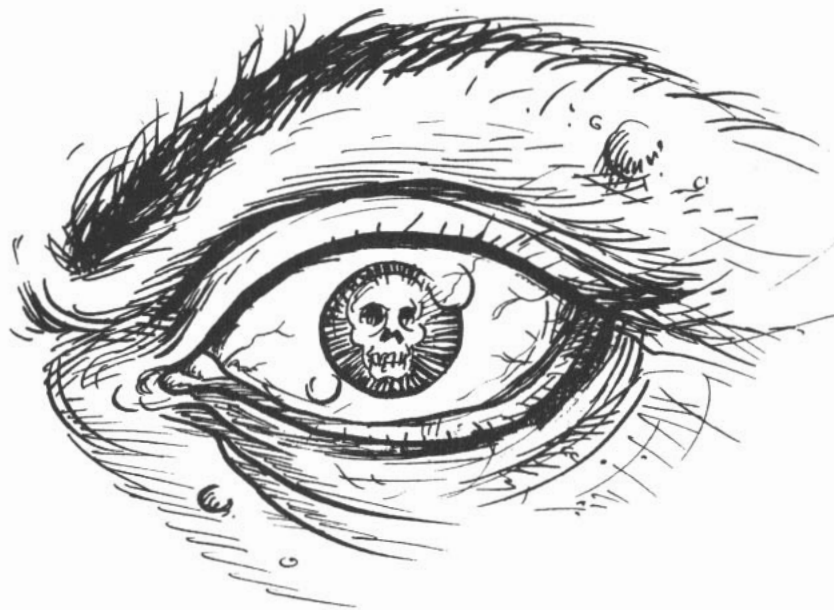
The cleanest path to victory is for the PCs to discover and use the *dagger of petrification* on a creature while the nescent is inside it, and then destroy the statue. But there are other options.

If you want to bring the nescent back later in your campaign, you might omit the ghost from the scenario, forcing the PCs to rely upon their wits to survive, increasing the chances they leave the tomb without destroying the nescent. If the PCs take Tirna'gae's ring with them when they leave, the nescent is especially likely to follow them, traveling from one body to the next until it regains its coveted treasure and exacts revenge upon the characters.

Depending on what knowledge or suppositions the PCs bring forth from their tomb raid, the kingdom may look upon Tirna'gae differently.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- If the PCs return and the lord of the realm is satisfied, he has another mission in mind for them — exploring a long-forgotten tower. Merchants are reporting problems taking Genmarr Pass through the northern mountains, and he asks the PCs to investigate the cursed gateway (see the adventure “The Last Defender”).
- The PCs are summoned by paladins from the Order of Garadon and questioned about their experiences at the Tomb of Tirna'gae (see the adventure “Garadon Manor”).





Chapter 14:
The Red Isle

Levels 4 to 6

by A. A. Acevedo

Having just finished your business in Desburg, you charter a ship, heading for Galishor. The ship, Nora's Grace, is leaving today and you have just enough coin to buy passage. Captain Daniels tips his cap and welcomes you aboard, as porters show you to your rooms. The accommodations are more than acceptable and you settle in for the journey ahead.

"White Squall! Captain Daniels!"

A startled cry is cut short as massive waves hammer the ship. The sound of wood splintering fills your ears as the ship is buffeted by another wave. Lightning explodes in the air as the gutted sky spills the contents of its belly.

A storm is rising and the ship is a victim of the sea's whim.

As you rush onto the main deck, a horrific sight welcomes you. A monstrous wave towers above the ship. You scramble for purchase as it peaks and plummets toward you. The sea engulfs Nora's Grace. The last thing you remember is the taste of salt water in your mouth and the shock of icy water swirling around you.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 4 to 6. It is strongly suggested that at least one of the PCs be a cleric and another a rogue as the vast majority of the encounters include undead and traps. Should the DM wish for a "Horror Movie" feel to this adventure, have some of the surviving crew of the Nora's Grace travel with the party only to be horribly slain by the monsters and in the traps of the Red Isle.

The player characters are not initially privy to the background information, but may learn it during the course of the adventure.

This adventure takes place on a small, rocky island. It can be easily adapted to fit in any ocean setting in your campaign as a small island in a larger chain or as a single isle in dangerous waters. The isle should be a several days sail from major shipping lanes and outside of a settled seacoast area.

Nearly fifty years ago, the infamous pirate known as Mhalik the Red took refuge on a small, uncharted island. His stolen wealth and loyal crew allowed him to create an incredible lair within the rocky caves of the island. They installed ingenious traps to protect their plunder and kept the isle's location secret. The Red Isle was a luxurious haven for these treacherous pirates.

For years, Mhalik the Red preyed on the merchant vessels and coastal towns in the region. His wealth grew with his victories, as did his paranoia. Mhalik became increasingly aloof; he began to suspect his crew of subterfuge and treachery at every turn. Eventually,

his paranoia escalated so much he took action against his own crew. He used a relic from his hoard, a scepter, to transform the unfortunate sailors into zombies and unthinking guardians for his lair.

Note: The undead in this adventure have been animated or created by the *scepter of the damned*. All undead in this adventure are assumed to have +4 turn resistance.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs have been marooned on the Red Isle; the legendary home of Mhalik the Red. They were traveling in a small caravel when a turbulent white squall struck and sank their ship. The details for the PCs' initial voyage are left to the DM to establish. When you're ready to begin the adventure, after you've read or paraphrased the player background, do the same with the following:

You awaken with the sting of salt in your wounds and the sharp bite of bile in your mouth. It's a real effort to open your sand-caked eyes and take in your surroundings. You run a swollen tongue over your dry, cracked lips as you look around.

The cries of gulls and a mild breeze welcome you to one of the most desolate and cheerless places you have ever encountered. You are lying on a narrow beach with your companions and the scattered, broken remains of Nora's Grace. There is no sign of Captain Daniels or his crew.

Just off shore, three hundred feet away, is another ship lying in ruin atop jagged shoals.

The PCs have several options. They can search the immediate area and establish a makeshift camp from the debris, they can swim out to the other wreck or they can climb the stairs and enter the caves.

The Red Isle is a small, rocky island about two miles long and a mile wide. Its craggy cliffs are battered and worn by the sea, creating dangerous, jagged shoals around the majority of the island. The waves thundering and splashing against these rocks are a warning for ships to steer clear of their stony grasp. Any attempt to navigate the shoals would surely end in disaster.

There is only one safe place to land a boat on the island. On the northernmost tip of the island is a narrow stretch of beach, hidden by a second, tiny island comprised entirely of jagged rocks. The beach, a narrow strip of coarse sand and scraggly grass, is a desolate place with few signs of life. There is little sign of wildlife, and with the exception of the grass and a few gnarled, stunted trees, there is no sign of plant life either. The PCs soon discover the island holds little more in store than unrest and death.

RED ISLE LOCATIONS

As the PCs enter each numbered area on the map, consult the entry listed here and read the boxed text to them aloud.

1. Beach

This narrow beach consists of coarse brown sand, scraggly grass, and piles of driftwood. You see no sign of habitation; the isle seems deserted. The beach extends south for nearly 300 ft. There are a few stunted, gnarled trees at the base of the rough cliffs. Except for the gulls, there is no sign of wildlife.

This beach is the only feasible landing point for boats. Over the years, the beach has given way to the weather and tide. Soon, this patch of land will erode, leaving no plausible access to the island.

2. Wreckage

You can see the wreckage of a ship just off shore. It appears to have run aground on the jagged shoals between the Red Isle and a nearby island. The hull has been pierced and is supported by a small group of rocks about 300 ft. off shore. You see no sign of life on the decks and judging by the weathered condition of her sail and hull, she's been a wreck for some time.

Mhalik's flagship, *The Calling Bell*, is aground on the rocky shoals 300 ft. from the shore, in water between 20 and 30 ft. deep. Only the lowest level of the ship, the ballast section, is completely underwater. The prow, rower's quarters and benches rest above sea level, but this level takes on water through the holes in the hull during high tide.

Encounter: Skurja — the Sea Hag — has claimed the wrecked ship as her lair. In the many years that she has lived here, she has "decorated" the inner hull with barnacles, crustaceans, and sea kelp making the ship her private, hermetic home. She prefers isolation and does not leave the ship to attack the PCs. However, she defends her lair if they investigate the wreckage. She will kill if she has too.

Tactics: Skurja has two trained sharks to defend her lair. She remains in the shadows (covering her amulet, see below) for as long as possible, striking when the PCs least expect it. She attempts to drag a wizard (or other spellcaster) under in an attempt to drown him. Once engaged, she uses her evil eye to her advantage. She carries a small pendant around her neck with *light* cast on it, to ensure that others can see her horrific appearance.

▲ **Skurja, the Sea Hag:** CR 4; Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic); HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws); SA Horrific appearance, evil eye; SQ Amphibious, SR 14; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Craft or Knowledge (any one) +3, Hide +4, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +12; Alertness, Toughness.

Horrific Appearance (Su): The sight of a sea hag is so revolting that anyone (other than another hag) who sets eyes upon one must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or instantly be weakened, taking 2d6 points of Strength damage. This damage cannot reduce a victim's Strength score below 0, but anyone reduced to Strength 0 is helpless. Creatures that are affected by this power or that successfully save against it cannot be affected again by the same hag's horrific appearance for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Evil Eye (Su): Three times per day, a sea hag can cast its dire gaze upon any single creature within 30 ft. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or be dazed for three days, although *remove curse* or *dispel evil* can restore sanity sooner. In addition, an affected creature must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or die from fright. Creatures with immunity to fear effects are not affected by the sea hag's evil eye. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Amphibious (Ex): Although sea hags are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely on land.

Skills: A sea hag has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Possessions: *Amulet of light* (a simple shell necklace with *light* cast permanently on it).

♣ **Shark, Large:** CR 2; Large animal (aquatic); HD 7d8+7; hp 38; Init +6; Spd Swim 60 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +12; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsight, keen scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +7, Swim +11; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative.

Blindsight (Ex): A shark can locate creatures underwater within a 30-ft. radius. This ability works only when the shark is underwater.

Keen Scent (Ex): A shark can notice creatures by scent in a 180-ft. radius and detect blood in the water at ranges of up to a mile.

Skills: A shark has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Treasure: Skurja has gathered everything of value into the captain's quarters. She spends most of her time here in the comfortably large, canopied bed. There is a good-sized, rotted sea chest lying open at the foot of the bed. Scattered inside, Skurja has collected the following treasure: a 1,000 sp, 100 gp, 20 pp, three black pearls (gem, nonmagical, 300 gp value each), one jade stone (a nonmagical gem, 90 gp value), and one *potion of cure light wounds*.

3. Rocky Stairs

There is a flight of rough-hewn stairs cut into the cliff face. These steps wind up to the first ledge, approximately 20 ft. from the base of the cliffs. The mouth of a cave leads into the darkness beyond. On the edge of the ledge you can make out what looks to be a wooden mechanism.

These stairs are narrow and the PCs must walk single file when ascending to the first landing. Years ago, the pirates used a winch to haul cargo and supplies up to the landing. The winch mechanism has fallen into disrepair and is no longer functional.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check (used with Captain Daniels and his men).

DC 10 As the story goes, Mhalik the Red was once a respected naval officer, but his fierce and often bloody conquests earned him the title "the Red".

DC 15 After numerous reprimands, he was court-martialed and his ship scuttled. Losing his ship unfortunately pushed him over the edge. Mhalik began a murderous rampage, leaving a dozen naval ships shattered, broken and burning.

DC 20 Mhalik's escapades as a pirate were more gruesome than those as a naval officer. Eventually, Mhalik retired on a hidden isle with the wealth of a king and an army of his most trusted men.

DC 25 The location of the isle was worth a small fortune, but Mhalik's men would die before revealing its coordinates. Many did, as naval officers and rival pirates continued to search in vain for the mysterious isle. For nearly 50 years now, the isle lies hidden from those who seek it, defying even the most adventurous treasure hunters.

4. Main Storage

The cave mouth leads into a large cavern extending almost 200 ft. in length. There are stacks of rotting crates, barrels, sacks, and casks stacked against the walls of this room. It appears to be used for storing cargo and supplies.

Hanging from a rope in the center of the room is the basket for the winch. Unlike the winch on the ledge, the basket might be functional.

Stores fill the room, consisting primarily of tools, timber, pitch, oil, tar, and other similar goods. These materials have not been touched in over twenty-five years and exposure to the sea air has rendered most of it useless. The PCs may attempt to salvage some of the goods if they wish. Roughly 10% of the material is still usable.

The ropes holding the basket are weak and frayed. There is a 50% chance the ropes break with any additional weight. If the PCs try to load more than one hundred pounds into the basket, the ropes break automatically.

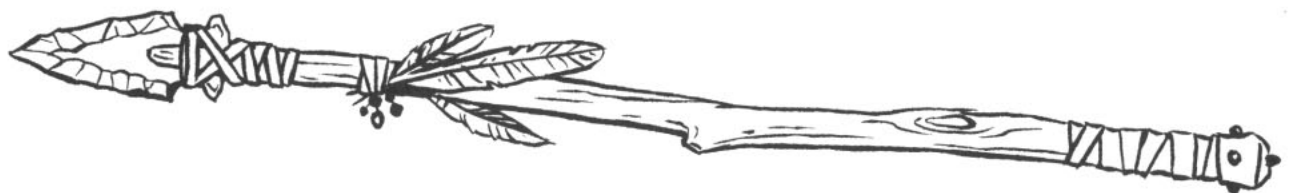
Hidden in the back of the chamber, behind a large group of crates, is a small round door — a Search check (DC 15) is required to find it. This stone door is locked (DC 20) and trapped. If any PC opens the door (without disarming the trap), continue with the following text:

As the door pivots in the doorframe there is a sudden cracking sound beneath your feet. The floor gives way, revealing a deep pit. Rows of spikes line the floor of the shaft as you scramble to regain footing.

▣ **Stone Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; AC 5; break DC 28 stuck, lock DC28.

♣ **Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 20.

Climbing out of the pit is easy enough (DC 10) as the stone sides of the pit are rough and cracked.



5. Hidden Stairs

The door opens into a narrow passage, splitting after 20 ft. The left fork angles downward while the right leads up a flight of irregular, rough-hewn steps.

The stairs are trapped. Every third step has a pressure plate triggering a poison needle trap located beside the step in question. If any PC walks up the stairs (without discovering the traps), continue with the text below:

Suddenly, you feel the step beneath your feet give way with a soft click. Two needles launch from small crevice in the wall, aimed directly at you!

♣ **Poisoned Needle Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +12 ranged each (1d8 plus poison, arrow); poison (Large wyvern poison, DC 17 Fortitude save resists, 2d6 Con /2d6 Con); Search DC 19; Disable Device DC 15.

6. First Mate's Quarters

This chamber is a lavishly furnished natural cave. A comfortable canopied bed with folds of silk and lace rests in the center of the room atop piles of plush rugs. Tapestries adorn the walls, depicting scenes of sea battles and ships. The silken material surrounding the bed shifts as if brushed by a light breeze.

As you move further into the room a foul smell assaults your nostrils and suddenly a grotesque figure — gaunt with deathly pale skin and malevolent eyes — leaps from behind the folds of silk and roars a challenge at you!

Encounter: The creature is Mhalik's first mate, transformed by the scepter into a wight. He is still wearing his pirate clothing, though it is nearly unrecognizable. The creature has been lying in a near catatonic state, fermenting its hatred and yearning for a chance to destroy the living. Once the PCs enter this room, they cannot avoid facing the creature. The creature attacks mercilessly and fights to the death.

☠ **First Mate, Wight:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., +4 turn resistance, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Treasure: There is a small chest under the bed containing 300 sp, 120 gp, 2 pp, two pearls (gem, nonmagical, 300 gp value each), one uncut diamond (large gem, nonmagical, 900 gp value) and a potion of water breathing.

There is a small writing table resting against the eastern wall of this room. Old, dried ink has stained the writing surface. An old journal rests here, collecting dust. The journal belonged to Mhalik's first mate, "Tall" Greggs. The journal details Mhalik's descent into madness and how he turned on his own men, using an item of dark magic to turn them into mindless, undead creatures. The last entry ends abruptly in mid-sentence.

Hidden behind a tapestry in the back of this room is a secret door (DC 28). This stone door is cleverly crafted to resemble the natural cavern wall. The door is locked (DC 22). Secreted under the bed, is a pressure plate releasing the lock. The door opens to reveal a long, dark set of stone steps leading to the Captain's Quarters (area #7).

🗑 **Stone Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; AC 5; stuck DC 28, lock DC 28.

7. Crew's Quarters

This large room is filled with crude bunks, sailor's lockers, and chairs. It appears to have been the crew's living area. It is apparent from the stench and debris, no living creature dwells here.

Lying on bunks and on the floor are decayed corpses wearing sailors' garb. As the last of your party enters the room the bodies stir.

Tactics: The corpses are zombies; former crewmembers who have been animated by Mhalik's scepter and ordered to kill anyone entering the room.

☠ **Zombie Crewman, Human War 2:** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16, 16, 15, 15, 14, 12, 12, 11, 11, 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2/+3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier); SA—; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., +4 turn resistance, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Toughness

Possessions: Studded leather armor, rapier.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

8. Mess Hall / Galley

You can see a great deal of debris on the floor of the cavern. It appears to have been the crew's mess hall and galley. Barrels, crates, and sacks of rotten foodstuffs line the walls of the chamber. There is a large oak table with dozens of broken and overturned chairs. Brass utensils are scattered about the floor along with pewter plates, goblets, and brass pots and pans.

There is a 10-ft. wide hole in the center of the room with a winch beside it. Apparently the pirates used the device to haul supplies up from the storage room below. Hanging to the right of it is a decayed rope ladder leading to a tunnel in the ceiling.

There is a large fire pit covered with debris at the far end of the cavern. There are piles of bones and rags lying in the rubble. As you move about the room the bones rise and stride toward you!

Tactics: These skeletons were once part of Mhalik's crew. They are under orders to kill anyone entering the area.

☠ **Human Warrior Skeleton:** CR 1/3; Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 8, 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, +4 turn resistance, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative

9. Lookout Tunnel

This passage winds its way back to a small ledge on the cliff face. You can see the wreckage of the ship and the beach far below.

The rope ladder leads to a small, winding passage in the ceiling. This passage leads back out to the cliff face. The pirates once sent a lookout up the tunnel to stand watch for incoming ships. The rope ladder is frayed and rotten. There is a 75% chance it breaks if a PC attempts to climb it.

10. Captain's Quarters

This room is even more lavishly decorated than the last. There is an even larger canopied bed in the center of the room, draped with piles of silks and lace. There are tapestries on the wall, hanging beside exotic weapons and trophies. An ornately carved writing desk sits against the northern wall beside a set of shelves filled with books and scrolls. Plush carpets line the entire chamber in thick overlapping piles.

Encounter: This room was once Mhalik's quarters. He created 4 shadows with the scepter, but he cannot control them. As a result, they are sealed off in this room, as Mhalik knows they will attack anyone who enters.

Tactics: If possible, they push the PCs back into the stairway so they only have to fight one of them at a time.

☛ **Shadow:** CR 3; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12; hp 26, 19, 15; Init +2; Spd Fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); SA Create spawn, strength damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +6 turn resistance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge.

Strength Damage (Su): The touch of a shadow deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Skills: Shadows have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks.

*A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

Once the PCs defeat the Shadows they have time to search Mhalik's room. While he took most of his treasure into the vault with him, they may find some of his books, maps and navigational charts here. These will fetch a decent price at the market (1,000 gp for the lot).

If the PCs have not already guessed, they find confirmation they are indeed marooned upon the Red Isle. There are maps and charts here, providing the exact location of the island and the surrounding waters. These items may be sold for a tidy sum should the PCs find the right buyer.

There is secret door which can be found with a Search check (DC 28) in this room. It is the same as the door found in the First Mate's Quarters (area #3), except it has a magical lightning trap. If any PC opens the door (without disarming the trap), continue with the text below:

As the door pivots in the doorframe there is a sudden crackling of energy as electricity dances in the doorway and then arcs into the room.

☛ **Lightning Bolt Trap:** CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

☛ **Secret Stone Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; AC 5; stuck DC 28, locked DC 28.

Beyond the door is a narrow passage leading to an iron door. This is the door to Mhalik's vault (area #8). It is locked, but can be bypassed with an Open Lock check (DC 28), but it is trapped as well. If any PC opens the door (without disarming the trap), continue with the text below:

As the massive iron door slides open you hear a sharp click. You watch in horror as a stone slab falls from the ceiling and blocks your exit! As you turn to push the door open and move into the next room it slams closed, trapping you in the small passageway.

☛ **Suffocation Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (1d4 rounds); air deprivation; Search DC 17; Disable Device DC 23.

Consult the Chapter 8 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules on suffocation.

☛ **Iron Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; AC 5; stuck DC 28, locked DC 28.

Treasure: This natural cavern has a high, vaulted ceiling covered with faint phosphorescence. The floor is covered with mounds and bags of coins. Golden chalices, ivory statuettes, jade figurines, and a multitude of other wondrous items litter the floor. Chests of jewels and precious gems overflow. This is truly the hoard of a pirate king.

11. Mhalik's Vault

Dominating the center of the room is an ornate well crafted in marble. You sense an evil presence in this area — the haunting feeling of death and unholy magic. Then the shadows in the well, lift into the air. They are featureless except for the glowing red pinpoints of their eyes.

Encounter: The shadows flying from the well are actually two wraiths created with the scepter. They attack the PCs as soon as they enter the room. These men were loyal to Mhalik in life and obey his orders now as wraiths.

Tactics: Mhalik's ghost is here as well directing them. But, he waits until the PCs are occupied with the wraiths before making his presence known. He uses his frightful moan during the second round of combat and then attacks the characters directly with his frightful gaze, horrific appearance, and telekinesis. He fights until he's destroyed.

✦ **Wraith:** CR 5; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 34, 32; Init +7; Spd Fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp —; Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); SA Constitution drain, create spawn; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., daylight powerlessness, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 ft. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

Daylight Powerlessness (Ex): Wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

Constitution Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution drain. The save DC is Charisma-based. On each such successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points.

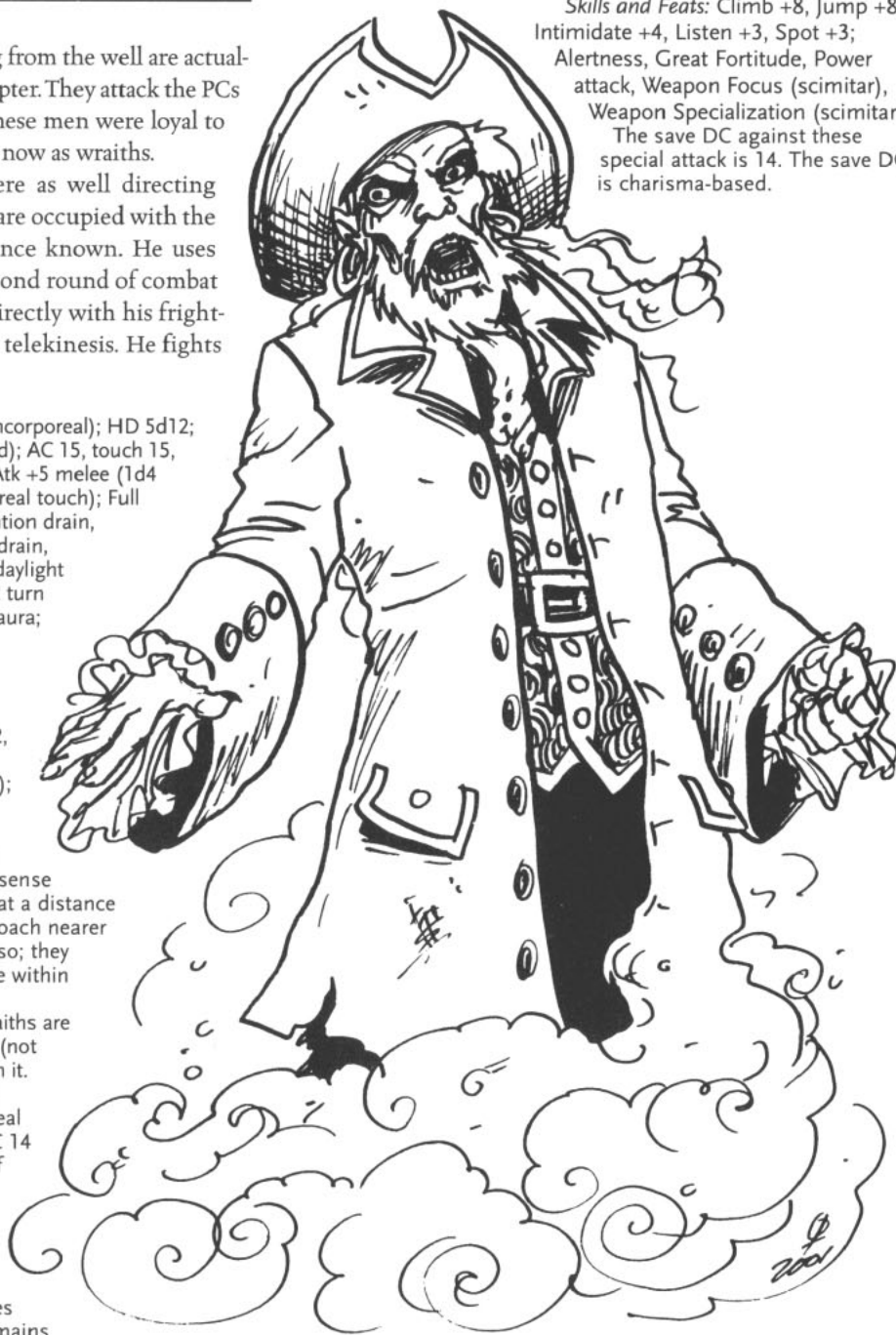
Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wraith becomes a wraith in 1d4 rounds. Its body remains intact and inanimate, but its spirit is torn free from its corpse and transformed. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death.

They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

✦ **Mhalik the Red Ghost, Human Ghost Ftr 4:** CR 6; Medium Humanoid (undead, incorporeal); HD 4d12; hp 32; Init +1; Spd 20ft.; AC natural 13, manifested 12, touch natural 13, manifested 10, flat-footed natural 10, manifested 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/18-20, scimitar); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/18-20, scimitar); SA corrupting gaze, frightful moan, horrific appearance, incorporeal touch, manifestation; SQ Incorporeal traits, rejuvenation, +8 turn resistance, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Power attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar).

The save DC against these special attack is 14. The save DC is charisma-based.



THE RED ISLE

Corrupting Gaze (Su): A ghost can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 ft. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

Frightful Moan (Su): A ghost can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-ft. spread must succeed on a Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

Horrific Appearance (Su): Any living creature within 60-ft. that views a ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

Manifestation (Su): A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon (see Ghostly Equipment, below). A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where it is not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

Rejuvenation (Su): In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. This ghost, who would otherwise be destroyed, returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20+4) against DC 16. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a ghost for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

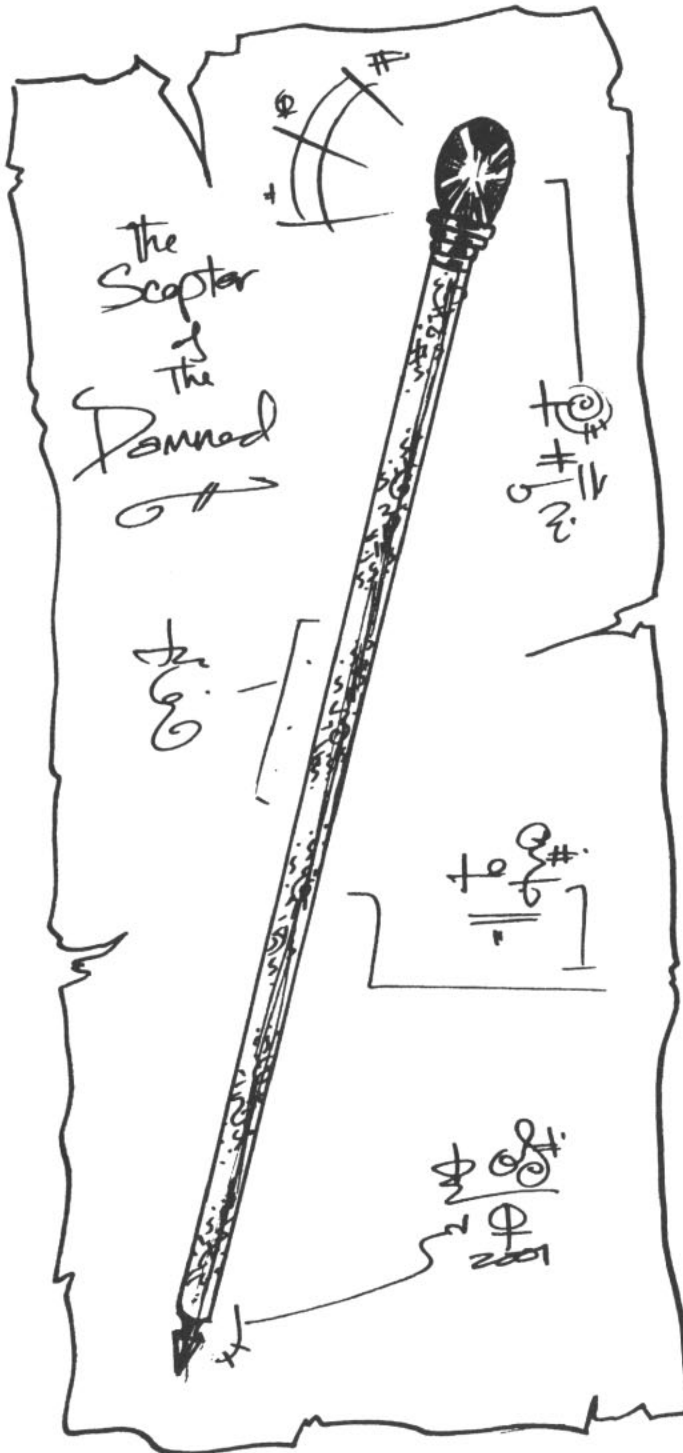
Possessions: +1 ghost touch scimitar.

If the party manages to destroy the ghost of Mhalik the Red, a Search check (DC 20) reveals the *scepter of the damned* (see New Magic—Appendix A) at the bottom of the well, clutched in Mhalik's dead hand. Removing the scepter from the captain's remains is not enough to ensure his ghost does not reincarnate. It must be destroyed. If not, the ghost will return in 2d4 days. If the scepter is removed from the isle, but not destroyed, he reforms in 3d4 days, beginning his quest for the retrieval of the scepter.

The vault houses a hoard fit for a king. The PCs can salvage the following if they manage to find a way to transport it:

Collectively, the chests and sacks contain a total of 10,406 sp, 1,192 gp, 405 pp, three jade statues (100 gp each), twenty moonstones (80 gp each), thirty pearls (12 gp each), one black pearl (500 gp), six wool tapestries (5 gp each), twelve pieces of gold jewelry (50 gp each), an eye-patch with mock eye of sapphire (200 gp), a +2 rapier of thundering (named "Stormwave"), a ring of water elemental command, a scroll of teleport and three potions of water-breathing.

The scroll of teleport can be used to transport the party away from the island. The scroll was created by a 15th level caster and can be used to transport seven hundred and fifty pounds. They will most likely have to leave some of the treasure behind and return for it at a later date. The maps and charts found in the Captain's Quarters (area #7) provide all the necessary information for a return trip to the island.



THE RED ISLE



EPILOGUE

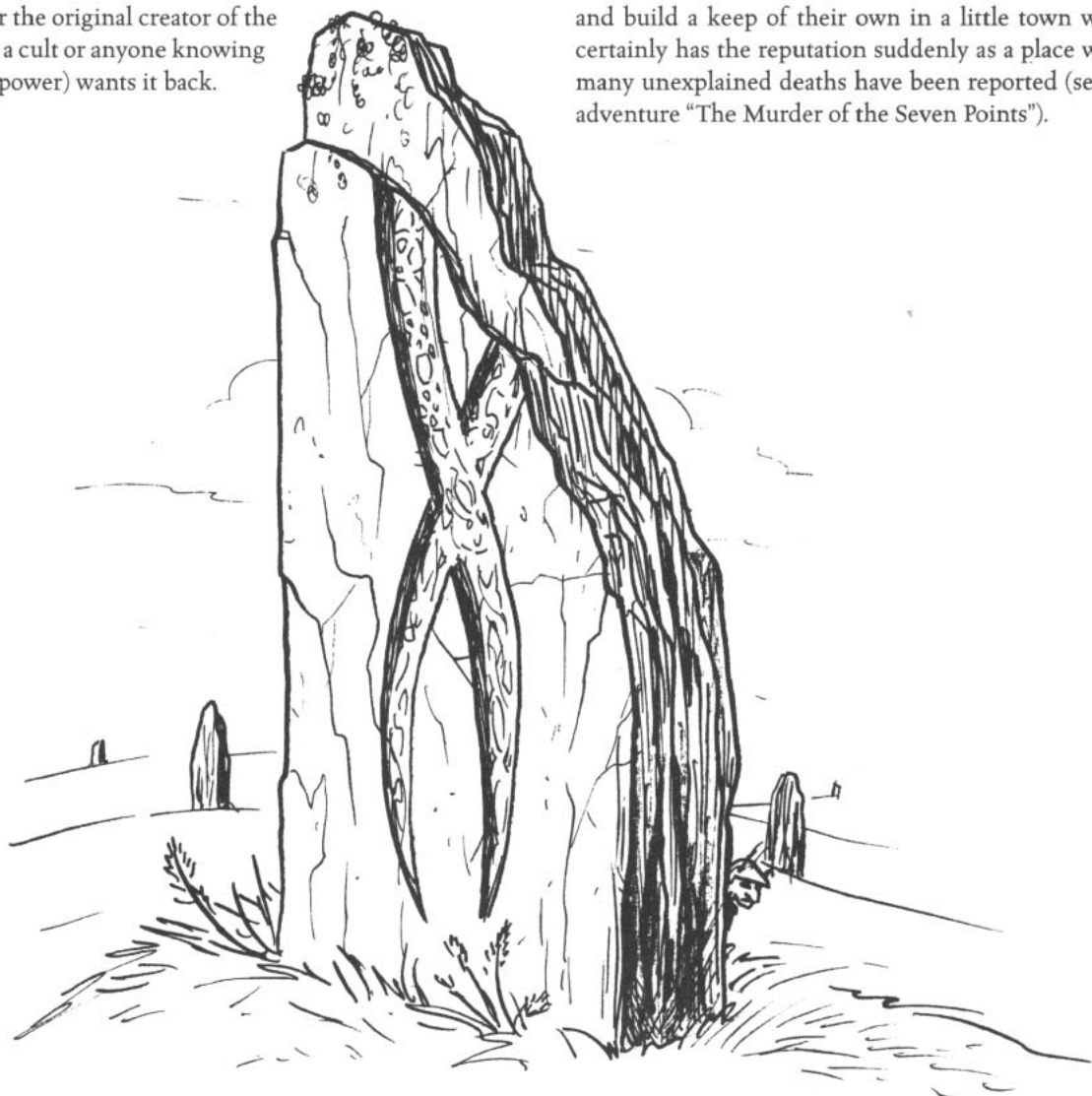
Once Mhalik is destroyed, most likely the PCs will spend a great deal of time investigating the island, sorting through the treasure, and (hopefully) looking for a way to destroy the sceptre. In the mean time, there are a few plot complications that might stem from this experience that the DM should be aware of:

- The PCs can hire a ship to return to the Isle and claim the rest of Mhalik's hoard.
- The PCs may wish to take up residence on the island and use it as a base of operations for further adventures. They have the resources to restore the sanctuary with the treasure recovered from Mhalik's hoard.
- Another pirate may discover the island and begin a new campaign of piracy, under Mhalik's flag.
- Mhalik or the original creator of the *sceptre* (or a cult or anyone knowing about its power) wants it back.

- Alternately, there could be no *scroll of teleport* and the PCs are left to devise a way off the island.
- Since the *sceptre of the damned* is near artifact level, it should be difficult to destroy. Other than the obvious methods — throw it in a volcano, grind it under the heel of a demon, dissolve it in the blood of an innocent, negate it in a place of pure holy energy, etc... the PCs could also take the sceptre to a powerful paladin or religious order so it can be entombed.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The PCs set sail for whichever city they were heading to, be it Desburg, Galishor, or some other port. Upon arriving they see the landscape has changed; an earthquake hit the city! Deaths were minimal until sewer workers start showing up brutally murdered (see the adventure "Sundered Faith").
- The PCs take their newfound treasure from the island and build a keep of their own in a little town which certainly has the reputation suddenly as a place where many unexplained deaths have been reported (see the adventure "The Murder of the Seven Points").



Chapter 15:

Dawn of the Serpent

Levels 5 to 7
by Steve Hough

Night falls and darkness presses in like walls as you ride along the forest road. The thin light from the moon above does little to dispel the gloom. A wind gently stirs the leaves and the chilling air stings your exposed flesh. Your breath hangs in the air forming small halos around your heads.

Rounding a bend you see the cheerful glow of a campfire about a hundred yards ahead. You can make out the silhouettes of three figures standing around a welcoming fire. Eager to warm yourselves and share in some camaraderie with fellow travelers you urge your steeds on. As you approach, uneasiness settles in the pit of your stomachs. The forest around you is ominously still. An oppressive silence fills the void... as if the entire forest is holding its breath expectantly.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 5 to 7. Wilderness skills are invaluable in this adventure.

Travel has its hazards. Inclement weather, roving bandits, and the occasional monster all take their toll. In the PCs' case, they are about to encounter all three.

The Gloamwood Forest is shrouded in mystery and local legend. The local peasants spread tales of petrified animals, giant spiders, and lost caravans. However, educated members of society mostly pass off the dire stories as superstition. Though strange disappearances do occur from time to time, the road through the Gloamwood Forest is still popular with merchants and travelers.

A medusa and her maedar mate (Illian and Vaash) have haunted the Forest for months, living in a cave hidden deep in the woods. Normally content to hunt small forest animals, they will stalk larger prey when it presents itself, especially as winter draws near and food grows scarce.

Hissk, an evil drider, leads a gang of bandits that use the legends surrounding the forest to their advantage. His guile lures unsuspecting travelers off the road into the woods and once out of sight, he attacks them. His efforts to propagate the wild legends about the forest are successful so far, and the local constabulary is afraid to even enter the forest at this point.

If the PCs fare poorly in this dangerous adventure, Larian the Druid (see rumor 2 below) can appear and aid them. Larian is more than happy to help the PCs rid his forest of the bandits and the medusa. Statistics for Larian can be found towards the end of this adventure.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins with the PCs traveling along the Gloamwood Forest Road as night falls. They spot a welcoming campfire ahead and urge their steeds forward only to find the camp occupants turned to stone. Further investigation reveals a pair of deep grooves in the soil leading into the wilderness. Following the trail, the PCs are led to the nest of a drider and his gang of bandits. After facing the bandits, the PCs return to the

campsite to discover their horses (and any other NPCs who remained at the camp) turned to stone. A new set of tracks leads the adventurers to a cave where a medusa and her mate lurk.

The Gloamwood Forest the PCs are traveling through has been left deliberately vague so that you can place it anywhere in your own campaign. The only requirement is that the forest be large and have a fairly well traveled road running through it. The boxed text entries describe the adventure as taking place during or near the winter season. This is used to set the atmosphere of the adventure, but does not need to be strictly followed. DMs should feel free to set this adventure in any season they wish, making sure to modify the weather descriptions and circumstance penalty (see *The Cold Weather* below) as appropriate.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if he's heard any rumors about the forest.

- DC 10** Petrified animals have been found in the Gloamwood Forest by woodsmen and hunters.
- DC 15** Gloamwood Forest is a place of many unexplained disappearances.
- DC 20** A strange hermit dressed in rags has been seen wandering through the forest and speaking with the animals.
- DC 25** A huge spider-like creature skulks about the edges of villages near the Gloamwood Forest.

Gloamwood Forest is ripe with erroneous stories and long-winded tales from the surrounding communities. If any check above equals 10 or less, the DM may read from one of the false rumors below:

1. A beautiful nymph has been known to bathe in the cool streams found in Gloamwood Forest. However, any poor devil lucky enough to see her is instantly struck dumb and blind.
2. An old crone lurks deep in the woods. It is said she has the power to raise the dead!
3. If you must travel through the Gloamwood Forest, carry a stick of rowan wood clenched in your teeth. It wards off the evil spirits. (Interestingly, peasants do sell charms made of rowan wood specifically for this purpose, at 2 cp per charm.)
4. A cabal of evil sorcerers has a shrine dedicated to a dark god hidden in the depths of the forest. They kidnap travelers to make bloody sacrifices every new moon.

THE COLD WEATHER

Winter has set in and the air is deathly cold. An unprotected character must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of non-lethal damage. A character who has the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see the skill Description, as well as "Cold Dangers" in Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

A WELCOMING FIRE

At this stage, read or paraphrase the introductory text of this adventure to the players, allowing the PCs to react as they wish. Once they near the camp, read the following.

Upon closer inspection the figures surrounding the campfire appear to be extremely life-like stone statues, their faces frozen masks of fear or surprise.

Examining the campsite, you notice a pair of deep, parallel grooves in the soil leading into the thick brush to the north as if something heavy has been dragged away.

The statues are the remains of an adventuring party that were turned to stone by Illian several weeks ago. Hissk happened upon the petrified adventurers before Vaash could recover them. The bandits placed them by the side of the road, hoping to lure unsuspecting travelers off the road and into their trap.

The brambles that the trail leads through are too thick for horses to pass through, so the PCs will be forced to leave their mounts behind.

While the others are away, any mounts or members of the adventuring party left behind at the campsite will be attacked by Illian the medusa (see room #9 below for statistics).

Attracted by the firelight, Illian will approach the campsite to discover who has invaded her hunting grounds. Her first attacks will always be against any PCs that remain behind. She will attempt to remain out of melee range and use her gaze attack against her foes. Failing that, she will flee to the south toward her lair leaving an obvious trail. (Tracking check DC 8 to follow).

NPCs and mounts left alone at the campsite automatically succumb to Illian's gaze attacks for the PCs to discover in Returning to the Campsite below. After Illian has petrified them, she returns to her lair to tell Vaash of her successful hunt. Her trail can be followed with a successful Track check (DC 15).

Petrified PCs and NPCs can be returned to their original state later in the adventure. Likely the PCs are aware of magical cures, but the emotional impact of their trusty steeds and loyal companions turned to stone is a great motivator. If there are no NPCs or mounts in the party, this section can be ignored.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

The trail leads through the entangling undergrowth for about 100 yards before opening up in a large clearing. The roughly circular clearing is about 30 ft. across. The trees surrounding the clearing are draped in huge spiderwebs that sway in the breeze. It is ominously quiet

Those with Wild Empathy note that there is not a lot of natural creature activity in the area.

Encounter: Two unsavory looking individuals stand in the center of the clearing arguing over a heavy wooden chest. The grooves in the soft soil lead around the edge of the clearing to the chest on the ground. Two others hide in trees, looking for trouble. A Spot check (DC 15) reveals the two hiding in the trees. If the PCs try to hide from the men in the trees, consider their Spot check (to oppose a Hide check) 16. Two more are crouched behind dead wood, waiting for the PCs (Spot check, DC 25).

These bandits are wily and paranoid; the pit trap they set up at the entrance to the clearing is evidence of this.

♣ **Camouflaged Pit Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 30 ft. deep (3d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent squares); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 18.

Besides the bandits in the center of the clearing, Hissk (a Drider) is lurking in the tree branches above the archers. He might be seen with a successful Spot check (assume he takes 20 on his Hide check, making the DC 30).

▲ **Bandits, Human Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d6; hp 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18*, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Bast Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Poison arrows, sneak attack +1d6; SQ Trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Poison Arrows: Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, masterwork shortbow, 10 arrows, 3 poisonous arrows, dagger, belt pouch, 8 cp.

Tactics: The bandits are alert and waiting for the PCs to attack from the direction of the clearing entrance. They rush to finish off anyone who fell victim to the pit trap and guard against further intrusion. If the PCs try to sneak around and attack from a different direction, they may be able to surprise the bandits (opposed Spot vs. Hide skill checks).

If the bandits gain surprise, the archers in the trees attack with their bows first, allowing their comrades on the ground to run for cover. They are familiar with magic and attack spellcasters first. They pepper the PCs with poisonous arrows (drider's venom — weakened, as it does not preserve well), dealing sneak attack damage whenever possible. Should all of the PCs enter the clearing, they surround the survivors and flank the strongest opponents. They have defended this clearing before, and know the ins and outs of fighting here. As long as they are not flat-footed, they are considered to have cover (+4 to AC, already calculated above).



SUMMON MONSTER I AND II

Hissk makes liberal use of his summoning spells. Here are some of his favorite allies.

✦ **Summon Monster I, Fiendish Dire Rat:** CR 1/3; Small magical beast (extraplanar); HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease, smite good; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., resistance to cold 5 and fire 5, scent, spell resistance 6; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon FinesseB

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills and Feats: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD total (maximum of +20) against a good foe.

✦ **Summon Monster I, Fiendish Small Snake (viper):** CR 1/3; Tiny magical beast (extraplanar); HD 1/4d8; hp 1; Init +3; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -11; Atk +5 melee (1 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1 plus poison, bite); SA Poison, smite good; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., resistance to cold 5 and fire 5, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +5; Weapon Finesse (bite) Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD total (maximum of +20) against a good foe.

Poison (Ex): A viper snake has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Con. The save DC is 10. The save DC is Constitution-based.

✦ **Summon Monster II, Fiendish Monstrous Centipede, Large:** CR 1; Large magical beast (extraplanar); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 40ft.; 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +7; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1 plus poison, bite); SA Poison, smite good; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., resistance to cold 5 and fire 5, vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Hide +6, Spot +4; Weapon FinesseB

Poison (Ex): A monstrous centipede has a poisonous bite. Anyone bit must make a Fortitude save DC 14 or suffer 1d4 temporary Dexterity damage. The save DC is Constitution-based. The indicated damage is both initial and secondary damage.

Skills: Monstrous centipedes have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Climb and Hide checks. They can use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher. Monstrous scorpions can take 10 on Climb checks, even if threatened or distracted.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD total (maximum of +20) against a good foe.

Continued on following page.

The bandits fight intelligently, but are willing to die out of misguided loyalty to Hissk. Hissk uses ranged attacks as long as he can, closing only when he feels the PCs have been softened up. Hissk is unconcerned about the welfare of the bandits and casts spells even if they are in the area of effect. After suffering 40 hit points of damage, Hissk flees, using *darkness*, *ghost sound*, *summon monster*, *web*, or some similar spell or spell-like ability to draw the PCs' attention away.

✦ **Hissk the Drider:** CR 7: Large aberration; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, dagger) or +6 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, bite) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/19-20, 1d6+1/19-20, 2 daggers) and +1 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, bite); or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Spells, spell-like abilities, poison; SA Darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 17; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Concentration +9, Hide +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Spot +9

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution based.

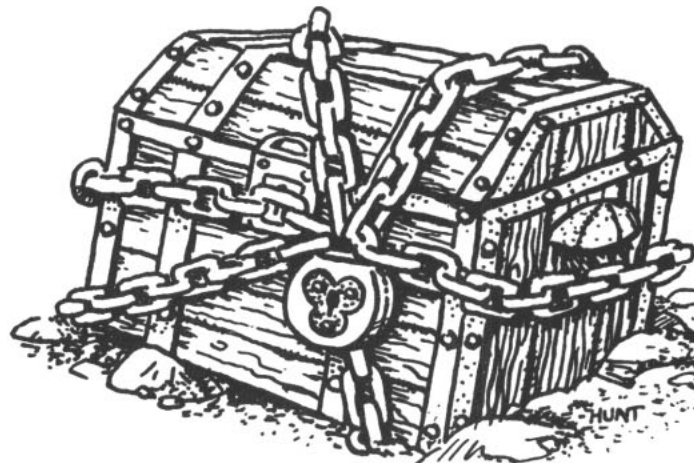
Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights* (DC 13), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *faerie fire*, *levitate*, *suggestion* (DC 16). Caster level 6th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Spells: Hissk can cast spells as a 6th-level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4, base save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *summon monster I*; 2nd—*summon monster II*, *web*; 3rd—*lightning bolt*.

Skills: A drider has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. It has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

Treasure: The chest contains 2,200 gp in varied coins, 1 amethyst (100 gp), 1 golden yellow topaz (500 gp), 2 moonstones (50 gp each), 1 jar of keoghtom's ointment, and 1 *potion of cat's grace*.



RETURNING TO THE CAMPSITE

By the time the PCs have defeated Hisck and dragged all the loot back to the campsite, Vaash and Illian will have ransacked any belongings the PCs left behind and lugged a statue back to their lair.

The following boxed text assumes that only mounts were left behind at the campsite as the PCs followed the path to the forest clearing. The encounter description should be adjusted to fit the particular situation left by your PCs.

Returning to the campsite an all too familiar uneasiness settles in your stomachs.

The gear you left behind lies scattered about the road. Your mounts are motionless, petrified statues.

Of the three statues that stood around the fire before, only two remain. Where the third stood, a deep groove leads to the south, across the road and into the brush on the far side.

If any NPCs were left at the camp, be sure to include them in the description of the statues that now surround the campfire. Also, it may be useful to get the PCs more personally involved by making the missing statue a favorite NPC or mount rather than one of the strangers.

The new path starts where the missing statue stood and leads across the road and into the brush on the far side. After following it for about a half-mile, the PCs will find the hidden entrance to the medusa's lair (See #1 below) with a successful Spot or Search check (DC 15).

1. The Lair Entrance

After following the new trail for about half a mile, you push your way through the brambles to reveal a hidden cave in the side of a cliff face.

The entrance is low and roughly circular, about three ft. in diameter. Small toadstools and other fungi grow in patches around the cave mouth. The thin moonlight does little to illuminate the interior of the cavern.

Vaash often has to break pieces off the statues he recovers to fit them inside the cave. There is a petrified limb from one such unfortunate soul lying at the base of one of the bramble bushes outside the cave which can be noticed with a Spot Check (DC 15).

Particularly fiendish DMs can make the limb belong to the statue that Vaash lugged from the campsite.

SUMMON MONSTER I AND II CONTINUED

☛ **Summon Monster II, Fiendish Monstrous Spider, Large:** CR 2; Large magical beast (extraplanar); HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +9; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 plus poison); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 plus poison); SA Poison, smite good, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., resistance to cold 5 and fire 5, tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +3, Jump +2, Spot +4
Poison (Ex): A monstrous spider has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Str. The save DC is 13. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD total (maximum of +20) against a good foe.

Tremorsense (Ex): A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 ft. in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

Web (Ex): Both types of monstrous spiders often wait in their webs or in trees, then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Web-spinners can throw a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 ft., with a range increment of 10 ft., and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the spider. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 13) or burst it with a Strength check (DC 17). The check DCs are Constitution-based, and the Strength check DC includes a +4 racial bonus. The web has 12 hit points.

2. The Crawl

This narrow passage stretches for about 40 ft. before forking. At the far end you can see that the cave narrows further and a large passage opens to the northeast.

Encounter: About halfway down the passage, a snake is curled and hiding in wait (note its exceptional Hide skill). The creature is ready to strike when the PCs come upon it. Attacking the snake in the closed environment of the cave with a slashing weapon incurs a -1 circumstance penalty.

☛ **Constrictor Snake, Giant:** CR 5; Huge animal; HD 11d8+14; hp 63; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +8; Grp +23; Atk +13 melee (1d8+10, bite); Full Atk +13 melee (1d8+10, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Constrict 1d8+10, improved grab; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +17, Hide +10, Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +16; Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (hide), Toughness.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a constrictor snake deals 1d8+10 points of damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a constrictor snake must hit with its bite attack. It can then start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

3. The Fork

At the fork, the narrowing of the already cramped passage impedes further progress to the northwest. A larger passage roughly 7 ft. in diameter opens to the northeast leading to room #4.

Only a small creature is tiny enough to explore the narrow passage to the northwest. After twisting and turning for about 55 ft. it leads to room #8.

Illian and Vaash don't consider creatures small enough to navigate the narrow passage much of a threat and so have not blocked the passage. However they have set a spear trap just inside the entrance to discourage such creatures anyway.

♣ **Spear Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +12 ranged (1d8/x3, spear); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. Note: 200-ft. max range, target determined randomly from those in its path. Market Price: 1,200 gp.

4. The Digester

This irregularly shaped room is roughly 15 ft. across at the widest point. The air is thick and stale. Large mushrooms standing about four-ft. tall sprout randomly from the sandy floor. There is no obvious pathway through the fungi.

You hear a slight scuffling noise from behind a dense collection of fungi in the far corner. Dripping water can be heard from down the corridor in the eastern wall.

The fungus in this room is completely harmless apart the stale scent in the air.

Encounter: Lurking back in the darkest corner of the room behind a thick stand of the mushrooms is a digester. The digester attacks with its acid spray as the PCs near the center of the room.

♣ **Digester:** CR 6; Medium magical beast; HD 8d10+24; hp 68; Init +6; Spd 60 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, claw); SA Acid spray; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +6, Jump +21, Spot +6; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

Acid Spray (Ex): A digester can spray acid in a 20-ft. cone, dealing 4d8 points of damage to everything in the area. Once a digester uses this ability, it can't use it again until 1d4 rounds later.

The creature can also produce a concentrated stream of acid that deals 8d8 points of damage to a single target within 5 ft. In either case, a DC 17 Reflex save halves the damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: A digester's coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks. It also has a +4 racial bonus on Jump checks.

5. The Feeding Room

Standing along the walls of this 20-ft. by 10-ft. kidney-shaped room are eight statues similar to the ones you found at the campsite. Two of the statues are heavily damaged — one is missing an arm and the other is not much more than a torso. Dark stains like dried blood cover the floor around both statues.

Against the southeastern edge of the room is a stone well. Water gently trickles down the wall to be collected in the basin below.

Be sure to describe one of the statues as one that was taken from the campsite while the PCs were fighting Hissk and his bandits, if applicable.

This room is where Illian and Vaash eat. After Illian has subdued the prey with her gaze attack, Vaash drags the petrified victims into this room for storage. When they grow hungry Vaash uses his great strength to break parts off of the statues and then use his reversing gaze (see *New Monsters*—Appendix B) to return the stone bits into edible morsels.

Treasure: Anyone gazing into the well sees a faint glow coming from the bottom. The glow emanates from the blade of a +1 *keen longsword* (threat range 17–20) named "Sinewslayer." The blade continually glows pale-green, lighting a 20-ft. radius like a torch.

Encounter: Submerged in the well is a unfriendly water elemental. If the water in the well is disturbed, the elemental rises up, attacking immediately.

♣ **Water Elemental, Large:** CR 5; Large elemental (water, extraplanar); HD 8d8+32; hp 68; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Water mastery, drench, vortex; SQ Damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; AL N; Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +6; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

Water Mastery (Ex): A water elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its opponent are touching water. If the opponent or the elemental is touching the ground, the elemental suffers a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of non-magical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* (caster level equals elemental's HD).

Vortex (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlpool once every 10 minutes, provided it is underwater, and remains in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In vortex form, the elemental can move through the water or along the bottom at its swim speed. The vortex is 5 ft. wide at the base, up to 30 ft. wide at the top, and 10 ft. or more tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 ft.

The elemental's movement while in vortex form does not provoke attacks of opportunity, even if the elemental enters the space another creature occupies. Another creature might be caught in the vortex if it touches or enters the vortex, or if the elemental moves into or through the creature's space.

Creatures one or more size categories smaller than the elemental might take damage when caught in the vortex (see the table below for details) and may be swept up by it. An affected creature must succeed on a Reflex save when it comes into contact with the vortex or take the indicated damage. It must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful currents, automatically taking damage each round. An affected creature is allowed a Reflex save each round to escape the vortex. The creature still takes damage, but can leave if the save is successful. The DC for saves against the vortex's effects varies with the elemental's size. The save DC is Strength-based.

Creatures trapped in the vortex cannot move except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind. Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + spell level) to cast a spell. Creatures caught in the whirlwind take a -4 penalty to Dexterity and a -2 penalty on attack rolls. The elemental can have only as many creatures trapped inside the vortex at one time as will fit inside the vortex's volume.

The elemental can eject any carried creatures whenever it wishes, depositing them wherever the vortex happens to be. A summoned elemental always ejects trapped creatures before returning to its home plane.

If the vortex's base touches the bottom, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the vortex's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 ft. Creatures 5 ft. away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment.

Those caught in the cloud must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell.

An elemental in vortex form cannot make slam attacks and does not threaten the area around it.

Skills and Feats: A water elemental has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Illian the medusa is protected from the elemental by her *ring of elemental command (water)* (room #9).

6. Pit Trap

Halfway along the corridor between room #5 and room #7 is a pit trap. Illian and Vaash use the secret tunnel in the western wall to circumvent the pit as they move about their lair.

♦ **Pit Trap:** CR 3; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 60 ft. deep (6d6, fall); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

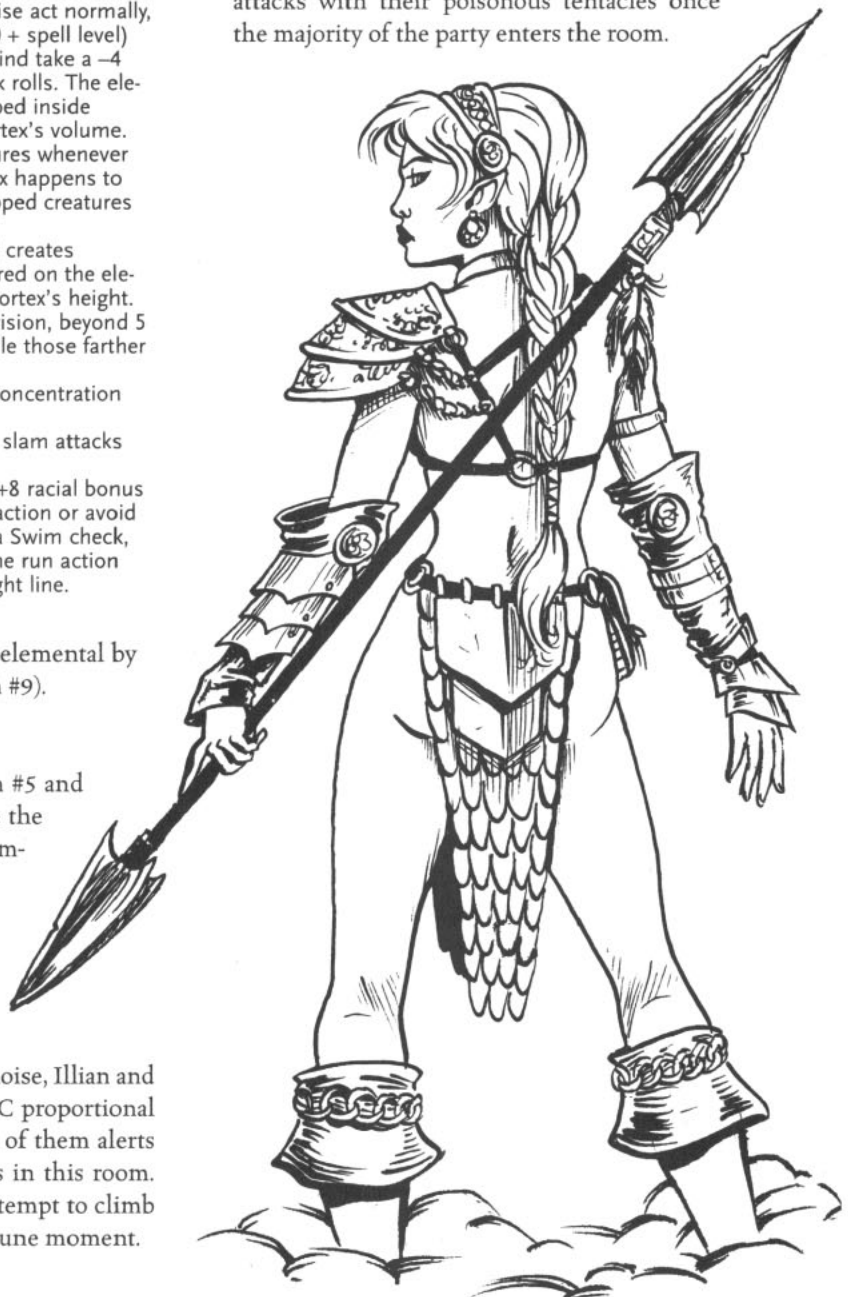
Tactics: If the PCs make a great deal of noise, Illian and Vaash should be allowed Listen checks (DC proportional with the level of noise). If successful, one of them alerts the other and attempts to waylay the PCs in this room. They watch for a few rounds as the PCs attempt to climb out of the pit, attacking at the most opportune moment.

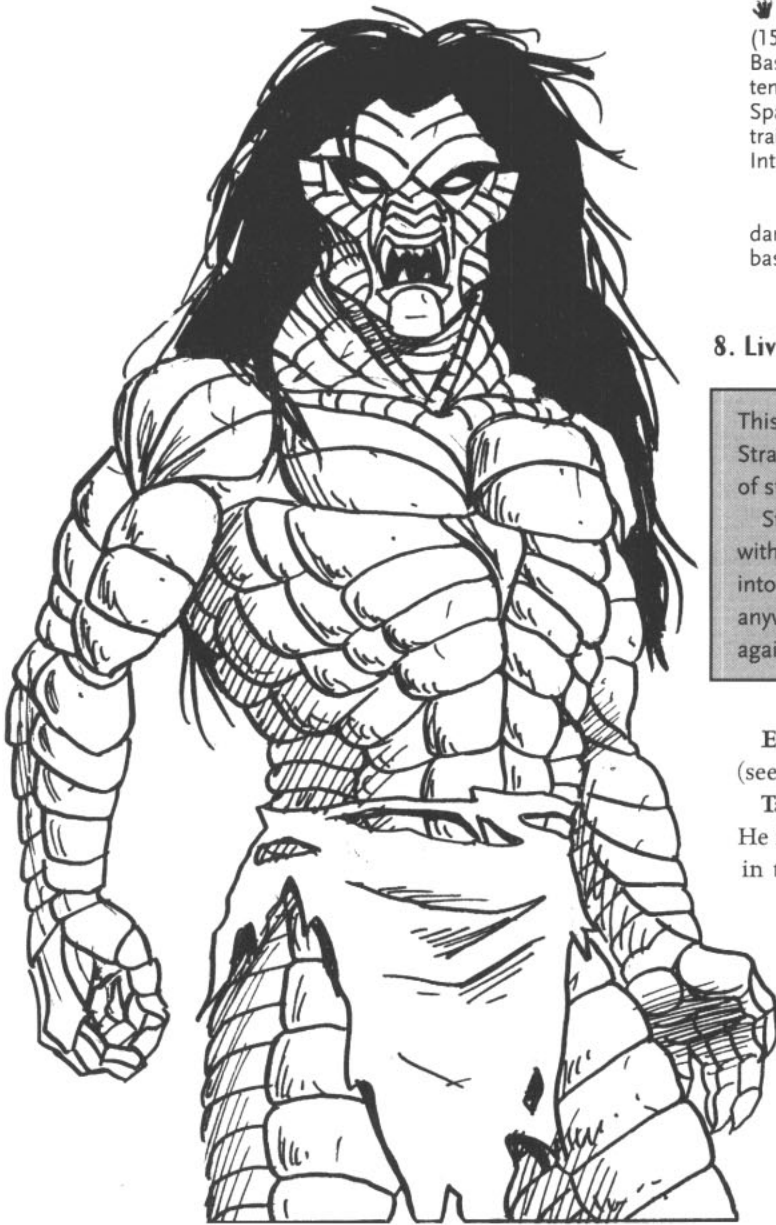
7. Mushroom Forest

This roughly circular room is about 15 ft. in diameter. The air is thick and musty. From sand, large purple fungi grow to 6 ft. A clearly marked path runs through the center of the room to another corridor in the western wall.

Encounter: Most of the mushrooms are harmless shriekers, however there are two violet funguses hidden among them (one on each side of the path). Should the PCs attempt to silence all the shriekers, there are 9 altogether.

Tactics: As soon as the PCs move into the room, the shriekers emit a piercing wail of alarm. The violet fungus attacks with their poisonous tentacles once the majority of the party enters the room.





If the PCs make a great deal of noise, Illian and Vassh should be allowed Listen checks (DC proportional with the level of noise). If successful, one of them alerts the other and attempts to waylay the PCs in this room. They watch for a few rounds as the PCs fight the fungus, attacking at the most opportune moment.

☛ **Fungus, Shriekers:** CR 1; Medium plant; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init -5; Spd 0 ft.; AC 8, touch 5, flat-footed 8; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk —; Full Atk —; Space/Reach 5 ft./0 ft.; SA Shriek; SQ Low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref —, Will -4; Str —, Dex —, Con 13, Int —, Wis 2, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —.

Shriek (Ex): Movement or a light source within 10 ft. of a shrieker causes the fungus to emit a piercing sound that lasts for 1d3 rounds. The sound attracts nearby creatures disposed to investigate it. Some creatures that live near shriekers learn that the fungus' noise means there is food in the vicinity.

☛ **Fungus, Violet Fungus:** CR 3; Medium plant; HD 2d8+6 (15 hp each); Init -1; Spd 10 ft.; AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +1/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2 plus poison, tentacle); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2 plus poison, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 16, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: —.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 14, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Str and 1d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

8. Living Chamber

This irregularly shaped room is roughly 20 ft. by 15 ft. Straw carpets the floor. In the western corner a large heap of straw is gathered to form a nest.

Standing in the center of the room is a tall, hairless man with reptilian features. He shakes his head and slowly intones, "You are too late, my friends, but come, come anyway." He lifts a great falchion from its resting place against the wall. Tensing his muscles, he charges!

Encounter: The man in the room is Vaash, the maedar (see New Monsters—Appendix B).

Tactics: Vaash is alert and waiting for the intruders. He fights to the death to protect his mate (Illian) who is in the nursery (room #9). Vaash attacks the largest PC, hoping to subdue the "alpha" quickly. He attacks with his falchion for one round, then bites for three successive rounds or until his opponent is subdued. Vaash continues this pattern on the remaining PCs until he is killed or no one is left standing. If the PCs flee or otherwise leave him undeterred, he violently performs a coup de grace each round against his fallen adversaries.

▲ **Vaash, Maedar:** CR 6; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (2d4+8/18-20, +2 falchion); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (2d4+8/18-20, +2 falchion); SA Poison; SQ Reversing gaze; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Reflex +7, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Disguise +11, Hide +7, Move Silently +9, Spot +10; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Poison (Ex): Bite, Fortitude save (DC 14); initial damage 1d6 temporary Strength, secondary damage 2d6 temporary Strength.

Reversing Gaze (Su): Reverse the effects of a petrifying gaze or similar spell or spell-like ability (like *flesh to stone* and *statue*), returning the target to its original state.

Possessions: +2 falchion, brooch of shielding (34 points remaining), head of the maedar (see New Magic—Appendix A), ring of protection +1.

9. The Nursery

This room is roughly 20 ft. deep by 15 ft. wide. The floor is carpeted with loose straw. A fire pit ringed with stones stands near the center of the room; a merry fire burns brightly. Strange paintings of large snakes and other reptiles adorn the walls of the cavern.

In the far corner, near another straw nest, a figure in a black hooded cloak stands and turns to face you.

Encounter: The hooded figure is Illian the Medusa. Besides her natural attacks, Illian is armed with a short bow, a dagger, and a *ring of elemental command (water)*.

Tactics: Illian is no fool, but fights to the death to defend the clutch of eggs lying in the straw nest behind her. In the first round, Illian creates a *wall of ice* between herself and the PCs. During the next two rounds, she softens up the PCs by casting *ice storm* (twice). If the PCs do not break through the wall, she *creates water* again and again until a large enough amount exists for her to control with the ring. Otherwise, she uses her more mundane forms of attack.

Should a single PC be standing alone on her side of the wall of ice, she uses her gaze attack first and failing that, attacks him in hand to hand combat.

Treasure: Behind the medusa, hidden in the straw that forms the nest, is a large wooden chest which can be found with a Search check (DC 15) or Spot check (DC 20). The chest contains a little under 1,000 gp and a silver chalice with small lapis lazuli gems set into the rim (105 gp).

There are three medusa eggs in the nest, which are quite valuable. Mages, druids or collectors of strange artifacts may pay as much as 300 gp per egg. The value increases if the embryo within is still viable. Broken eggs are worthless.

▲ Illian, Medusa: CR 7; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+6; hp 33 hp; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +8 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow) or +8 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger) or +8 melee (1d4 plus poison, snakes); Full Atk +8/+3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); or +8/+3 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger) and +3 melee (1d4 plus poison, snakes); SA Petrifying gaze, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +9 (+11 acting), Intimidate +4, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse.

Petrifying Gaze (Su): Turn to stone permanently, 30 ft., Fortitude DC 15 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 14, initial damage 1d6 Str, secondary damage 2d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Water Elemental Control (Su): Illian suffers a –2 saving throw penalty against all fire-based effects.

Possessions: Short bow, dagger, *ring of elemental command (water)*.



LARIAN THE DRUID

Larian the Druid is intended as an alternative encounter to be used by the DM in one of two ways. First, Larian can lend the party his aid if the PCs need healing or a hand in defeating the medusa. Second, he can be used to thwart the PCs if they try something completely unscrupulous like starting a forest fire in order to kill the drider, bandits, and the medusa. Also, if the PCs are at a loss as to what to do with the medusa eggs, he offers to take them. However Larian has no money to offer the PCs in exchange for them, but can heal them or restore lost ability score points.

Larian is a male human, 45 years old. He has a bushy gray beard and wears his salt-and-pepper hair long and untamed. Although not physically imposing, standing a little over 5 ft. tall, his keen steel-colored eyes are unsettling.

Always eager to meet those who travel through his forest, Larian is quick of wit and jovial. He spends most of his days wondering his beloved forest and tending to its needs.

▲ Larian, Human Dru 8: CR 8; Medium Humanoid; HD 8d8+16; hp 55; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar); SA spells; SQ animal companion, nature sense, wild empathy, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure, wild shape (large, 3/day); AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Handle Animal +7, Heal +7, Hide +6, Knowledge (nature) +10, Spellcraft +5, Spot +7, Survival +12, Swim +5; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Run, Weapon Focus (Scimitar).

Animal Companion (Ex): This druid has a hawk animal companion he's named Scenshaw.

♣ Scenshaw, Hawk: CR 1/3; Tiny animal; HD 4d8; hp 21; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp -7; Atk +6 melee 1d4-2, talons); Full Atk +6 melee 1d4-2, talons); SA —; SQ bonus tricks (4), evasion, devotion, link, low-light vision, share spells; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +14; Weapon Finesse (talons).

Hawks combine both talons into a single attack.

Skills: Hawks have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks.

Bonus Tricks:

Attack: The animal attacks apparent enemies. You may point to a particular creature that you wish the animal to attack, and it will comply if able. Normally, an animal will attack only humanoids, monstrous humanoids, giants, or other animals. Teaching an animal to attack all creatures (including such unnatural creatures as undead and aberrations) counts as two tricks.

Come: The animal comes to you, even if it normally would not do so.

Defend: The animal defends you (or is ready to defend you if no threat is present), even without any command being given. Alternatively, you can command the animal to defend a specific other character.

Seek: The animal moves into an area and looks around for anything that is obviously alive or animate.

Link (Ex): A druid can handle his animal companion as a free action, or push it as a move action, even if he doesn't have any ranks in the Handle Animal skill. The druid gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks made regarding an animal companion.

Share Spells (Ex): At the druid's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts upon himself also affects his animal companion. The animal companion must be within 5 ft. of him at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the animal companion if the companion moves farther than 5 ft. away and will not affect the animal again, even if it returns to the druid before the duration expires.

Additionally, the druid may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his animal companion (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. A druid and his animal companion can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the companion's type (animal).

Evasion (Ex): If an animal companion is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw.

Devotion (Ex): An animal companion gains a +4 morale bonus on Will saves against enchantment spells and effects.

Trackless Step (Ex): This druid leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. He may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

Resist Nature's Lure (Ex): This druid gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against the spell-like abilities of fey.

Wild Empathy (Ex): A druid can improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person. The druid rolls 1d20+9 to determine the wild empathy check result.

Wild Shape (Su): This druid gains the ability to turn himself into any Small, Medium or Large animal and back again three times per day. His options for new forms include all creatures with the animal type. This ability functions like the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 8 hours, or until he changes back. Changing form (to animal or back) is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity.

The form chosen must be that of an animal this druid is familiar with.

This druid loses his ability to speak while in animal form because he is limited to the sounds that a normal, untrained animal can make, but he can communicate normally with other animals of the same general grouping as his new form.

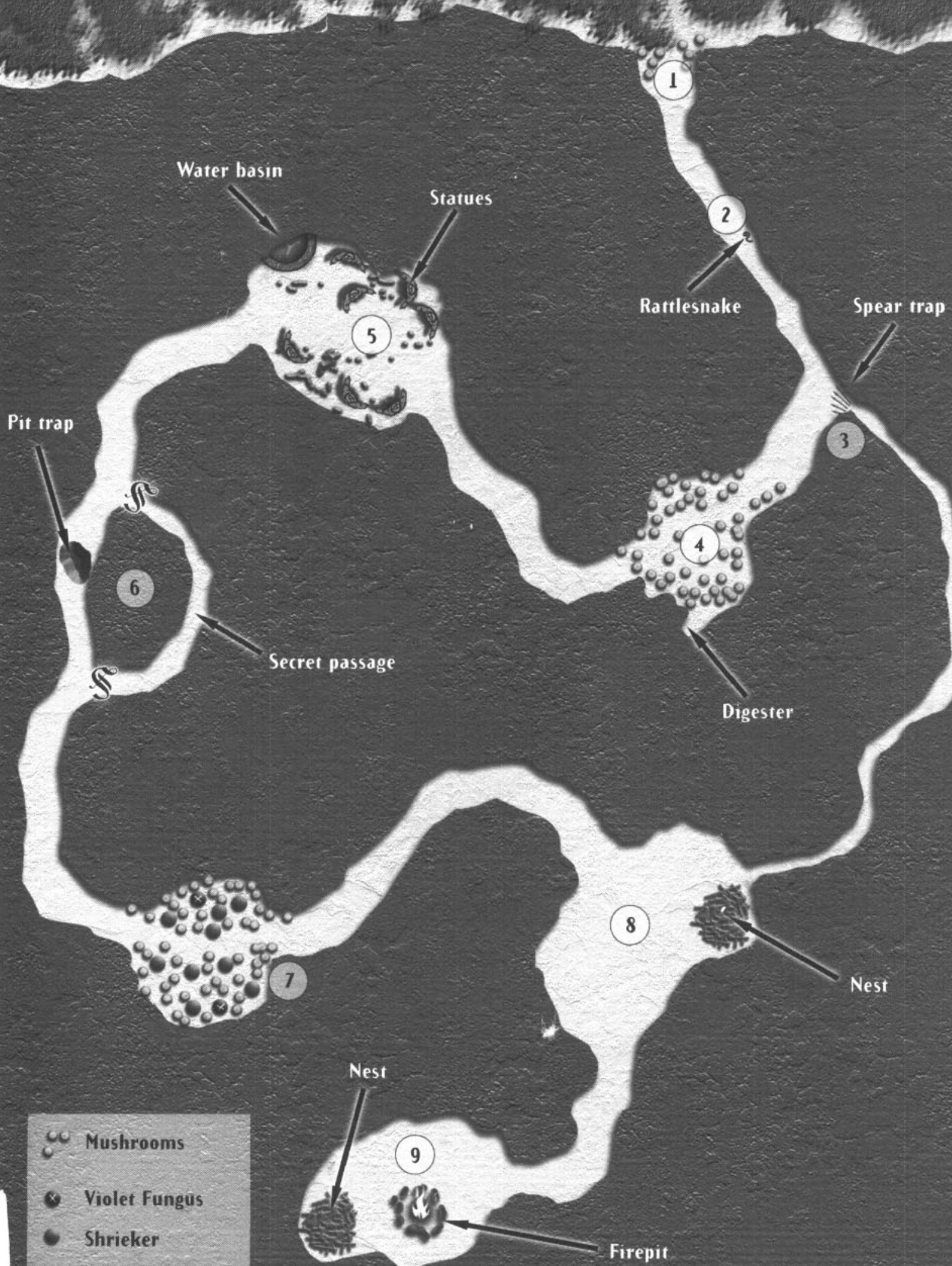
Woodland Stride (Ex): This druid may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at his normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are magically manipulated to impede motion still affect him.

Druid Spells Prepared: (6/5/4/4/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*cure moderate wounds, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, know direction, resistance*, 1st—*calm animals, endure elements, jump, longstrider, obscuring mist, speak with animals*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, delay poison, flame blade, lesser restoration*; 3rd—*cure moderate wounds, stone shape, speak with plants, sleet storm*; 4th—*cure serious wounds, reincarnate*.

Possessions: +2 leather armor, +2 amulet of natural armor, +1 scimitar (named "Guardinal").

DAWN OF THE SERPENT

ILLIAN'S LAIR



EPILOGUE

This isn't necessarily the end of the adventure. There are many ways to string along the events that occurred in Dawn of the Serpent. If the PCs decide to keep the medusa eggs in hopes of finding a buyer, the eggs may hatch in the course of their journey. This could lead to havoc, especially if the eggs hatch while the PCs are in a town or village. Imagine the PCs' reactions when they find the empty eggshells and rumors of local pets (or farm animals) turned to stone beginning to surface.

If Hissk the drider managed to escape, he may trail the PCs seeking vengeance. Hissk isn't likely to attack the PCs who have already defeated him once. Instead the drider will seek his revenge in other ways. Hissk's attempts to ruin their reputations with rumors or simply stealing their treasures shortly after each adventure could lead to interesting game sessions.

What if the maedar head, along with its ability to reverse petrification, also carries a curse along with it? Or maybe the ghost of Vaash haunts the bearer of his head until it is returned to the cave where he and his beloved died.

A cabal of dark sorcerers, having heard of the PC's encounter with the medusa, may attack or blackmail them to gain possession of the eggs or the maedar head.

The possibilities are limitless. Curses, ghosts, murders and blackmail are just a few of the ways to keep the action going.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The PCs move on to civilization to get a break from rural traveling. Upon arriving in the nearby city they discover an earthquake hit the city! Deaths were minimal until sewer workers start showing up brutally murdered (see the adventure "Sundered Faith").
- The druid Larian says he'll finish the work of restoring the woods, and asks if the PCs could help a fellow who came for his aid from a nearby village, where mysterious deaths are plaguing the villagers (see the adventure "The Murder of the Seven Points").



Chapter 16:

The Last Defender

Levels 5 to 7

by A. A. Acevedo & J. Darby Douglas

The spring thaw is now in full swing. The sun shines brightly over the Brathmoor Mountains, colors stream across the clouds. The rivers run quickly, swollen with the run off water from melting ice and snow. The local rangers have now declared the trails safe for travel through Genmarr Pass and to the coast on the other side of the range.

Your party traveled several days to reach Genmarr Pass. Aside from a few trappers and woodsmen you haven't seen many travelers. The pass is quiet this time of year, but these last few days have come across as unusually still. It's as if the entire area is waiting ...

The merchants said this would be an easy undertaking. Just trek up to the dizzying heights of Genmarr Pass, retrieve their ill-fated caravan, and take it to the port city of Desburg on the other side of the range. Yet each step up the mountain feels wrong.

Your lungs burn as altitude take its toll. As you round a bend in the trail, you spot the remains of the caravan you were sent to find. Behind it, looming in the shadows, lurk the hulking towers and battlements of The Cursed Gateway... a long, unmanned battlement from a bygone era. Are the legends about the Gateway true? Is the pass haunted?

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 5 to 7. A working knowledge of ghosts and how to exorcise them would serve the characters well. Although originally not slated to be used with *Undead*, the material in that book can be used to make the encounters in this adventure better and give PCs more options.

The PCs are not initially privy to the background information, but may become so during the course of the adventure. The adventure begins as the party is making its way through a recently reopened pass in an ancient range. There are a variety of reasons the PCs have for making the trip:

- If the party completed the "Ice Caves of Azinth" adventure and are of high enough level, this adventure can be a sequel. In this case, they have recently opened the mountain pass after a five-year magical blizzard, and are asked by King Ezred of Azinth to investigate the pass to guarantee its safety.
- A merchant guild from a nearby city may hire the party to find their lost caravan of goods.
- A minor noble, interested in gaining control of the Cursed Gateway, may hire the player characters to enforce his family's claim for ownership of the pass and the stronghold.

THE LAST DEFENDER

Whatever the reason, the player characters should have a good reason to travel through the Cursed Gateway.

Once you've established the reason for the PCs' journey, you should ask if the PCs would like to make any special preparations before beginning the quest. Buying equipment and supplies is easily accomplished in one of many local establishments, especially if the PCs are hired by the merchant guild. It is important for the PCs to take the necessary steps to retrieve the caravan. If they don't think of it themselves, the DM may suggest the group bring extra horses and supplies.

As our story begins, the PCs have arrived at the point in Genmarr Pass where a wide crevasse cuts a jagged, impassable path across the trail. More than three hundred years ago, a local Baron commissioned a guild of dwarven engineers to construct fortified gates on either side of this abyss. These gates allowed him to forcibly control the pass, the most accessible way through the treacherous mountains for hundreds of miles. The fortifications faced outward, to guard a bridge tower built on a column of rock, in the center of the crevasse. The Baron paid handsomely for the dwarven guild to build the monolithic structure and the proud clansmen crafted an engineering marvel, which would stand against the most fearsome assaults.

For over fifty years the Baron's men held Genmarr Pass, filling their lord's coffers with a hoard of merchant's gold. The Baron became a wealthy man. Various factions warred against the Baron, but his men repelled every attempt to capture the stronghold, solidifying the Baron's position as the most powerful man in the region. No one was willing to challenge his stranglehold of the local economy.

Angry merchants from nearby cities petitioned the King. They claimed the Baron was charging an unfair toll, draining them of their monies, and thereby causing an increase in the market price of goods in the region. The King responded to their pleas, issuing a command for the crossing fees to be reduced. The Baron, drunk with his newfound wealth, stubbornly resisted the King's decree. He refused to lower the crossing fees for the Pass. In an effort to appease the merchant guild, the King sent a force to capture the stronghold at Genmarr Pass.

Defying his King to the last, the Baron sent a large reinforcement contingent to the Pass to bolster the stronghold garrison. Word was sent to the garrison commander, Captain Renik Ghent, help was on its way. Ghent's orders were to hold the pass, at any cost. The Captain, ever the loyal myrmidon, vowed to do as ordered.

The King's army arrived to find a small but determined garrison. Ghent's men were seasoned veterans, ready to viciously defend their lord's domain. The fighting was gruesome. Casualties were high on both sides. Captain Ghent and his soldiers held the Pass in a tenacious grip, but they were eventually forced back, as the opposing force overwhelmed the fortification with sheer numbers.

Unknown to the loyal Captain, terror seized the Baron in the final hour of his rebellion. Fearing his lands and newfound wealth would be seized the Baron changed his orders. He recalled the garrisons' reinforcements, leaving the brave men to their fate, certain death.

In a final foray, the attackers overran the undermanned garrison, breaking their ranks thus seizing control of the Pass. The brave Captain Ghent and his men were put to the sword. With his dying breaths Ghent vowed to return to his lord's pass. He would reclaim his post with all the power death afforded him. His pledge would not go unfulfilled.

A few years later, accidents occurred at the Cursed Gateway to those who manned the Keep, as it had become known. As these deaths became a serious concern, an alternate trail to the coast was blazed. Genmarr Pass was abandoned, left to rust and rot.

Now, nearly three hundred years later, the legend of the Cursed Gateway is all but forgotten. Rumors persist among the elderly, but few take them seriously. Now, a new merchant guild is determined to find a more direct route to the coast. A month ago a caravan laden with goods was sent through Genmarr Pass. It never reached its final destination.

The Cursed Gateway has awakened; its powerful thirst for veneration unfulfilled. Captain Ghent's indomitable spirit still stalks the towers and walls of the Cursed Gateway... he remains the last defender of Genmarr Pass.



BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs round a bend in the trail leading up to the cursed gateway. The merchant caravan lies between them and the fortification. Refer to the map for more details.

1. The Caravan

The warm weather melts the snow and announces an early spring. You notice the trickling sound of running water as your party gazes upon the remains of the caravan wagons strewn about. Just beyond lies the Keep, presumed to be haunted, but is still and quiet now as the wind whistles through the canyon. A large pile of snow and rock to the right of the trail (perhaps a landslide caused by the warm weather) covers one of the five wagons. An eerie crunching sound emanates from behind one of the wagons. As you approach, a huge serpentine creature scuttles from behind the rockslide.

Encounter: The creature is a behir, which has been scavenging among the wagons for corpses.

Tactics: The behir greedily leaves the carrion for a fresh meal. The monster is ravenous; having just awoken from its winter hibernation. The party has interrupted its feeding. Those failing a Listen check (DC 15) are caught flat-footed when the behir attacks.

The behir blasts the party with its lightning breath in the surprise or first round of combat. The behir is an accomplished fighter, lining up as many PCs as possible for greatest effect. In the following rounds, the creature tries to grab and constrict one opponent at a time until all are motionless. It then feeds at its leisure.

The creature is hungry but not suicidal. If brought down to 35 hp or less, the behir flees, scuttling into a hole it has burrowed in the side of the mountain.

If the PCs defeat the behir, they can search the caravan more thoroughly. They easily discover Horrusk and Hodge, two bandits in hiding, having been there since they spotted the behir — nearly two hours — waiting for the creature to leave. The PCs may treat them poorly for their cowardice, but the two are thankful to be alive, enduring the PCs jibes.

👑 **Behir:** CR 8; Huge magical beast; HD 9d10+45; hp 94; Init +1; Spd 40 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +25; Atk +15 melee (2d4+12, bite); Full Atk +15 melee (2d4+12, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon, constrict 2d8+8, improved grab, rake 1d4+4, swallow whole; SQ Can't be tripped, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +16, Hide +5, Listen +4, Spot +4, Survival +2; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Track.

Breath Weapon (Su): 20- line, once every 10 rounds, damage 7d6 electricity, Reflex DC 19 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Constrict (Ex): A behir deals 2d8+8 points of damage with a successful grapple check. It can make six rake attacks against a grappled foe as well.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a behir must hit a creature of any size with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to constrict the opponent or swallow the opponent in the following round.

Rake (Ex): Six claws, attack bonus +15 melee, damage 1d4+4.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A behir can try to swallow a grabbed Medium or smaller opponent by making a successful grapple check. A behir that swallows an opponent can use its Cleave feat to bite and grab another opponent.

A swallowed creature takes 2d8+8 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the behir's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 15). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

A behir's gizzard can hold 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Skills: Behirs have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

▲ **Horrusk, Half-orc Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+6; hp 26; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, flail) or +4 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, flail) or +4 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); SA —; SQ darkvision 60 ft., orc blood; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +4, Listen +2, Spot +1; Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (flail).

Possessions: Chain shirt, masterwork flail, 2 daggers.

▲ **Hodge, Human Rog 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 10; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Bast Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Evasion (Ex): If this rogue makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30-ft.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, dagger.

If the party allows them to do so, the two bandits depart empty handed. They can see the PCs are too strong for them to assault. However, if they join the group they rob the PCs while they sleep.

Four out of the five wagons may be salvaged. It is assumed the party brought enough horses with them (two per wagon) to move the caravan. If not, make the return trip long enough for another raid to be possible. Leaving Horrusk or Hodge to guard the wagons is an unwise, but interesting plot twist.

Treasure: With 2 hours time and a successful Appraise or Search check (DC 10), the PCs inventory all of the undamaged cargo.

The wagons contain the following unspoiled goods: Twenty bolts of fine silk, thirty-five sacks of grain, ten casks of brown ale, ten crates of miscellaneous spices, twelve containers of scented oils, twenty bottles of fine wine (worth 30 gp each), and two chests. The first chest is equipped with a finely crafted lock (Open Lock, DC 35) and contains 10,000 gp. The PCs may notice one of the bandits tried to pick the lock and failed (Spot check, DC 18). There are scratch marks on and around the keyhole.

The second chest is smaller and equipped with an even higher quality lock (Open Lock, DC 35). It is trapped with large scorpion venom and contains various non-magical gems valuing a total of 25,000 gp.

♦ **Poison Needle Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (large scorpion venom, DC 18 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1d6 Str/1d6 Str); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

2. The Eastern Gate

The Eastern Gate is housed within a barbican riddled with murder holes and arrow slits. This is where the last battle occurred over two hundred years ago. The betrayed garrison remains here to this day; ready to defend the Cursed Gateway forever.

As you approach the gate, you notice a massive iron portcullis blocks the way 15-ft. high by 20-ft. wide. The stone barbican housing the portcullis stands as a solid testament to its dwarven builders. As if in a dream, you notice subtle, ghostly movements on the wall and gate towers. The sound of crossbow bolts hissing through the air breaks the unreality of the situation. The gate has defenders!

Encounter: The wall and barbican hold a contingent of 20 shadows of the guards who once manned the walls. They defend the gate to the best of their ability; and to the last man. The shadows of the former soldiers under

Captain Ghent are armed with mystic heavy crossbows and halberds, which have formed with them as part of their immortal curse (these weapons are equivalent to *ghost touch* weapons, but dissipate when the shadows are destroyed). The defenders on the wall and those firing through the arrow slits all have cover. These creatures don't know they are ghosts, so they only use their weapons and react as they did in life, draining Strength only as an after effect of their actions.

The gate's mechanism has been sabotaged. A successful Strength check (DC 35) is required to lift the massive iron portcullis.

▣ **Iron Portcullis:** hardness 15; hp 80; break DC 35.

Tactics: If the shadows take massive casualties (12 or more), the survivor's retreat. They disappear from the Eastern Gate (room #2) and reappear again to help man the Drawbridge Tower (room #4).

☞ **Shadow:** CR 3; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12 (19 hp each); Init +2; Spd Fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch) or +4 melee (1d10/x3, halberd) or +3 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch) or +4 melee (1d10/x3, halberd) or +3 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SA Create spawn, strength damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge Weapon Focus (halberd)B.

Strength Damage (Su): The touch of a shadow deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Skills: Shadows have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks.

*A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

Possessions: None. Their mystic weapons dissipate once the shadows are destroyed.

3. Eastern Drawbridge

The drawbridge is targeted by 15 shadows (from room #4) armed with heavy crossbows.

With the eastern gate behind you, your party turns its attention toward the hulking drawbridge tower in the middle of the crevasse. You can see more of the ghostly defenders are manning the tower. They await your advance in grim, determined silence. The 20-ft. of wooden bridge between your group and the tower seems to stretch impossibly far, as the apparitions begin firing their crossbows at the PCs. It is a 50-ft. drop to the canyon below the drawbridge.

THE LAST DEFENDER

☠ **Shadow:** CR 3; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12 (19 hp each); Init +2; Spd Fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch) or +4 melee (1d10/x3, halberd) or +3 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch) or +4 melee (1d10/x3, halberd) or +3 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SA Create spawn, strength damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge Weapon Focus (halberd)B.

Strength Damage (Su): The touch of a shadow deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Skills: Shadows have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks.

*A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a –4 penalty on Hide checks.

Possessions: None. Their mystic weapons dissipate once the shadows are destroyed.

4-8. The Drawbridge Tower

The tower itself is 40-ft.tall, topped with crenellations. There are four levels. The bottom two levels house the gate and drawbridge mechanisms. The upper two are the barracks and the roof battlements respectively. An additional 15 shadows (12 hp each) man the roof (room #4d). If any haunts retreated, the survivors from the Eastern Gate (room #2) join them. If this group of shadows is reduced to ten or fewer, the remaining defenders relocate, standing beside their commander at the Western Drawbridge (room #5).

5. The Central Gate

A pair of iron portcullises, as immense as those you first passed, loom in the gateway before you. You can make out in the gloom, a solid looking stone door, just beyond the first barrier.

Two iron portcullises block the gate, ten ft. apart. In between the two barriers on the south wall is a barred, stone door. This portal leads to a stairway to room #4b.

☒ **Iron Portcullises:** hardness 15; hp 80, 78; break DC 35 stuck, 35 locked.

☒ **Stone Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; AC 5; break DC 28 stuck, 28 locked.

6. Winch Room

This level is one massive room filled with machinery. It is obvious with a cursory glance the mechanisms are damaged beyond hope of quick repair. The stairway, which brought you here, continues upward.

The stairs continue up to room #4c. This level, which is 45 ft. by 45 ft., is where the winches for both drawbridges and both portcullises are. The machinery is completely destroyed, preventing the PCs from easily raising the barriers.

7. Barracks

This large room is easily recognizable as the barracks. The remains of bedding and furniture litter the floor. In the Southeastern corner there appears to be a kitchen and mess hall area.

This 45 ft. by 45 ft. open room is where the living inhabitants stayed while stationed at Genmarr Pass. A 15 ft. by 15 ft. enclosed area in the Southeastern portion houses the kitchen and mess hall. The room is strewn with broken cots, chests, and rubbish. Nothing of value remains here.

8. Roof

The trapdoor you just passed through leads to the tower roof. Abandoned artifacts of war lie strewn about. None of the equipment appears to be salvageable. The ballista on the east side of the battlements has a twin on the west side.

The top of the Drawbridge Tower is edged with crenellated battlements. On both the eastern and western sides, ballistae are mounted with a clear view of the surrounding canyon. They are rusted and useless now, but still imposing nonetheless.

PROPS

A time-tested trick to catch your players off guard with this type of undead is to make his speech by talking into an empty coffee can... no kidding, practice first while no one is around. If you can keep this prop hidden from the players, and make the speech from behind a DM screen out of sight, so much the better.

9. Western Drawbridge

As you reach the middle of the Western Drawbridge, a swirling mist coalesces into the armored form of a hulking human. The man is clutching a blackened longsword pulsing with an eerie red glow. The last defender of Genmarr Pass has arrived. "You shall pay for your trespass!" it intones with a hollow, metallic voice. "Be gone! We shall defend the pass to the last! Look now, as our fallen rise for battle! You are doomed!"

The final encounter occurs at the opposite end of the western drawbridge. The long dead Captain Renik Ghent stands watching the battle in progress. He remains incorporeal until the PCs approach; the final sentinel, awaiting his final battle.

Captain Ghent is a powerful undead entity called a Guardian Spectre (see New Monsters — Appendix B).

Tactics: Ghent continues to rant about his task as long as he remains materialized. Shadows continue to join him as he engages the player characters in battle.

There are three ways to destroy the spirit of Captain Ghent and end the haunting of the Cursed Gateway. A successful Knowledge check (History or Arcana, DC 20) will identify the creature and the means to destroy it. The first requires the player characters to physically destroy the guardian spectre, then cast hallow on the drawbridge tower.

If the PCs do not have this spell and the spectre returns, they may realize they need additional help to complete the adventure. It is quite all right to have them return to civilization and retrieve a powerful cleric or scroll (for a small retainer — the 25,000 gp in gems they found should do nicely, unless they returned it to the merchant guild).

If this adventure becomes an important campaign plot point, it is recommended Ghent be harder to kill than merely beating him in combat.

The second requires ridding Ghent of his unholy weapon by casting remove curse on it and then throwing it into the chasm, effectively destroying the item. To do this effectively, you may want to require the caster of the spell has to actually touch the blade. Alternately, a Bardic Knowledge check would reveal the same about the sword.

The final alternative requires little or no research. The PCs must obtain written orders from the original baron's descendants, relieving the Captain of his command. Thereby absolving the spirit of his duty to defend Genmarr Pass.

If the PCs succeed in destroying Ghent, the shadows rest as well, never to return.

▲ Captain Renik Ghent, Guardian Spectre, Human Ftr 8: CR 10; Medium undead; HD 10d12; hp 63; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d12+7 plus *ghost touch, unholy, wounding/x3, arcanus morti*); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d12+7 plus *ghost touch, unholy, wounding/x3, arcanus morti*); SA Manifestation, frightful moan, horrific appearance, corrupting gaze; SQ Undead traits, incorporeal traits, telekinesis, +4 turn resistance and rejuvenation; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 15, Con—, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +10, Search +10, Spot +10; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Manifestation (Su): Can affect things on the material plane

Frightful moan (Su): The guardian spectre can moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same guardian spectre's moan for one day.

Horrific Appearance (Su): Any living creature within 60-ft that views the guardian spectre must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or immediately suffer 1d4 points of permanent Strength, 1d4 points of permanent Constitution and 1d4 points of permanent Dexterity drain. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same guardian spectre's horrific appearance for one day.

Corrupting Gaze (Su): The guardian spectre can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 ft. Creatures that meet the guardian spectre's gaze must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or suffer 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of permanent Charisma drain.

Telekinesis (Su): The guardian spectre can use telekinesis once per round as a free action, as cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the guardian spectre's HD or 12 whichever is higher.

Rejuvenation (Su): The guardian spectre will restore itself in 2d4 days with a successful level check (1d20+ guardian spectre's level or HD) against DC 16. The only ways to permanently destroy a guardian spectre are:

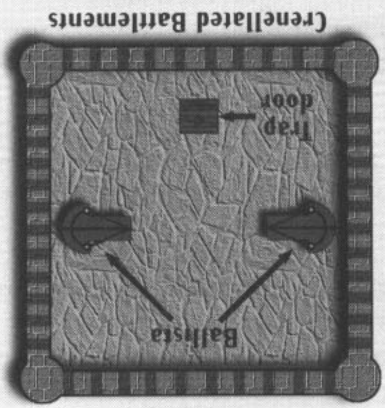
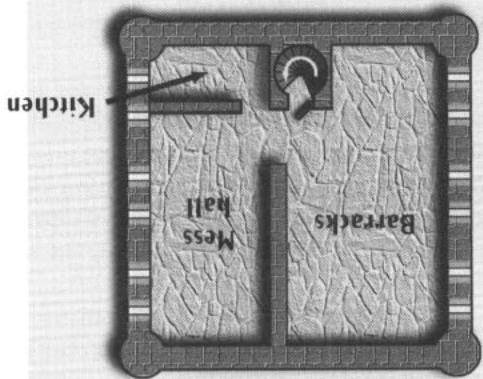
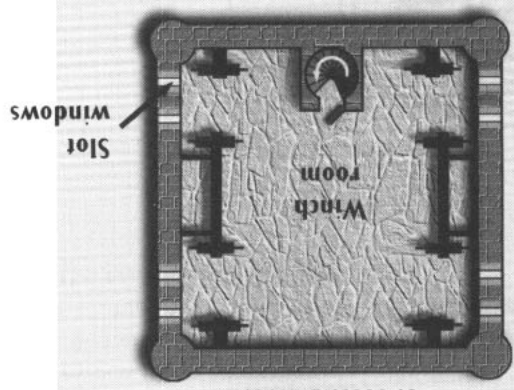
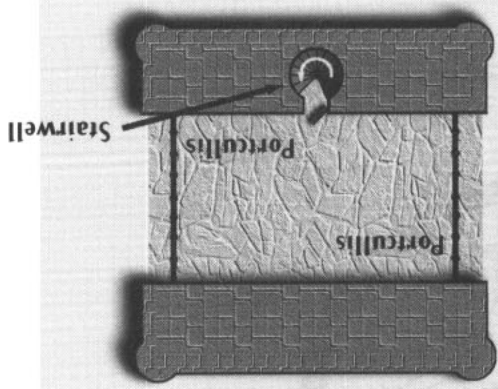
- To cast hallow on the focus of its attention after it is physically destroyed, but before it rejuvenates.
- To relieve the creature of its weapon, cast a remove curse, and then destroy it.
- Lawfully relieve the guardian spectre of its command.

Ghost Touch (Su): Incorporeal creatures may be damaged by attacks from ghost touch weapons and the 50% miss chance does not apply.

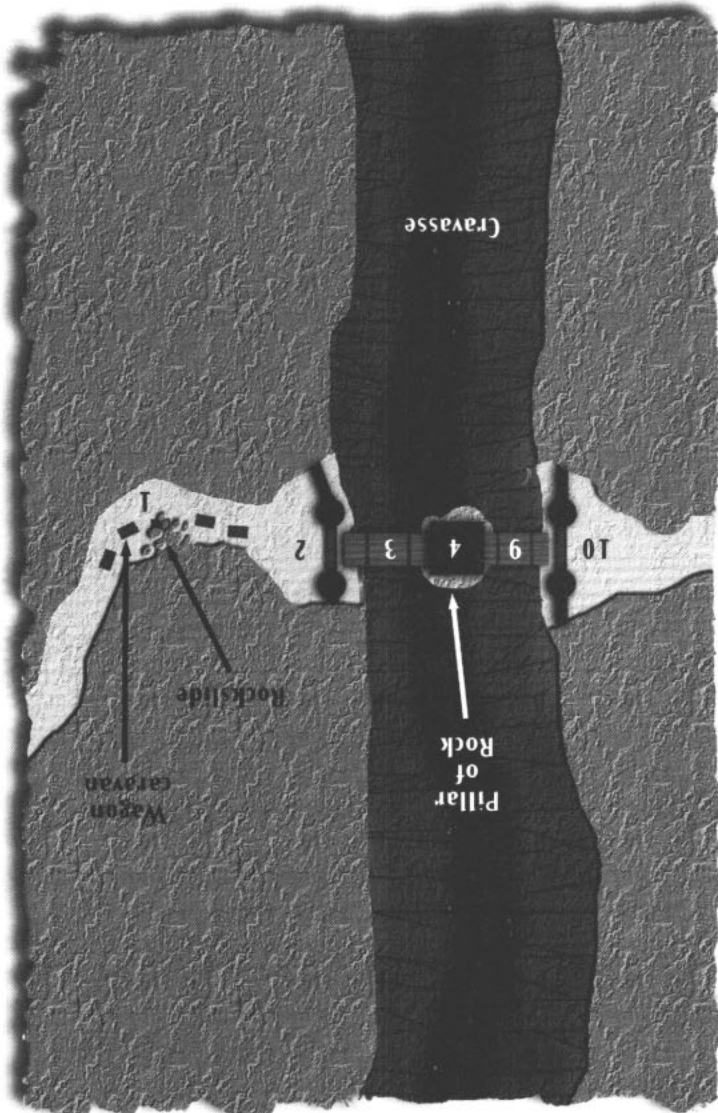
Unholy (Su): Good characters struck by *arcanus morti* suffer 2d6 points of damage.

Wounding (Su): Creatures struck by *arcanus morti* suffer 1 point of Constitution damage. A critical hit does not multiply this damage.

Possessions: +2 *ghost touch full plate, arcanus morti*.



THE DRAWBRIDGE TOWER



THE CURSED GATEWAY



THE LAST DEFENDER

THE LAST DEFENDER

Tactics: Renik understands tactics. He retains the memories of a seasoned veteran who commanded over one hundred successful battles. He remembers how to defend the pass and stops at nothing to do so.

- He forms the remaining shadows into a wedge and charges them down into the center of the player characters.
- Ghent keeps a minimum of two shadows in the rear, armed with crossbows. They fire at spell casters, trying to disrupt their ability to use spells.
- Captain Ghent employs his Improved Bull Rush to try to knock an obvious fighter over the edge of the bridge. It is a 50-ft. fall to the canyon below.
- In the rounds that follow, he and the remaining shadows fall back to the western edge of the crevasse and form a defensive line. DM's Note: This is where Ghent fell in combat the first time. He and his men will not retreat from this point, fighting to the death as they did 200 years ago.
- If Ghent is defeated in combat, he and all of the shadows disappear. They and Ghent return in 2d4 days, unless he is banished.

10. Western Gate

The Western Gate is housed within a barbican riddled with murder holes and arrow slits, just like its twin. But this gate has no defenders.

The last portcullis stands open in silent testimony of your victory. You have lifted the curse and earned the right to pass through the final gate. The trail to the coast stands before you, winding its way down the mountain pass and out of The Cursed Gateway.

EPILOGUE

If the DM wishes to use Genmarr Pass as part of a larger campaign, here are a few adventure hooks possibly stemming from this experience:

- The merchant guild may hire the PCs to train a new militia for the pass.
- The merchant guild may hire the PCs as permanent escorts for all caravans traveling through the pass.
- The PCs may use their victory to bargain for the right to the pass themselves, setting up their own toll system.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Upon returning to the city to report their victory, they see the landscape has changed...an earthquake hit while they were gone! Deaths are calculated at a minimum until sewer workers start showing up brutally murdered (see the adventure "Sundered Faith").
- The PCs are summoned by the Order of Garadon who have some interesting questions about their latest adventures (see the adventure "Garadon Manor").



Chapter 17:

The Lost King

Levels 5 to 7
By Eric Steiger

Draneken Castle recently withstood an invasion by the Barbarians of Beloran Gorge. During the course of the fight, the court wizard, the self-titled Keland the Magnificent, sent His Majesty King Ivol Lareth II into hiding. Shortly afterward, however, Keland died. In fact, he died before telling anyone what he did with King Lareth.

Now, the King's unaccomplished son is ruling over Draneken and King Lareth's trail grows even colder. With all their options exhausted, you are the kingdom's last hope. If you can bring home King Lareth, the wealth and gratitude of an entire kingdom is yours for the asking.

Keland, for all of his beastliness, was still a rather shrewd character as he made finding King Lareth difficult. Your search begins in Keland's chambers in Draneken castle. Only a fool enters a wizard's chambers without an invitation.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 5 to 7. It requires social skills, wilderness skills, and some arcane knowledge. A flexible party is recommended.

During the invasion, Keland polymorphed King Lareth into a griffon and then cast *dimension door* to get him out of the castle. Keland figured that king Lareth would be safe in this new form as few creatures pose a serious threat to a griffon. Now, Lareth is happily living as a griffon on the summit of Godsword Peak, the tallest mountain in the range. Keland told nobody exactly what he turned King Lareth into and this should be a complete surprise for the PCs. He did, however, make sure that he could always track Lareth using his ring of remembrance.

As for Keland, he was less of a wizard than he proclaimed. Lazy and greedy, he spent more time building up his reputation as a wizard than studying. Even so he had a natural talent for magic and his skill earned him an important position as the King's Court Wizard. He was especially fond of polymorph. Keland was also a coward, and while he is hailed as a hero for dying in the line of duty, the truth is that he was killed in the process of attempting to teleport out of the castle.

Now, Lareth's son Mellan, nominally rules Draneken. Mellan is a dullard. He is unqualified to rule, self-absorbed, and enjoys the perks of his office to the degree of ignoring responsibility. The task of ruling Draneken has fallen to Lareth's trusted seneschal, Kaylin Lorinthen. A brilliant, beautiful and competent elven administrator, Kaylin keeps Draneken functioning in Lareth's absence.

Kaylin is keenly aware of her value to the kingdom. She is unwilling to risk her own life in a hopeless search for the king. Neither can she afford to send men from the castle guard to search for Lareth. The threat of war with the Barbarians still looms and Mellan's inability to rule is sure to bring about another siege. Keland's paranoia makes matters even worse; his chambers are trapped and dangerous. Kaylin refuses to risk anyone's well-being in an attempt to search the wizard's tower.

Therefore, she is looking to hire mercenaries that are competent, professional, and expendable. Kaylin feels the PC's can spring whatever traps lie in wait in Keland's quarters. This done, she can search the chambers for any clues as to King Lareth's whereabouts.

Note: The absence of a map from this adventure is intentional. There is no need for one. Draneken is a simple country and other than the general layout (castle in the center, mountains in the north) the DM is encouraged to flesh it out. The events happen in a specific order, so the terrain from point A to point B can merely be described without worrying about specifics.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard of the King Lareth or the current political situation. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Knowledge check.

- DC 10** King Lareth went missing during the barbarian invasion.
- DC 15** He hasn't returned yet and his idiot son is ruling the kingdom.
- DC 20** His court wizard also vanished during the invasion.
- DC 25** The court wizard was entrusted with keeping King Lareth safe.

THE ADVENTURE

You can draw the PCs into the adventure in various ways. If the PCs are known in this area, it is likely that Kaylin has heard of them and summoned them to the castle. They will of course be handsomely rewarded. If the PCs are new to the area, then Kaylin has sent out missives to all nearby towns, cities, and manors requesting the bravest heroes in all the land, and promising the gratitude of an entire kingdom.

King Ivole Lareth II rules Draneken Castle that lies in the center of the small kingdom. The Draneken army recently repelled an invasion by the Barbarians of Beloran Gorge (in the far north). Most people are at a loss to explain why the barbarians attacked, as Draneken lacks resources and its land is sparse and fallow. There are only meager towns in the kingdom, with no large cities.

DRANEKEN CASTLE

Keland's quarters are the only detailed area of Draneken Castle. The rest of the castle is restricted and if the PCs wander, the guards escort them back to the audience chamber where they must answer to an annoyed Kaylin.

Upon entering the castle, a servant leads PCs to the main audience chamber, where Kaylin intercepts them before they can reach the throne of "King" Mellan.

"Thank the Heavens, you've come. Few know what I'm about to tell, and I would prefer it to stay that way. Even if you choose not to take on the task for which I have summoned you, I need your word that you will speak of this to nobody. I do hope you will help us. The entire kingdom is in jeopardy!"

If the PCs do not initially accept the task, Kaylin is not above using her considerable charm to get them to agree. Once they all swear to keep silent, she continues:

"A month ago barbarians invaded our fair kingdom and laid siege to this very castle. During the attack, the king's trusted wizard, Keland the Magnificent, magically sent King Lareth into hiding. However, before he told anybody just what he did with our beloved king, Keland died defending the castle. While Keland's loyalty was beyond reproach, he was rather eccentric, and we now have no idea where King Lareth might be. This is where you come in. If you find and return our rightful king, the gratitude of an entire nation will be yours."

THE LOST KING

Kaylin is happy to answer any questions the PCs have about the assignment. She offers whatever money the PCs require; while Draneken is not a rich kingdom, they are desperate for their king's safe return. Kaylin suggests that PCs begin their search in Keland's chambers, which are still sealed and have not been disturbed since the wizard's death. If the PCs ask why she has not yet searched the room, she dodges the question, reiterating Keland's eccentricity.

Mellan

Mellan is an idiot. His sole purpose for this adventure is to make things difficult for both Kaylin and the PCs. If they dawdle too long in the castle, use Mellan as incentive to keep them moving. He makes stupid comments on their attire, attempts to grab at any interesting objects on their persons, and makes passes at female characters. A few sharp words from Kaylin usually quiets him and shames him into leaving... for a while.

Keland's Quarters

Once the PCs have all the information they need, the guards escort them to Keland's chambers. The door is wooden and nondescript; it is also locked.

Door: 2 inches thick; hardness 5; hit points 20; stuck DC 23; locked DC 25.

Upon entering, the PCs find a horrendously opulent bedchamber. The place is garishly and tastelessly decorated with expensive art, furniture and other accoutrements. There is a large, overstuffed four-poster bed in the center of the room. Keland was paid well for his services, and was not frugal with his earnings. However, what the PCs do not find are any magical or arcane tools or instruments.

On a successful Listen check (DC 20) the PCs hear the sound of running water behind the wall opposite the entrance. A more detailed Search of the wall (DC 25) reveals a hidden seam in the brickwork indicating a hidden door. However, the hidden door does not budge, regardless of the amount of force applied. The door is connected to a stone in the floor, directly under the bottom-left leg of the bed. The stone is a pressure-plate and if the weight of the bed is removed, the stone rises and the secret door swings open.

The secret door leads into Keland's laboratory, which is far less impressive than his bedchamber. There is a research table, a small fountain, and a bookshelf, all of which are covered in a thin layer of dust. The only thing that looks like it has been touched recently is a small jewelry box lying in an alcove on the wall. The box is not locked, but the ring inside is trapped with a cloudkill trap. If the trap is sprung, cloudkill (8th-level) fills the room. Cutting the thread disables the device.

Cloudkill Trap: CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*cloudkill*, 8th-level wizard, DC 14 Fortitude save partial); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 24.

The ring is the *ring of remembrance* (see Appendix A), attuned to King Lareth. There is nothing else of interest in the laboratory.

Read or paraphrase the following to whichever PC puts on the ring:

As you slide the ring onto your finger, you feel a tug at the back of your mind. The sensation is not unpleasant, but it is insistent. It is definitely pulling you... north. For whatever reason, the ring is determined that you should go north, strongly implying there is somebody there you need to find.

THE SEARCH FOR KIND LARETH

Kaylin is happy to provide the PCs with any reasonable supplies they need (taking it out of their pay, of course), such as provisions, or a map of the area. The ring guides the PCs north, to the Aelier Mountains and the Godsword Peak. Kaylin strongly suggests they take climbing supplies, the mountain are only three days from the castle, but there are several incidents that can occur during that time (these are all independent encounters and can be run in any order):

1. Leftover Barbarians

A small group of the invading barbarian tribe chooses to remain in Draneken, trying their hand at highway robbery. However, the road upon which they have decided to ply their trade is almost entirely free from traffic. In fact, after nearly a month, they haven't found a single soul to pillage, and are about to give up. Hence, they are excited when the PCs happen by.

Encounter: There are six robbers hiding behind foliage beside the road, and due to their excitement, are less subtle than they could be, easily noticed with a Sense Motive check (DC 15). Spotted or not, they order the PCs to surrender and hand over their valuables.

The men confronting you are a sad lot. On the edge of starvation, they appear worn, down by the life of a highwayman without a highway. Nevertheless, ferocity gleams in their eyes, an eagerness to use the large axes in their hands is apparent. One of them approaches you.

"Drop your weapons and nobody gets hurt. We want your money, your valuables..." Another of the ragged crew steps up to him and whispers in his ear. He grins. "Oh yeah, your food, too. Better have lots of food on ya."

▲ **Bandits, Human Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 32 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d12+5/x3, greataxe) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, longbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d12+5/x3, greataxe) +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, longbow); SA—; SQ—; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Intimidate +6, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Power attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)

Possessions: Banded mail, shield, masterwork greataxe, longbow, 20 arrows, 15 cp.

Tactics: The bandits begin the fight in earnest; after all they are starving. PCs with the largest bundles are attacked first. The bandits grab their gear (sacks or backpacks) first and run. They won't coup de grace fallen foes, rather, if the PCs have are helpless, they loot for food and gold before fleeing.

2. Crushed Farmhouse

Occasionally, the rocs that live in the Aelier Mountains like to carry off a cow or horse from one of the farms in northern Draneken. The farmers, knowing better than to try to dissuade a hungry roc usually just sigh and make the best of it.

Off to the side of the road, you notice one of the scattered farmsteads that dot your road. However, this one is distinctly different. Even from this distance you can tell that the main house has collapsed on itself. The house is a mess of thatch and wooden beams, and the once-proud chimney is a jumble of stone. You hear a woman's voice screaming for help.

Crushed Farmhouse Area

There are three people on the farmstead; Alcyon, his wife Elenor, and their son, Edwyn. Beams from the roof trap both Alcyon and Edwyn, and Elenor is in a state of panic. A Strength check (DC 22) is required to free them. If the PCs help them, they are eternally grateful, and happily offer the PCs food and shelter. They tell the PCs about a giant winged bird, like an eagle, that came out of the sky and stole their livestock. It seemed enraged, crushing their homestead and farm before leaving. We hid behind a fence and stayed still until it left.

▲ **Farmer, Human Com 1:** CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NC; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

3. Flight from the Dragon

Tarcoloss, a red dragon has returned. A human generation ago Tarcoloss came to the Aelier Mountains, earning the title Mountainmelter. However, shortly afterwards, Tarcoloss left for greener pastures. Recently, he has returned to claim his old stomping grounds, and the nearby village of Northwick is paying the price.

In the distance, you see the mountains. The ring guides you unwaveringly towards them. Ahead of you on the road, you see a ragged procession of refugees in distress. While they have nothing save the clothes on their backs, they seem far more worried about whatever is behind them than anything else. As you reach the head of the group, they begin clamoring and warning you to run for your lives. On the horizon, you see a monstrous silhouette winging its way towards you at an alarming rate. It's a dragon!

It should be obvious to the PCs that Tarcoloss moves a lot faster than they do. It should also be equally obvious that they cannot stand against him. Their only recourse is to retreat into the hills. The villagers inform the PCs that there is a cave nearby, barely a mile east, where the children like to play.

This is an excellent roleplaying opportunity, as the PCs must shepherd the villagers to safety. Tarcoloss, having eaten his fill and destroyed the village, is content merely to terrorize the villagers, and uses his breath weapon from the air. Once the PCs have taken the villagers to the cave, read or paraphrase the following.

You have managed to evade the dragon for now. He cannot reach you in this cave, and you hope that he will soon get bored and leave. The villagers are out of breath, clinging to each other out of fear, exhaustion, and desperation, but they are grateful. As they huddle around you, recuperating, you see several glowing red eyes in the darkness beyond, accompanied by grinning mouths of dull ivory teeth. You are not alone! As if to demonstrate the severity of the situation, you also hear a great roar from outside. The dragon hasn't left quite yet.

Encounter: The cave has become the waypoint for five bugbear soldiers on route to join their army. Low on supplies and itching for action, they are more than pleased at the weak, ripe meat the PCs have escorted into their makeshift lair. They attack with abandon.

Tactics: The PCs have three goals here: kill the bugbears, protect the villagers, and make sure nobody leaves the cave. Once the PCs defeat the bugbears, the villagers are again grateful but ask about the threat outside the cave. Tarcoloss taunts them briefly for a time, shooting goutts of flame and buffeting his wings against the stone. He watches the cave from a distance before becoming bored and flying off back to the mountains. If for whatever reason the PCs are foolhardy enough to taunt or attack the dragon, his statistics are in location #6.

▲ **Tarcoloss, Juvenile Red Dragon:** CR 10; Large dragon (fire); HD 16d12+64; hp 168; Init +0; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +16; Grp +29; Attack +24 melee (2d6+11, bite); Full Atk +24 melee (2d6+9, bite), +19 melee (2d4+4, 2 claws), +19 melee (1d6+4, 2 wings), +19 melee (2d4+12, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon, crush, snatch, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., immunity to fire, sleep, and paralysis, low-light vision, spell resistance 21, vulnerability to cold; AL CE; Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +12; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +21, Concentration +18, Decipher Script +16, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (geography) +13, Listen +22, Search +20, Spot +22, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +10, Use Magic Device +15; Alertness, Awesome Blow, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack.

Breath Weapon (Su): 60-ft. cone, damage 8d10 fire, Reflex DC 22 half.

Crush (Ex): Area 15 ft. by 15 ft.; Small or smaller opponents take 2d8+16 points of bludgeoning damage, and must succeed at a DC 24 Reflex save or be pinned; grapple bonus +29.

Snatch (Ex): Grapple bonus +29; claw against Small or smaller opponents for 2d4+5/round, bite against Medium or smaller opponents for 2d6+9/round, or 4d6+18 if the dragon does not move; snatched creature can be flung 60 ft for 6d6 points of damage.

Spell-Like Abilities: 4/day—locate object.

Spells: As 3rd-level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/5; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—detect magic, mage hand, message, read magic, resistance; 1st—burning hands, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement.

▼ **Bugbear:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+3; hp 22, 19, 18, 16, 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Skills: Bugbears have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.



ranks in the Climb skill should be at a disadvantage (see chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Periodically, have the PCs make Climb checks of increasing difficulty. Do not penalize them for bad die rolls; the idea is to remind them that they are climbing a difficult mountain face. The mountain has a good deal of activity, and the following encounters are to make things interesting. They can be resolved in any order (on either the way up or down the mountain) and only the last one (King Lareth) is required.

GODSWORD PEAK

The ring eventually guides the PCs to the base of Godsword Peak, the tallest mountain in the Aelier range. From this point on the PCs have to walk. The mountain presents difficult terrain to traverse, and anyone who doesn't have

4. Meenaer and the Giants

Meenaer is a veirgan (see New Monsters — Appendix B) with a problem. A hill giant and his ogre followers have moved into a cavern near her home and she fears for her life, and that of her offspring, Zeegi. She is deathly afraid of them, and must leave if they do not. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of good nesting places on the mountain.

As you laboriously scale a rock face of this mountain you hear a rustling in the air off to the side. Carefully turning your heads to see the cause of the disturbance, you find yourselves facing a small cat hovering in mid-air on its colorful, feathered wings, and observing you intently.

The terrain here is especially difficult, but there's relative safety just a few more feet up. Each PC who fails a climb check (DC 20) must make a Reflex save (DC 18) to catch themselves and avoid falling. If they fall, Meenaer uses her telekinesis to catch the first one and placed him on top of the ledge. If a second one falls, the PC takes 3d6 damage from the 30 ft. drop to the last ledge they were on. Meenaer uses telekinesis to lift those who fall and place them back on the ledge. Once everybody has safely reached the top, she leaves unless some effort is made to speak to her. If the PCs find some way to communicate, she explains her predicament, and requests their help. If they are antagonistic, she flies off.

The hill giant and his cronies however are not friendly, and do not leave without a fight. If they are cowed into leaving they do not return. Meenaer has nothing with which to compensate the PCs for their efforts, but if they ask, she gladly accompanies them up the mountain.

👁 **Hill Giant:** CR 7; Large giant; HD 12d8+48; hp 102; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (in hide armor); AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +9; Grp +20; Atk +16 melee (2d8+10, greatclub) or +15 melee (1d4+7, slam) or +8 ranged (2d6+7, rock); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d8+10, greatclub) or +15 melee (1d4+7, 2 slams) or +8 ranged (2d6+7, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Rock throwing; SQ Low-light vision, rock catching; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Jump +7, Listen +3, Spot +6; Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Improved Sunder, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Rock Throwing (Ex): The range increment is 120 ft. for a hill giant's thrown rocks.

👁 **Ogre:** CR 3; Large giant; HD 4d8+11 (29 hp); Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (in hide armor); AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +12; Atk +8 melee (2d8+7, greatclub) or +1 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Full Atk +8 melee (2d8+7, greatclub) or +1 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2; Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

5. Manticores

A pair of manticores recently immigrated to Godsword Peak hoping to find some easy prey. Unfortunately, they have had little luck in this regard, as most of the creatures on this mountain are either capable of flight or much larger than they are.

The going eases up a little and you reach semblance of a plateau. The ring steadily guides you to the apex of the mountain. As you stop to catch your breath, you notice movement out of the corner of your eye. When you look, though, there is nothing. Perhaps it was just your imagination.

Tactics: The manticores ambush the PCs, relying on speed to pick them off one at a time. They do not want a long battle, and flee in the face of one. Nevertheless, they continue to stalk the party and strike again at the most opportune time. If forced to retreat, they return to their lair, to which the PCs can track them. The lair contain a few bones, and the following treasure: 34 gp (scattered around) and the chain shirt of one of their few victims.

👁 **Manticore:** CR 5; Large magical beast; HD 6d10+24; hp 67, 47; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy); AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d4+5, claw) or +8 ranged (1d8+2/19–20, 6 spikes); Full Atk +10 melee (2d4+5, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d8+2, bite); or +8 ranged (1d8+2/19–20, 6 spikes); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Spikes; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +9, Survival +1; Flyby Attack, Multiattack, TrackB, Weapon Focus (spikes).

Spikes (Ex): With a snap of its tail, a manticore can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 ft. with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 ft. of each other. The creature can launch only 24 spikes in any 24-hour period.

Skills: *Manticores have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

6. The Dragon's Return

The PCs may have escaped Tarcoloss the first time (assuming that encounter was used), but they are in his territory now, and he bears a grudge. Tarcoloss lairs on one of the nearby mountains and periodically surveys his domain. As soon as he spots the PCs, he attacks.

You have reached a point where you feel relatively safe on the mountain, with no apparent threat from either the mountain or its inhabitants. As you stop to take a long overdue rest, you hear a pounding like thunder, and a familiar booming voice roars.

"You! You ruined my amusement. I do not take kindly to being thwarted so. And you will pay dearly for having spoiled my fun. Be certain that the enjoyment I would have taken from the villagers, I will now take from you tenfold!"

While Tarcoloss is more than a match for the PCs in a fair fight, they do have a few things going for them. There are certain parts of the mountain where he will not go, such as the stone giant's territory (encounter #1) or the peak of the mountain, where the rocs nest. If the PCs make it to either of these locations, Tarcoloss leaves them alone. Also, if Meenaer is with them, she helps hide the PCs using her magic. Finally, the PCs can use the mountain to their advantage. Climb, Jump and Hide checks should be abundant as they scale through dangerous rock and keep hidden the hundreds of crags on the mountain face. Make it challenging, not arduous.

Tactics: Tarcoloss is on the wing, and does not risk landing unless he is sure of solid footing (which is a rarity on the mountain for a creature of his size). Thus, he is limited to his breath weapon since hovering sacrifices his maneuverability, unless the PCs expose themselves. However, with so many overhangs, updrafts, and so on, his breath weapon is less effective. Give the PCs a +1 or +2 circumstance bonus to their Reflexes saving throws if they are using the cover of the mountain. Also, reduce the breath weapons damage by half if Tarcoloss is breathing and flying by at the same time.

Tarcoloss is centuries old. Thinking himself indestructible, he won't retreat from the PCs unless they reduce him to 75 hit points or less.

7. The Disguised King

This encounter takes place at the peak of the mountain and is the climax of the adventure (note that it does not have to happen last, as the PCs still need to go back down the mountain). The ring of remembrance lead them this far and their quarry is here.

The pull of the ring lead you far, and you have finally arrived at the top of the Godsword Peak. The tracking sensor given by the ring pulls your eyes upwards, and as you look to the open air, you see a majestic griffon on the wing, narrowly dodging the clutches of a gigantic bird of prey, the legendary roc. The urging from the ring is unmistakable, leading you to one inevitable conclusion: either the griffon or the roc is the lost king, and the object of your quest.

The ring of remembrance offers no clues as to which creature is really King Lareth. There are several ways to solve this puzzle. A successful Spellcraft check (DC 20) reveals that *polymorph* is not capable of turning a human into a creature as large as a roc. Detect magic reveals the griffon has a strong magical aura. A *Speak with animals* spell solves the problem efficiently, as Lareth is eloquent and desperate for help. Finally, if Meenaer accompanies the PCs, she has been friends with the griffon, and knows that he is more than he seems.

Once the PCs identify Lareth, there is the significant task of saving him from the roc. One major advantage the PCs have is that unless they do something extreme, nobody is paying much attention to them. Once the PCs have fought off the roc, Lareth is free to land and thank them for their assistance, which he does quite eloquently, considering he cannot talk. Assuming the PCs find a way to communicate with Lareth, he is grateful, and curious about the current state of Draneken Castle, however he politely declines any requests to return there, as he prefers the life of a griffon. The PCs must either convince him of his duty to his nation (which can be best accomplished by tactfully reminding him of his son's incompetence), take him back by force, or find a way to magically change him back against his will.

Tactics: Until they damage the roc, it ignores them. Once they do, it forces the roc to split its attention between the PCs and Lareth. In order to drive the roc away, the PCs must do 50 hit points of damage, in which case it considers the meal a lost cause and flies off to recuperate.

✦ **Roc:** CR 9; Gargantuan animal; HD 18d8+126; hp 207; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +13; Grp +37; Atk +21 melee (2d6+12, talon); Full Atk +21 (2d6+12, 2 talons) and +19 melee (2d8+6, bite); SA —; SQ low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +9; Str 34, Dex 15, Con 24, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Hide -3, Listen +10, Spot +14; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover

Skills: Rocs have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

✦ **Griffon:** CR 4; Large magical beast; HD 7d10+21; hp 59; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +15; Atk +11 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +8 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Pounce, rake 1d6+2; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Jump +8, Listen +6, Spot +10; Iron Will, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Pounce (Ex): If a griffon dives upon or charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +8 melee, damage 1d6+2.

Skills: Griffons have a +4 racial bonus on Jump and Spot checks.

8. Family Matters

The journey back to Draneken Castle is uneventful once the PCs reach the bottom of Godsword Peak. However, upon their return, one last problem needs their attention...

Mellan, it seems, is not quite as dim-witted as he first appears. He has decided he likes being king, and when the PCs went searching for his father, he hired an assassin in case they succeeded. Figuring the longer King Lareth is home, the tougher it will be to have him killed, the assassin strikes the very night the PCs return.

Lareth and Kaylin extend their hospitality to the PCs, with a lavish celebration for the king's return, and a room to stay in for the night. Once everybody has gone to bed, the assassin strikes.

Jared Blackblood is a notorious killer, a wanted man in more than one land. He became famous for his ability to escape danger and loyalty to those who hire him. Mellan has provided Jared with a duplicate key to the king's chambers. He is to knife the king, and escape through a window (easily opened from inside the chamber).

In the dead of night, the PCs hear a scream. When they investigate, they see Kaylin already rushing to the king's door. Inside they find King Lareth collapsed on the floor and a figure crouched in the king's window alcove against a white moon. Jared has already cast *jump* on himself. His ideal escape is to use this spell to help him jump outward over the moat, and his *feather fall* spell thereafter to ensure a soft landing.

Kaylin calls for the healers and rushes to the king's side as the PCs chase down the assassin. Mellan arrives soon thereafter. A Sense Motive check (DC 20) by a PC who stayed behind reveals mixed emotions on Mellan's face (he's a bad performer). The king is in negative hit points from the assassin's death attack. Kaylin can use Heal to stabilize him, allow any PCs to stay behind to help. With this type of attention, the King miraculously survives the attack, but is bedridden for a while.

Catching Jared won't be easy. If they climb down the keep's walls (DC 18), they will have to traverse the 10 ft. deep moat with a Swim check (DC 10) or Jump check. If the PCs catch and subdue Jared, nothing short of torture causes the assassin to reveal his employer. Confronting Mellan with this evidence causes the spineless man to collapse, he confesses and begs his father for mercy. The king makes no decisions tonight, but has Mellan jailed. The following day he is duly exiled from the kingdom.

▲ **Jared Blackblood, Human Rog 6/Asn 2:** CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 8d6+6; hp 40; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+2/19-20, short sword) or +9 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +8/+8 melee (1d6+2/19-20, short sword) or +9 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +4d6, death attack, spells; SQ Evasion, poison use, save against poison +1, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Climb +10, Disable Device +10, Disguise +10, Hide +10, Listen +12, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +12, Search +12, Spot +10, Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +8; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Death Attack: If this assassin studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (assassin's choice). While studying the victim, this assassin can undertake other actions so long as his attention stays focused on the target and the target does not detect the

assassin or recognize the assassin as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 14) against the kill effect, she dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6+2 rounds. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the assassin has completed the 3 rounds of study, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds.

Evasion (Ex): This rogue can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage.

Poison Use: Assassins are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Save Bonus against Poison: The assassin gains a natural saving throw bonus of +1 against all poisons.

Sneak Attack: This rogue's attacks deals an extra 4d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): This rogue gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): This rogue retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Assassin Spells Prepared: (4; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st—*feather fall*, *jump*.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, +1 *speed* short sword, masterwork dagger (3), tanglefoot bag, two thunderstones.

EPILOGUE

This setting can be used as a single adventure, or as an ongoing campaign. The dragon Tarcoloss is currently especially vindictive towards the PCs providing they survived the adventure. Meenaer and Zeegi might come seeking the PCs help in the future if they worked well together here. Alcyon and his family or the refugees need help rebuilding their town and any PC volunteering to help is greatly appreciated. Having proven their worth, Lareth or Kaylin may have additional tasks for which they are willing to hire the PCs (such as escorting Mellan out of Draneken).

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Upon returning to the city with King Lareth, they see the landscape has changed...an earthquake hit while they were gone! Deaths were minimal until sewer workers start showing up brutally murdered (see the adventure "Sundered Faith").
- The PCs are summoned by the Order of Garadon who have some interesting questions about their adventures (see the adventure "Garadon Manor").

Chapter 18:

The Wreck of the Venerable Drake

Levels 5 to 7
by Douglas Sun

While passing through the bustling city of Galishor on your way to Dragon's Bluff, you visit the establishment of Samuel Beckett, a merchant who comes highly recommended for the quality of his adventuring gear. The shop's assistant attends to you, recommending the priciest items. From the back of the store comes wailing and groaning. "Oh, that's Master Beckett" the clerk says. He leans forward and whispers, "terrible news today."

Beckett appears and immediately eyes his assistant. Beckett is plump and prosperous-looking, but disheveled at the moment. "Who are you wagging your tongue at, boy?" he snaps. He pulls up short when he sees you. "Oh, I'm sorry. Today has been less than good. I've been short with everyone. My ship was lost, fully laden with cargo. It ran aground two leagues north of here. And those cowards of a crew won't go back to salvage it! Losing the cargo is bad enough, but a family heirloom was aboard the ship, locked away in my monogrammed chest. I would pay dearly to get it back..."

You've been in this scenario before — man in distress pays adventurers handsomely to retrieve missing locket, charm, or arcane tome that eats the world. Yeah. This should be easy.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 1 to 3. The ability to swim and operate in and under water is important in this adventure. PCs without water breathing magic should purchase scrolls and potions before heading out.

It centers around the *Venerable Drake*, a merchant ship that ran aground on a reef while returning to the city of Galishor. It is 50-ft. long with two decks, a square mast amidships and a triangular, lanteen sail on the poop deck. Hlavius Beckett owned both the ship and its cargo. Part of his agony over the wreck stems from the fact it occurred ridiculously close to home.

The *Venerable Drake* ran aground on the Plangent Reeds. The Reeds are located close enough to Galishor that Beckett lends the PCs either a wagon or a barge to transport anything they recover from the ship. He does not provide wagon drivers or a crew for the boat, however.

In either case, refer to table 18–1 on page 182 to determine possible encounters en route or on the return trip.

The ship lies stranded on a reef about 500 yards offshore. Unless the PCs travel by boat and are skilled enough navigators to pull directly alongside the wreck and climb onboard, they must wade or swim out to it.

The PCs find little worth salvaging once aboard the

THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE

Venerable Drake. A large gash opened in the hull just below the waterline when it struck the reef. At high tide both the cargo hold and the lower deck were flooded, taking the cargo out to sea.

If the PCs carry out their mission faithfully and return everything worth returning to Beckett — including the chest with his initials on it — he rewards them handsomely, true to his word. If the PCs insist on setting a specific payment, he offers to pay them based on a scale. He hints that at least 5,000 gold coins could be in their future if they return all he asks. If they wonder what happened to the crew, he tells them they reported the shipwreck but will not return, considering it bad luck to do so.

In one very important respect, however, Beckett has been less than honest with the PCs. The item in that chest is not a family heirloom of great sentimental value, but a powerful magic item. Beckett acquired it through his connections in a faraway port on a hunch it had magical powers. He fears the PCs suspect its true nature, they will run off with it. He doesn't know exactly what it does and therefore has no immediate plans to use it for personal gain, but he is a clever man with significant resources at his beck and call, so it's only a matter of time before he comes up with a plan.

The amulet is so powerful that it indirectly caused the destruction of the *Venerable Drake*. Endowed with the primal power of the water gods, it drew the attention of a merfolk high priest as the ship passed by his tribal territory. The priest discovered the *Venerable Drake* honing in on the powerful magic radiating from the amulet. That land creatures should possess such a divine relic of the waters outraged the priest. He immediately summoned a water elemental. The ship ran aground and the crew fled in terror at the sight of the elemental. The priest has not decided whether he is worthy to possess the amulet himself. However, he has pledged to protect it and if he senses outsiders trying to take it, he and his soldiers will rush to defend it.

TABLE 18–1: ENCOUNTERS EN ROUTE TO THE SHIP

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No encounter
11	Sea Hag (performing magic ritual on shore)
12	Bandits (looking for the wrecked ship to loot)
13	Barghest (out hunting)
14	Lone scrag (part of a lost party)
15	Manta Rays (2d4) or wolves (2d4) (depending if the PCs are on sand or surf)
16	Minor Xorn (working way through the sand)
17	Orc camp (3d4)
18	Pegasus (enjoying the shoreline vista)
19	Sahuagin raiders (2d3)
20	Sea Cat (hunting from nearby coastal cave)

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The journey up the coast is relatively easy. It is only 12 miles and with horses the journey takes four hours. Once the PCs are within sight of the wreck, they see the *Venerable Drake*. The ship appears to have slammed broadside against the reef, and is now listing at a 15-degree angle. The main mast has toppled over and is resting against the reef.

THE TIDEPPOOL

If the PCs approach on land (the more likely method), read the following:

To get to the wreck, you must cross a broad and shallow pool between the shore and the reef. The water is murky, but you can make out small fish swimming around.

The ship is about 200 ft. from shore, in a silt bottom portion of the ocean. The depth of the pool varies between 1 ft. at low tide and 5 ft. at high tide. At high tide, any Medium, Small or Tiny creatures must swim the length. Any Large or larger PC can wade across without difficulty. See Water Dangers in Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Knowledge check.

- DC 10** Sam's imported goods and adventuring gear are top-quality.
- DC 15** Sam Beckett is a shrewd merchant who knows how to take advantage of a good deal.
- DC 18** The area of the wreck is also where the great shark Greydoom is said to have plagued small boats for years.
- DC 20** Beckett's ship the *Venerable Drake* ran ashore north of here just a day or two ago, but there was no storm!
- DC 25** A local knows a surviving crewman from the *Drake*, he said the ocean attacked them!

THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE

CURRENT TIDE*

1d20	Tide
1-4	Low tide (1 ft. deep)
5-8	Low tide (2 ft. deep)
9-12	Medium tide (3 ft. deep)
13-16	High tide (4 ft. deep)
17-20	High tide (5 ft. deep)

* Roll again every 4 hours

If a PC attempts to wade barefoot or wearing anything less protective than shoes, roll 1d20 for every 5 minutes spent in the water. On a roll of 1-10 the PC must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer 1 point of nonlethal damage from stinging anemones. Additionally, roll 1d20 for every 5 minutes of wading for any PC with exposed skin (e.g., bare legs or midriff). On a roll of 1-10 the PC must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer 1 point of nonlethal damage from slimy stinging eels and jellyfish. PCs who swim automatically check for eel/jellyfish nonlethal damage every 5 minutes).

If the PCs attempt to cross at high tide, roll 1d20 for every five minutes one of them remains in the water. On a roll of 1-10 Greydoom (a shark) enters the pool and attacks the nearest PC.

🦈 **Greydoom, Huge Shark:** CR 4; Huge animal (aquatic); HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Init +6; Spd Swim 60 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +7; Grp +20; Atk +10 melee (2d6+7, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (2d6+7, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsight, keen scent; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills and Feats: Listen +10, Spot +10, Swim +13; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Blindsight (Ex): A shark can locate creatures underwater within a 30-ft. radius. This ability works only when the shark is underwater.

Keen Scent (Ex): A shark can notice creatures by scent in a 180-ft. radius and detect blood in the water at ranges of up to a mile.

Skills: A shark has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

If they come in by boat, read the following:

The reef that has claimed the Venerable Drake's remains won't be easy to approach. The waves crash against the uneven barrier making the approach difficult at best.

PCs approaching by boat can drop anchor and approach with a rowboat. Regardless of the method used, it is a difficult test of their skill. A Profession (sailor) check (DC 15 to 25*, based on the size of the boat) is required to maneuver the approach without hitting the reef and damaging their transportation.

* A smaller vessel like a rowboat is easier to navigate than a galleon.

THE VENERABLE DRAKE

One look at the Venerable Drake makes it plain there is no way to redress the ship. The force of the hull striking the reef caved in the starboard side which is now below the waterline. The mainmast has snapped in two, and the main sail lies in tatters on the reef. As you examine the wreck, you see there is no way to enter the cargo hold through the gash in the hull without scraping yourself badly on the sharp coral. However, the former crew was considerate enough to leave the gangway out for you, and the bottom rung barely scrapes the reef beneath your feet.

Once you climb onto the quarterdeck, you find you have to steady yourself to adjust to the angle at which the Venerable Drake is listing. It's an odd sensation standing on a listing, bobbing ship. On your right is a door flanked by ladders leading up to the forecabin. To your left is a similar arrangement, except the ladders lead up to the poop deck. An open hatchway beckons to you from halfway between the main mast and the forecabin. The large rectangular cargo hatch is set into the quarterdeck, to one side of the main mast. A fine, metal grill covers it, preventing anyone from falling in.

Movement rates on board the ship are halved because of the odd angle and slippery condition of the floors. In addition, any PC attempting to move faster than walking speed must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 15) each round or fall.

There is nothing of note on either the forecabin or the poop deck.

The open hatchway leads down to the lower deck. Everything below the lower poop deck is slightly flooded with water. The rooms and passageways are sometimes difficult to navigate.

1. Captain's Quarters

You enter a spacious cabin with a bed in the far right corner, a cabinet at its foot in the near right corner, and a table and two chairs in the middle. A writing desk and matching chair have slid into the far left corner. Five reptilian lizardfolk rummage around.

Tactics: The five lizardfolk are half of a wandering gang who happened upon the wreck in their travels (the other half is presently in the galley). These three are eagerly looting the captain's quarters and attack at the slightest hint of a threat.

THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE

FOOTLOCKER CONTENTS

Throughout this adventure PCs will find various foot lockers with personal effects and items of worth from the crew. Roll on the following table when they open a footlocker to discover any items within.

1	1d6 gp
2	2d8 cp
3	3d12 sp
4	Bottle of rum
5	Bottle of wine
6	Extra food and clothes
7	Gambling utensils (dice and cards)
8	Good luck charm (worth 1d6 gp)
9	Holy symbol
10	Lantern oil
11	Lockpicks
12	Masterwork dagger
13	Mirror and brush
14	Pearl (worth 1d20 gp)
15	Silk bandana (1 gp)
16	Spare pegleg or an eyepatch
17	Tattoo kit
18	Tattered corner of a sea map
19	Vial of acid
20	Whetstone

🐉 **Lizardfolk:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2 (16, 14, 13, 12, 10 hp); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA —; SQ Hold breath; AL N: SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skill and Feats: Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Multiattack.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a -2 armor check penalty (-4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

One of the lizardfolk has just pulled the captain's locker from under the bed when the PCs burst in. It contains 250 gp, a masterwork spyglass, nautical maps (including the coast and the infamous Red Isle), a merchant's scale, an hourglass, a magnifying glass, a noble's outfit, a *potion of cure serious wounds* and two *potions of water breathing*.

2. Galley

You enter a large room with a stove. Attached to the left bulkhead and a mess table with 10 chairs in the middle. There are also several cabinets attached to the left bulkhead about 6-ft. above the floor. Some prepared, and then hastily abandoned, food lies strewn about. Exposure to the moist, salty air has ruined it, but the floor is still good enough for the six lizardfolk greedily devouring all they find.

Encounter: These six lizardfolk are the other half of the wandering gang. They don't much like being interrupted while scavenging and attack at the slightest hint of a threat.

Tactics: The quarters in here are close and the lizardfolk use the aid another option during combat, preferring to add +2 to their comrades' AC when possible.

Treasure: If the PCs search the cabinets, they find a sack containing 200 sp and two *potions of neutralize poison* hidden among bags of salt, pepper, and other spices.

🐉 **Lizardfolk:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2; (18, 16, 15, 13, 12, 10 hp); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA —; SQ Hold breath; AL N: SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skill and Feats: Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Multiattack.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a -2 armor check penalty (-4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

3. Lower Deck

You reach the bottom of the ladder, entering a large open space about two-thirds as long as the ship itself. Off to one side, toward the bow, another open hatch beckons. The sound of water sloshing about comes through the hatch. Just off to the other side, is the mainmast, and beyond that, towards the stern, is a passageway lined on each side with three doors. There is also a large, covered cargo hatch directly below the cargo hatch in the quarterdeck.

All about you are crates, some broken open. Burst sacks of soaked grain, sodden bags of wet flour, and strips of cured meat that have been getting a good dunking in briny water with every tide.

If the PCs enter the lower deck within four hours of high tide, the deck is flooded within two feet of water. If they enter within four hours of low tide, the deck is not flooded, but remains damp and slippery. If they enter at any other time, the deck is flooded under one foot of water.

Encounter: If the PCs search the items strewn about the lower deck, they stir up 12 rats feasting on the soggy grain. The rats have been gorging on food from the wreckage, and are not really a threat. The six dire rats among them, however, enjoy a meal of fresh flesh.

THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE

☛ **Dire Rat:** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+1 (8, 7, 6, 5, 5, 4 hp); Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flatfooted 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse
Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills and Feats: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

Treasure: The crates contain valuable spools of fabric ruined by exposure to salt water. If at least one PC succeeds at a Spot check (DC 10), however, they find one crate stacked above the waterline. This crate contains a spool of fine silk (worth 1,000 gp). The spool is six ft. long and two ft. in circumference however. Anyone carrying it must use both hands. Crucial functions, such as combat, climbing or steadying oneself become difficult while carrying the silk.

4. Crew Cabin

This is a small, cramped room with bunk beds lengthwise against one wall and space enough for little else. You can just see what looks like two footlockers jutting out beneath the bunks.

For footlocker contents, consult the Footlocker Contents sidebar.

5. Cabin

This is another small cabin with bunk beds set lengthwise against one wall. There is a hole in the floor and the water level here is higher than it is elsewhere on this deck.

Encounter: If the PCs search under the bunk, they find a frightened octopus has wandered into the wreckage. It is fighting the current, trying to leave the ship.

Tactics: If the PCs attack the octopus it fills the water with ink to conceal its exact location, hoping to be left alone. If they persist, it attacks anyone reaching into the cloud.

☛ **Octopus:** CR 1; Small animal (aquatic); HD 2d8 (9 hp); Init +3; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +5 melee (0, arms); Full Atk +5 melee (0, arms) and +0 melee (1d3, bite); SA Improved grab; SQ Ink cloud, jet, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Escape Artist +13, Hide +11, Listen +2, Spot +5, Swim +9; Weapon Finesse

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an octopus must hit an opponent of any size with its arms attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and automatically deals bite damage.

Ink Cloud (Ex): An octopus can emit a cloud of jet-black ink 10-ft. high by 10-ft. wide by 10-ft. long once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment, which the octopus normally uses to escape a losing fight. All vision within the cloud is obscured.

Jet (Ex): An octopus can jet backward once per round as a full-round action, at a speed of 200 ft. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.

Skills: An octopus can change colors, giving it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks. An octopus also can squeeze and contort its body, giving it a +10 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks. An octopus has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Treasure: For footlocker contents, consult the Footlocker contents sidebar. However these containers cannot be seen unless the PCs take a look under the waterline. In addition, the contents of the footlocker have suffered water damage.

6. Crew Cabin

Hammocks are strung up lengthwise along either side of this room. In one of the hammocks, is a portion of cured meat and moldy bread, apparently abandoned by one of the former crew. The smell of dirty rat hair fills the room, replacing the cool sea air. You also notice two footlockers resting beneath the hammocks. A gash in the hull is just large enough to permit the entry of two enormous rats, whose explorations you have just interrupted.

Tactics: Drawn by the decaying food in one of the hammocks, two dire rats are part of a foraging party snooping around the remains of the wreck. They attack if disturbed. Four more dire rats linger on the reef just outside the skip. If they smell blood, they rush in the side of the ship and attack.

THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE

▼ **Dire Rat:** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+1 (9, 7, 5, 4, 4, 3 hp); Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse
Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills and Feats: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

For footlocker contents, consult the sidebar. Any clothing and personal effects have suffered minor water damage.

7. Crew Cabin

A strong, hefty male mermaid rests on the bunk of this cabin. He stands when you enter, a glint in his eye. Uncharacteristic of peaceful merfolk, he levels his trident, taking a fighting stance.

"Drylanders" he hisses. "The merfolk defenders have claimed this ship. Leave, and profane it with your presence no more. Leave...or die!"

Encounter: Khamed is a merfolk defender (see New Monsters — Appendix B), a tribesman of the high priest Arzun, who has wandered off to have a look at the wrecked ship for himself. He does not attack the PCs except to defend himself, but if provoked fights to the death. If the PCs prod him into elaborating on his warning, he repeats "Leave or die!"

Tactics: Khamed is willing to fight to the death, hinting to the PCs that something is amiss.

▲ **Khamed, Merfolk Defender Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium Humanoid (Aquatic); HD 5d10+5; hp 35; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., swim 50 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+6, trident) or +7 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+6, trident) or +7 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SA —; SQ Amphibious, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack [replaced Dodge, prereq for Cleave], Weapon focus (trident), Weapon specialization (trident).

Amphibious (Ex): Merfolk can breathe both air and water, although they rarely travel more than a few feet from the water's edge.

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork trident, heavy crossbow, 15 bolts.

For footlocker contents, consult the sidebar. One of the lockers also contains a *potion of water breathing*.

8. Crew Cabin

Two bedrolls are spread out on the floor and two foot lockers rest against the hull. There is a difficulty making out the furnishings, however. An odd, yellowish slime blurs your eyesight, coating the floor and walls.

Encounter: The slime is an ochre jelly that attacks immediately. The ooze has trouble moving through the doorway, however, cutting its movement in half when it does.

▼ **Ochre Jelly:** CR 5; Large ooze; HD 6d10+36 (69 hp); Init -5; Spd 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4; Base Atk +4; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (2d4+3 plus 1d4 acid, slam); Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+3 plus 1d4 acid, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid, constrict 2d4+3 plus 1d4 acid, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., split, ooze traits; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref -3, Will -3; Str 15, Dex 1, Con 22, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10

Acid (Ex): An ochre jelly secretes a digestive acid that dissolves only flesh. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage.

Constrict (Ex): An ochre jelly deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an ochre jelly must hit with its slam attack. It can then start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Split (Ex): Slashing and piercing weapons and electricity attacks deal no damage to an ochre jelly. Instead the creature splits into two identical jellies, each with half of the original's current hit points (round down). A jelly with 10 hit points or less cannot be further split and dies if reduced to 0 hit points.

Skills and Feats: An ochre jelly has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

Treasure: For footlocker contents, consult the Footlocker Contents sidebar.

9. First Officers Quarters

This small room is just as cramped as the others, but it has only one bed instead of a bunk. A foot locker is against the starboard bunkhead.

Treasure: This foot locker contains 50 gp, two *potions of water breathing*, a locket with a braided chain of silver (worth 50 gp) and a masterwork sextant.

THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE

10. Cargo Hold

Climbing down the gangway, cold, miserable seawater engulfs your leg. A cursory glance indicated the hold is entirely flooded all the way to the top.

Moving through the hold is difficult. PCs unable to breath water do not last long under water. If the PCs explore the hold, read or paraphrase the following.

The hold is the most spacious part of the ship. Here is where longshoremen stow crates and boxes filled with expensive trade goods, setting them against the bulkheads, leaving only a narrow aisle down the middle of the hold. The containers are askew jostled, toppled or smashed by the force of the wreck, their once-valuable contents immersed in corrosive brine.

Encounter: The cargo hold is in a state of chaos. Containers filled with fine cloth, hides, rare fruits, and other delicacies otherwise unknown in Galishor lie scattered on the floor. If the PCs search the wreckage, they find nothing is salvageable. However, they do however find eight poisonous water snakes hiding amongst the broken containers (and are happily keeping the rat population in check). Exact locations are left to the DM.

Tactics: The water snakes attack if disturbed.

☛ **Small Snake (vipers):** CR 1/3; Tiny animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 each; Init +3; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -11; Atk +5 melee (1 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1 plus poison, bite); SA Poison; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +5; Weapon Finesse (bite)

Poison (Ex): A viper snake has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Con. The Fort save DC is 10. The save DC is Constitution-based.

By now, it should occur to the PCs that they have searched most of the ship, yet not found the chest Beckett described. If they search for secret doors, each PC searching makes a Search check (DC 20). Success means they sight something strange about the bulkhead ceiling off the bow. There is a 3-ft. long gap between the bottom of the bulkhead and the floor. Pushing on the section of the bulkhead opens the secret door to a small compartment.

11. The Amulet of Gos

The door opens into a small compartment containing an iron chest with the initials "SB" emblazoned on it in gold. A chain held in place by a huge lock binds the chest; nonetheless, the chain has loosened, leaving the chest slightly open.

If a PC searches for traps on the chest (Search check DC 25) he noticed a strange sigil craved into the lock holding the chain in place. The sigil is a *glyph of warding* that is set to create an electrical blast unless Beckett's key is used to open the lock.

Picking the lock is an option, but it is not easy. If the PCs succeed the glyph does not explode. Any other attempt to open the chest or a failed attempt to pick the lock sets it off.

☛ **Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 9th-level cleric, 4d8 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 24.

If it deals more than 20 points of damage, it destroys the lock, and if it deals more than 30 points of damage, it destroys the chest.

If the PCs successfully open the chest, they find the *amulet of gos* (see New Magic — Appendix A) inside. The amulet is platinum on a golden chain, still shiny despite its exposure to seawater. Two vipers are coiled inside the chest, guarding an egg. The vipers attack if the PCs reach into the chest. At this point, read or paraphrase the following:

Before your eyes, the egg shakes and the shell cracks. Before you can do anything, the egg hatches and a full-grown adult viper emerges from the chest!

PCs within a 10 ft. radius must succeed at a Will save (DC 25). If a PC fails, read or paraphrase the following text:

Time shifts, as if passing you by. Things are accelerating and you feel yourself moving slowly. Standing still as the world spins past you.

If the PCs pick up the chest and carry it out of the secret compartment, the vipers slither out from under the lid and attempt to escape, attacking anyone who interferes with them.

THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE

ANOTHER VISITOR

Encounter: 10 minutes after PCs take possession of the *amulet of gos* (either by opening the chest or removing it from the ship), Arzun a 7th level merfolk defender adept confronts them.

Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, a strangely imposing merfolk with intense eyes appears before you. He wears a silver ringlet on his brow and a flowing garment woven from strands of kelp. He calls for you to halt, speaking in the common tongue.

Tactics: Arzun's sole purpose is to get the PCs to give up the *amulet of gos*, as their possession of anything blessed with the primal power of the water gods is a blasphemy against all he holds dear. His convictions absolutely forbid him from negotiating any arrangement allowing the PCs to keep the amulet. Whether he persuades them to put the amulet back, or prides it out of their waterlogged hands, it's all the same to him.

If Arzun uses force, or if the PCs attack him, he summons a large water elemental to smash the unbelievers, as he did with the *Venerable Drake*. Arzun's trident has a powerful enchantment that works exactly like a *bowl of commanding water elementals*, except it only works once per day and is made of salt water, not fresh water. It only works in Plangent Reefs environs, so PCs taking it from Arzun find it useless anywhere else. It is a full-round action for Arzun to summon the elemental. Arzun begins the encounter with *aid*, *entropic shield* and *shield of faith* already cast upon himself.

▲ Arzun, Merfolk Defender Clr 7: CR 7; Medium humanoid (aquatic); HD 7d8+7; hp 42; Init +6; Spd 5 ft., swim 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3, trident); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+3, trident); SA Turn or destroy undead; SQ Amphibious, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +9; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (trident)

Amphibious (Ex): Merfolk can breathe both air and water, although they rarely travel more than a few feet from the water's edge.

Turn or Rebuke Undead (Su): This cleric can turn or destroy undead creatures. He may attempt to turn undead 3 times per day. This cleric, with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion), gets a +2 bonus on turning checks against undead.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (6/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*command*, *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield**+, *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*+; 2nd—*aid**+, *enthrall*, *hold person*, *owl's wisdom*, *spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*blindness/deafness*, *protection from energy**+, *searing light*; 4th—*divine power*, *freedom of movement**.

* Domain spell. **Domains:** Luck (reroll 1 roll once per day), Water (Turn or destroy fire creatures as a good cleric turns undead, 5 times per day).

Possessions: Leather armor, +2 trident, holy symbol.

Water Elemental, Large: CR 5; Large elemental (water, extraplanar); HD 8d8+32 (68 hp); Init +2; Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Water mastery, drench, vortex; SQ Damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; AL N; Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +6; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

Water Mastery (Ex): A water elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its opponent are touching water. If the opponent or the elemental is touching the ground, the elemental takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

A water elemental can be a serious threat to a ship that crosses its path. An elemental can easily overturn small craft (5 ft. of length per Hit Die of the elemental) and stop larger vessels (10 ft. long per HD). Even large ships (20 ft. long per HD) can be slowed to half speed.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as dispel magic (caster level equals elemental's HD).

Vortex (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlpool once every 10 minutes, provided it is underwater, and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In vortex form, the elemental can move through the water or along the bottom at its swim speed. The vortex is 5 ft. wide at the base, up to 30 ft. wide at the top, and 10 ft. or more tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 ft.

The elemental's movement while in vortex form does not provoke attacks of opportunity, even if the elemental enters the space another creature occupies. Another creature might be caught in the vortex if it touches or enters the vortex, or if the elemental moves into or through the creature's space.

Creatures one or more size categories smaller than the elemental might take damage when caught in the vortex (see the table below for details) and may be swept up by it. An affected creature must succeed on a Reflex save when it comes into contact with the vortex or take the indicated damage. It must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful currents, automatically taking damage each round. An affected creature is allowed a Reflex save each round to escape the vortex. The creature still takes damage, but can leave if the save is successful. The DC for saves against the vortex's effects varies with the elemental's size. The save DC is Strength-based.

Creatures trapped in the vortex cannot move except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind. Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + spell level) to cast a spell. Creatures caught in the whirlwind take a –4 penalty to Dexterity and a –2 penalty on attack rolls. The elemental can have only as many creatures trapped inside the vortex at one time as will fit inside the vortex's volume.

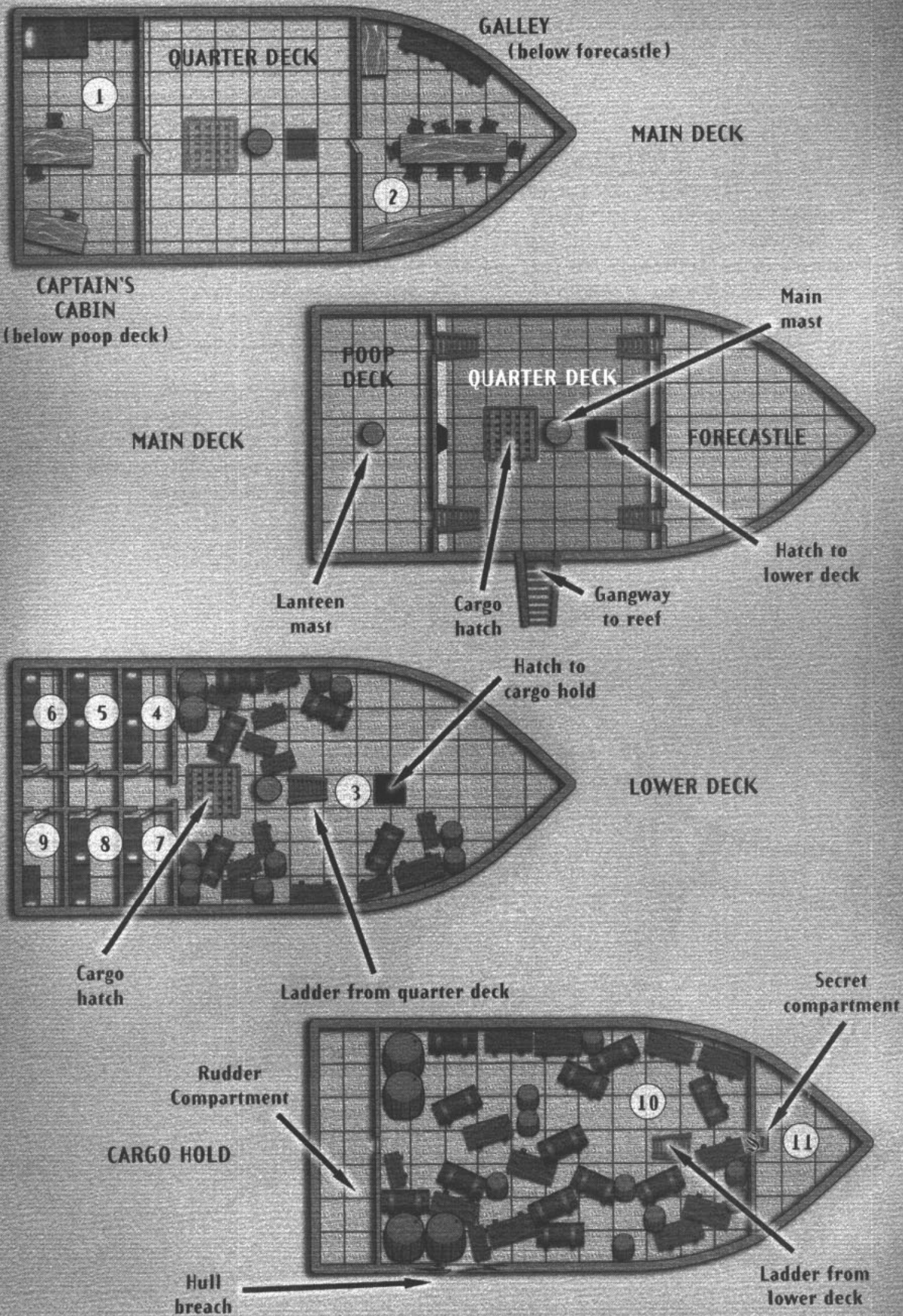
The elemental can eject any carried creatures whenever it wishes, depositing them wherever the vortex happens to be. A summoned elemental always ejects trapped creatures before returning to its home plane.

If the vortex's base touches the bottom, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the vortex's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 ft. Creatures 5 ft. away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment.

Those caught in the cloud must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell.

An elemental in vortex form cannot make slam attacks and does not threaten the area around it.

THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE



THE WRECK OF THE VENERABLE DRAKE

Skills and Feats: A water elemental has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

EPILOGUE

If the PCs return to Galishor and present Samuel Beckett with his chest unopened, he receives them joyfully. He opens the huge lock with a key on a chain around his neck and checks the contents. He thanks the PCs and presents them with 3,000 gp and a bag of gemstones worth 2,500 gp.

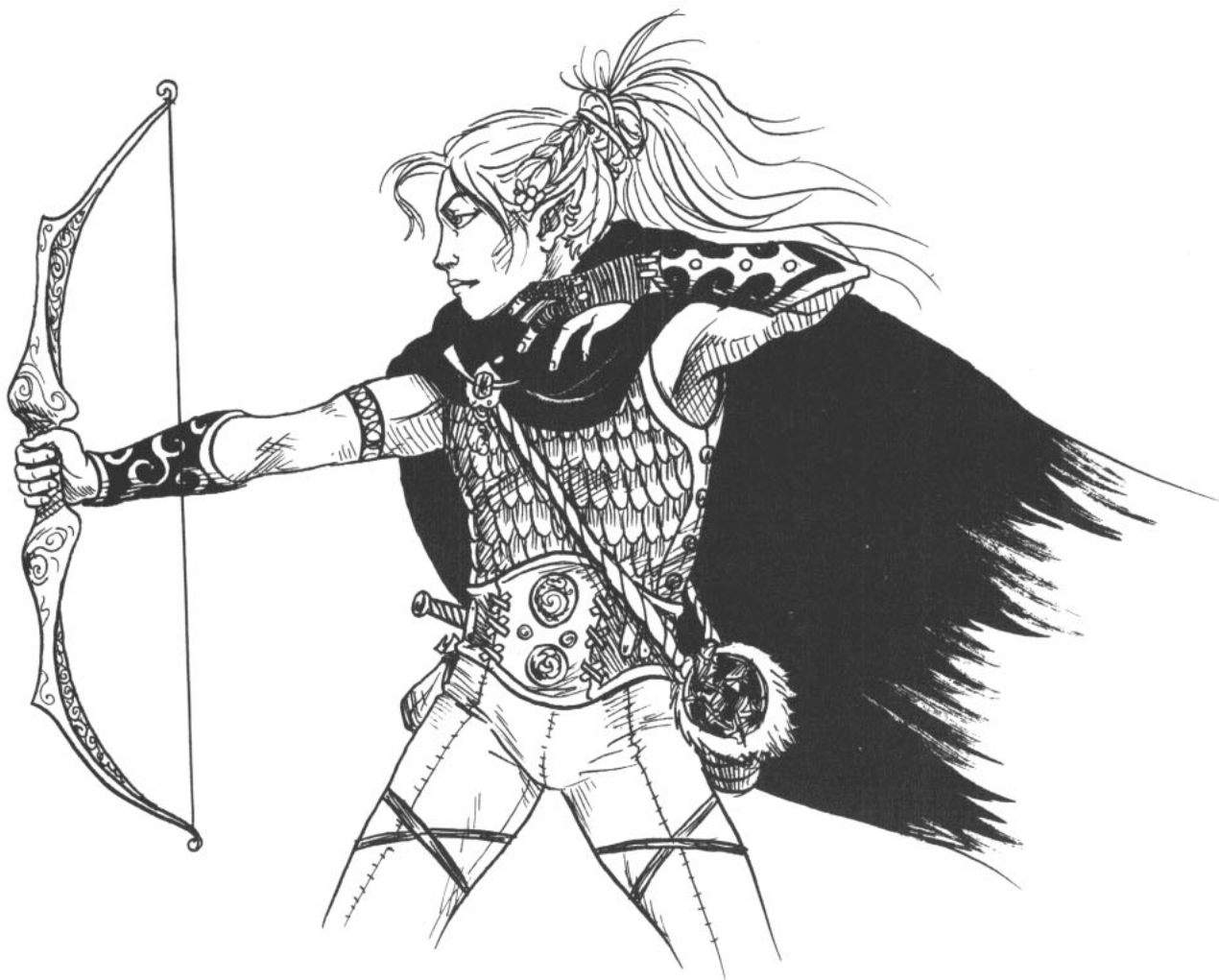
If the PCs return to Galishor and present Griff with the *amulet of gos* but it is obvious they have opened the chest (e.g. if the spell destroyed the lock), he looks at them with mild suspicion, but gives them 3,000 gp and his warm thanks.

If the PCs return to Galishor and present Beckett with the spool of silk but not the amulet, he looks at them with deep suspicion and sends them on their way with 100 gp.

If the PCs do not return the amulet, a squad of Galishor town guards stop the PCs, take them into the guardhouse and thoroughly search their persons and their belongings. If they don't find the amulet, they release the PCs upon payment of a 50gp per head "exit tax." If they find the *amulet of gos*, they take it, give it to Beckett, and arraign the PCs for trial.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The PCs are summoned by the Order of Garadon who have some interesting questions about their adventures (see the adventure "Garadon Manor").
- The PCs are asked by Samuel (providing they have acted honorably) to escort a shipment of goods to a nearby town for him. A town the PCs discovers mysterious deaths are plaguing the villagers (see the adventure "The Murder of the Seven Points").



Chapter 19:

Garadon Manor

Levels 6 to 8

by Patrick Kapera

The legend of the realm of Tirna'cel is notorious. Once known for its power-mongering warlords, homunculi-wielding sorcerers, and archfiends from the deepest pits of the Abyss, Tirna'cel has become a powerful and welcoming land over the last 600 years, due in no small part to the efforts of the warlord Tirna'gael, a member of the land's founding nobility.

But your party knows the truth. You ventured into the Tomb of Tirna'gael some six months ago, and therein discovered that the fallen warlord was actually little more than his brethren: a petty, avaricious power-monger. Possessed by a rival force who also desired the kingdom — a rare incorporeal demon called a nescent, inhabited his body and augmented his already incredible power to unforeseen levels — Tirna'gael sought to overthrow the ancient warlords only to replace them.

Through Tirna'gael's augmented body, the nescent overwhelmed and eliminated the other warlords, eventually dominating the realm. But before it could consolidate its rule and throw Tirna'cel into an even darker age, the paladins of Garadon, a virtuous cell of justice and light discovered the secret of its power. The paladins lured Tirna'gael into the center of his own fortress and trapped him there in a powerful antimagic field. His body withered and died but the nescent remained dormant, waiting for its chance for revenge.

During your visit to Tirna'gael's fortress-tomb six months ago, you accidentally released the nescent from its prison. That enemy has since been vanquished — at least for the time being — but the memory of your pitched battle against it lingers as you approach the original chapter house of the Order of Garadon.

You have been summoned.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 6 to 8. Access to silver weapons or weapons with the good trait are a necessity against the foes in these encounters.

This is a sequel to the adventure “Out of Body, Out of Mind”. Running the first adventure is not required, but is recommended to take full advantage of the alternate setting of Tirna'cel. Players will discover that Tirna'cel's history peels away like an onion, revealing new layers of truth...

People assume that the warlords who dominated Tirna'cel until six hundred years ago were guided only by their selfishness and greed. Even Tirna'gael — now known by the PCs as the host of a powerful demon — is misperceived as an honorable warrior, driven only by the legendary strength of his convictions. But the warlords of Tirna'cel were much more than that. In truth, they were puppets whose power was established by the baatezu, the devils of the Nine Hells dedicated to corrupting humanity.

The demon's control of the warlord Tirna'gael disrupted baatezu control of the realm of Tirna'cel, eventually removing their minions from the realm's nobility altogether. Of course, were it not for the valiant efforts of the Order of Garadon, the demon might simply have replaced the baatezu, ushering in a new period of tyranny. The paladins of Garadon saved the land, and buried the secret of Tirna'gael with his body.

But there is still more to the story...

The Order of Garadon has itself become corrupted over the last six hundred years by the baatezu, who are not through with this world. The paladins of the Order — with

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check.

DC 10 The paladins of Garadon are still revered but they have had little impact on the land for many years.

DC 15 Some say the paladins have grown lazy and content with their lot in life and have lost ambition.

DC 20 Garadorn manor is an ancient, gothic structure with tunnels carved out beneath.

DC 25 An ancient artifact is supposed to reside in Garadon manor, the *sword of Tirna'gael*.

nothing to challenge the strength of their convictions over the centuries – have become soft, easy prey for devils who specialize in wearing down such barriers.

Since then, the paladins have become Blackguards (see Chapter 6: Characters in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), and strive to bring the baatezu across into the Material Plane. They have already succeeded once, permanently summoning a new type of devil, the Dark Champion. If the PCs do not discover what the Blackguards have done, and destroy the Champion and the gate he came through, all of Tirna'cel is in terrible danger.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs are summoned by the Order of Garadon (actually Blackguards) and questioned about their many experiences at the Tomb of Tirna'gael (during the adventure "Out of Body, Out of Mind"). The Blackguards are following the instructions of an osyluth devil, which lingers nearby throughout the interview, shielded from sight by an invisibility spell. Once the devil's instructions are satisfied, the Blackguards are ordered to eliminate the characters and reveal themselves.

The presence of the Blackguards at the Manor should encourage the PCs to investigate further. Information about their purpose and the Order's true history is found elsewhere in the building, as well as knowledge of the true threat (the Dark Champion, who now resides in the basement levels).

A powerful magical item of good alignment (the Sword of Tirna'gael) might also be found, offering the PCs a powerful weapon against the Champion.

From there, the PCs decide the course of the adventure. They can seek out the Sword of Tirna'gael, stalk the basement levels, or take the fight directly to the Dark Champion.

GARADON MANOR

This ancient stronghold is deep in the swamplands of Nil'a'gor, just a few miles from the open ocean. As the PCs approach the manor, the road meanders over compressed earth, opening onto an island of the same. Deciduous trees and a jungle of vines drape the building, trapping the surrounding heat and dampness. Unless the PCs are paying close attention, they fail to notice how nervous their horses are. Anyone with the Wild Empathy ability or a Handle Animal check (DC 20) will notice mounts are skittish.

THE INTERVIEW

The manor's interior is comfortable. Mahogany furniture and lush carpets decorate the gothic stone interior, creating a brooding atmosphere that remains welcoming.

Even though there are quarters for them, servants no longer live at the manor. A "paladin" greets the PCs instead, and leads them to the sitting room (area #3). The guide informs the group that this is a time of many festivals and courtly functions, and that most of the Order (especially the higher-ranking paladins) are away. He is quick to point out that the remainder of the Order is at their service.

Three paladins remain at the estate, all of which are found in the sitting room. The man who answered the door, Sir Caenti, wears no armor and carries a sacred blade at his side. Two armed and armored guards, who take up positions near the inner corners of the room, accompany him.

Once the characters are seated comfortably and offered refreshments, the interview commences. The questions focus on the characters' experiences at the Tomb, especially concerning a demonic presence, magic items of significance (like the Ring of Tirna'gael, first presented in "Out of Body, Out of Mind"), and the condition and location of the nescent following the adventure.

The interview takes little time (the questions are specific and rather pointed), and concludes within a half hour (or however long it takes to roleplay a dozen or so improvised exchanges). During this time, the DM is encouraged to make skill checks for any PCs with the Sense Motive (DC 20). Success indicates to the PCs that something is wrong – the interviewers seem terribly anxious for men who profess to have found serenity, and

there is a sense of barely contained rage behind their words. This knowledge grants those aware a surprise round at the beginning of *The Attack* (see below).

THE UNSEEN SAGE

The Blackguard's questions are guided by an unseen master — an osyluth devil hiding in the room, masked by an *invisibility* spell. This creature wishes to discover what the characters know of Tirna'gaele, his tomb's contents, and the true history of Tirna'cel. The hellspawn observes the interview, watching the characters closely. Should he notice that they are suspicious, he signals for the Blackguard to attack. He uses a major image spell ability to make it appear as if a picture fell off the wall; the DM should make a Spot check (DC 10) before the characters leave for them to notice the picture back on the wall, never having fallen at all. This may clue them in to the fact that an invisible adversary is loose in the manor, after which they may call for Spot checks (DC 20) at any time to see if the osyluth is present with them.

After the attack, the osyluth devil slips out of the room, remaining invisible and shadowing the PCs as they search the manor. It uses its fear aura and suggestion to keep the PCs from discovering it or the secrets hidden in the basement, and resorts to its wall of ice, fly, and teleport without error abilities if it appears to be in mortal danger.

The osyluth devil is wearing a *ring of protection +1*.

THE ATTACK!

Following the interview (or whenever the osyluth devil signals to the Blackguard), the paladins reveal their true nature and attack the PCs. Their tactics are simple — target the weakest character and overwhelm him, then move on to the next victim. The blackguard do not back down or run; they fight to the death, knowing that failing the osyluth devil is far, far worse.

Each of the three Blackguards has a satchel containing 50 gp and a small medallion given to them by the baatezu. The medallions are taboo across most of Tirna'cel, being widely recognized as devil emblems, but the PCs could sell them to a diabolist for nearly 800 gp each.

EXPLORING THE MANOR

The PCs should be intensely curious following the attack. Did agents of dark forces capture or kill the paladins who lived here? Why were the Blackguard questioning them about the Tomb of Tirna'gaele? What are the baatezu planning?

Allow the player characters to explore the manor at their leisure, describing the contents of each room in as much detail as you wish. This scene is open-ended,

WHAT IF MY PARTY DIDN'T PLAY THE FIRST ADVENTURE?

DMs who did not run the previous adventure have several options when conducting the interview:

- This adventure may be linked to an event in the DM's campaign. In this case, the paladins' questions focus on something the DM has introduced before, preferably something of no relevance to the rest of the adventure, involving matters of magical or otherworldly importance.
- The DM may decide that the adventurers never visited the Tomb, and were called here mistakenly. In such a case, the characters are likely to have just as many questions as the paladins, and the fighting may start much earlier (when the Blackguards determine that the characters are inconsequential, and should be eliminated).
- The DM may simply describe the interview instead of conducting it, narrating the story of the Tomb and what was found inside. This will require the DM to make assumptions about the players' actions during the first adventure, but an industrious DM can turn this into a campaign-building or storytelling exercise.
- If this adventure occurs early in a campaign, perhaps the Tomb experience could be incorporated into the player characters' histories ahead of time, salvaging some of the players' connection to the plot (and making them feel more connected to the DM's backstory).

focusing on the important locations and leaving the remainder to DMs. Inexperienced DMs and those who wish to usher the action along should simply give the party sparse details about most locations, guiding them toward encounter areas.

During this portion of the adventure, two forces shadow the PCs (to be thrown at the PCs if the players' attentions wander). The first is the osyluth devil, who remains invisible at all times, only acting when the PCs enter the basement. The second is a cadre of 4 lemure devils commanded by a bound kyton devil, all of whom move from room to room by crawling along the outside of the building. This second force attacks the PCs when they enter the library.

The lemure devils are carrying 120 platinum pieces (30 each) in small pouches they guard with their lives. The kyton carries an emerald (2150 gp) that allows it to send (but not receive) telepathic messages to the lemure devils. This gem was a gift to the kyton from the baatezu, and cannot be used by non-outsiders.

GARADON MANOR

♣ **Blackguard, Human Ex-Pal 6/Blk 1:** CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d10+14; hp 60; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (in full plate); AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d10+2/19-20, bastard sword); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d10+2/19-20, bastard sword); SA Lay on hands, poisoned blades, smite good, sneak attack +1d6; SQ aura of evil, detect good, poison use; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Ride +6; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Aura of Evil (Ex): The power of a blackguard's aura of evil (see the detect evil spell) is 1st level.

Detect Good (Sp): At will, a blackguard can detect good as a spell-like ability, duplicating the effect of the detect good spell.

Poisoned Blades: These blackguards have coated their bastard swords with small centipede poison (DC 11, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex).

Poison Use: Blackguards are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Blackguard Spells Prepared (1; save DC 11 + spell level): 1—*cause fear*.

Possessions: Masterwork full plate, masterwork light steel shield, masterwork bastard sword.

♣ **Bone Devil (Osyluth):** CR 9; Large Outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 10d8+50; hp 95; Init +9; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +19; Atk +14 melee (1d8+5, bite); Full Atk +14 melee (1d8+5, bite) and +12 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) and +12 melee (3d4+2 plus poison, sting); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, fear aura, poison, *summon devil*; SQ Damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, SR 21, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 21, Dex 21, Con 21, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Hide +14, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (any one) +15, Listen +17, Move Silently +18, Search +15, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack.

Fear Aura (Su): Bone devils can radiate a 5-ft.-radius fear aura as a free action. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or be affected as though by a fear spell (caster level 7th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same bone devil's aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial damage 1d6 Str, secondary damage 2d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *dimensional anchor*, *fly*, *invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 15), *wall of ice*. Caster level 12th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Summon Devil (Sp): Once per day a bone devil can attempt to summon 2d10 lemuris with a 50% chance of success, or another bone devil with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

♣ **Chain Devil (Kyton):** CR 6; Medium Outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 8d8+16 (52 hp); Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (2d4+2/19-20, chain); Full Atk +10 melee (2d4+2/19-20, 2 chains); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with chains); SA Dancing chains, unnerving gaze; SQ Damage reduction 5/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, regeneration 2, SR 18; AL LE; Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Craft (blacksmithing) +17, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +13, Spot +13, Use Rope +2 (+4 with bindings); Feats: Alertness, Improved Critical (chain), Improved Initiative.

Dancing Chains (Su): A chain devil's most awesome attack is its ability to control up to four chains within 20 ft. as a standard action, making the chains dance or move as it wishes. In addition, a chain devil can increase these chains' length by up to 15 ft. and cause them to sprout razor-edged barbs. These chains attack as effectively as the devil itself. If a chain is in another creature's possession, the creature can attempt a DC 15 Will save to break the chain devil's power over that chain. If the save is successful, the kyton cannot attempt to control that particular chain again for 24 hours or until the chain leaves the creature's possession. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A chain devil can climb chains it controls at its normal speed without making Climb checks.

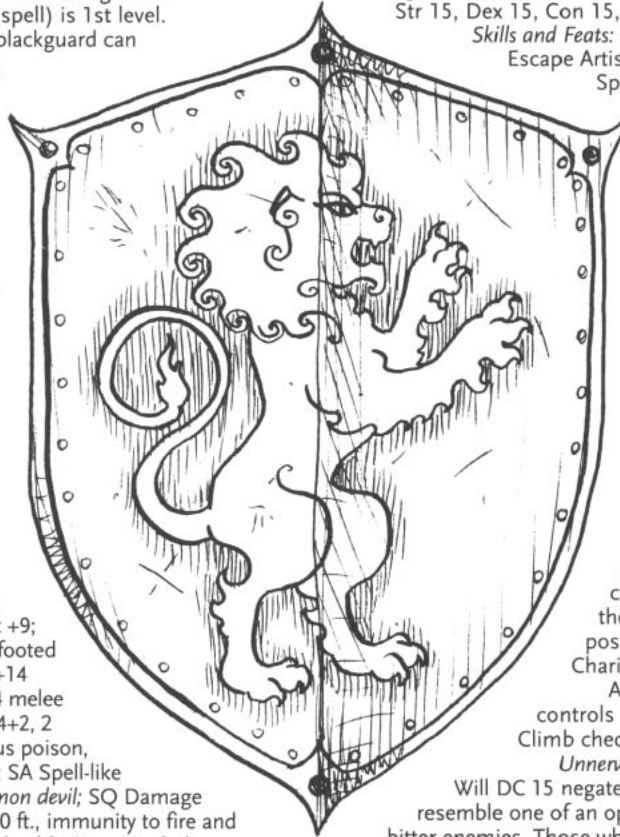
Unnerving Gaze (Su): Range 30 ft., Will DC 15 negates. A chain devil can make its face resemble one of an opponent's departed loved ones or bitter enemies. Those who fail their saves take a -2 penalty on attack rolls for 1d3 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Regeneration (Ex): Chain devils take normal damage from silvered weapons, good-aligned weapons, and spells or effects with the good descriptor. A chain devil that loses a piece of its body regrows it in 2d6x10 minutes. Holding the severed member against the stump enables it to reattach instantly.

Skills: Chain devils have a +8 racial bonus on Craft checks involving metalwork.

♣ **Lemure:** CR 1; HD Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 2d8; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4, 2 claws); SQ Damage reduction 5/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, mindless, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 5.

Mindless (Ex): Immunity to mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).



1. Foyer

The PCs are led through this large entryway en route to the sitting room before the interview. It is simply adorned with three large mirrors flanked by lush red draperies and a single chair for the absent doorman.

2. Dining Hall

This dining hall has been neglected for decades. Its most prominent furnishing is an immense heavy wooden table, which seats forty. A fine layer of dust coats everything in the room.

This is where the Order of Garadon once took dinner each night at dusk. The room is covered with a thick blanket of dust (left undisturbed since the servants were relieved).

3. Sitting Room

This sitting room is open and airy, and features a large fireplace that has been recently used. Light floods through two tall windows, casting shadows at odd angles. Several padded chairs are situated in an open arrangement around the perimeter. A large area carpet of deep red and black hues covers most of the wooden floor.

This is the room where the interview takes place.

4. Study

This thickly draped room holds a large research table with one sturdy, unpadded seat. Books lie about, opened to passages about the infernal realms, baatezu, and contact between the Material and Non-Material Planes.

There are seven books in total, dealing with obviously evil topics. Each book is well researched and worth approximately 150 gold apiece. A diabolist would pay three times that amount. Reading the entire series grants a +3 competency bonus to Knowledge (the planes) skill checks, but the infernal, mad writing of many passages means the reader must make a successful Will save (DC 15) or lose 1 point of permanent Wisdom damage.

5. Servants' Quarters

This area is filled with small sleeping chambers, all of which have remained empty for many years. Upon cursory inspection, there doesn't appear to be anything in any of them. A Search check (DC 20) however, may reveal something.

1d20 Servant's Quarters Objects

1-10	Nothing of interest
11	A cold iron punching dagger
12	A gold wedding band (worth 100 gp)
13	Hawk trainer's arm guard
14	Iron robe clamp
15	Meditation candles
16	Pouch of incense
17	Small ivory holy symbol
18	Small prayer book to the celestial gods
19	Sticks of colored chalk
20	Tiny, silver-plated bell (worth 5 gp)

6. Pantry

This pantry is a walk-in closet, containing the sparse provisions of the Blackguards.

PCs will note that there is nothing in the pantry that requires preparation (only travel provisions are found on the shelves).

7. Kitchen

Much like the dining room and the pantry, this room has not seen use in many months. Pots and pans hang on the wall, concealing spider nests and equally disgusting occupants. Everything is covered in a thick layer of dust.

8. Guest Rooms

Once these comfortable sleeping rooms were once offered to visitors, but today they are as neglected as the rest of the mansion's first floor, reminders of ages past. The bed, wooden table and chamber pot offer nothing of interest for explorers. In one chamber however (determine randomly) the party will find a small cage housing dozens of small centipedes, a virtual farm of the creatures, and the vile tools to extract their poison for the blackguard's blades.

9. Barracks

The windows of each barracks area are boarded over, reducing the beds, armor and weapons racks, and desks within to brooding silhouettes.

- A. Wooden pole arms are smashed and splintered in this room, except for a particularly fiendish-looking one that is a Masterwork Halberd. Ash and coal also litter the floor.
- B. A brazier in the corner reveals burning embers of a ritual sacrifice. Small animal carcasses lay about, drained of their blood.
- C. A painting showing a lone paladin fighting a losing battle atop a cliff face in hell against fiendish legions adorns one wall of this room. Apparently one of the new occupants took a liking to it.

D. Kyton's chamber. Spiked chains of all sizes hang from various parts of the ceiling and infernal writing is scrawled in the stone walls with wicked claws.

The Blackguards live in these rooms, leaving the basement chambers to their baatezu masters.

10. Temple

This is a shallow, wide room with pews facing the outside wall. A pulpit stands before a window of stained glass.

Examination of the room reveals that it was used recently, but a successful Tracking (DC 15) roll also shows the patterns of movement within are not consistent with typical lawful good rites. A Knowledge (arcane) or Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 15) reveals that the movement patterns are consistent with unholy lawful evil rituals. Moving the pulpit exposes a baatezu symbol, crudely chiseled into the stone floor.

There are two significant treasures on the manor's second floor. The first is located here, stacked with the Blackguards' dark robes high in a closet: as many *potions of water breathing* as there are PCs, plus one (the ex-paladins use these to traverse the catacomb level below).

11. Offices

These rooms were once used by the Order's highest-ranking officials, but have fallen into disuse since the Blackguard took over. The various maps of Tirna'cel posted on the office walls are outdated by several months and nothing has been touched in as long. Otherwise there is not much of interest here except for the occasional wax pencil, measuring devices, and blank parchment.

12. Library

Religious texts focusing on Garadon's ancient enemies lie open all about this room. Among them, a journal lies open on the central table, containing fascinating entries.

The journal reveals the entire history of Tirna'cel as presented in the DM Background sections of this adventure and its prequel, and this:

"...and the will of our lords from beyond have been met! The first of their number has been loosed into this realm through the portal! His power is everything we have projected, linked to the forces of the universe itself. It is only a matter of time before the self-congratulating leaders of Tirna'cel once more belong to the infernal realms.

"There are only two potential setbacks. First and foremost, the Champion requires magic in great quantity as sustenance. This is not yet debilitating, and will come in most handy when we unseat Tirna'cel's current rulers. But it has proved difficult to perform the gateway ritual again.

"Secondly, the ancient incantations required to destroy the accursed Sword of Tirna'gael have so far eluded us. We know that they must be among the ancient texts cataloguing our people, but until we decipher the Garadon code, the blasphemous weapon rests with our minions below."

If the invisible osyluth devil following the PCs has not previously revealed itself, it does so now, attacking with every weapon and minion at its disposal. Now that the PCs know the truth about what is happening, they cannot be allowed to live.



Lying between the stacked books is a silk pouch containing a hag eye (consult the *Monster Manual*). This gem is a gift from the Dark Champion to his betrothed, a green hag located in room #25. The osyluth devil is tasked with safeguarding the gem until the marriage. Should the PCs recognize the gem for what it is and destroy it, the green hag's blood-curdling scream is heard throughout the manor, and she is blind when they encounter her.

THE MANOR BASEMENT

Assuming the characters discover the osyluth devil's journal, their next destination should be the Manor basement. It is naturally dark; PCs will have to provide light for those without darkvision. There is a perpetually moldy smell and the gray stone-fitted walls are cool to the touch.

13. Confinement Office

The room's only contents are an unadorned table and chair. A torch rack with a single, unlit torch hangs on one wall.

This is the office for the warden of the Manor's dungeon. Once guarded by the paladins of light, this chamber has fallen into disrepair since the Blackguards arrived.

14. Interrogation Room

A metal chair is bolted to the stone floor of this room and the walls are lined with all manner of intimidating devices designed to inflict pain.

Never used by the paladins, these items were not removed from the walls and require effort, a Strength check (DC 20), to get rid of. From the look of the chair, a small nonhuman creature has recently been interrogated here. None of the devices on the walls were used on it, but from the bloodstains apparent on the floor surrounding the chair, other means of violence were.

15. Cells

All of these small chambers are empty except one, containing a crouching, pitiful form.

The last cell on the right contains an unfortunate dretch, the victim of the interrogation room. The poor dretch has languished here for weeks, tortured by the Blackguards. He has been observant, and knows some of the devils' plans, as well as where the Sword of Tirna'gaeil is (through a secret panel in the catacombs).

He only grants this information in exchange for his freedom. The dretch has hidden 12 gilded darts (worth 50 gp each) in the cell's vermin-infested bed, which may be noticed with a Spot (DC 15) check.

☛ Dretch: CR 2; Small outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil); HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp -1; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d4, bite); SA Spell-like abilities, *summon demon*; SQ Damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, telepathy 100 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Search +2, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks); Multiattack.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*scare* (DC 12), *stinking cloud* (DC 13). Caster level 2nd. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day a dretch can attempt to summon another dretch with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 1st-level spell.

Telepathy (Su): Dretches can communicate telepathically with creatures within 100 ft. that speak Abyssal.

16. Wine Cellar

The devils who have taken over the manor consumed nearly all the fine wine that was once stored here and left behind piles of broken glass and shattered wood. Among the remaining bottles are Elven Starfire wine and Drathack, the dark wine favored by dragons in human form. Both of these vintage offerings could fetch upwards of 100 gp each.

17. Training Room

The weapons and training devices here are covered in blood and gristle, and the floor is a nightmarish miasma of unrecognizable body chunks and fluids.





The most incredible feature of the room, however, is a net of gossamer strands, anchored to the floor with metal pitons. It appears that something was held beneath the net, but has escaped. Two of the pitons were pulled free of the ground, but the net is undamaged. The strands of the net, the pitons, and the floor below are charred, as if subjected to a powerful open flame.

The net is magical and formerly held the Dark Champion's steed — a nightmare — in place. But the nightmare has escaped, vanishing for a time into the ethereal plane. As the characters investigate the net, or when they choose to leave the room, it returns and attacks them. The net is made of enchanted gold, and is effectively indestructible. If polished, it would be worth at least 1,500 gp on the open market.

☛ **Nightmare:** CR 5; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar); HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good); AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +6; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d4 fire, hoof); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d4 fire, 2 hooves) and +4 melee (1d8+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Flaming hooves, smoke; SQ Astral projection, darkvision 60 ft., etherealness; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +12, Move Silently +11, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Spot +12, Survival +10 (+12 on other planes and following tracks); Alertness, Improved Initiative, Run.

Flaming Hooves (Su): A blow from a nightmare's hooves sets combustible materials alight.

Smoke (Su): In the throes of battle, a nightmare snorts and neighs with rage. This snorting fills a 15-ft. cone with a hot, sulfurous smoke that chokes and blinds opponents.

Anyone in the cone must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or take a –2 penalty on all attack and damage rolls until 1d6 minutes after leaving the cone. The cone lasts 1 round, and the nightmare uses it once as a free action during its turn each round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Because of the smoke it gives off, a nightmare has concealment against creatures 5 ft. away and total concealment against creatures 10 ft. or farther away. The smoke does not obscure the nightmare's vision at all.

Astral Projection and Etherealness (Su): These abilities function just like the spells of the same names (caster level 20th); a nightmare can use either at will.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a nightmare is up to 300 pounds; a medium load, 301–600 pounds; and a heavy load, 601–900 pounds.

THE CATACOMBS

Here the PCs enter the final leg of the adventure, venturing into the catacombs, which have been submerged beneath the murky waters of the surrounding bog. The most dangerous creatures of the adventure lurk here, along with the only path to the basement rooms where the Sword of Tirna'gael and the Dark Champion lie.

Special Note: The catacombs are filled with water, with only a few pockets of rank air here (noted in the room descriptions). The potions of water breathing in the upper level should come in handy for the PCs to continue their quest. DMs should observe the rules for drowning while the PCs explore this level, keeping handy the various rules for Underwater Terrain in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.)

18. Hallway

This wide and tall hallway winds through this level of the manor, from the stairs where the PCs enter to the opposite staircase. The hallway itself contains nothing of interest, but it is the easiest route to every other part of the catacombs. It is also the most frequented route of the aboleth, which has taken up residence here. Every five rounds the PCs are in the catacombs, there is a cumulative 10% chance that the aboleth swims through the hall. If the aboleth senses the PCs, it attacks immediately (to defend its offspring in the war offices, #19).

✦ **Aboleth:** CR 7; Huge aberration (aquatic); HD 8d8+40; hp 76; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +22; Atk +12 melee (1d6+8 plus slime, tentacle); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+8 plus slime, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Enslave, psionics, slime; SQ Aquatic subtype, darkvision 60 ft., mucus cloud; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 26, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +16, Knowledge (any one) +13, Listen +16, Spot +16, Swim +8; Alertness, Combat Casting, Iron Will.

Enslave (Su): Three times per day, an aboleth can enslave any single living creature within 30 ft. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or be affected as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 16th). An enslaved creature obeys the aboleth's telepathic commands until freed by *remove curse*, and can attempt a new Will save every 24 hours to break free. The control is also broken if the aboleth dies or travels more than 1 mile from its slave. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Psionics (Sp): At will—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 15), *illusory wall* (DC 17), *mirage arcana* (DC 18), *persistent image* (DC 18), *programmed image* (DC 19), *project image* (DC 20), *veil* (DC 19). Effective caster level 16th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Slime (Ex): A blow from an aboleth's tentacle can cause a terrible affliction. A creature hit by a tentacle must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or begin to transform over the next 1d4+1 minutes, the skin gradually becoming a clear, slimy membrane. An afflicted creature must remain moistened with cool, fresh water or take 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes. The slime reduces the creature's natural armor bonus by 1 (but never to less than 0). The save DC is Constitution-based.

A *remove disease* spell cast before the transformation is complete will restore an afflicted creature to normal. Afterward, however, only a heal or mass heal spell can reverse the affliction.

Mucus Cloud (Ex): An aboleth underwater surrounds itself with a viscous cloud of mucus roughly 1 ft. thick. Any creature coming into contact with and inhaling this substance must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or lose the ability to breathe air for the next 3 hours. An affected creature suffocates in 2d6 minutes if removed from the water. Renewed contact with the mucus cloud and failing another Fortitude save continues the effect for another 3 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills and Feats: An aboleth has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

19. War Offices

Once the planning area, this room is at present a submerged ruin. The tables are rotted into barely recognizable slats of wood and other remnants of the war effort are little more than catastrophes.

This room is one of two on this level most often visited by the aboleth as it is the nest for its recent spawn (see below). The chance of encountering the aboleth here increases by 30%. Fortunately, there are several air pockets here, within the arched ceiling of the room.

A school of 9 skum protects a nest of aboleth eggs here. The nest of eggs is worth 1,000 gp to a fan of delicacies made from them. Beside them is a female skeleton wearing a suit of +1 *studded leather armor*, with a backpack containing a scroll with *one invisibility sphere spell* inscribed upon it, as well as 250 gp in various gems and coins.

✦ **Skum:** CR 2; Medium aberration (aquatic); HD 2d8+2; hp 16, 14, 14, 14, 13, 11, 11, 10, 9 hp; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +0 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); SA Rake 1d6+2; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., amphibious; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6*, Listen +7*, Move Silently +6, Spot +7*, Swim +12; Alertness.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +0 melee, damage 1d6+2. A skum also gains two rake attacks when it attacks while swimming.

Skills: *Skum have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks underwater.

A skum has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

20. Armory

A literal wreck, lying amidst underwater weeds and collapsed portions of rock are a silver longsword, two daggers, a trident, and two heavy shields. Many pole arms lay around, their wood having rotted away long ago.

21. Smithy

This long, low chamber contains many air pockets between the rafters along its ceiling. Between two such rafters is an easily recognizable rooftop panel, leading to room #24, the resting place of the Sword of Tirna'gael. The rest of the chamber is filled with rusted metal creations and the forges they were made with, along with somewhat useable artisan's tools, and a masterwork anvil and hammer.

22. Aboleth Lair

If the PCs have not encountered the aboleth by the time they reach this room, it bears down on them now, using its psionic powers to confuse and enslave them, and its sheer might to overpower and destroy them.

23. Skum Lair

A school of 7 skum dwell here, protecting the aboleth's young. They attack all intruders and fight to the death. The only air pocket is at the top of the staircase.

☛ **Skum:** CR 2; Medium aberration (aquatic); HD 2d8+2; hp 15, 15, 14, 13, 13, 12, 10; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +0 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); SA Rake 1d6+2; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., amphibious; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.
Skills and Feats: Hide +6*, Listen +7*, Move Silently +6, Spot +7*, Swim +12; Alertness.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +0 melee, damage 1d6+2. A skum also gains two rake attacks when it attacks while swimming.

Skills: *Skum have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks underwater.

A skum has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

24. The Sword of Tinra'gael

This room contains a single weapon rack and the easily recognizable Sword of Tinra'gael.

Surrounded by a pulsing sphere of conflicting energies, PCs of any alignment but evil may grab the sword. Evil characters will find that their hands merely pass through the hilt. The sphere vanishes harmlessly once the sword is removed. It is the ancient, ritual magic that created the sphere protecting it from evil's grasp... once that protection is gone, an evil-aligned creature may grasp the sword normally (except for extraplanar creatures... see the "New Magic Item" section at the end of this chapter).

25. The Bride's Lair

This room is decorated as a mock bridal suite, complete with rancid seaweed curtains upon a slime-covered four-poster bed and black candles made from tanar'ri hides. Gems adorn nearly everything in the room.

A green hag immediately attacks any who enter. If she is reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, she dashes for area #26, seeking the protection of her lover. The only way to avoid her fury is to offer her the hag eye found in area #12, in which case she politely declines to alert the champion, fleeing the manor immediately. The hag will not fight the champion.

If the PCs search the room, they uncover 3 pearls (worth 200 gp each), 4 amber shards (worth 100 gp each), 2 quartz dollips (worth 50 gp each), and 25 pearls (worth 20 gp each).

☛ **Green Hag:** CR 5; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 9d8+9; hp 49; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +9; Grp +13; Atk +13 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +13 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws); SA Spell-like abilities, weakness, mimicry; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., spell resistance 18; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14.

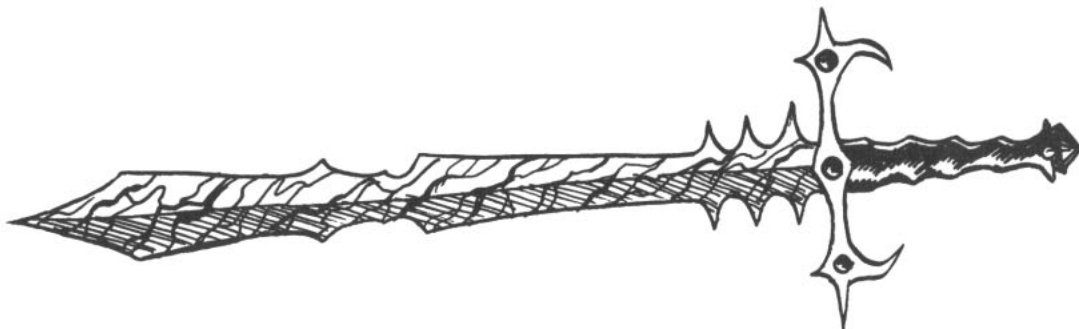
Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Craft or Knowledge (any one) +7, Hide +9, Listen +11, Spot +11 Swim +12; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*dancing lights, disguise self, ghost sound* (DC 12), *invisibility, pass without trace, tongues, water breathing*. Caster level 9th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Weakness (Su): A green hag can weaken a foe by making a special touch attack. The opponent must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 2d4 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

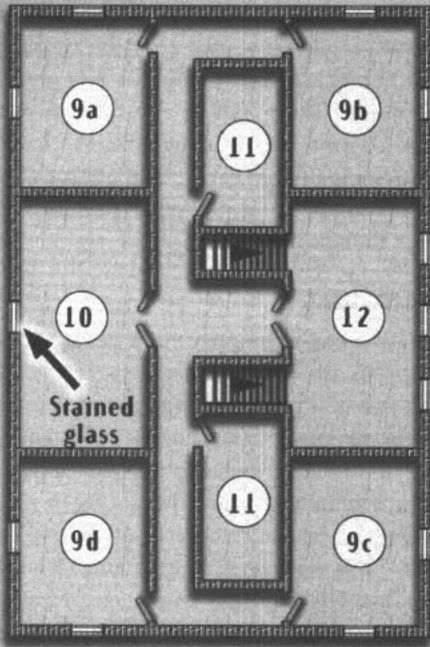
Mimicry (Ex): A green hag can imitate the sounds of almost any animal found near its lair.

Skills and Feats: A green hag has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

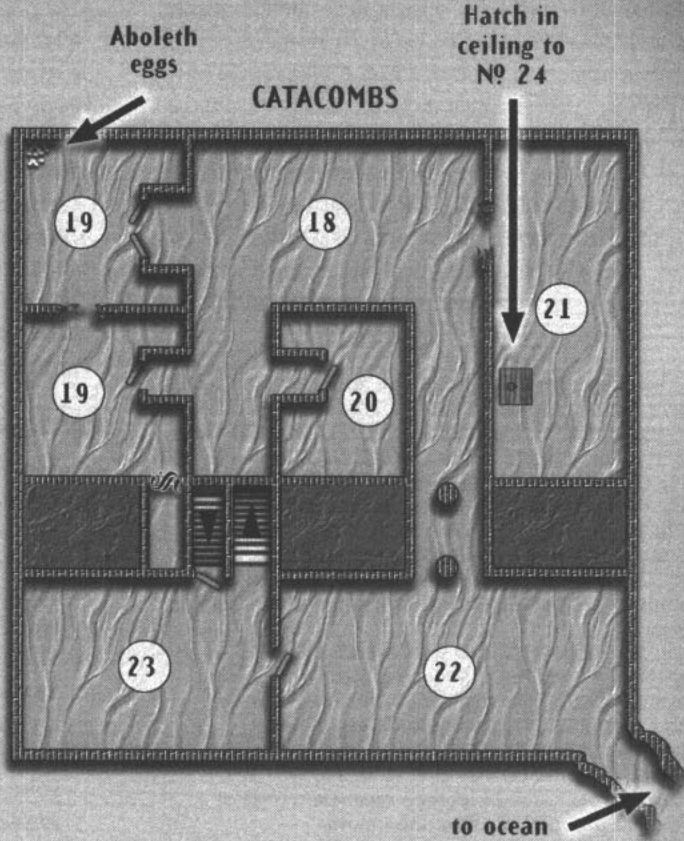


GARADON MANOR

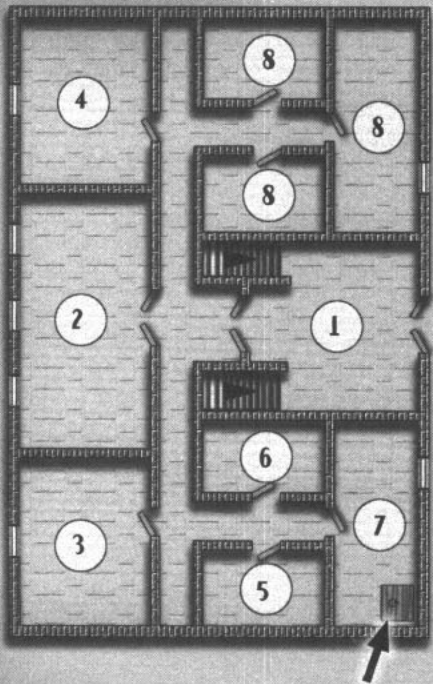
SECOND FLOOR



CATACOMBS

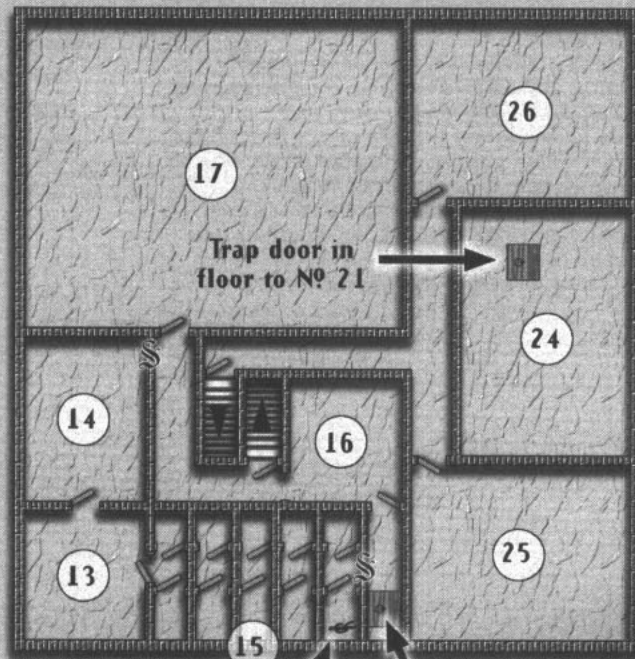


GROUND FLOOR



Trap door in floor to № 16

BASEMENT LEVEL



Prisoner

Hatch in ceiling to № 7

26. The Dark Champion's Lair

This room has been warped to appear like a hellish plane; the floor and walls are cracked apart to reveal gouts of vertical flame and oozing pools of ichor. A planar gate rests behind a throne: a pile of bones and armor shaped from the remains of paladins who resisted the devils' corruption.

The Dark Champion (see New Monsters — Appendix B). The Dark Champion carries a +2 *shield* bearing an infernal symbol. If the icon is removed, the item is worth 5,000 gp. Destroying the gate requires magical or good-aligned weapons. The gate has a Hardness of 20, hp 180, and a Break DC of 50. A critical hit renders it inoperable.

☛ **Dark Champion, Baatezu:** CR 8; Large outsider (lawful, evil); HD 8d8+24; hp 56; Init +6; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (1d6+4, claw); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+4, 2 claws) and +10 melee (1d8+4, tail); SA Tendon slice, lightning attack; SQ Redirect magic; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Climb +9, Hide +8, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +12, Search +7, Sense Motive +8, Spot +9; Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack

Tendon Slice (Ex): A hit from the Dark Champion's tail slices through tendons and muscle, cutting deep into the opponent's flesh. The target must immediately make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage suffered) or suffer a cumulative –2 penalty to all attack rolls, melee weapon damage rolls, and physical Skill checks. In addition, the target must make a second Fortitude save (DC same) or lose 1 hit point permanently from the trauma.

Lightning Attack (Ex): For every 10 points of casting levels and modifiers the Dark Champion gains from its redirect magic quality (see below), it may release a lightning bolt as cast by an 8th level sorcerer. This attack behaves in every way like the lightning bolt spell effect.

Redirect Magic (Su): Magic spells and items brought within a 20-ft. radius of the Dark Champion are affected by an *antimagic field* as cast by a 10th level sorcerer, and immediately drop to their lowest possible casting level (in the case of spells) or modifier, positive or negative (in the case of items) to the champion for the purposes of its lightning attack (see above). Spell-like effects without a casting level and items without a numerical bonus do not affect this total, but are still affected by the antimagic field. This does not effect the Dark Champion's lightning attack in any way.

EPILOGUE

With the information gathered here, the PCs are set up as rewriters of history, or at least the loremasters who discovered the truth. The realm may even begin looking upon them as new saviors. Bards begin writing about their tales, official stations of honor and prestige are heaped upon them and nobles seek out eligible PCs to wed into their ranks. Of course, there will be a number of young adventurers and loremasters who will begin checking into the dubious past of the PCs... if their great hero wasn't always the figure they assumed perhaps these new heroes have their secrets.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- An influential noble asks the party to investigate the disappearance of his or her younger kinsman, Cedric. Cedric had heard of a beautiful young woman named Liriandra, said to be of marriageable age, and the daughter of a wizard. Seeking an advantageous marriage, the somewhat impulsive young man ran off to the village of Stormy Shore to offer himself as a suitor. Cedric was well liked by everyone, especially the young ladies. His impulses often took him away from home for weeks at a time, but he has never been gone this long. The noble offers the PCs a modest reward for information pertaining to Cedric's well being, preferably bringing him home if possible (see the adventure "The Illusionists Daughter").
- Some elven refugees come to the realm (and quickly learn of the PCs by reputation) and plead with the PCs to restore their neighboring homeland (see the adventure "Servants of the Blood Moon").

Chapter 20:

The Murder of the Seven Points

Levels 6 to 8
by Erik Yaple

The sun hangs over the gentle hills in the west as the road leads you to an open city at the confluence of two rivers. As you head into the center of town, you spy a market and a small collection of buildings. Most of them look uninviting, with the exception of a tavern, from the eaves of which swings a sign labeled "The Boar's Head."

You enter, and an enormous half-orc asks you to leave your weapons with him. As he cannot be budged on this matter, you comply.

You step into the crowded main hall, and a grinning dwarf in a freshly stained apron rolls over to you. "I'm Rugar, and this is my place. What'll you have?"

Soon after a round of much-welcomed drinks, you're served a bland but satisfying dinner by the gigantic half-orc you met at the door. "Name's Denaz," he grunts, clearly doing his best to emulate Rugar's friendliness, even though he just doesn't seem to have it in him.

As you finish your meal, the door to the tavern suddenly swings open to reveal a city guardsman standing in the frame. The room falls silent as he clears his throat.

"Good citizens! Beginning tonight, there is a curfew enforced within the limits of our fair town. Any citizen found on the streets after sundown will be arrested. You are encouraged to make your way home immediately."

The dwarven bartender pokes his head up over the bar in the back of the room. "What's up, Callam?" he asks, a look of concern on his face. "You'd better have a good reason for sending my customers home."

The young man surveys the crowd intently for a moment before turning his attention to the dwarf. "Some of you have probably already heard. There's a killer on the loose in our town. Seven dead so far this week, with the last two killed only just last night."

The guard allows a horrified murmur to pass through the tavern before he continues. "In a town of this size, there just aren't enough people to properly patrol the streets. I need good people, strong and able, to lend me a hand with this."

With that, the guard's gaze suddenly focuses on you.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 6 to 8. Investigation and social skills are useful in this adventure, as well as arcane knowledge. The DM should feel free to supplant the final encounter with any demonic or otherworldly creature of his choosing.

Use the following stats for any of the named fighters in the story, making adjustments only for racial type. This includes Rugar, Callam, Denaz, and any volunteers used in the posse.

THE MURDER OF THE SEVEN POINTS

4 Human Ftr 4: CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 32 each; Init +1; Spd 20ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword); SA—; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Power attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Banded mail, shield, masterwork longsword.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard about the town or its people. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 205 and DC 15). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check.

DC 15 The town is moderately sized, but old. Its people are tight-knit and seem to know each other's business.

DC 20 This town was once under the protection of six elven knights.

DC 25 The method of these deaths is indicative of an ancient, evil ritual.

CHAPTER ONE: GATHERING A POSSE

The young guard named Callam strides up to your table and plants both his hands flat down between the dirty plates, the only sign left of your meal. He looks each of you carefully in the eye, hunting for some hint of recognition. Seeing none, he speaks.

"I've never seen any of you before. You're new in town," he says slowly and carefully. "You couldn't have committed the murders. I need your help."

If the PCs fail to volunteer, they are free to go on their way the next morning, but they've given up the opportunity to take part in this adventure.

Whether the PCs join up with Callam or not, two brothers by the name of Loab and Garl step forward. Denaz confers quickly with Rugar and offers his services.

Once all the volunteers are rounded up, Callam leads the patrol to the main square in the center of the town. In the middle of the square, there's a rough map of the town engraved into a bronze plate. The map is simple, not to scale, and weathered.

On the map, Callam shows the posse the location of the murders. He points out where each of them occurred, in order — or so it seems. With a slight bit of confusion in his speech, Callam transposes the third and fourth murder locations. He then leads the posse to the sites of last night's murders.

Lots of things can happen as your party travels through the town, it's outskirts, and market place. At any given moment, roll on the chart below to determine if there's an encounter.

TOWN AND VILLAGE ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No encounter
11	Bandit
12	Beggar
13	Dire Rats
14	Doppelganger
15	Dwarven apprentices
16	Guard patrol
17	Lost Child
18	Merchant
19	Wild Dogs (1d4)
20	Wraith (restless in the graveyard)

THE OTHER KILLINGS

Should the PCs ask about the previous murders, Callam tells them each victim was cut from palm to palm, all the way up and across the neck. No obvious trails were left, as though they were killed at the spot where they died. All were found face down and left to bleed straight into the ground. When the bodies were moved, they left behind a line of blood-soaked dirt.

Up until last night, the killer had been taking one victim every night. Then last night, there were two deaths. Callam fears this means the killer is stepping things up a notch, which is why he's finally decided to call in outside help.

THE OTHER VICTIMS

If the PCs ask about the persons killed, Callam gives them a brief catalogue of the victims. Feel free to embellish and add as much to these characters as feel inspired to.

Trauning: The first victim. The dwarven daughter of the most prominent merchant in town. She was to be wedded to another merchant's son in a few months.

Baloca: The second victim. An overweight sloth of a man, known for being a slave master to his children, who worked his farmlands.

THE MURDER OF THE SEVEN POINTS

Jusnile: The third victim. A young girl, recently married. She was murdered near her family's farm, which is adjacent to the tower of an old half-elf who lives outside of town.

Kerrlie: The fourth victim. An older, elven woman in her later years. She was known for her generosity and kindness around town. Her sons cared for her after the death of her husband, a local merchant who specialized in exotic herbs.

Hannil: The fifth victim. Husband to Jusnile, he was murdered not far from the spot where his wife was killed. An only child, he was to inherit a large tract of land from his ailing father. Hannil's father suffered a heart attack and died after receiving the news of his son's murder.

CHAPTER TWO: THE RED-HERRING MURDER

"It was right here where the last body was found," Callam states flatly. You can tell this young man has yet to be hardened to the cold realities of death. He points down at a spot in the middle of the street where lies a pool of blood.

This is where a murder took place, although it has nothing to do with the others. The victim was a dwarf by the name of Mulson. He made his living as a farmer, raising livestock and harvesting crops. He moved into the area around 20 years ago with his wife Kalela, and they spent most of his days tending their acres on the outskirts of town.

He and his wife have fallen on hard times lately. Their livestock has dwindled, and their harvest was poor this year. The pair has been seen arguing in public lately, most notably in an incident at one of the markets, in which Mulson actually raised his hand at his wife in anger.

When the patrol arrives, the body of Mulson is already taken away to be prepared for burial. The sun has begun to set, and citizens are moving about the street, hoping to make it home before the curfew.

Should the PCs inquire about the victim, Callam is able to fill in any details they might want about Mulson and his wife. While inspecting the scene, the PCs should come to notice (Search, DC 10) there is a bloody trail on the dirt road, indicating the body was dragged to the middle of the street.

The trail is not long, terminating after only a few yards. It heads south toward Mulson's farm. The remainder of the trail has been obliterated by a full day's traffic.

If the PCs inquire about the murder, Callam reveals Mulson had been stabbed in the back repeatedly with a good-sized knife. The dwarf's body was found dressed in his bedtime clothing, and he was lying atop a bloody bedsheet.

The obvious thing to do here is head out to Mulson's farm to question his wife.

CHAPTER THREE: THE BATTERED DWARF

You follow Callam down the road until you reach a squat home on the edge of a farm. The guard knocks firmly on the door. After a moment, a heavysset lady dwarf answers the door, tears rolling down her bruised cheeks. Her hair is in disarray, and one of her eyes is black and blue and swollen shut. When she sees Callam, she breaks into a wail.

The fact is Kalela killed Mulson in a fit of rage. Yesterday he beat her for spilling a can of milk they could ill afford to lose, and that night, as Mulson lay sleeping in bed, Kalela stabbed him to death.

The distraught wife then wrapped Mulson's body up in the bed sheets and dragged him off into the city. With the rumors of the killing flying around town, the streets were deserted, and no one saw a thing. Kalela hoped her husband's death would be blamed on the killer and she would be left alone.

In her heart, though, she knew someone would come by to question her about Mulson's death, and she just can't seem to stop crying about it. Getting the truth out of Kalela isn't all difficult. As the questioning continues, she quickly reaches the point where she can no longer take the stress, and confesses to the killing.

After Kalela confesses, read the following to the PCs:

As tears of grief pour from Kalela's eyes, Callam comforts her for a moment, then asks if he can borrow some torches so he and the PCs can find their way back to town. The battered dwarf agrees, and Callam leads the PCs outside...

"I'll send someone for her in the morning," he says. "She's no threat to anyone else — now her husband is gone. In the meantime, it's clear she had nothing to do with the other killings. We've still got work to do."

THE MURDER OF THE SEVEN POINTS

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SIXTH MURDER

Callam leads you quickly to the scene of the other murder which took place last night. When you arrive at the murder site, you see stakes have been placed into the dirt road around a patch of blood-soaked ground. The crimson fluid stains the earth in a clear line. The street is empty, with only a few people hustling home after the curfew's deadline. Those who see Callam turn their curious gazes from the murder scene and quicken their pace towards home.

Any party member who casts or uses the power of *detect evil* senses a strong presence from the center of the roped-off area. If the caster makes a Spot check (DC 10), she sees the faint red glow of seven points arranged in a circle, with one of the points almost seeming to be two points overlap each other.

While the PCs look over the site, Callam tells them about the victim. Winnian was an old man, about 80 years of age. He commonly told stories to the younger children at the market, while his daughters sold their crops and livestock.

His farm does not lie far from his murder site. He had two daughters, who will now likely inherit the farm. The young ladies are out of town, visiting family. Winnian was killed by the same method used on the first five victims.

After the party has looked over the site, Callam breaks the patrol into two groups and asks them to walk the streets until he can relieve them after midnight. He assigns Denaz, Garl, and Loab to patrol the south end, and he asks the PCs to patrol the north end. After Denaz, Garl, and Loab take off, Callam pulls one of the PCs aside and tells them Rugar has offered to give them free lodging until these troubles blow over, in return for them helping out. They should have a warm bed waiting for them at the end of the night.

CHAPTER FIVE: CITIZENS ON PATROL

As you turn a corner, you see four men in the middle of the street up ahead. The one in the center is an old man who's close to falling-down drunk. The others are three young toughs who are preying on the old man's condition. They shove the drunken sot back and forth like a rum-soaked pinball, mocking him as they do.

Right before midnight, the PCs run into a trio of thieves harassing an old drunk. Assuming the PCs get involved, the trio stops picking on the man and turns to face the newcomers, being sure to keep a few yards between them and the PCs.

The leader of the thugs is a man by the name of Jallone. He's a large man, standing about 6-ft. 4 in. His left arm is covered in tattoos, and he carries a longsword. He and his friends Scratch and Milekae are known about town as troublemakers.

Scratch is a half-elf, and Milekae is a human. The two have been hanging around with Jallone for a good number of years. They are both sparsely tattooed and wear swords on their belts. The three thieves usually prey on drunks and outsiders who get lost after nightfall. Beyond putting a blade in a target's face, the members of the trio have yet to commit a truly violent act. They chose their targets for their helplessness, and about this, at least, they're rarely wrong.

If the PCs give him a hard time, Jallone questions the party's authority and makes fun of them. If the PCs draw their weapons and make a move toward arresting the trio, the thugs make a run for it. If the players come at the thieves bare fisted, the lowlifes stand their ground and fight.

As the confrontation is ending, Callam shows up and either arrests or chases off the thugs. Then he relieves the party and sends them back to the tavern for some sleep.

▲ Thug, Human Rog 4: CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6; hp 20, 17, 14; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Climb +8, Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Evasion (Ex): If these rogues make a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, they instead take no damage.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deal an extra 2d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): These rogues gain an intuitive sense that alerts her to danger from traps, giving them a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, dagger.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): These rogues can react to danger before their senses would normally allow them to. They retain their Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if they are caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork longsword, dagger (3).

CHAPTER SIX: THE SEVENTH MURDER

You get back to Rugar's, and the dwarf lets you in looking grateful. "Denaz and the others got back just a few minutes ago. They're already in bed. I've got your rooms made up already, so off you go." He leads you to a clean, well-kept place, hands you the key to the room, and bids you good night.

After what seems like scant minutes, you awaken to the sound of someone rapping on your door. You rise to answer it. As you open the door, Callam pushes his way in. He's not in the mood to argue about manners.

"It's happened again," he says. "Get yourselves together, and come with me."

Once the PCs are ready, Callam leads them out to the murder site. As they leave the inn, Rugar hands them each an apple and a bit of toast for breakfast.

On the way to the scene of the crime, Callam tells the PCs all about the victim. Marika was a single mother who was widowed three years ago when her husband was caught in a stampede of bulls. Despite her advanced years, she remained attractive. She sold her land and livestock to her neighbor Kyland and lived off of the lump sum. Marika spent her days caring for her son Lyn, whom she was protective of.

The victim was also a second cousin of Loab and Garl. Those two are busy consoling their family, but Denaz is guarding the crime scene.

When the PCs arrive at the murder site, Denaz greets them with a grunt. He points them over toward a body lying face down in a pool of blood so fresh it still hasn't entirely soaked into the ground. A couple of other guards stand at the ends of the street, diverting foot traffic away from the murder site.

The murder was performed in accordance with the previous killings. Any party member casting or using the power *detect evil* senses a strong presence from the center of the roped-off area, just like with Winnian, the sixth victim.

Any PC who makes a Spot check (DC 10) sees a child running from the nearby bushes toward the farmlands. Callam recognizes the child as Lyn. He yells for the PCs to follow him as he rushes after the child.

Lyn flees to his home. He witnessed the murder of his mother, which has left him too traumatized to speak. Lyn is a playful little scamp, known around town for getting into childish trouble. Chasing chickens through market is one of his favorite pastimes. When not getting into trouble, Lyn was usually found grasping his mother's hand or holding onto her skirt.

When Lyn reaches his yard, he disappears into the foliage, momentarily losing his pursuers. Callam orders the PCs to split up and look for the child.

As the PCs search the property, one of them runs into Kyland, a kind, gentlemanly dwarf whose beard is stained from chewing tobacco leaves. He knows the home and should be able to answer any questions the players have about Marika and Lyn.

Kyland offers his assistance in finding the child. He opens the door to the home for the PCs and tells them the child usually hides under a loose floorboard in his room, in a space too cramped for an adult to fit into. When the PCs pull up the board, they can hear the boy wriggling further away. If one of them sticks her head into the hole, she can see the child huddled there in the darkness, just out of reach.

The trick here is getting the kid out of his hideout without traumatizing him even more. This can be accomplished with a Diplomacy roll (DC 10).

Once Lyn is drawn out, he's still too scared to speak. The important thing is the party sees the seven-pointed star drawn with blood onto the child's face. The words "HELP ME" are inscribed on the child's bare chest as well (the killer drew them both).

After a while, the PCs realize any attempts to coax any answers out of Lyn are doomed. At this point, Kyland tells the PCs he and his wife are more than willing to take care of the child. Callam approves of this as well.

After Kyland takes Lyn away, Callam leads the PCs back to the bronze map of the city, there in the central square. He marks the location of the seven murders. As he does this, Callam recognizes his earlier mistake of transposing the locations of the third and fourth murders.

The PCs should recognize the seven-pointed star being formed by the murders. Hopefully, they should find it obvious the next murder will occur at the same location as the first. Callam recommends staking out the location tonight. Otherwise, the PCs have another night on patrol ahead of them. In the meantime, Callam offers to buy the party a meal at the tavern.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WAITING AT THE TAVERN

As you finish your lunch, you notice Callam has taken out a pencil and is doodling on the table. You look over to see he's drawn a seven-pointed star over and over again. "What in the stars are you drawing on my table?" you hear a voice grunt.

Continued on following page

THE MURDER OF THE SEVEN POINTS

You look up to see Rugar glaring directly at Callam. The young guard freezes for a moment, instinctively covering his artwork with his hands. Shortly, though, he withers under the dwarf's gaze, blows out a deep sigh, and exposes his handiwork to Rugar.

The dwarf leans over, and his demeanor quickly shifts from irritated to intrigued. He pulls at his beard for a long moment and then turns to Callam. "Do you know what this is?" he asks.

The young guard shakes his head slowly. "Neither do I," grunts Rugar, "but I know someone who might."

The dwarf looks up at you each in turn. "Clean your plates, folks. I'll send Denaz around in a moment. He can take you to see Loremaster Syle."

Denaz and Callam lead the PCs through the streets to the library of loremaster Syle. Use some arbitrary rolls to break the party up in the market (see the encounter table at the beginning of this adventure). They don't know it yet, but the killer has been following them from the Boar's Head—invisibly.

Once the party has been broken up a bit, the weakest feels a hand fall over her mouth. Using improved invisibility, the killer surprises the hero and tries to grapple her. If he succeeds, he pulls the hero into a nearby alley or empty stall. Have the other PCs make Spot checks (DC 20) to see if they notice their friend being dragged off.

As the killer wrestles with the PC, he hisses, "You and your friends had better stop snooping around. Let the cycle complete itself!"

If the target PC gets free and calls for help, the killer, still invisible, slips away into the crowd and is gone. If need be, the killer uses his summon swarm spell to cover up his escape.

TROUBLESHOOTING STUBBORN PLAYERS

DMs who have players who don't take well to letting things happen around them at your decree with no chance of stopping the activity (anything from "Well, wait, I'll trail him through the crowd, I've had worse! I get a 35 on my Search check!" to "Oh, so he grapples my monk, huh? Well, I'll flurry blows all over him until he's bruised using my 30 Escape Artist check to wriggle free") have some choices to make about running this little encounter:

Eliminate it. It's good atmosphere, but if the players are likely to overtake the killer right here and now spoiling the rest of the adventure then it's not worth it.

Exercise DM caution and "roll in favor of the murderer" to escape. You know, the look of surprise and glee as if you rolled a 20, informing the PCs that he's lost in the crowd, hoping they don't call you bluff.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE LIBRARY

While the incident in the market has left you shaken, you are determined to soldier on. Callam leads you to the door of an ancient home right in the heart of the town. A sign hangs over the doorway, depicting an open book.

Callam steels himself for a moment, then raises his fist and gives the door three solid knocks.

It's a long moment before the door creaks open. Eventually it does, and an elf with eyes older than the sea stands at the threshold. He looks at each of you in turn. When his eyes fall on Callam, his cold expression warms. "Yes," he says quietly, "how can I help you?"



CHAPTER NINE: HIGHMORE'S TOWER

Once either the PCs or Callam explains the situation to the loremaster, he opens his door and invites them in, ushering them into a large main room, which makes up the bulk of the house. Its walls are filled from ceiling to floor with shelves of books. With little ado, the loremaster digs in.

Syle dresses in long, brown robes and moves slowly. He is proud of his legacy as the keeper of the town's history, and is always eager to show off the fruits of his labors. After all, he has been with the city longer than anyone else, there is no one who knows this place better than he.

The loremaster's research quickly proves enlightening. Pulling an ancient tome from a high shelf, the elf begins shooting out facts about the case from its pages.

Apparently, the seven-pointed star is a symbol of the demon Urneil, the demon of waste and bile. Some few hundred years ago, an ambitious necromancer who sought to bind a demon to do his bidding summoned Urneil. The demon fought the binding, absorbed the flesh of the necromancer, and made the usurper's body his own. At the time, the city was under the protection of six elven knights who had been cast out of their original homes for one reason or another. The knights, in exchange for a place to live, had offered to protect the city from harm. It was a good deal for all involved — or so it seemed. When the demon arose, a band of citizens and farmers led by the knights sought to slay the abomination. Those armed with only common weapons were dispatched quickly by the demon, but the knights who carried the luminous blades were able to fight and eventually defeat the demon. During the battle, four of the six knights were killed. The fifth, also the eldest, was mortally wounded. The sixth, the youngest, was able to defeat the monstrosity, banishing it from this world. This knight sealed the beast away with the creature's own symbol, the seven-pointed star. After the battle, the youngest knight took the eldest back to his home, where he died some three days later. The youngest lived on, protecting the city until his death. He took a human bride who gave birth to a half-elf child.

The loremaster tells the player the descendant of this child still resides in town. He also suggests the child may still have the remaining luminous blades. The descendant's name is Highmore.

The research also explains the ritual by which the demon was originally raised. Eight living sacrifices had to be made to raise the demon, each performed in order as the moon sailed overhead. The eighth had to occur where the first took place to complete the cycle of summoning.

After this, the text then gives an explanation of how to banish the demon. Once the demon is stricken, the star needs to be carved into the demon's flesh. Once this is completed, the demon needs to be set ablaze, banishing it for at least another five centuries.

Callam knows where Highmore's tower is, and he's ready to lead the PCs there.

As you reach the tower on the outskirts of town, Callam comments on how the place has fallen into disrepair since he was a child. Few people see much of Highmore these days. Word has it he's on his last legs and will soon lose even those. He's a kind enough old bird, if only a bit daft. But what can you expect from someone who's been alive as long as he?"

A long, tattered ribbon hangs outside the front door, and when Callam reaches up and pulls on it, it gives way, but not before ringing an off-key bell inside one last time. After a long moment, the warped door creaks open, and an elderly half-elf pokes his withered nose out. He extends his right hand to you as he blinks out at you with watery eyes unaccustomed to sunlight.

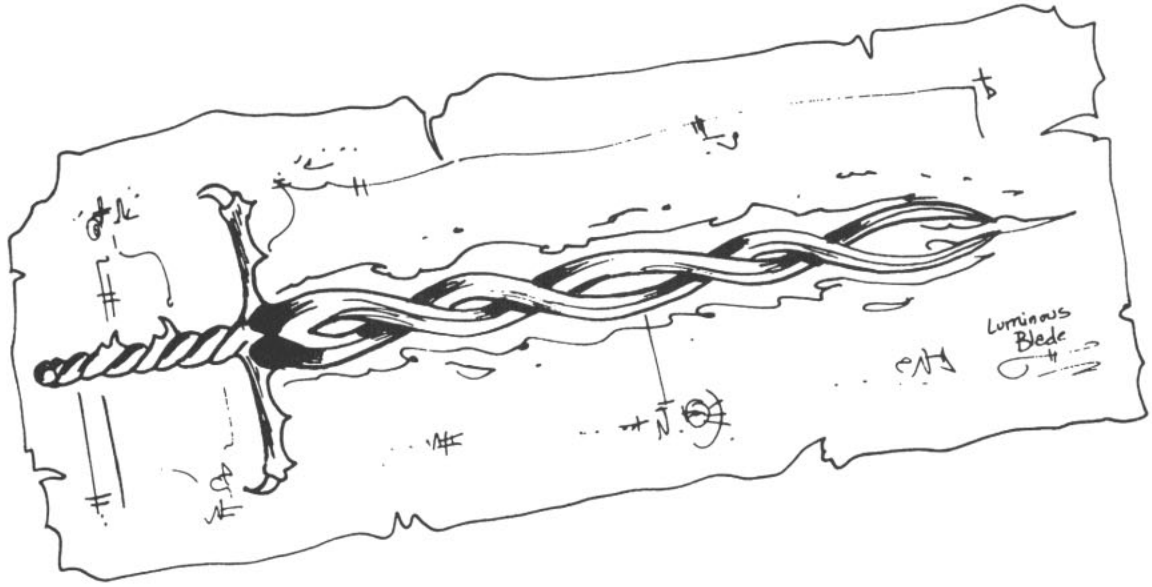
"Yes," he croaks. "What do you want?"

Highmore's line is littered with the breeding of half-elves, humans, and elves. His left arm didn't develop fully, and it hangs next to his body, lame. He is a recluse who hardly ever comes out of his tower. He has a few assistants in the area who tend his fields and run the odd errand for him in exchange for a share of the crops. He is a frail half-elf, and he expects his days are numbered shorter than what they should. He looks weaker even than usual, since a fever currently has him in its grips.

Any PCs looking outside around Highmore's property notice a large wagon of manure being moved from his fields out to the street. The manure is being taken to the site of the first victim. Unbeknownst to the people hauling the load, the demon requires it to manifest in. If the PCs ask about it, Highmore tells them his assistants are taking the manure to market to sell as fertilizer.

If the PCs ask about the luminous blades, Highmore admits he still has two of them, the ones belonging to both the eldest and youngest of the knights. He offers them to the PCs to use on a temporary basis, as long as Callam is willing to vouch for them. Once this over with, Highmore throws himself into a coughing fit. When he comes up for air, he asks his guests to leave him to his sickbed.

THE MURDER OF THE SEVEN POINTS



CHAPTER TEN: THE STAKE OUT

As the sun sets in the west, Callam leads you out to the site of the first murder. "A dwarven maid named Trauning was killed here," Callam informs you. "She was the only daughter of Traunax, the most prominent merchant in town. She was to be wed in a few months to Himlurt, son of a merchant by the name of Braulturt.

"At first, I thought one of the fathers might have been against the wedding and paid for the murder... but it just didn't add up. The families loved each other and were looking forward to the merging of their brightest assets. But when the killings continued, I knew something was wrong."

You can smell the site before you see it. The foul scent of fresh manure is in the air as you turn a corner and spy a number of guards setting up torches on stakes around the murder scene.

When the party arrives at the site, the guards are mulling over what to do about a broken wagon that dumped its load of manure all over the site of the first killing. The odor is revolting, and none of the guards are volunteering to step forward and clean it up. Callam curses the luck, but he figures out loud they'll just have to wait until the morning to worry about it. Night has fallen now, and he can't spare any men for the cleanup detail.

Then it's time for the PCs to settle in and wait. Nothing really happens until just before midnight. Dressed in his ancestral tunic, Highmore steps from the shadows and into the flickering firelight. He tells Callam he's come to offer his assistance. Noting the look of determination in the half-elf's eyes, Callam welcomes him, stating flatly, "We can use all the help we can get."

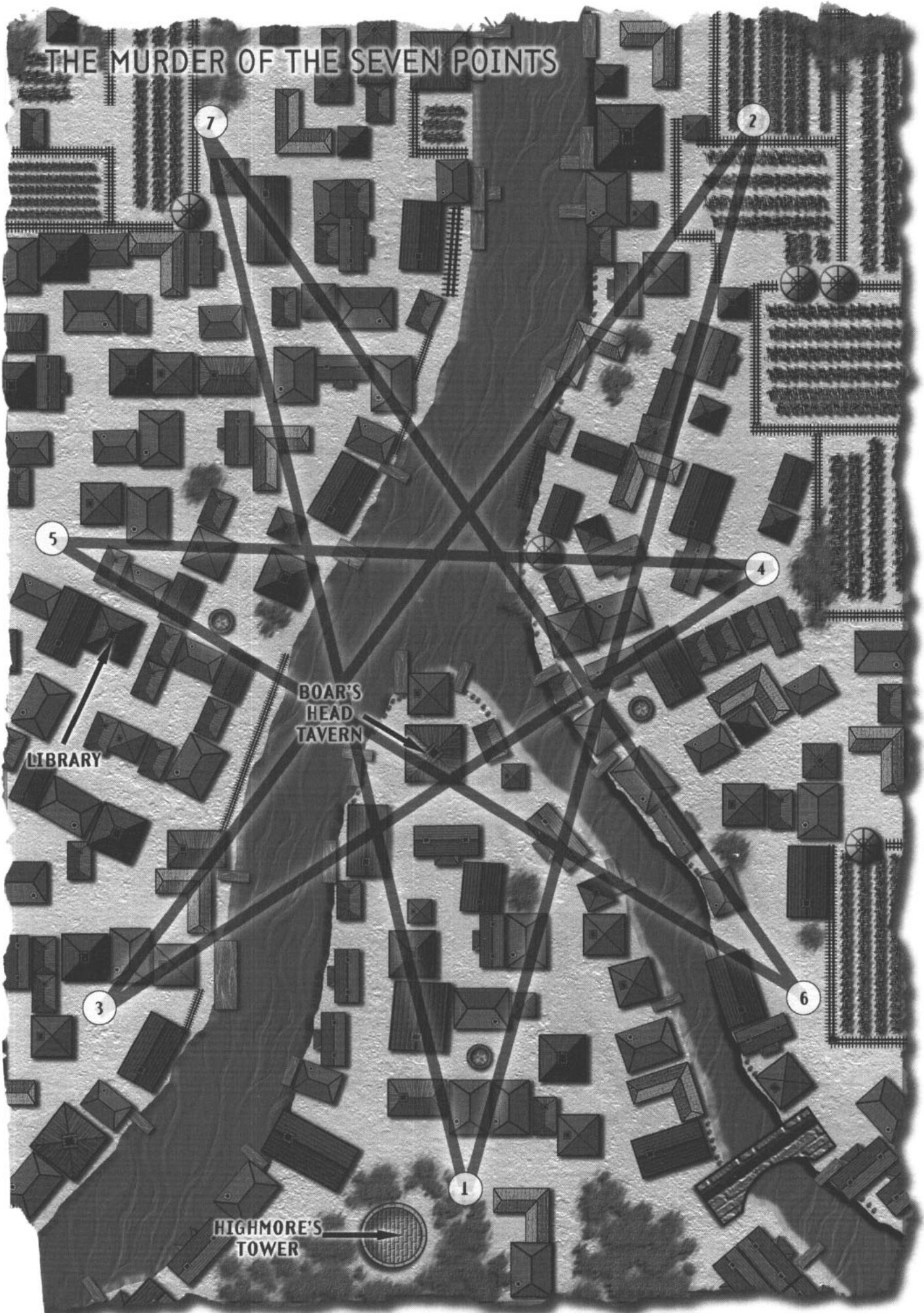
A few moments later, as the moon hangs directly over head, Highmore asks if anyone else heard something. He then climbs on top of the mound of manure, peering intently into the surrounding darkness.

The half-elf then removes a knife from his belt, looks into your eyes, and says: "It was me. I'm sorry. It is almost over." With that, Highmore plunges his knife into his throat and falls to his knees, bleeding into the manure. Smoke, steam, and a strong stench of sulfur rises from the pile. The rapidly pooling blood appears to be opening a hole into the earth.

If any characters approach, Highmore looks up at them, and gurgles at them with his dying breath: "Let the cycle complete."

Characters getting too close (within 10 ft.) to the pile must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or become stunned for 1d6 rounds. After a moment or two, Highmore's body slowly absorbs into the manure. A moment later, the manure bubbles and boils. From this frothing slop, Urnel the demon of bile and waste arises (see Appendix B).

THE MURDER OF THE SEVEN POINTS



BOAR'S
HEAD
TAVERN

LIBRARY

HIGHMORE'S
TOWER

7

2

5

4

3

6

1

THE MURDER OF THE SEVEN POINTS

After the demon rises, the PCs are in for a real fight to take it down. At your discretion, some or all of the others described in this adventure can pitch in to lend them a hand. At the very least, Callam and Denaz stand their ground.

With a little encouragement, Loab and Garl stick around too, as well as up to five guards. [Use the stats for the thieves in Chapter Five for them.] Otherwise, they flee in terror.

☛ **Urneil, Demon of Bile and Waste:** CR 8; Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil); HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +10; Grp +15; Atk +14 melee (2d8+5 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +14 melee (2d8+5 plus disease, bite) or +13 melee (1d10+2 and disease, 2 claws); SA Spell-like abilities, fear aura; SQ Damage reduction 10/cold iron or good, dark-vision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, stench, spell resistance 22, ritual weakness, telepathy 100 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +15, Sense Motive +10, Spot +12; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack.

Disease (Su): Filth Fever—Injury, Fort save DC 12, Incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Fear Aura (Su): As a free action, Urneil can surround himself with an aura of fear with a 10-ft. radius. This is otherwise identical to a 13th-level sorcerer casting a fear spell (save DC 17). The save DC is charisma-based. If a PC successfully saves against this ability, it cannot affect him again for one day. Other demons are not affected by this ability.

Spell-like Abilities: At will — *animate dead*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against good* (self only), *suggestion*, *unholy blight*, and *contagion*. Caster level 8th.



Stench (Ex): The stink of corruption surrounding this creature is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 ft. must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again this creature's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ritual Weakness (Su): Once a seven-pointed star is drawn on the creature's head, it loses its fire resistance and can no longer regenerate fire damage.

EPILOGUE

Once the PCs have defeated the demon, they should mark its head with the seven-pointed star and set fire to it, thereby condemning the beast to oblivion once again for another 500 years. They will have (hopefully) made some great friends and important contacts in the town, folks who can help them in the future. The fact that town is home to such a rich history and a tight-knit community, many a young lad or lass may wish to be married to one of the heroes of the town... eligible PCs being the choice pick. Regardless, a celebration is surely in order.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- An influential villager asks the party to investigate the disappearance of his or her younger kinsman, Cedric. Cedric had heard of a beautiful young woman named Liriandra, said to be of marriageable age, and the daughter of a wizard. Seeking an advantageous marriage, the somewhat impulsive young man ran off to the village of Stormy Shore to offer himself as a suitor. Cedric was well liked by everyone, especially the young ladies of the town. His impulses often took him away from home for weeks at a time, but he has never been gone this long... The noble offers the PCs a modest reward for information pertaining to Cedric's well-being, preferably bringing him home if possible (see the adventure "The Illusionists Daughter").
- Some elven refugees from the land the six elven knights were originally from come to the town (and quickly learn of the PCs by reputation) and plead with the PCs to restore their homeland (see the adventure "Servants of the Blood Moon").

Chapter 21:

Sundered Faith

Levels 6 to 8
by Kevin Wilson

FOR PUBLIC POSTING:

"Last week, several laborers cleaning up the damage to our sewer caused by the recent earthquake have been found brutally murdered. Until further notice, citizens should stay clear of any sewer gratings, openings, or tunnels for their own safety. Do not allow children to play unattended in areas where such openings exist.

The count is assembling a party to investigate these murders. Each registered member of the investigation team will receive 500 gold coins up front, with an additional 2,000 gold coins to follow upon a thorough and satisfactory completion of the investigation, provided evidence the matter has been dealt with is presented to the count. If you desire to join this investigation, please apply at City Hall."

DM BACKGROUND

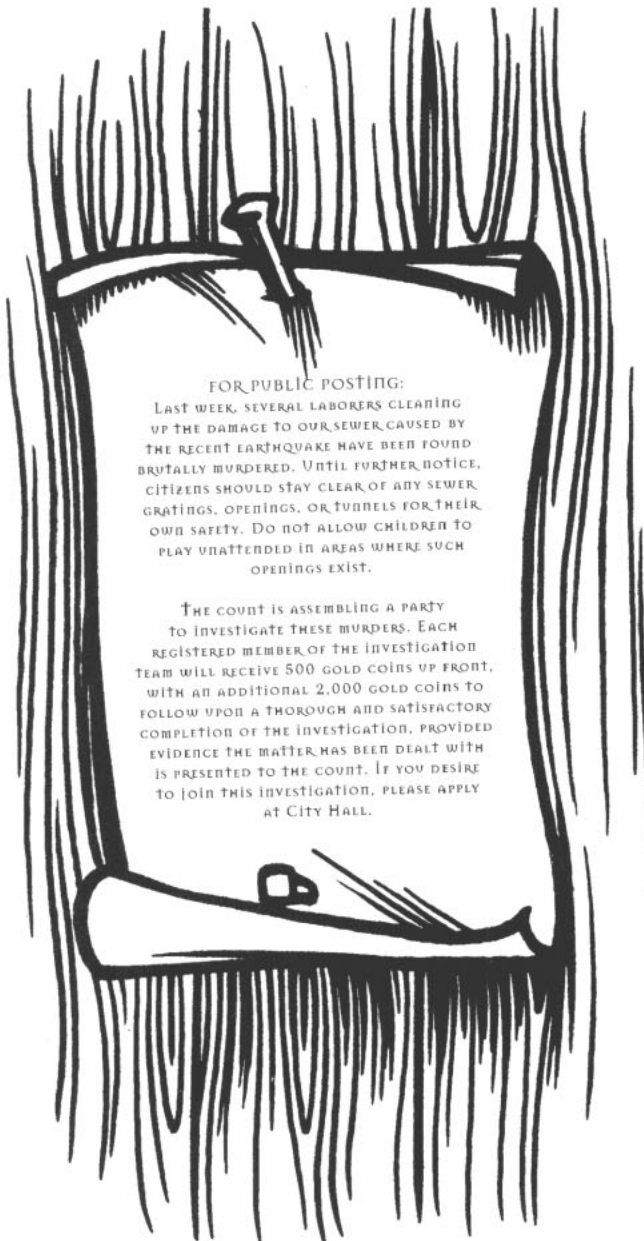
This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 6 to 8. PCs with wilderness as well as arcane knowledge are useful in this adventure. A paladin or good cleric is essential to the success of this adventure. The catacombs under the city are populated by undead with the ability to paralyze and drain levels. A store of items or spells that counter such abilities are essential for the party's survival.

Recently, sewer workers have been torn apart beneath the city, and the count of the city is in a panic, desperate to find out what's stalking the depths of his fair city. The grim reality of the situation is a small earthquake recently hit the town and opened up a connection between the sewers of the city and an abandoned temple. This temple, built deep beneath the earth, is dedicated to Nethtek, a god worshipped by the undead (alternatively, you can use any other god of the undead you like). Undead are slowly but steadily pouring out of the temple and making their way into the sewers above. Unless something is done, they could eventually threaten the city itself.

The count, unaware of the undead, has offered a reward of 10,000 gp for each group willing to go into the sewers and deal with the situation. Characters who successfully complete this mission earn the count's respect and may be hired to handle other tasks. If the PCs recently helped the count uncover an insidious plot (see the adventure

“Honor Among Thieves”), the group is hired immediately, and 2,500 gold will be put up, and the rest payable upon proof the deed is done.

The adventure begins with a brief interview between the characters and the count's aide, who simply assures himself of the characters' competence and advises them on how he feels they might best deal with the difficulties of adventuring in the city's sewers. The next part of the adventure takes place in the sewers themselves. The cramped quarters of the sewers complicate the characters' progress as they fight off some undead before a collapsing floor dumps them into an underground lake.



FOR PUBLIC POSTING:

LAST WEEK, SEVERAL LABORERS CLEANING UP THE DAMAGE TO OUR SEWER CAUSED BY THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE HAVE BEEN FOUND BRUTALLY MURDERED. UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, CITIZENS SHOULD STAY CLEAR OF ANY SEWER GRATINGS, OPENINGS, OR TUNNELS FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY. DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO PLAY UNATTENDED IN AREAS WHERE SUCH OPENINGS EXIST.

THE COUNT IS ASSEMBLING A PARTY TO INVESTIGATE THESE MURDERS. EACH REGISTERED MEMBER OF THE INVESTIGATION TEAM WILL RECEIVE 500 GOLD COINS UP FRONT, WITH AN ADDITIONAL 2,000 GOLD COINS TO FOLLOW UPON A THOROUGH AND SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE INVESTIGATION. PROVIDED EVIDENCE THE MATTER HAS BEEN DEALT WITH IS PRESENTED TO THE COUNT. IF YOU DESIRE TO JOIN THIS INVESTIGATION, PLEASE APPLY AT CITY HALL.

In the lake is a cave wyrm, an enormous undead snake which served as the guardian for the temple back when it was still in use. The characters are most likely forced to retreat into the temple proper.

With many of their light sources broken in the fall, the characters learn magical light doesn't work in the temple, and magical healing is only barely effective. Worse, undead haunt the temple and can't be turned or warded off. In the meantime, the PCs' few surviving light sources are being used up at an alarming rate, and they must hurry to defeat the undead — before they're left alone in the dark with them.

Eventually, the characters come to realize the temple is creating undead periodically, and they must seek out and destroy the temple's altar, which is the source of this plague. After doing so, they discover the way out, a narrow shaft leading back up to the sewers and out of this nightmare.

If necessary, have the PCs come across the posted notice at the opening of this adventure.

THE INTERVIEW AND THE SEWER

Wherever the PCs are in the city, a city official walks up nearby and posts a notice. When they examine it, read them the introduction of this adventure. If the PCs go to City Hall, they find a noticeable lack of volunteers (unless you've added an NPC or two to help them out). They don't have to wait long until they are quickly taken before the count's right-hand man, his aide, Johann Gold. Read the following text to the PCs aloud:

“It's a tragic thing, really. Some of those men who were killed were friends of my family. I helped one or two of them get their positions. Worse, the whole city's on alert until something's done about this. What the count needs you to do is to go down into the sewers, find out what's been killing our men, and put an end to it, whatever it is. Just bring me back proof of your success, and I'll pay you the balance of your fee.”

The PCs may be able to talk Gold into increasing their fee up to as much as 12,500 gp apiece, but he tries to keep most of the payment on the tail end, after they've completed the mission. Gold doesn't want them skipping town with a substantial portion of the city's treasury, after all. Once terms are agreed upon, and the characters are ready to go, Gold gives them their advance and this last bit of advice before turning them over to a page named Jeremy who takes them to the sewer entrance.

SUNDERED FAITH

"Just so you know, the sewers are rather narrow, so I wouldn't take any bulky weapons. I would also stock up on torches and lanterns before you go. It's terrible to be lost down in the sewers."

Jeremy then takes the PCs to a sewer opening just on the outskirts of town. Read the PCs the following text:

The page leads you to a foul-smelling opening on the edge of town. A 5-ft. diameter clay pipe leads into the side of a hill. The interior of the pipe is pitch black, and a stream of unknown foulness trickles out of its mouth. The page bids you good luck and turns to leave.

The characters may stop Jeremy and chat with him, but he doesn't know much about what's going on. However, he's useful should they want someone to run errands for them before they go in, or if they need someone to meet them here at a prearranged time. Otherwise, the PCs are on their own.

DUNGEON FEATURES

Adventurers who go into the sewers unprepared are in for a rude awakening. The sewers are narrow and circular, only 5 ft. in diameter. This means not only does the party have to travel in single file, but any tall members of the party must stoop over to walk. Any character who has to fight while stooped over suffers a -1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls (they are not "squeezing through a space" but they are not comfortable, either). Because of the tight quarters, blunt or slashing weapons larger than Small size must be used as piercing weapons. When used in this manner, they only inflict half damage. Once the PCs find themselves in a chamber, obviously, these penalties are negated.

Lastly, there is no map provided for the sewers. Wandering through a maze can be particularly unexciting for PCs, so just allow them to make a few turns between each encounter, just enough to give them the feel of a maze without actually forcing them to navigate one. Proceed through the following three encounters in order, and after "The Temple Guards" (#3), the characters are dumped into the next segment of the adventure.

1. Small Chamber

As you squeeze through the narrow confines of the sewer tunnel, you hear splashing noises from around the corner up ahead to your right.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately the information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check of the same DC as a Bardic Knowledge check.

DC 10 The sewer system of Desburg is ancient and complicated, not all sections connect (thus the map, if any, from the sewers from the "Honor Among Thieves" adventure won't be of use here).

DC 15 Some even say there are ruins beneath the city.

DC 20 An odd towns person or two says they see shambling figures moving near the sewer grates at night.

DC 25 Sewer workers tell tales of a giant creature that dwells within a forgotten cave.

Encounter: A group of four ghouls feed on a rotting corpse in a small (10-ft. by 10-ft. square) chamber. Two are inside and the other two are clamoring to get to the body.

Tactics: They attack the PCs once they see them, positioning to take advantage of the wider area the chamber provides while penning the characters in the narrow tunnel.

Treasure: The corpse the ghouls were feeding on has two torches wrapped in oilcloth in its backpack. If left wrapped, these torches stay dry even if immersed in water. Up to three more torches can be added to the oilcloth bundle.

☛ **Ghoul:** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 16, 13, 12, 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite) and +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

2. Pursuit

As you approach another chamber, you hear loud splashing noises approaching from behind.

Encounter: As the PCs reach another 10-ft. by 10-ft. square chamber, they are accosted by a gang of three ghouls led (from the rear) by a ghast. The creatures have tracked the PCs from their previous encounter.

Tactics: The ghouls force their way into the chamber, while the ghast singles out any elves in the party for its attacks.

Treasure: One of the ghouls has a 60 gp black pearl sewn into its rotting flesh in its neck.

☠ **Ghoul:** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 15, 14, 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite) and +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

☠ **Ghast:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30ft; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2/+5; Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 + paralysis, bite), +3 melee (1d4+1 + paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

Ghoul Fever (Ex): Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghast's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even elves are affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 ft. must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ghast's stench for 24 hours. A delay poison or neutralize poison spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

3. The Temple Guards

The corridor opens up ahead into a room with a wooden floor, revealing the scene of a slaughter. The corpses of several sewer workers are laying around the room, next to an overturned table and several broken chairs.

Encounter: The room is 20 ft. by 30 ft. with an overturned table, some broken chairs, and 10 corpses. This area is relatively clean, and it probably served as headquarters for the sewer workers. If the characters enter the room, the corpses of the sewer workers animate and attack them, the rickety wooden floor creaking under their feet.

Tactics: Sometime during this encounter, when it seems the party has won, the floor cracks ominously and then gives way (Dexterity check, DC 30, to leap clear), dumping everyone in the room into a tight tunnel filled with roaring water. They are shot along and dumped 20 ft. into the lake (room #4). The water is approximately 20 ft. deep where the PCs have fallen 50 ft. from above, so falling PCs suffer 3d6 points of damage. Characters who deliberately dive into water take no damage on a successful DC 15 Swim check or DC 15 Tumble check.

Should the PCs escape the temple without destroying the altar, the next time they pass this way the zombies have been replaced.

Treasure: There is no treasure here.

☠ **Human Commoner Zombie:** CR ½; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1/+2; Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); Full Atk Slam+2 melee, (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); SA-; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

THE LAKE AND THE TEMPLE OF NETHTEK

The PCs find themselves unceremoniously dumped into an underground lake. If only a few of the PCs fell into the watery chute, the rest have to determine how much they value their friend's lives. There is no chance of the PCs following their friends by any other way than leaping into the chute, which is several hundred feet long.

DUNGEON FEATURES

The Temple of Nethtek has been specially corrupted to be more attractive to undead. This has several effects on magic used within its confines (locations #6–17, and #5, past the seal), particularly priest magic. Clerics and other spell casters feel the chill hand of evil on their souls when moving through the temple. With a successful Knowledge (religion) or Spellcraft check (DC 15) they understand that their magic will be hampered once inside. With a successful Knowledge (religion) or Spellcraft check (DC 20), they know one of the four facts below. With a successful Knowledge (religion) or Spellcraft check (DC 25), they know two of the four facts below. No more than two facts can be learned by a single PC.

- All *cure* spells, potions, items, and anything else with healing properties used here automatically have the least possible effect. E.g., a spell that normally heals 1d8+1 hp, only heals 2 hp.
- All forms of magical *light* or illumination entering or cast within the temple are automatically extinguished and dispelled.
- All effects specifically targeting evil or undead creatures, such as *protection from evil*, *detect evil*, or *hide from undead*, are negated within the temple.
- All attempts to turn undead automatically fail. Instead, each undead facing the PC suffers damage equal to the maximum level of undead affected by the turning. Thus, if a cleric's turning check determines he can turn undead of up to 5 Hit Dice with this attempt, each undead facing him suffers 5 hp of damage.

4. The Lake

This enormous lake is lit from above by glowworms clinging to the ceiling, which is at least 50-ft. above you. A waterfall of filth is pouring into the lake from the hole in the ceiling you fell from, and off to one side you can just make out a sandy shore and a narrow opening leading into darkness.

This cavern is filled with an underground lake, averaging 20 ft. in depth. The ceiling is 50 ft. up, and the walls are smooth limestone, slick from the waterfall (Climb check at DC 30 to scale). However, even if the characters reach the hole they came out of, the force of the sewage shooting out of it makes it impossible to go back the way they came.

A PC who manages to gather some of the glowworms can use them as a poor light source illuminating a 5-ft. area.

Encounter: When the characters are first dumped into the lake, any nonmagical light sources they are carrying have a 17 in 20 chance of breaking or becoming fouled in the process (unless wrapped in oilcloth or similarly protected). In addition, the characters may need to dump armor and other heavy objects in order to avoid drowning (see Water Dangers in Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*[™]). Roused by their struggles in the water, the cave wyrm rises out of the water and attacks. It starts with any zombies that still move, thus giving the PCs a slight chance to escape to shore.

Once the characters are inside the Temple, the cave wyrm does not follow. If the PCs enraged the wyrm, it bashes through the stone and rides a wave of sewage into room #11, where it enters the fissure and leaves.

Treasure: There is a suit of +1 *full plate armor* and a rotting leather pouch containing 400 gp lying at the bottom of the lake where "X" is marked on the map. Both are covered in algae, so a Spot check (DC 15) is needed to see them through the murk, assuming the characters have some sort of light and the time to leisurely search the lake.

☛ **Cave Wyrms:** CR 9; Gargantuan undead; HD 16d12; hp 104; Init -2; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 6, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +8; Grp +19; Atk +15 melee (2d8+11 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d8+11 plus poison, bite); SA Poison; SQ Blindsight 120 ft., damage reduction 10/good, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 32, Dex 7, Con -, Int 2, Wis 7, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +19, Listen +12; Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Snatch.

Poison (Su): Anyone bitten by a cave wyrm must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 18) or take 1d4 points of permanent Constitution damage as the poison races through his system, rotting away at his internal organs. A victim who dies from this poison turns into a rotted corpse and collapses right before his friends' eyes. This poison loses its potency upon the cave wyrm's death.

Skills: Cave wyrms have a +7 racial bonus to Listen checks.

5. The Entryway

This hallway stretches on as far as you can see, and there are many dark figures crouched along the sides. The structure is clearly man-made, with smooth walls and a cobbled floor. The floor has a huge bronze seal of a scythe set into it.

This is the only entrance to the Temple of Nethtek.

The huge bronze seal marks the border of the Temple, and once the characters step on or pass the seal, they are subject to the temple's unholy effects (the curse described in "Dungeon Features", above). If using a god other than Nethtek, replace the scythe on the seal with the appropriate holy sigil.

If the characters lead the gray ooze from location 9 to the seal, it consumes the metal, breaking the curse, but setting off a 5d6 fireball centered on its location.

There are seven zombies crouching in the hallway. They stand and advance slowly toward the PCs the moment the seal is crossed, making sure to stay within the protective barrier of the Temple's Seal. If the characters explore the left or right wing of the temple for more than an hour, the zombies are replaced.

☛ **Human Commoner Zombie:** CR ½; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16, 16, 15, 13, 13, 13, 10; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club); Full Atk +2 melee, (1d6+1, slam) or +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); SA —; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

THE LEFT WING

6. The Crossroads

The passage ends in a three-way intersection here. To your left and straight ahead are sets of bronze double doors, each held closed by a smaller version of the seal you saw earlier. To your right, the earth has sagged down about 10 ft., and there is another set of bronze double doors down in the depression.

Treat the bronze doors as if they were made of iron (hardness: 10, hp 60, break DC 28). The seals on them keep the doors magically closed, but they are easily destroyed with a little brute force.

Encounter: Hidden in both the left and right passages are wights, taking advantage of the shadows and darkness of the area. PCs who succeed at Spot checks (DC 20) are not surprised by the wights when they attack.

Tactics: When the PCs enter the intersection, the wights attack. They come from both sides, and take advantage of flanking maneuvers where possible. If a PC is slain, the undead cut the fallen PC from his comrades, hoping to gain another ally in the fight.

☛ **Wight:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

7. Enchanted Sword Room

This 20-ft. by 20-ft. room contains a magical circle inscribed into the floor. A short sword lies in the center of the circle, glowing. A wooden table and a chair can also be seen near the circle. The table is covered in sheets of vellum with writing on them.

This room was once used for magical research, but it was abandoned suddenly when the inhabitants fled the undercity years ago. The wizard working here left his research notes on the table, and a Spellcraft check (DC 20) made while examining them explains how to finish the sword's enchantment, as described below. The notes also warn against touching the sword before the enchantment is completed.

Sitting on the table is an arcane *scroll of shocking grasp* (written at 1st level), while concealed inside one of the table legs (Search check, DC 20) is a *wand of shocking grasp* with 16 charges. The command word, "tempus," is carved into the bottom of the table.

In addition, the sword in the protective circle is an almost-finished +1 *short sword*. To complete it, a 0- or 1st-level arcane spell with a target of "You" or "One Creature" must be cast while standing in the circle, and then the caster must name the blade. The sword then not only acquires its full +1 enchantment, it also gains the

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ability to cast the spell cast into it, once per day. If the spell's target was "You," the sword-cast spell automatically affects the wielder when used; otherwise it affects the next creature touched with the sword's blade. Touching the blade before this procedure is performed destroys the enchantment on the sword.

8. Ghoul Pen

The walls of this room are stained with blood and gore, and there is a pile of gnawed bones in one corner.

Encounter: The priests of the temple used to keep ghouls in this room for use in repelling invaders. They would feed the remains of their sacrifices to the beasts to keep them docile. Three ghouls survived to the present day, although they are quite hungry and fierce, attacking anyone who opens the door.

Treasure: One of the ghouls is wearing a 90 gp cloak made of golden cloth. It's filthy, but it could be cleaned up. If sold as-is, it's only worth 5 sp. Hidden under the pile of bones is a small (unlocked and untrapped) chest containing 200 gp.

☠ **Ghoul:** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 19, 15, 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite) and +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghaunt, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

9. Natural Crevice

This room looks to have been damaged recently. There is a small hole in the ceiling here, about 4 ft. in diameter, leading upwards. Water has pooled at the base of the opening, draining down from above. Rubbish lays scattered around the room.

The opening in the ceiling narrows to a mere 6 inches in diameter after climbing for 15 ft., making escape via this route impossible without the ability to shrink in size. Even if the characters possess this ability, the opening leads into a maze of tunnels easily disorienting anyone.

Encounter: The puddle of water is free of debris (Spot check, DC 15). It is, in fact, not water at all. Instead, it is a gray ooze. It entered the temple through the hole in the ceiling. The creature is fairly docile for its species and happily follows a trail of metal to another location, such as the entryway (#5). It eagerly devours anything placed near it.

Treasure: Three gems lay hidden in the rubbish around the room: a 12 gp polished agate, a 30 gp cut rose quartz, and a 50 gp polished onyx.

☁ **Gray Ooze:** CR 4; Medium ooze; HD 3d10+15; 31 hp; Init -5; Spd 10 ft.; AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, slam); SA Acid, constrict 1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., immunity to cold and fire, ooze traits, transparent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will -4; Str 12, Dex 1, Con 21, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —

Acid (Ex): A gray ooze secretes a digestive acid that quickly dissolves organic material and metal, but not stone. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage. Armor or clothing dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless it succeeds on a DC 16 Reflex save. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a gray ooze also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds on a DC 16 Reflex save. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

The ooze's acidic touch deals 16 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the object for 1 full round to deal this damage.

Constrict (Ex): A gray ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor take a -4 penalty on Reflex saves against the acid.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a gray ooze must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and constricts.

Transparent (Ex): A gray ooze is hard to identify, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice one. Creatures who fail to notice a gray ooze and walk into it are automatically hit with a melee attack for slam and acid damage.

THE RIGHT WING

This portion of the temple has settled and flooded due to the recent earthquake. Characters without water breathing capabilities may find themselves in a great deal of trouble if they attempt to explore this area (see Water Dangers in Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

10. Recessed Doors

The bronze double doors here are bowed outward, and a tiny trickle of water seeps out from underneath.

These doors are under tremendous strain from the water on their other side. The magical seal on the doors is the only thing preventing them from bursting open.

If opened, the doors disgorge a blast of water, slamming anyone in this location up against the wall (2d6 damage, half is a successful Reflex saving throw is made) and the recessed area is filled with 8 ft. of water.

11. Main Underwater Chamber and Fissure

This chamber is mostly underwater, except for a small gap on the surface where some air has been caught. Under the surface, you can see a black fissure descending deep into the earth. In addition, there is a small opening in one wall appearing to lead to another room.

This water here is 10 ft. deep at the edges of the room, with the fissure descending another 200 ft. before opening up into the water table. Characters attempting to escape this way should be prepared to travel underwater for several days. There is 1 ft. of air caught at the top of the room, enough for 4 people to breathe for 60 minutes. The opening leading into the underwater skeleton room (#12) used to have a door, but it was torn from its hinges by the flooding water.

Treasure: There is an 80 gp chunk of polished pink coral lying on the floor of the room near the fissure. It requires a Spot check (DC 20) or Search check (DC 15) to find.

If the cave wyrm enters, it dives through the fissure, only to emerge later in a major body of water (perhaps a nearby lake or bay).

12. Underwater Skeleton Room

It appears some poor souls were left here to die when the area flooded. Now merely skeletons, they are shackled to the floor with heavy chains, although several of them are wearing jewelry. There are only a few inches of air caught at the top of this area.

Encounter: This room was a prisoner holding area. When the cell flooded, the prisoners drowned. Now they have become skeletons existing only to drag others into this watery grave. There is enough air at the top of this room for 4 people to breathe for 15 minutes, but anyone doing so dangles his legs within reach of the skeletons below.

Tactics: The six skeletons attempt to grapple any character foolish enough to come near them, such as a character attempting to remove the jewelry they are wearing. The skeletons then attempt to hold and drown the character.

Treasure: The skeletons wear the following jewelry: a silver ring of jumping, a 50 gp polished bloodstone and silver necklace, a 60 gp pearl and silver ring, and a 500 gp large black pearl and gold ring. Concealed beneath its tattered clothing, one of the skeletons has a pouch containing 230 gp.

☠ **Human Prisoner Skeleton:** CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative

THE CENTER WING

This is the main area of the temple. There are a number of doors down this corridor, which ends in one big set of double doors. The undead in these rooms (#13–17) ignore combat going on in other rooms. However, opening the double doors, or triggering the shrieker in the shrieker closet (#15) causes all of them to come out of their rooms and attack en masse.

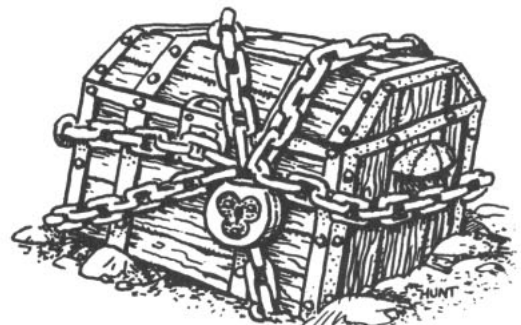
13. Place of Worship

Wooden pews are scattered around this room, and a small offering chest sits on a pedestal at the far end. In the darkness are crouched many misshapen humanoid figures...and there is an unearthly stench of decay.

Encounter: This was once a place of worship for the followers of Nethtek, where they would gather to hear the words of the lesser priests. When the temple fell, many believers chose to stay and take poison rather than flee. Nethtek rewarded their loyalty by transforming them into undead, leaving behind eight zombies and six skeletons.

Tactics: If the encounter goes too easily for the PCs, a ghoulish lieutenant arrives with two more zombie followers.

Treasure: Inside the chest are 500 gp and three potions: a *potion of enlarge* (at 5th level), a *potion of aid*, and a *potion of blur*.



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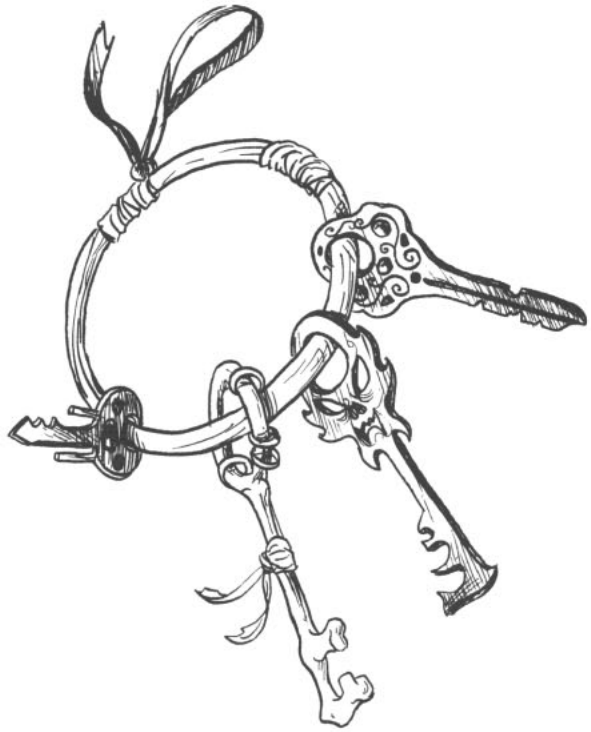
✚ **Human Follower Zombie:** CR ½; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 20, 18, 18, 16, 16, 14, 14, 13; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club); Full Atk +2 melee, (1d6+1, slam) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club); SA —; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

✚ **Human Follower Skeleton:** CR ½; Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 5; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.



14. Priest's Quarters

Two rotting beds dominate this room, with an old trunk at the foot of each.

The beds are rotted. They collapse under the slightest weight. As for the trunks, they contain old, black robes and coarse linens.

Encounter: Two wights wait here, crouched behind the beds, requiring a Spot check (DC 18) to notice.

Tactics: They leap to the attack as soon as someone enters the room, hoping to gain surprise on the PCs.

Treasure: Concealed in a hidden compartment (Search, DC 20) in the floor underneath the eastern trunk are 600 gp and a scroll of *aid*, *inflict moderate wounds* (both written at 3rd level).

✚ **Wight:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

15. Shrieker Closet

Encounter: This small room is nothing more than a closet filled with a large purple fungus.

Tactics: The outside of the door to this room is crudely engraved with a sketch of a candle. As soon as the door is opened, if the party is using any source of light, the shrieker shrieks, attracting all the undead remaining in the entire wing (areas #13-17).

✚ **Fungus, Shrieker:** CR 1; Medium plant; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init -5; Spd 0 ft.; AC 8, touch 5, flat-footed 8; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk —; Full Atk —; Space/Reach 5 ft./0 ft.; SA Shriek; SQ Low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref —, Will -4; Str —, Dex —, Con 13, Int —, Wis 2, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —.

Shriek (Ex): Movement or a light source within 10 ft. of a shrieker causes the fungus to emit a piercing sound that lasts for 1d3 rounds. The sound attracts nearby creatures that are disposed to investigate it. Some creatures that live near shriekers come to learn that the fungus' noise means there is food nearby.

16. Monk's Cells

This large stone room is barren and divided into smaller rooms, each devoid of even the most basic comforts. These were probably used as meditation chambers originally.

Encounter: Kneeling in Cell A is a wight wearing +1 studded leather armor, a mockery of life in a bizarre meditative trance. There are skeletons in similar poses in the other cells.

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Tactics: When anyone disturbs the creature's meditation, it attacks, followed by the five skeletons that leap out of the other cells here. Otherwise, it acts only after its meditation for the day is complete (anytime the DM decides).

Treasure: In addition, it has 70 gp and an 80 gp piece of carved amber in a rotting, leather pouch.

✦ **Wight:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.
Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.
Possessions: +1 studded leather.

✦ **Human Follower Skeletons:** CR 1/3; Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 5; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.
Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative

17. The Altar Room

This circular room is sloped upwards towards the middle, where a dais displays an elaborate onyx altar. Pinned to the altar with a sword is a desiccated corpse. Beyond the altar, a fissure in the wall leads upwards.

Encounter: As soon as the PCs enter this room they are attacked by the spectre of the Temple's old priest. When it fell, the priest cried out to Nethtek to protect the Temple, and drove a sword through his body and into the altar, sacrificing himself and pinning his corpse in place.

Tactics: Removing the sword from the stone requires a Strength check (DC 30). Each round spent trying to remove the sword, reduces the DC by 1. Successful or not, the sword comes loose after 8 rounds. If the PCs attack the spectre with anything other than the sword pinned to the floor, it gains damage resistance 10/—.

The fissure leads back to the sewers below the city. Here, after a turn or two, the characters find themselves back where they fought the second group of ghouls (room #2). If the altar was not destroyed, the ghouls have returned. From there, they can follow their map back to the surface.

The altar looks like a large onyx chest, carved with hideous shapes into its side. It is the source of the undead plaguing the sewers. Every hour (roll 1d20), 1d8 zombies (1–10), 1d4 ghouls (11–18), or 1d2 ghouls (19–20) is generated by it. These undead appear on the dais, then either go out to take up guard positions in the Temple or climb up the fissure to roam the sewers above.

In order to destroy the altar (or the sword), the characters must slay the spectre, then remove his corpse from the room, which turns it to dust. Next, a cleric or other divine caster of at least 5th-level must first *bless*, *consecrate*, or *hallow* the altar and then direct a turn undead attempt at the altar with a turning check of 10 or higher. When this is complete, the altar splits down the middle with a rumble, releasing unholy vapors. Every living thing within 60 ft. of the altar must succeed at a Willpower save (DC 20) or suffer 3d8+10 unholy damage.

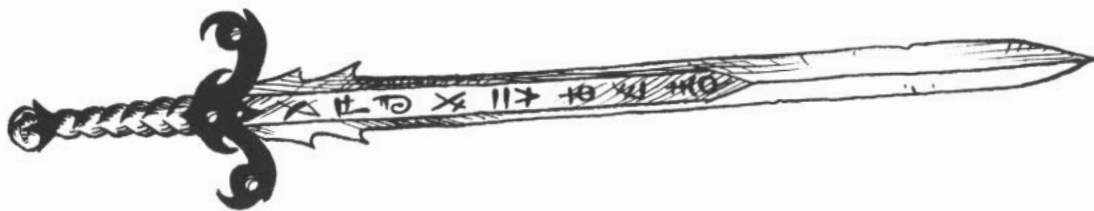
Once the altar is destroyed, any remaining undead in the area (except the cave wyrm) crumble to dust.

A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20) reveals everything the PCs need to know about destroying the altar. Should any part of this ritual fail, the altar lashes out with unholy energy, summoning undead as mentioned above.

If the characters leave without first destroying the altar, the plague of undead continues. Should they return to try again, restock the temple with a new assortment of undead appropriate to the party's level.

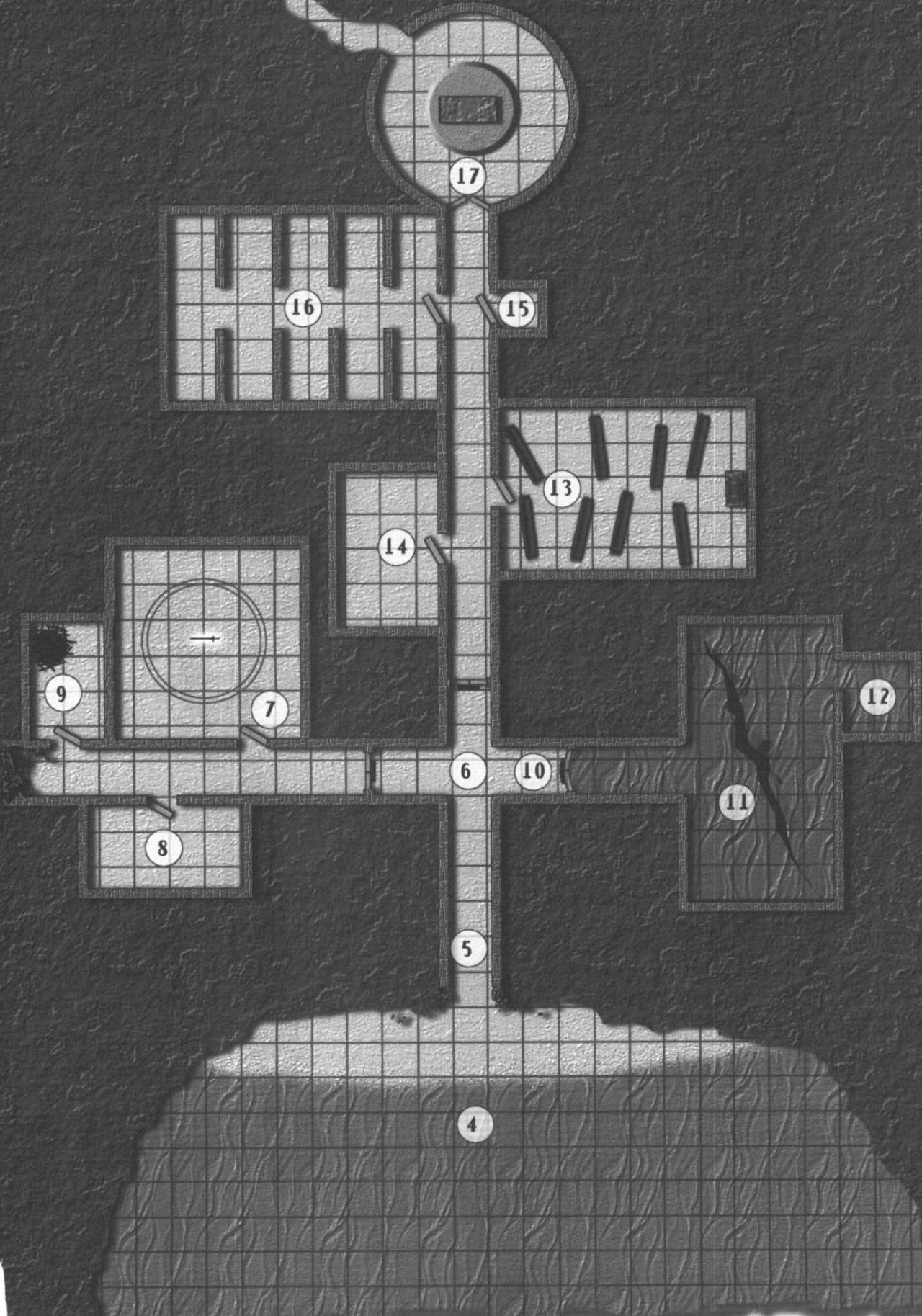
Opening the altar triggers a glyph trap.

✦ **Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 10th-level cleric, 5d8 cold, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.



SUNDERED FAITH

THE TEMPLE OF AZRAEL



SUNDERED FAITH

There is a golden scythe on top of the altar worth 1,100 gp, while inside the altar itself is 1,350 pp, 2,000 gp, and *Perditor Mortua*, a silvery maul (see New Magic Appendix A).

☛ **Spectre:** CR 7; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +7; Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp —; Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain, incorporeal touch); SA Energy drain, create spawn; SQ [Damage resistance 10/–], Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, sunlight powerlessness, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +14, Search +12, Spot +14, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a spectre's incorporeal touch attack gain two negative levels. The DC is 15 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the spectre gains 5 temporary hit points.

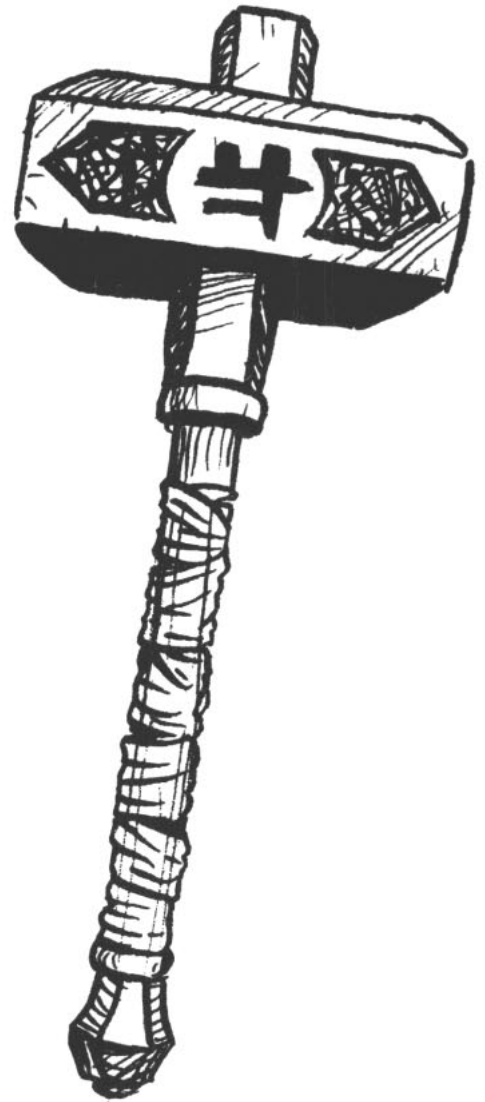
Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a spectre becomes a spectre in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the spectre that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 ft. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to; they are panicked as long as they are within that range.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action in a round.

marriage, the somewhat impulsive young man ran off to the village of Stormy Shore to offer himself as a suitor. Cedric was well liked by everyone, especially amongst the ladies. His impulses often took him away from home for weeks at a time, but he has never been gone this long before. The noble offers the PCs a modest reward for information pertaining to Cedric's well-being, preferably bringing him home if possible (see the adventure "The Illusionists Daughter").

- Some elven refugees come to the city (and quickly learn of the PCs by reputation) and plead with the PCs to restore their neighboring homeland (see the adventure "Servants of the Blood Moon").



EPILOGUE

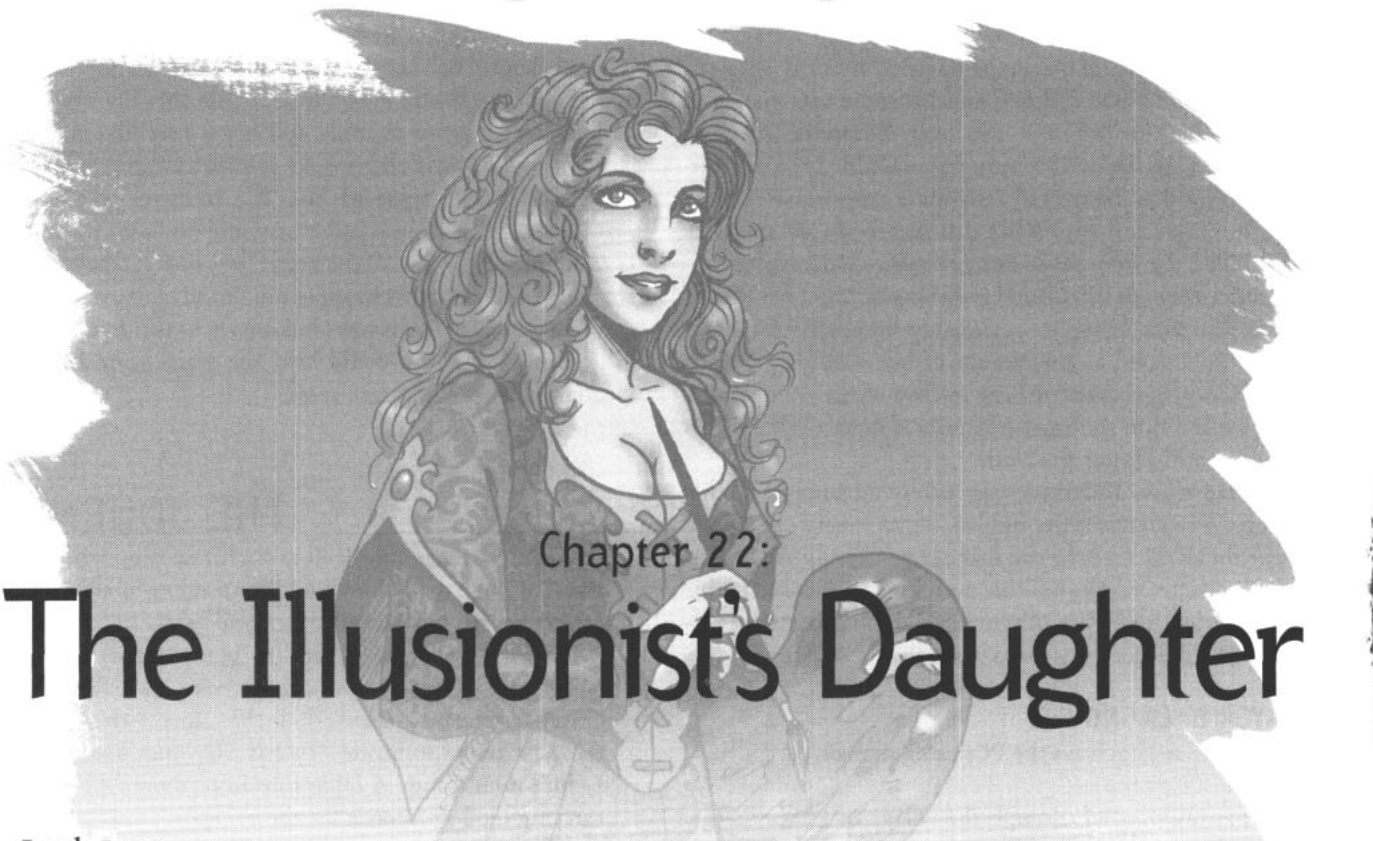
When the characters return to the count's aide, he demands proof of their success. A convincing story along with showing him an item from the Altar Room (*perditor mortua*, for instance) convinces him and he pays them the balance of their fee.

If the characters fail to destroy the altar the first time around, then they may need to arrange a return trip to do so. On the other hand, if they let the cave wyrm escape to the ocean, then the count may rope them into a naval expedition to kill the beast.

If the count hears about the wyrm, he demands the PCs do something about the monster they released.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- An influential noble asks the party to investigate the disappearance of his or her younger kinsman, Cedric. Cedric had heard of a beautiful young woman named Liriandra, said to be of marriageable age, and the daughter of a wizard. Seeking an advantageous



Chapter 22:

The Illusionist's Daughter

Levels 7 to 9

By Travis Heermann

Near the forgotten village of Stormy Shore, an old illusionist tries to raise Liriandra, his only daughter, in peace, but her incredible beauty makes seclusion impossible. Suitors travel from far and wide to meet her. Her beauty inspires ballads and her kindness and generosity inspire the love of all who meet her.

But sinister forces threaten the peaceful fishing village right under the noses of the old wizard and his daughter.

An impulsive young nobleman named Cedric sets out to win her heart, making the long journey to Stormy Shore, but he is never heard from again. His family is worried, and they can pay well for information of Cedric's whereabouts. Can your party of bold adventurers discover the truth of the Illusionist's Daughter?

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 7 to 9. This is an investigative adventure. Access to social skills and arcane knowledge will make this adventure less puzzling for the PCs.

Along a cold, inhospitable coastline lies the tiny village of Stormy Shore, where resides an old illusionist, Delthis, and his seventeen-year-old daughter. Delthis lost his beloved wife to a plague 10 years ago, and devoted his life to raising his daughter, Liriandra. Liriandra became a rare beauty with tremendous magical potential.

Two years ago, a band of mercenaries passed through Stormy Shore, short on coin and morals, recently having deserted a distant war. Their charismatic and opportunistic leader, Ladathus, convinced Delthis to hire him and his band as bodyguards. Ladathus immediately wanted Liriandra for himself, but he kept his lusts a secret when he saw how devoted to her Delthis was. As time passed, his lust became an obsession.

When tales of Liriandra's beauty and grace reached beyond the village, suitors from many a noble house came to court her. She was charming and gracious to all, but found no one to her liking, until a young nobleman named Cedric arrived last winter. He was handsome and charming and skilled with the lute, and she was enchanted. Delthis himself immediately liked this boy and thought he would make a good husband for his daughter. A snowstorm forced Cedric to remain at the tower until the weather improved.

THE ILLUSIONIST'S DAUGHTER

Ladathus' obsession turned to jealousy. He revealed his feelings to Liriandra, and she spurned him. In a jealous rage Ladathus attacked her, and Liriandra was unable to defend herself. When it was over, Liriandra lay dead, and Ladathus devised a way to frame Cedric for his crime. When Delthis discovered Liriandra's corpse and Cedric's unconscious and apparently drunken body, he snapped. He killed the young man before Cedric could explain.

Since then, Delthis' mind is unhinged. Grief has driven him mad, fracturing his personality. Soon after Liriandra died, he created a simulacrum of her. Delthis' insanity, coupled with the astonishing realism of the simulacrum, has caused him to forget Liriandra is dead. Only Delthis and Ladathus know the truth.

Meanwhile Ladathus has taken advantage of his employer's mental state, and has begun to squeeze the village for all the taxes he can manage, pocketing the money for himself. Only he and his men know, because Delthis has not left his house in months, and he accepts no visitors. The villagers, unable to plead their case, are starving.

PLAYER BACKGROUND

There are several ways the PCs can get involved.

- They are passing through the village of Stormy Shore on their way to somewhere else, and notice something is seriously amiss in the village.
- An influential noble asks the party to investigate the disappearance of his or her younger kinsman, Cedric. Cedric had heard of a beautiful young woman named Liriandra, said to be of marriageable age, and the daughter of a respected wizard. Seeking an advantageous marriage, the somewhat impulsive young man ran off to the distant village of Stormy Shore to offer himself as a suitor. Cedric was well liked by everyone, especially the young ladies. His impulses often took him away from home for weeks at a time, but he has never been gone this long before. The noble offers the PCs a modest reward for information pertaining to Cedric's well-being, preferably bringing him home if possible. He or she offers the PCs a map detailing (roughly) where the village lies. However, the exact location of such a small, remote place is unknown. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) on the noble reveals he or she is genuinely concerned about Cedric's welfare.
- A PC looking for an advantageous marriage himself hears tales of Liriandra's beauty. He only has to convince the rest of the party to accompany him.

- The PCs happen across an itinerant minstrel who plays a beautiful ballad called "The Locks of Liriandra," about a young girl with eyes like fiery jade, lips like rosebuds, skin as smooth as milk, and black hair like polished obsidian. She is said to have suitors traveling for weeks just for a glimpse of her. The minstrel assures his listeners his song is quite new, and he has just learned it himself. (DMs: All the better for campaign continuity if you can slip this in some time in advance, so the PCs can say, "You mean we're talking about *that* Liriandra?"). Perhaps the PCs could hear the song from different musicians in different areas.

THE JOURNEY

By land, the village is difficult to reach, requiring exhausting travel through rocky, forested hills. Traveling up the coast is little easier than the woodlands. Placid beaches occasionally make for easy walking, but in many places the way is blocked or broken by jagged rocks and steep cliffs. The characters may talk to a trade ship captain who has been there, or knows someone who has. They may even be able to hire such a ship. A trade ship stops there twice a year carrying food and goods for the villagers. To spice up the travel session, you may wish to use the following chart.

TRAVELING ENCOUNTERS

1d20	Encounter
1	Brown bear with cubs
2	Bugbear barbarians
3	Dire Bats (2d4)
4	Dire wolves (1d6)
5	Ettin
6	Fishermen
7	Giant eagle
8	Hill giant
9	Holy pilgrims
10	Howlers (2d3)
11	Hydra, 8-headed
12	Manticore
13	Mercenaries
14	Merchants with wares
15	Owlbear
16	Sahuagin (near coast only)
17	Stone Giant
18	Troll pair, hunting
19	Troll, scrag (near coast only)
20	Wyvern

THE ILLUSIONIST'S DAUGHTER

Characters can make Spot checks (DC 20) to notice several spindly-limbed children are watching them from the shadows under some of the stilted houses. Sense Motive checks (DC 15) reveal the villagers are suspicious of strangers (and remain so for the length of their stay). The recent influx of visitors has taught them to be wary of outsiders.

▲ Villager, Human Com 1: CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed) Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).



1. The Inn

A weather-beaten wooden sign hangs squeaking above the door, with a finely carved image of a kettle filled with steaming fish.

The Fish Kettle Inn is run-down. The proprietor is a retired fisherman named Jacomb. Currently, there is no food to offer customers. The only drinks offered are water and wine produced by a local vintner. The rooms here are of poor quality. PCs staying here must make a Survival check (DC 15) or be infested with fleas.

THE VILLAGE

Stormy Shore lies on a rocky stretch of shoreline, carved from the surrounding forest and protected from the perpetually pounding waves by a dark barrier reef about a hundred paces from the shore. This arrangement makes approach from the sea dangerous. Atop an escarpment overlooking the ocean just visible from the village lays a dark tower. The waters are gray and cold, and the thunder of waves against the reef never relents. The sky is gray and sodden, and looks as if it could rain at any moment. A chill wind howls through the bare branches of the trees. Wooden docks reach out over the cold, dark water, lined by dozens of small fishing boats. The villagers' meager houses are raised on four stilts, and the streets are no more than dirt paths between them, crooked and muddy.

Roughly one hundred villagers live here, mostly fishermen, along with a few woodsmen and craftsmen

VILLAGE LOCATIONS

As you enter the village, the few villagers you see are gaunt. Their clothes are threadbare, and they look at you with sunken eyes.

QUESTIONS

Any of the adult villagers could provide the following information if the characters make Gather Information checks (DC 15), one check per piece of information.

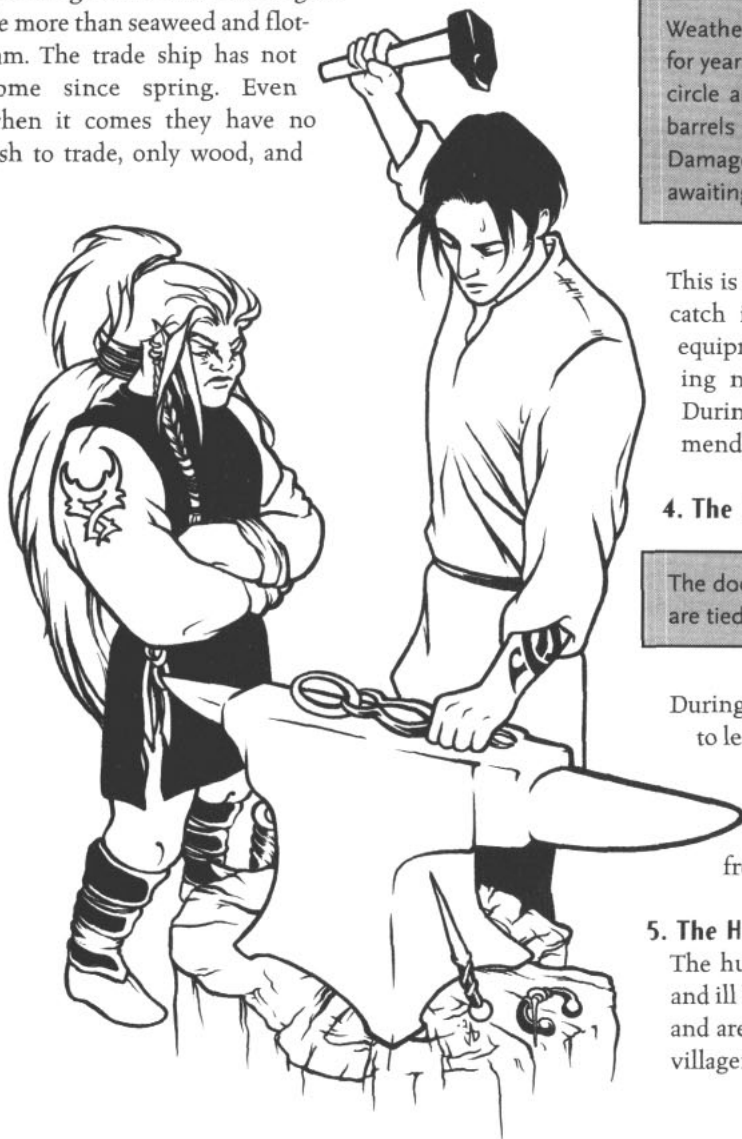
1. Many suitors have come and gone most of them rude and foppish.
2. The villagers remember Cedric well, because he was friendly and kind, and an excellent musician.
3. Liriandra is good to the villagers and well loved by everyone, but she has not been seen since last winter. Some of the villagers fear she may be ill.
4. Delthis does not come to the village any longer. He sends his servants or bodyguards to do his errands. He used to be a jovial man, when his wife was alive. After she died of the plague, they seldom saw him.
5. Delthis has five bodyguards, led by a man named Ladathus. The villagers hate them, especially Ladathus, because they collect the taxes and are often cruel.

THE ILLUSIONIST'S DAUGHTER

2. The Barbershop

The largest house in the village is unimpressive. The wind-worn sides badly need to be replaced. A placard hanging from a post reads "Barber, Undertaker, and Fine Boxes."

The de facto leader of the village is man named Edlum. He is pleasant with strangers, but a Sense Motive check (opposed by Edlum's unskilled Bluff) shows he is guarding his information carefully. He invites the PCs into his home, which also serves as his barbershop, wood shop, and funeral parlor. If the characters mention the scarcity of food or ask him about it, he tells them it has been a terrible year. It started out well, but over the last few weeks the daily catch has dwindled until the villagers are now catching little more than seaweed and flotsam. The trade ship has not come since spring. Even when it comes they have no fish to trade, only wood, and



that cannot sustain the village through the winter. To make matters worse, Delthis has imposed crushing taxes on the village taking what little money the villagers had.

Delthis never imposed taxes before last spring. He kept to himself, and often helped the villagers if they needed it. He has tried to talk to Delthis, but hasn't been able to even see him.

If asked about Cedric, the young nobleman, Edlum says he remembers the young man well. All the other suitors who came to meet Liriandra treated the villagers poorly, but not Cedric. He spent a night at The Fish Kettle, and sang all night long for free. Even the simple fishermen and woodcutters were moved by his performance. The next day, he went he visited Delthis, and Edlum did not see him again. It is possible he left during the night.

3. The Boathouse

Weather and surf have pounded this gray building for years, and the stench of fish is overpowering. Seagulls circle and dip, picking discarded bits of chum from the barrels full of offal along the west wall of the building. Damaged nets hang from racks along the north side, awaiting repair.

This is the center of the village's fishing trade, where the catch is cleaned, nets repaired, and fishing and boat equipment stored. One must be cautious to avoid becoming nauseous from the stench of rotting fish guts. During the day, 2d6 village women can be found here mending nets.

4. The Docks

The docks are gray and worn. Several small fishing boats are tied up here.

During the day, 2d6 fisherman are here, either preparing to leave, or returning with a meager catch. They are not particularly interested in small talk. They'll complain loudly about the horrible conditions, but take no real notice of strangers coming or going from their town.

5. The Huts

The huts of the village fisherman are in poor condition and ill kept. Even the local animals, cats and dogs, are thin and are out hunting rats. At any given time there may be villagers home

THE ILLUSIONIST'S DAUGHTER

1d6	Village Hut Encounter
1	No one home
2	Village woman
3	Village woman with child
4	Village woman with 1d3 children
5	Village elder
6	Village family

6. The Woodshop

A sign near each of these two huts reads "Fine Wood Items." Beneath the smell of sea air and fish, you can detect the scents of sawdust and lacquer.

The village woodcrafters ply their trade here during the day, and late at night. In the evening they can be found at The Fish Kettle. Finished wood products like boxes, carvings, chairs, etc. of good quality can be found here and are definitely for sale. The craftsmen are eager to have visitors and try to sell their wares to the PCs. They even offer to make special items for visitors who appear well stocked with coin. These simple villagers are skilled salesmen. Appraise checks (DC 15) reveal the wood products are good quality.

7. The Tower

Atop a rocky escarpment overlooking the village, a dark, three-tiered structure can be seen peeking over the naked branches of the forest. An unwavering light burns on top of the sharp spire.

This is Delthis' Tower.

8. The Reef

Waves crash and roar against the black reef, veiling it in foamy spray.

During the day, the fishermen row their boats around these treacherous rocks with practiced ease, but sailing a ship to the docks is impossible. Anyone not from the village trying to enter or leave the small inlet in a boat must make a Profession (boating/sailing) check (DC 20) or run aground.

9. The Cliffs

Here the surf relentlessly pounds away at the imposing 20-ft. high cliffs.

It is extremely dangerous for anyone to approach these areas with a boat. Anyone who does must make a Profession (boating/sailing) check (DC 25). Failure means the craft is dashed against the rocks at the base of the cliff and destroyed. Any occupants immediately take 2d6 points of damage and may even suffer from drowning. Climbing up the wet, slippery rocks requires a Climb check (DC 25). Swimming to the reef or the docks requires a Swim check (DC 20). In addition to the effects of drowning, those who fail take 1d6 damage each turn from the rocks and waves. For drowning rules and water dangers see Chapter 8 of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

THE TOWER OF DELTHIS

The narrow footpath winds through the forest, up the rocky hill, to the summit of a barren, windswept cliff above the village. The path is only wide enough for one person, but is still preferable to trying to find one's way through the thorny undergrowth of the forest floor.

The path climbs steeply in places, and is carpeted in layers of mulch. Rocks peek through the soil. Have the PCs make a Climb check (DC 15) to avoid slipping and falling on a treacherous slope coated with leaves. Any characters failing take 1d6 points of damage from the fall.

The Tower of Delthis is an odd three-tiered stone structure. A single flame burns atop a copper spire at the apex. A nine-ft. stone wall surrounds the tower, with an iron-bound wooden gate visible on the south side. The sparse windows are tightly shuttered against the cold wind.

No guards are posted during the day, but the front gate is always bolted. During the night, one guard is always posted, and can summon the others with a horn hanging inside the gate. On each half of the gate is an iron gargoyle's head, with great iron knockers hanging from their noses. When anyone approaches within 5-ft. of the gate, two *magic mouth* spells activate and the iron gargoyles speak. "Delthis the Great shall not be disturbed, and Liriandra will have no suitors. Leave or face his wrath!" The *magic mouths* trigger each time someone approaches the gate.

THE ILLUSIONIST'S DAUGHTER

Anyone who knocks persistently brings one of the bodyguards out of the house, expecting to turn away another starving villager or amorous suitor. The PCs can make Sense Motive checks (opposed by an unskilled Bluff) to notice he is visibly startled by the presence of a band of hearty adventurers.

The PCs seeking entrance are to be turned away by the guard. He makes it clear Delthis sees no one, and causing trouble would not be a wise choice with a wizard as powerful as he.

Once the bodyguard finally admits them (either through their Bluff, magical insistence or other means), he takes them to the Audience Hall, then goes to speak to Ladathus.

The house is sparsely decorated, with only a few paintings and wall hangings to brighten up the place. Even these spartan trappings look old and ill-kept. Dust and cobwebs gather in the corners. A hulking black shape lies on the floor, almost hidden by the fireplace. A massive black dog is studying you with beady yellow eyes burning with startling intelligence. A servant woman approaches you and offers refreshments while you wait. If approached, the servants smile and politely excuse themselves avoiding questions.

The huge dog warming himself beside the fireplace is Chak, a Battle Mastiff (see New Monsters — Appendix B). He belongs to Ladathus, and instantly attacks anyone who threatens to harm his master. Throughout the time the PCs are in Delthis' Tower, they may notice the servants appear to be constantly on edge. A Sense Motive check (DC 20) reveals something is amiss with the servants, but what exactly is unclear (see Room H).

While the PCs are visiting and walking around, have them make Spot checks (DC 12 to 15) to notice unexplained happenings around them: small audible noises like scurrying or scratching, the sound of a child wailing in sudden pain, bat-like shadows darting into their peripheral vision, disappearing instantly, the laughter of a child, fading away as if into the distance, faces appearing in the tiles, with fanged mouths opening into fiendish grins or threatening to bite a nearby foot, disappearing after a few seconds, or whatever creepy things the DM can conjure to keep the PCs on edge. These are physically harmless, spontaneous illusionary cantrips created by Delthis' fractured psyche.

This is why the servants are jumpy, because they hardly know any more what is real and what is not. After enough of these minor illusions, the PCs may begin to doubt everything they see, which makes the real dangers even worse.

It is recommended the illusions start small and harmless but progressively deteriorate as time goes on.

▲ **Bodyguard, Human Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+10; hp 50, 45, 40; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (in banded mail); AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA—; SQ—; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Power attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Banded mail, light steel shield, masterwork longsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, potion of cure light wounds. (The bodyguards have their crossbows with them, when they expect trouble. Other they are kept in area #25 — Weapon Closet).

▲ **Servant, Human Com 1:** CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

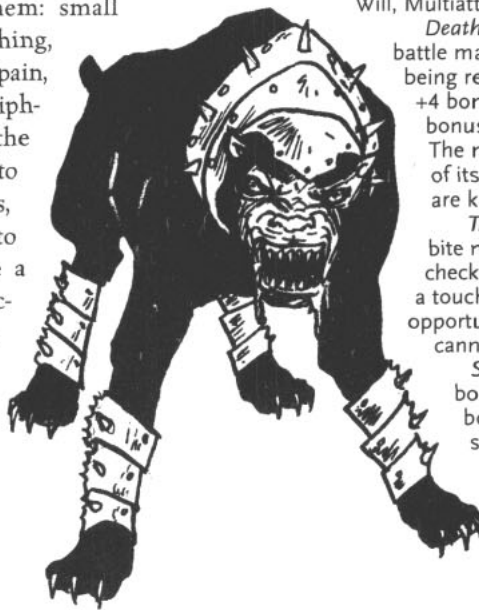
▲ **Battle Mastiff:** CR 3; Medium animal; HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, bite), +5 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); SA Death frenzy, trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Spot +6, Survival +1* (+5 when tracking my scent); Iron Will, MultiattackB, Weapon Focus (bite).

Death Frenzy (Ex): If their master is killed, a battle mastiff immediately attacks the person or being responsible, with suicidal focus. It gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution, a +2 bonus on Will Saves and a –2 armor class. The mastiff will not stop attacking the killer of its master until one of the other of them are killed.

Trip (Ex): A battle mastiff that hits with its bite may attempt to trip the opponent (+4 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the battle mastiff.

Skills: Battle Mastiffs have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks, and a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.



THE ILLUSIONIST'S DAUGHTER

Ladathus comes to speak to the PCs immediately. He is handsome and gracious, obviously a seasoned adventurer himself. He attempts to gain the PC's trust. Whenever he tells an outright lie, the DM can make a Bluff check versus the PC's Sense Motive. Ladathus is a skilled and cunning liar.

▲ Ladathus, Human Ftr 6/Rog 6: CR 12; Medium Humanoid; HD 6d10+6 plus 6d6+6; hp 70; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +18 melee (1d6+7/15–20, rapier) or +15 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (1d6+7/15–20, rapier), +15 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); SA sneak attack 3d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +13, Bluff +12, Disable Device +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +9, Jump +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +13, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10, Tumble +19; Acrobatic, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse, Weapon focus (rapier), Weapon specialization (rapier).

Evasion (Ex): If this rogue makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: This rogue's attack deals an extra 3d6 damage any time his target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks his target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): This rogue gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): This rogue retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: +2 shadow leather armor, +3 rapier (named "Sinslayer"), masterwork dagger (3), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2).

DINNER

The PCs are treated to dinner in the Dining Room at the appropriate hour. Delthis, Ladathus, and Liriandra join them. A large raven perches on the back of Delthis' chair. Sense Motive (DC 15) on Delthis reveals him to be nervous and distracted. He is obviously unaccustomed to visitors.

▲ Delthis, Human Wiz 12: CR 12; Medium Humanoid; HD 12d4+24; hp 46; Init +7; Spd 30ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +9 ranged (1d4, dart); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +9/+4 ranged (1d4, dart); SA spells; SQ summon familiar, scribe scroll; AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 9, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +17, Craft (alchemy) +19, Decipher Script +19, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Listen +4, Search +9, Spellcraft +19, Spot +4; Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (illusion), Still Spell.

Familiar: Allisana, his raven familiar.

▲ Allisana, Raven: CR 1/6; Tiny animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -13; Atk +4 melee (1d2-5, claws); Full Atk +4 melee (1d2-5, claws); SA —; SQ Low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse (claws)

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/6/5/5/4/4/2; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, ghost sound*, mage hand, read magic*; 1st—*color spray*, disguise self*, grease, magic missile, silent image*, ventriloquism**; 2nd—*blur*, invisibility*, minor image*, mirror image*, misdirection**; 3rd—*deep slumber, displacement*, illusory script*, invisibility sphere*, major image**; 4th—*hallucinatory terrain*, illusory wall*, rainbow pattern*, shadow conjuration**; 5th—*false vision*, persistent image*, seeming*, shadow evocation**; 6th—*permanent image*, programmed image**.

* Illusion spells, save DC 15 + spell level.

Spellbook: 0—*daze, detect magic, flair, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, read magic*; 1st—*alarm, color spray, disguise self, grease, identify magic missile, silent image, sleep, ventriloquism*; 2nd—*blur, invisibility, minor image, mirror image, misdirection, protection from arrows, web*; 3rd—*deep slumber, displacement, illusory script, invisibility sphere, major image, nondetection, spectral hand*; 4th—*hallucinatory terrain, illusory wall, rainbow pattern, remove curse, shadow conjuration*; 5th—*false vision, mirage arcane, persistent image, seeming, shadow evocation*, 6th—*disintegrate, permanent image, programmed image*.

Possessions: *Robe of scintillating colors*, +2 dagger, darts, *wand of dispel magic* (10th level, 15 charges), *tan bag of tricks*, *amulet of natural armor*+2, *ring of protection* +3, *wand of delthis* (see New Magic — Appendix A).

Liriandra is truly worthy of the songs written about her. Male characters are immediately attracted to her. She has a lovely voice and charming demeanor. She does not know she is not the real Liriandra, and she does not know about the corpse in the hidden room (Area S). Delthis gave her a set of memories as best he could, though she does not remember anything regarding Cedric. His name is never mentioned around the house. If she ever realizes she is not real, the shock is too much for her to bear. Depending on the style of play, choose an option:

- Tragic:** Liriandra destroys herself in anguish.
- Heroic:** Confronts the PCs with her plight and begs for help.
- Gritty:** Becomes violent and lashes out at everyone.
- Romantic:** Liriandra chooses a PC with which to spend her life, believing companionship will keep her dream a reality.

Alternately Liriandra becomes comatose and reacts to nothing. Bringing her out of the coma, could be an adventure in itself as they search for some cherished childhood momento.

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▲ **Liriandra, Human Sor 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 30; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk -1 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk -1 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Simulacrum, summon familiar; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Craft (alchemy) +4, Concentration +4, Craft (painting) +4, Knowledge (arcane) +4, Spellcraft +4; Spell Focus (illusion).

Simulacrum: If wounded, she bleeds water, being originally constructed of snow and ice.

Familiar: Liriandra's familiar, a raven named Yaskar, was set free by her father upon her death.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (4/2; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*light, mage hand, message, read magic*; 1st—*silent image, ventriloquism*.

The PCs can make a Sense Motive check (vs. Delthis unskilled Bluff) to see Delthis is a kind old man who adores his daughter, but his eyes are haunted by sorrow. He treats the PCs well during their visit, unless they raise the subject of the missing Cedric.

Delthis' anger flares. "I threw the scoundrel out of my house after what he did! If he is missing, so much the better for the rest of the world!"

Liriandra asks, "Who is Cedric?"

Delthis replies, "No one you need concern yourself with, my dear. Just a horrible man."

If Delthis' carefully crafted illusions begin to unravel, the PCs can make Sense Motive checks (DC 15) to realize the old man is teetering on the brink of madness. Some spark of his former goodness still remains, but it is fading fast. However, additional Sense Motive checks do not reveal why. The PCs have to put those pieces together on their own. Part of him knows his daughter is dead, and another part keeps him in the grip of a dark melancholy. When he sees Liriandra's simulacrum around the house, he feels joy but does not understand why the rest of the time he is so depressed. He does not remember anything bad has happened.

He often addresses his familiar, Allisanna, a large raven, as if she were a woman. Liriandra whispers to one of the PCs he believes the raven to be the reincarnated soul of his dead wife, Liriandra's mother, Allisanna. The raven is so intelligent sometimes Liriandra believes it as well.

During dinner, a cold rain begins to fall, and the PCs can hear the wind driving it against the walls and windows of the house. Delthis offers to let the PCs stay the night here, and is insistent. He has different motives depending on how the dinner progresses. If he believes the PCs suspect him of harming Cedric or something is amiss with Liriandra, he excuses himself after dinner and prepares his spells. If the PCs are perfect ladies and gentlemen during dinner and broached no unpleasant subjects, he is honestly concerned about their welfare.

"You could catch your death on a night like this," he says.

If Ladathus suspects the PCs mean him harm, immediately after dinner he tries to convince Delthis the PCs are friends of Cedric come to exact revenge.

If Delthis knows a fight is coming, he drugs Liriandra so she can sleep through it. If a fight breaks out spontaneously, she defends her father as best she can. If Liriandra is revealed to be the illusion she is (i.e., if she is wounded; see her profile above), she falls into a fit of inconsolable weeping, and Delthis goes completely insane. He immediately attacks the PCs with everything at his disposal. Ladathus and his men throw themselves into the fray, and Chak launches himself at the weakest looking character. If it becomes evident the PCs are winning, Ladathus and his company attempt a defensive withdrawal to the stables.

Assuming the PCs accepted his offer to put them up for the night, Delthis bides his time, allowing the PCs to go to sleep until all is ready. Ladathus and his men defend Delthis, but not to the death. If the fight goes badly, they try to keep their own skins intact, grab what valuables they can, and flee.

10. The Entry Yard

This area is composed of packed dirt with a few tufts of grass and weeds.

11. The Foyer

This is a small room where visitors can hang their cloaks. Diligent PCs may notice with a Spot check (DC 15) one robe on the floor in the corner, discarded. Any PC with ranks in Knowledge (local) does not recognize it as a local fashion, but from another land. Indeed, this is poor Cedric's cloak, with a grimy family symbol clasp still attached to it. The silver clasp is worth about 5 gp.

12. The Audience Hall

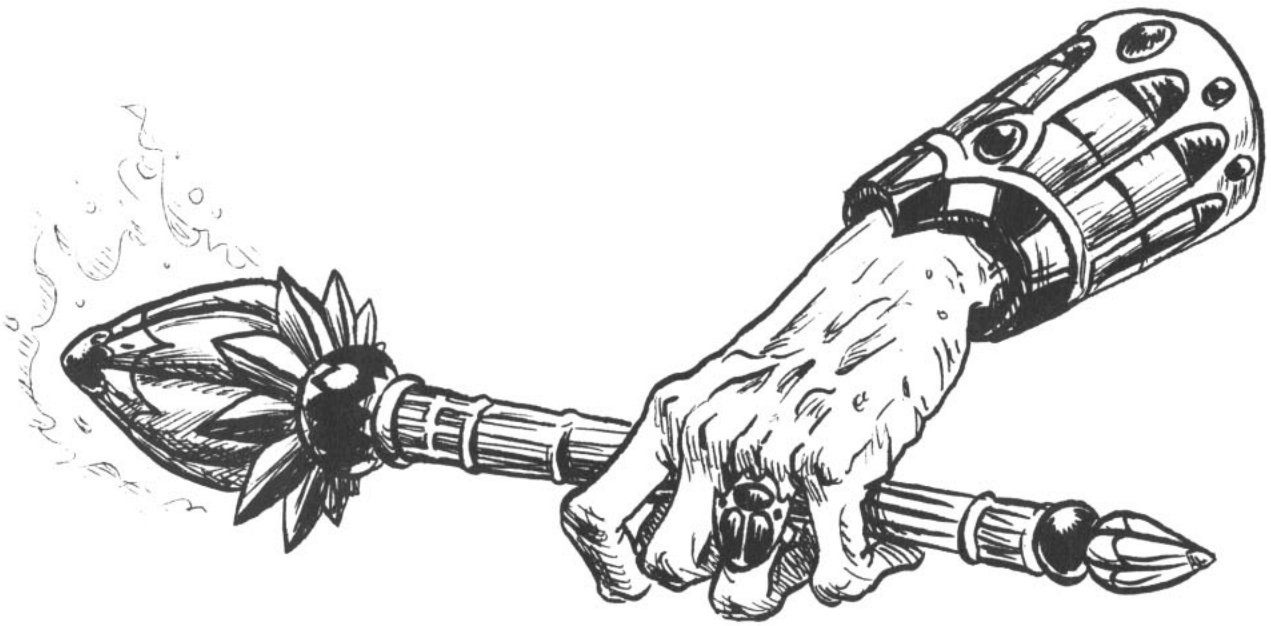
Stone pillars line the Audience Hall. The walls are decorated with dusty tapestries depicting scenes of monsters battling great heroes. Along the far wall is a stone dais, with two finely carved chairs and four beautiful golden candelabras. A large fireplace is lit and does an admirable job warming the great chamber.

PCs may relax here, and take notice of the tapestries.

Tapestry #1: An elven hero stretching out over a cliff face to battle a manticores with her longbow at sunset, her support are thin vines she's wrapped her legs in.

Tapestry #2: A band of heroes surrounding and getting the best of a large wolf-headed spider beast.

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Tapestry #3: A human monk lies dead beside a tower while his comrades charge the gnoll shaman responsible.

Tapestry #4: Dark elves swarming around a party of adventurers with a fading light in an immense cavern.

13. The Dining Room

Filled by a long banquet table, this opulent chamber looks as if it has not seen use in months. Two smaller candelabras like those in the Audience Hall light the room.

14. The Guest Rooms

The guest rooms are undecorated. They appear unused and ignored, as if no one has been here for months. Despite the dust, the beds look comfortable.

15. The Closer

Cedric's journal lies in a corner, forgotten. It can be found if someone searches the otherwise empty closet. In it, Cedric relates his mostly mundane adventures. The last few entries describe his arrival here and how he mistrusts Ladathus. Delthis seems like a good and kind old man. When he writes of Liriandra, his words are pure and altruistic. He does not seem like a man who would force himself on an innocent young woman.

16. The Pantry

Filled with household supplies and food stores. There appears to be no shortage of anything. Despite the condition of the surrounding village, this manor seems to be doing well.

17. The Servant's Quarters

This room houses six plain cots and a few possessions. And any given time a servant or two could be here sleeping or reading. The household servants are jumpy because of the strange occurrences throughout the house. They are terrified of Ladathus and his men. They have not seen Delthis in weeks.

If pressed, PCs can make Gather Information checks (DC 20) or an Intimidate or Diplomacy check (DC 15) to learn more. If successful, a single servant slips away to speak to them. Intimidated servants speak quickly and provide nothing more than a few words. Servants that are treated well (Diplomacy) or entertained with a story or drink (Gather Information) are more compliant.

- Lady Liriandra has not been herself in recent months. She used to be a wonderful painter but her skills have become terrible of late.
- Delthis was a wonderful Lord, but of late he can be heard mumbling to himself or crying alone. The strange noises and images are surely his illusions, but why?

18. The Kitchen

This area houses a large fireplace and walls lined with cooking utensils, pots, and pans. A large pile of firewood is stacked beside the fireplace.

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19. The Garden

Filled with beautifully manicured bushes, the Garden looks well tended, except all the flowers and foliage are dying. Along the west wall, near the gate is the five-ft. marble statue of a woman. Written in Common, Elvish, and Dwarvish at the base of statue are the words "Allisanna, a thousand times beloved wife". The date of her death is ten years ago.

Whenever anyone approaches within five ft. of the statue, a *magic mouth* spell appears on the statue and speaks with a woman's voice, "I am sorry I had to leave you, but I will love you forever. Someday we will meet again."

20. The Pool

The pool is murky, with small patches of brownish algae floating in the corners.

A Spot check (DC 20) reveals a signet ring in the southern end of the pool. The signet bears the same crest as Cedric's journal in the closet (F) and the clasp in the foyer (B) — the family crest.

21. The Stable

The stable contains five horses, with saddles and tack.

These mounts belong to Ladathus and his four companions. The saddles are kept at the quick in case they must leave suddenly.

22. Delthis' Chamber

This room is filled with luxury seemingly forgotten by its occupant. A finished watercolor painting of a gorgeous woman gazing into a rich sunset adorns the wall near the canopied bed. Cobwebs linger everywhere. A large wooden perch sits beside the bed.

Various notebooks containing arcane symbols and ideas for future implementation are here in Delthis' handwriting with dates attributed to them. Careful examination by someone with ranks in Knowledge (Arcana) shows how the meaning and idea became more scrambled and incoherent as the dates go on.

23. Liriandra's Chamber

Several paintings, many half-finished, are scattered around the room.

A Spot check (DC 15) and an Appraise check (DC 15) reveal the half-finished paintings are of poor quality, and appear to be attempts to copy or recreate the finished paintings. The scenes depict the villagers, birds, the village, cliff, and ocean below. Since this is not the real Liriandra, she does not have the skills to paint as Liriandra did. Even though she tries, but she cannot figure out why.

24. The Bodyguard's Room

This room contains five beds, three stools, and five empty armor racks.

Under four of the beds are locked chests containing the mercenaries' personal possessions, like a prized dagger, loaded dice, a flask of whiskey, and a trophy or two like a goblin's ear or a minotaur horn. Each chest also contains 2d3x100 gp in gold and jewels. The chest under Ladathus' bed has a poison needle trap in the lock.

◆ **Poisoned Dart Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); single target; poison (Greenblood, DC 13 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con/1d2 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 22.

Inside is a pouch of 10 gems worth 4d4 x 100 gp each.

25. The Weapons Closet

This closet is crammed full with weapons racks.

The racks contain four light crossbows, four quivers of 20 bolts each (unless the bodyguards have them), two longbows, and two quivers of 20 arrows each. A Spot check (DC 20) reveals several burlap sacks hidden in the back, containing 25 gp, 150 sp, and 13 gems worth 2d4 x 10 gp each. This comprises the taxes Ladathus and his men have extorted from the villagers.

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26. Delthis' Sanctum

This room appears to be where Delthis studies magic. There is a large magic circle carved into the floor, and the walls are lined with shelves filled with vials and jars. A large fireplace between two pillars warms the room.

There are also several books on the shelves. Most are journals written in Delthis' own cipher. Components for Illusion spells can be found here at the DM's discretion. An Illusory Wall conceals the Hidden Room (Area R), requiring a Spot check (DC 30) to notice.

27. The Hidden Room

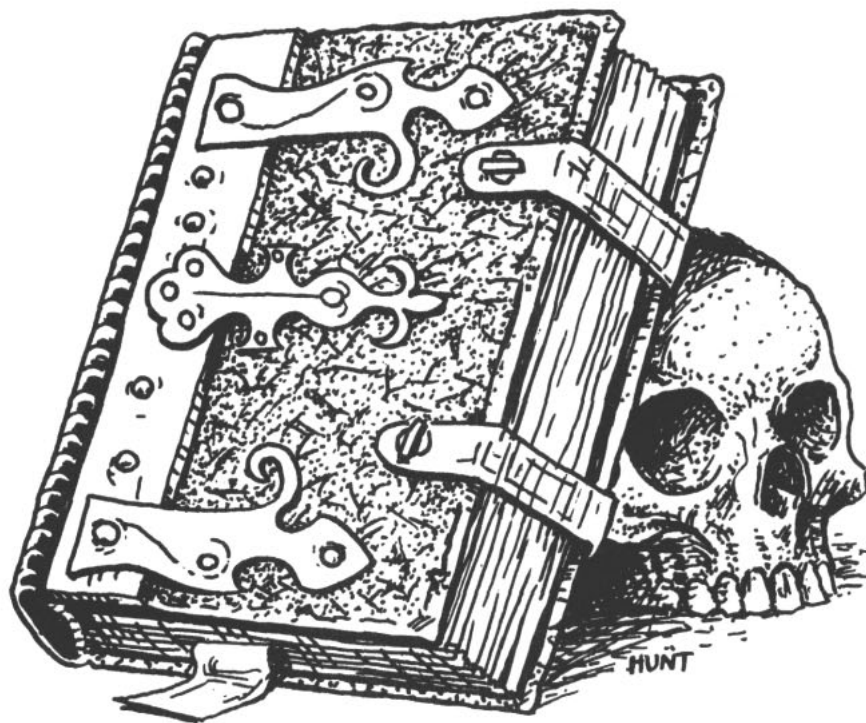
This hidden room contains a body, lying on a low stone table, covered by a fine sheet of white silk. Under the sheet is the long dead corpse of a young woman (in repose), her hands crossed over her heart. Someone has been reconstructing her face in beeswax and painted her face with white makeup and lipstick. The rest is little more than a decaying husk wearing a once-beautiful gown.

EPILOGUE

Returning to the village with the news brings both joy and fear for the future. Sure, they won't be taxed any more, but now there is no lord to help protect the town or watch over their lands. Perhaps the PCs know of someone, or even one of their own interested in taking this post. Perhaps the PCs can stick around for a while, helping to teach the town to defend itself and live free.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Some elven refugees come to the town (and quickly learn of the PCs by reputation) and plead with the PCs to restore their nearby homeland (see the adventure "Servants of the Blood Moon").
- The PCs camp on the outskirts of town a few days after the ordeal at the manor, sitting around their campfire enjoying the quiet evening. Suddenly there is a loud roar, and they are blinded momentarily as the campfire surges up into the air. The flames split down the middle, revealing a black-cloaked figure clutching a scythe. The apparition staggers for a moment. Then, it pulls back the hood on its cloak. Beneath is a bleached skull with stars for eyes (see the adventure "The Last Gods").



Chapter 23:

Servants of the Blood Moon

Levels 9 to 11
by Ree Soesbee

Something horrible has happened...

Deep in the elven forests of Myereth, the ancient rowan trees spread white boughs above a sacred site. Pillars of stone twist like some strange form of vine, curling among the branches and reflecting the light of a silvery moon. The forest is silent and beautiful, protected since the dawn of time by a powerful Unicorn.

Something which can never be repaired...

Now, Myereth runs with blood, and the rowan trees wither and die. In the center of the Rowan Grove, the bloodied bodies of the last elven warriors of Myereth lie scattered and broken. Over them stands a dark-robed sorcerer lifting the bloody skull of a creature that may once have been a horse — with a single, ivory horn.

The time has come for innocence to die...

The elves of Myereth are fading, their glamour lost, their forest rotting. A blood ritual has cursed the sacred grove, and the Unicorn has been destroyed. Only true PCs have the courage to save the elven nation. Only those with legendary skill can hope to emerge victorious against the Servants of the Blood Moon.

The time has come for a new legend to be born.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 9 to 11. A few PCs with good weapons are vital in this adventure, and a ready supply of silver should help as well. Someone with the Knowledge (arcana) skill and a spell caster with the Spell Penetration feat are ideal in this adventure.

Deep in the elven forests of Myereth, ancient rowan trees spread white boughs above a sacred site. Pillars of stone twist like some strange form of vine, curling among the branches and reflecting the light of a silvery moon. The forest is silent and beautiful, protected since the dawn of time by a powerful Unicorn.

The elven forest of Myereth is well known throughout the world as a safe haven, a place where evil cannot stand to enter and where the trees weep healing tears upon those injured within its boundaries. Any player character elves know of the forest, its healing properties, and its legendary beauty. They may have heard of it in a legend, or they may have visited its mystic shrine when they were children, brought along on a pilgrimage by other elves.

But something has gone terribly wrong. Refugees from Myereth, terrified and confused, are flooding into other elven cities. They speak of a great evil that has conquered the forest and has killed the body of the immortal Unicorn and tainted its spirit. Myereth runs with blood, they say,

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Knowledge check.

- DC 10** The sorcerer who has taken the forest is named Tycaris. He leads the Servants of the Blood Moon, and they've sacrificed the Unicorn for some evil purpose.
- DC 13** Just before the attack, a band of strangers — humans and dwarves — came through the city of Myr. They asked many questions and seemed interested in the Rowan Grove. I bet they had something to do with this. (The adventurers came to find Tycaris and stop him before he could sacrifice the Unicorn. They failed.)
- DC 16** The Unicorn isn't dead. Tycaris is an elf, cousin to Prince Dursalayne, and because of his noble blood he can control the Unicorn. He's enslaved it and forced it to turn the forest to evil. (False.)
- DC 19** Deep beneath the Rowan Grove is a portal to an evil land. The trees were grown to hold the portal shut, and now it has been defiled, the portal has opened, and the passage to the evil land is free once more. (Partly true, but it isn't an evil land beyond the portal. It is a captive.)
- DC 22** The Unicorn's horn was magical, and Tycaris has used it to curse the forest. Now he lives in Myr, with a legion of undead, and he is raising devils to create an army. (True.)
- DC 25** Only powerful magic can restore Myereth. Someone must go into the sacred grove and touch the magic statue there. A new Unicorn appears, and the forest is saved. (False. There isn't even a statue in the grove, much less a magic, shape-changing one.)
- DC 28** A party of adventurers much like yourselves has already gone into the forest. Only one returned — and his hands and eyes had been removed. He sits at the edge of the forest, eating children as they flee. (Partly true. Aloric is blind and mad, but he's staying near the forest because he thinks he can help the next party to go in.)

and the once-powerful rowan trees have begun to wither and die. In the center of the Rowan Grove, the bloodied bodies of the last elven warriors of Myereth lie scattered and broken. Those responsible call themselves the Servants of the Blood Moon, and a dark-robed sorcerer leads them. The surviving elves do not know this evil man — all but one of those who fought against the Servants died — but they know the sorcerer calls himself Tycaris.

He has butchered the Unicorn, the spirit of the forest. The Myereth, and the elves, are dying.

CALL TO ARMS

Numerous elven refugees escape from the Myereth Forest, and it is easiest to begin the adventure by giving the PCs an encounter with these sad, broken elves. Villages, cities, and even distant locales are going to hear of the horrors in the Myereth Forest, a name any elf in the world knows. Myereth is a sacred place, a shrine, a holy site to all elven races. To hear it has been assaulted and defiled should shake to the core even the most callous elf.

Some of these refugees actively come seeking the PCs (they know of the PCs by reputation) and plead with the PCs to restore their homeland. Some of them may even personally know one or more of the PCs from past adventures. Unhesitatingly, they use this connection to try to persuade the party to help.

"We lived in the city of Myr, deep within the Myereth Forest. One night, only a few short days past, we awakened to the sound of inhuman screams ringing throughout the forest. It was a nightmare. Our prince, Dursalayne, took his best men into the grove to discover its origin.

They had hardly gone when the trees began to bleed.

Now, the entire forest runs with blood, and the ground has turned black. Of our finest soldiers, only Dursalayne returned — and he is gravely wounded. Our clerics cannot ease his pain or heal his injury, and he remains in an encampment only a short distance from the forest's edge. The city has turned to ruin. Many died, fleeing the terrors that now roam the Myereth.

Please, you must aid us. Our land was once rich and filled with magic. It can be so again. Travel to Myereth and meet with Prince Durathas. He is grateful for your aid, and will tell you more than I can."

As the characters make their way toward the Myereth, they may meet with several other bands of elven refugees. Some of these are peasants, farmers, or craftsmen. Others are highly ranked nobles. All are frightened, their packs

SERVANTS OF THE BLOOD MOON

filled with whatever they could carry from the forest as it died around them. Their stories are disjointed, and filled with speculation.

THE ELVEN CAMP

Just within sight of the forest of Myereth, a large encampment has been erected. As many as 300 elves live in this camp. All of them are refugees from the cities, villages, and outposts within the blackened forest. Prince Dursalayne's tent stands in the center of the settlement. It has numerous banners waving in the wind in front of the main opening.

Once the player characters arrive at the encampment, they are met by a guard who requests to know their business. If he is told who the characters are, he treats them with respect and quickly escorts them to the prince's command tent. Inside the settlement, the characters see many wounded elves, displaced families, and orphaned children, huddled around small campfires. The PCs can tell by looking around many elves must have been killed.

The guard around the encampment is heavy, but the soldiers don't attack strangers. They are watching for something more specific. If the characters ask their escort about this, he mumbles something about vicious undead and then says the prince will tell the PCs anything they need to know.

Once the PCs reach the Prince's tent, they only have to wait a few minutes after the guard announces their presence. Soon, the elven chancellor comes to eagerly invite them in.

Prince Dursalayne's tent is large, but not well furnished. It is sparsely decorated with tables of maps. A single bed is cordoned to one side by hanging silks. The prince is a young adult by elven standards, although still decades old. He has an honest face and greets you warmly.

"Thank you for coming to help," Prince Dursalayne says. "I would lead you myself, but I cannot leave my people. Already, I have lost my entire family to this menace. I'm sure you've heard rumors. The Unicorn of the Forest has been destroyed. It is true. And with its death, an evil once held captive was freed — and the forest suffers. You must aid us, or the plague striking Myereth will spread until no land in the world is safe."

The prince gives the party all the information he has, and he shows them the roads leading to the forest: one north, one south, and one east. The southern road is the only one not yet guarded by a horde of the undead and Prince Dursalayne encourages the players to use it.

Prince Dursalayne and his advisors tell the characters the sacred grove was created hundreds of years ago by the elven gods. Its good magic was used to capture and contain a spirit of unthinkable evil, which is now free. The devil should be weak from its long imprisonment, but it grows stronger as it feeds upon the magic of the forest.

Killing the Unicorn was the key to freeing the beast. Dursalayne does not know how to recapture it without the Unicorn. When Tycaris killed the Unicorn, the Czatche (ZAT-che) was released from its prison.

The baatezu devil, Czatche is also known in elven legends as the "Blood Moon". His presence turns the land to blood. His servants are said to give Czatche their mortal souls in exchange for eternal life. Dursalayne tells the party the one place they can get more information about the devilish Czatche is in the Library of Sythanai, within the city of Myr. Getting there is sure to be perilous, as Tycaris has seized the city with his undead soldiers. Add the growing power of the Czatche to their number, and the situation becomes dire.

The prince is willing to give the PCs anything within his power to grant — and within reason. He can only offer a few magic weapons (all of +1 magical ability), horses, food, and maps of Myr and the forest around the city.

MYERETH FOREST

Myereth forest is an ancient, elven wilderness with huge trees, sprawling vines, and elaborately shaped bushes dotting the landscape. In most places, the forest is thick. Ancient oaks spread their wide boughs above shaded paths. From the road, you can see the marks of a tremendous numbers of travelers fleeing the forest. Clothing and other household items occasionally lay dropped by the roadside.

As soon as any ranger, druid or barbarian character enters the forest, they can immediately sense something is wrong. No birds sing; no small animals move. The forest is sick. The trees have wilted branches and leaves, as if some sort of plague is striking them. Even the ground seems infertile — dry, and crumbling. Elves, druids and rangers should be treated as if under the effects of an undispellable *bane* spell while in the doomed forest as its despair saps their resolve and undermines their will.

THE SOUTHERN ROAD

The PCs should head toward the Myereth forest by the southern road. If they choose any other means, they encounter obstacles. The only way into the forest safely is to the south. Outside the southern entrance to the forest is a small campsite. A single man rests by the fire, turning a small creature on a spit over the blaze. As the party approaches, the man waves angrily in their direction, mumbles, and then scoots over. He mumbles, then calls out an unrecognized name, as if calling to the

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PCs. If they do not respond — or if they reply and he recognizes they are not his companions — he seems sorrowful and bitter. He shouts:

“Come over here, then, if you want to know. I’ll tell you, I will. Crazy, to go in, but with the blood and the demon, I bet you’d go. I knew it. I knew they’d fail, and I know you’ll try anyway. You hear me? Aloric’s my name! Ha!”

Aloric is mad. He was a member of the first mercenary party to enter the forest, before the Unicorn was killed. They were travelers from the north, and a perceptive hero with Knowledge: local (DC 25) might be able to recognize Aloric for who he is: a well-known ranger. Now he’s just a blind madman, his eyes torn from their sockets. A *cure serious wounds* spell or better can ease his pain, and a regeneration spell can restore his eyes, but his madness is incurable. If the forest is healed, he recovers, but until then, he sits here and insists his party will return for him when they’ve finished ridding the forest of evil.

Aloric, though blind, has sharp senses. He is happy to talk to the PCs and to share with them his information, however fragmented. If the characters offer him food or are kind to him, he quickly warms up and begins talking.

“My friends... the Frozen Flame... gone. Sorcerer named Tycaris. Black robes... horribly evil. We followed him to Myr. He released the devil. We failed.

“Demon’s called Czatche. Trapped. Unicorn horn was the key to open the grove. We couldn’t stop it... Tycaris killed everyone. As soon as Tycaris discovered where the devil Czatche was imprisoned, as soon as he found the key, he came. We followed. Too late, too late. Sora... she was hung from tree to tree... belly ripped open. Tycaris fed the rest to Czatche... after the sorcerer had cut off the Unicorn’s head and opened the prison.

“Tycaris kept talking about awakening the Blood Moon. Some ritual. Tycaris needs the baatezu for something. Lyros, our mage, knew more. He went to the library to look for a book on the ritual. Never came back.

“We went to scout the grove. Found Tycaris... already performing the ritual. Too late, too late. Now, I don’t know. The forest has turned to blood, and Tycaris is still searching for something. Find Lyros. He can help you. The library... the library. But don’t go to the grove alone...” Aloric’s blind eyes become tearful, and his voice fades away into a fugue. He cannot be aroused except for food or sleep, and he seems to know no more.

The party may camp here in peace or continue into the forest of Myereth.

INTO THE WOODS

Inside the forest, the PCs find a series of paths leading through the forest in various directions. A sign points the way to Myr, down the largest road. As the PCs travel deeper into the forest, they notice more signs of corruption.

The forest, once green and fertile has turned disturbingly dark. The branches above you drip a strange red liquid: blood. The ground is stained with it, smeared by the passing of creatures. In the fallen, rotted leaves by the path, half-eaten bodies stare up at you, blank gazes dripping with pus. The stench of death lingers on the path, and a strange mist blows. Leaves rustle nearby, and more blood spatters your armor. Even now, you feel you are being watched.

Encounter: During their trip into the forest, skeletons and zombies attack the PCs — no real challenge for the high-level characters (use elves or forest creatures as the base for the undead if you feel like playing any of the encounters out or to give the osyluth some additional support). The one encounter of note is with osyluth, the “advanced troop soldiers” of Tycaris’s armies. The devils serve Tycaris loyally; fleeing only if they believe it is impossible to win. If any of them escape, they go to Myr and warn Tycaris about the invaders.

✦ **Bone Devil (Osyluth):** CR 9; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 10d8+50; hp 95; Init +9; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +19; Atk +14 melee (1d8+5, bite); Full Atk +14 melee (1d8+5, bite) and +12 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) and +12 melee (3d4+2 plus poison, sting); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, fear aura, poison, *summon devil*; SQ Damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, SR 21, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 21, Dex 21, Con 21, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Hide +14, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (any one) +15, Listen +17, Move Silently +18, Search +15, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack.

Fear Aura (Su): Bone devils can radiate a 5-ft.-radius fear aura as a free action. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or be affected as though by a fear spell (caster level 7th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same bone devil’s aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial damage 1d6 Str, secondary damage 2d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *dimensional anchor*, *fly*, *invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 15), *wall of ice*. Caster level 12th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Summon Devil (Sp): Once per day a bone devil can attempt to summon 2d10 lemuurs with a 50% chance of success, or another bone devil with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

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MYR

The city of Myr was once beautiful, pale, and sparkling against a dark-green background of leafy boughs. Now, it is a crumbling ruin, devastated by the devils who have taken up residency in the city streets and houses. Undead and baatezu roam freely, feasting on anything living they can find, and the trees have turned red, their boughs dripping with blood.

The ground is stained, reddish, and molding, and the city buildings are smeared with a scarlet taint. Much of the city is littered with bodies. The flesh of animals decorates the buildings and trees. The place reeks of death.

Undead creatures, as well as more of the devils you have met within the forest, seem to have the run of the city, and their gleeful shrieks echo through the streets of Myr.

Over the tops of the bleeding trees, you see two large buildings. One, with its golden roof and spires, is obviously the palace. A statue of the elven god of knowledge crowns the other, elegantly made to blend in with the trees around it. It is this building which you suppose is the library, the place where you can find the answers you need to defeat the evil seizing Myereth Forest. It is tremendous, and the front doors stand open, crushed by some powerful force.

Now all you have to do is get there.

Undead roam the streets of Myr, and as the PCs make their way through the remnants of a once-proud city, they encounter quite a few threats. Listen to the party's plan of entry (hidden or overt), and judge the exact number of encounters accordingly. The characters should meet with one to six special encounters as they move through the city.

CITY OF MYR ENCOUNTER CHART

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No encounter
11	Blood moon servant (invisible)
12	Elf skeletons (2d6)
13	Elf survivor (injured 6th level ranger)
14	Elf survivor (injured commoner)
15	Elf zombies (2d6)
16	Ghasts (1d4)
17	Kyton (1d2)
18	Lemure (1d10)
19	Osyluth scout
20	Wights (2d4)

THE LIBRARY OF SYTHANAI

Once the PCs enter either of the front doors, they find themselves in the main hall. The place has been ransacked.

The Library of Sythanai was once a beautiful, white building, but it is now covered in blood and filth. The two front doors are caved in, and bodies of townsfolk and librarians lie in chunks across the open entries. Beyond the front steps, you see the ransacked remnants of a library. Books and tomes of all sorts have been ripped, burnt, and crushed, the shelves overturned.

I. Library Chambers

To the right, off the Main Hall of the library, is a door leading into the private offices and personal quarters of the librarians. Each of their rooms looks similar: a low bed, a small chest, and a wardrobe filled with priest's attire. There are desks and some books. All of the rooms have been ransacked, and several townsfolk have been dragged here to be consumed by ghasts and a servant of the Blood Moon (see *New Monsters* — Appendix B).

Encounter: Six of the ghasts are in the living quarters, there others are in the nearby personal chambers (randomly selected). The ghasts attack the party on sight. The library living chambers are all alike except for 1A, which is not a living area, but rather the reserve librarian's personal office. This room has a larger desk and no bed.

☠ Ghast: CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 + paralysis, bite), +3 melee (1d4+1 + paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

Ghoul Fever (Ex): Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghast's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even elves can be affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 ft. must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ghast's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

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2. Head Librarian's Room

Encounter: This was once the living quarters for Arathus, the Head Librarian of Myr. He was a pompous man. His room was opulent, with a magnificent bed. His desk seems used only for personal correspondence, and the golden quill he wrote with still lies fallen under his chair. Now this room is the home of a Servant of the Blood Moon.

Tactics: The servant is cannier than its attendant ghosts. If it hears the party coming, it shrouds itself in invisibility and waits until one of the PCs is alone, hoping to pick them off one by one.

Treasure: If the room is searched, the PCs find the body of a rich merchant, well gnawed upon and by something other than a ghost. The teeth are larger, and the claw marks are deeper. The merchant is carrying 25 gp. There is a small, false bottom in the desk drawer (Search check, DC 18). Opening this reveals correspondence between Arathus and a man who signs his letters only as "Ta." The letters discuss several of the reserve books pertaining to the dark arts and a staff made from the horn of a Unicorn. In the last letter, "Ta" thanks Arathus for his help, saying he will come for the *Book of Urileaus* and confirming Arathus's secret is safe — for now.

☛ **Servant of the Blood Moon:** CR 7; Medium outsider (evil, lawful); HD 7d8+14; hp 55; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., glide 30 ft. (clumsy); AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, bite), +7 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); SA Bleeding wound, fear aura, spell-like abilities, summon servant of the blood moon; SQ Damage reduction 10/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 19, spell-like abilities, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Reflex +7, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Hide +13, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Spot +9; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Bleeding Wound (Su): A victim bitten by a servant loses 2 hit points from bleeding damage each round until the wound is bound (Heal, DC 10) or healed by any spell or effect.

Fear Aura (Su): As a free action, a servant can create an aura of fear in a 10-ft. radius. This is like a fear spell cast by a 12th level sorcerer (save DC 17). A PC that saves successfully cannot be affected again by this servant's fear aura for one day. Other servants are immune to this effect.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will — *animate dead, charm monster, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, hold person, magic circle against good, and suggestion*. At will, improved invisibility. This ability requires a full round action to activate. Caster level 12th.

Summon Servant (Sp): Once per day, a servant can summon another servant with a 60% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

3. Living Quarters

This room was once the living quarters for the library staff. It has a large table, couches, a stove, and several small bookshelves. The table has been overturned, and horrible claws have scored the furniture. There are 6 ghosts (hp 26 each) in this room, and they attack the party on sight.

TREASURE

If the PCs search rooms 1, 3, 4 and 5 (Search check, DC 15), roll on this chart to determine a surviving item to be discovered. Only two items can be found in each room.

1d20	Room Loot
1	1st level arcane spell scroll
2	Candles
3	Chalk
4	Common lamp
5	Elven slippers
6	Empty cistern
7	Hourglass
8	Ink (1 oz.)
9	Inkpen
10	Iron pot
11	Iron pot
12	Monocle
13	Oil (1 pint)
14	Potion of fox's cunning
15	Potion of owl's wisdom
16	Scholar's Outfit (elven)
17	Sheets of paper and parchment (blank)
18	Silk robe
19	Smokestick
20	Sunrod

4. Research/Meeting Rooms

The research rooms have been ransacked, and their contents burned in a large bonfire. Beyond this, these rooms contain only desks, chairs, and the remnants of rare books now torn, burned, and ruined.

5. Reserve Vaults

Rooms 5A and 5B are similar in purpose, though not in construction. The door from the hallway into Room 5A is not locked, but it is closed. The PCs can hear movement in the room beyond, but when they open the door they find nothing but ruined bookshelves and shattered glass cases.

Encounters: This room was once a reserve vault, protecting the most valuable books and items. Right now, it is the sanctuary of another Servant of the Blood Moon who becomes invisible just as the door is opening. Servants can see each other through their shroud of invisibility, so the one in the room recognizes another servant following the party. If so, both attack as soon as the party is in room 5A.

Tactics: If not, the servant waits until the party has turned its attention to the locked door into room 5B. Then it attacks with the advantage of surprise.

Treasure: If this room is searched (Search check, DC 20), the PCs find an elven made +2 dagger named "Starlit" and a set of horseshoes of speed.

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☛ **Servant of the Blood Moon:** CR 7; Medium outsider (evil, lawful); HD 7d8+14; hp 55; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., glide 30 ft. (clumsy); AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, bite), +7 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); SA Bleeding wound, fear aura, spell-like abilities, summon servant of the blood moon; SQ Damage reduction 10/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 19, spell-like abilities, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Reflex +7, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Hide +13, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Spot +9; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Bleeding Wound (Su): A victim bitten by a servant loses 2 hit points from bleeding damage each round until the wound is bound (Heal, DC 10) or healed by any spell or effect.

Fear Aura (Su): As a free action, a servant can create an aura of fear in a 10-ft. radius. This is like a fear spell cast by a 12th level sorcerer (save DC 17). A PC that saves successfully cannot be affected again by this servant's fear aura for one day. Other servants are immune to this effect

Spell-Like Abilities: At will — *animate dead*, *charm monster*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *hold person*, *magic circle against good*, and *suggestion*. At will, improved invisibility. This ability requires a full round action to activate. Caster level 12th.

Summon Servant (Sp): Once per day, a servant can summon another servant with a 60% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

Room 5A has been scorched by fire, its books destroyed and its glass cases turned to slag. The ceiling is black with smoke. Several impact points betray a spell battle took place here, and there is a hole in the ceiling where a broken set of iron stairs once led into the upper tower vault.

Anyone who investigates the room with a Search check (DC 20) can determine the fire was magical, burning too hot to be normal flame. Investigating the magical scorch marks and other residue to identify the spells with a Spellcraft check (DC 21; 15 + spell level + 3 for length of time since casting) reveals marks of both *fireball* and *lightning bolt* spells. A casual search finds the bodies of two more servants dead among the rubble.

6. Wizard's Vaults

Just up the twisted iron stairway (assuming the players use another means to ascend — the stairs cannot hold them), there is a bloody, badly burned corpse clad in the scorched remnants of a wizard's robes. The room is burned, though not as badly as below.

This seems to have once been a research room for wizards, and many of the half-burned books have titles such as "Yimkin's Invincible Shield," "Athanae's Divinatory Ledger," and "Star Cairn Spells". They are, unfortunately, ruined. The body belongs to the ranger Aloric's companion, the mage Lyros of the adventuring party Frozen Flame. Tycaris came for the Book of Urileaus, found Lyros, and killed him. The only things left are Lyros's notes. Tycaris stole the original tome.

Lyros's notes reveal the following: the servants of the Blood Moon are devils raised from beyond by the power of Tycaris's sorcery. They serve Tycaris so long as he has power over Czatche. Tycaris controls Czatche through a *wyrdstaff* fueled by the Unicorn's horn.



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If the staff and horn are destroyed, Czatche is fully freed — but Tycaris doesn't want this either. He wants the creature freed, true, but also forced to serve him. However, Tycaris does not yet have the strength to complete the ritual. Given the choice between life and death, Tycaris most likely free Czatche without the protective ritual and takes his chances. If the unicorn returns somehow, the devil is imprisoned again. For now, however, Tycaris controls the power of Czatche.

THE PALACE

The palace of Myr stands on what was once the most beautiful portion of the city, behind ancient oaks. Now, the fountains run with blood, and the golden doors are tarnished. As you watch, you see three devils walk into the building behind one of the rune-covered, undead servants.

This is where Tycaris stays — the sacred Rowan Grove, located behind the palace, shrouded by magic designed to keep it safe. The only way to enter the grove is through the palace, past the sorcerer and the servants of the Blood Moon.

1. Foyer

Encounter: The first room beyond the golden doors is the foyer, a palatial entranceway. Inside, the PCs see a revel in which devils bang out infernal rhythms on elf-skin drums. A huge bonfire of books and furniture burns, casting shadows around the room. There are three osyluths and four servants here in this macabre party.

Tactics: They attack anything that enters the room on sight.

✦ **Bone Devil (Osyluth):** CR 9; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 10d8+50; hp 95; Init +9; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +19; Atk +14 melee (1d8+5, bite); Full Atk +14 melee (1d8+5, bite) and +12 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) and +12 melee (3d4+2 plus poison, sting); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, fear aura, poison, summon devil; SQ Damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, SR 21, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 21, Dex 21, Con 21, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Hide +14, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (any one) +15, Listen +17, Move Silently +18, Search +15, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack.

Fear Aura (Su): Bone devils can radiate a 5-ft.-radius fear aura as a free action. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or be affected as though by a fear spell (caster level 7th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same bone devil's aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial damage 1d6 Str, secondary damage 2d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *dimensional anchor*, *fly*, *invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 15), *wall of ice*. Caster level 12th. The save DC is Charisma-based.⁷

Summon Devil (Sp): Once per day a bone devil can attempt to summon 2d10 lemures with a 50% chance of success, or another bone devil with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

✦ **Servant of the Blood Moon:** CR 7; Medium outsider (evil, lawful); HD 7d8+14; hp 55; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., glide 30 ft. (clumsy); AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, bite), +7 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); SA Bleeding wound, fear aura, spell-like abilities, summon servant of the blood moon; SQ Damage reduction 10/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 19, spell-like abilities, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Reflex +7, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Hide +13, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Spot +9; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Bleeding Wound (Su): A victim bitten by a servant loses 2 hit points from bleeding damage each round until the wound is bound (Heal, DC 10) or healed by any spell or effect.

Fear Aura (Su): As a free action, a servant can create an aura of fear in a 10-ft. radius. This is like a fear spell cast by a 12th level sorcerer (save DC 17). A PC that saves successfully cannot be affected again by this servant's fear aura for one day. Other servants are immune to this effect

Spell-Like Abilities: At will — *animate dead*, *charm monster*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *hold person*, *magic circle against good*, and *suggestion*. At will, improved invisibility. This ability requires a full round action to activate. Caster level 12th.

Summon Servant (Sp): Once per day, a servant can summon another servant with a 60% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

2. Meeting/Council Chambers

The palace has several meeting and council chambers scattered through the building. Most of these have only ruined couches or tables. In these rooms, the party has a 50% chance of meeting a pack of 1d6 ghastrs and an osyluth.

Room 2A has a secret door to the north, hidden behind a large portrait of the elven king. The devils have not discovered this and have hung the dead body of an elven scholar from the portrait. If the party lowers the corpse to the floor, they discover a hidden catch with a Search of DC10.



3. Grand Room

The remains of a tremendous feast lay scattered across a massive oak table. The center of the feast is the gnawed ribcage and body of a horse. No, not a horse: a unicorn! A waterfall in the northeastern corner of the room bubbles merrily, in sharp contrast to the gruesome scene.

If PCs look in the waterfall basin, they find a silver key on a scarlet cord. This is the key to the chapel (room #6). The door to the north is locked (Open Locks, DC 30), but this key doesn't fit it.

4. Chambers/Small Study

Several small chambers exist throughout the palace, intended for small meetings, guest quarters, and conservatories. Other than various atrocities, elven bodies, and blood, these rooms hold nothing of real interest. If the PCs insist on searching, any leftover items from the random item chart in the Library section can be used to satisfy their looting desires.

5. Throne Room

In the garden-like throne room, green boughs grow from the ceiling arches. The grass is brown and dead, and the stream which flows through the place is brackish. On the throne at the far end of the room sits a black-robed sorcerer: Tycaris. He holds a large, black staff, topped by the gold and ivory horn of a unicorn. His eyes masque barely concealed rage, while his face remains stoic. His eyes light up as he recognizes you, and he holds up a hand.

"More adventurers? Your kind breeds like lice. You will die in agony, just like those before you. Servants: amuse me." He sits back on the throne as 10 servants of the Blood Moon shiver into view. As they approach you, they fade away again, and Tycaris smiles.

"Kill them."

Tactics: After the first two rounds, Tycaris joins the fight. Until then, he watches from within a previously cast *globe of invulnerability*. If the tide of the battle is against him, the sorcerer casts *dimension door* to take him into the Rowan Grove. To give the story a satisfactory ending, ensure Tycaris vanishes from the room before he is too weakened to confront them later.

▲ **Tycaris, Half-elf Sor 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid; HD 12d4+12; hp 55; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +9 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +5/+1 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Summon familiar; SQ Half-elf traits; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18 [20].

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Spellcraft +10; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Spell Penetration, Spell Focus (necromancy).

Familiar: Tycaris's familiar, a tiny viper named Thaquion, was killed in combat with the adventuring group the Frozen Flame.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (6/7/7/7/5/3; save DC 15 + spell level): 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead**, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue**; 1st—*burning hands*, *cause fear**, *chill touch**, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement**; 2nd—*blindness/deafness**, *false life**, *ghoul touch**, *scare**, *spectral hand**; 3rd—*gentle repose**, *halt undead**, *ray of exhaustion**, *vampiric touch**; 4th—*contagion**, *dimension door*, *enervation**; 5th—*blight**, *waves of fatigue**; 6th—*circle of death**.

* Necromancy spell.

Possessions: Amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of defense +4, ring of protection +2, cloak of charisma +2, dagger, masterwork light crossbow, blank scroll (held globe of invulnerability).

SERVANTS OF THE BLOOD MOON

6. Chapel

A chapel lies before you, undefiled. Sunlight streams through the stained-glass windows, onto an altar of the healer goddess Sharisis. Beside it, a young elven woman in ill-fitting chain holds a sword, ready. When she sees you, she looks hopeful and excited. "Come in quickly, before they see you! You are safe here."

The doors to the north and south are blocked by tremendous piles of bone and dung, which can be moved through but only messily. Both doors are the same color as the cord of the key in the waterfall (see Room 3). The key unlocks either door.

The stream moving through the chapel is pure and drinkable. Food appears on the altar as needed, and the party can eat and rest in safety. The woman is a cleric named Alhani, a member of the Frozen Flame. She is a 6th level cleric and offers healing to the party, if they need it.

▲ Alhani, Human Clr 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d8; hp 35; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, heavy mace) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, heavy mace) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Turn undead, spells; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +9, Heal +12, Knowledge (religion) +9, Spellcraft +8; Brew Potion, Extra Turning, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (heal).

Turn or Rebuke Undead (Su): This good cleric can turn or destroy undead creatures. She may attempt to turn undead 9 times per day. Because she has 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion) she gets a +2 bonus on turning checks against undead.

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—cure minor wounds, light, mending, resistance, virtue; 1st—cure light wounds, deathwatch, entropic shield, protection from evil*, remove fear; 2nd—aid*, bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, make whole, owl's wisdom; 3rd—cure serious wounds, dispel magic, magic circle against evil*.

* Domain spell. **Domains:** Good (cast good spells at +1 caster level.), Healing (cast healing spells at +1 caster level.).

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, light steel shield, masterwork heavy mace, short bow, 10 masterwork arrows.

The devils cannot enter the chapel. It is high holy ground, something they cannot tread upon. Alhani's spirit has suffered, and she fears the creatures may be unbeatable, as the defeat of her friends proved. She will require strong persuasion to join the party in any combat (see influencing attitudes in chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook Ahlani is currently indifferent, but treat the PC's DC as if she were unfriendly). She can tell the party she thinks they succeeded in killing Tycaris' familiar, a snake of some sort. She also gives them a small talisman: a unicorn figurine made of a luminescent blue glass. The figurine cannot be broken. Inside is a faint firefly-like light.

"This was on the altar when I arrived. It is a blessing from Myrell, protector of the forests. Take it. It may prove useful."

THE GROVE

The Sacred Grove is silent, its white trees twisted and warped. Collapsed pillars of stone litter the ground like a child's toys, and a smoking pit fills the air with sulphurous fumes. A nearby lake, fetid and black, sprays a fountain into the air, mocking the once-beautiful garden. Farther into the grove, near the edge of the pit, you hear chanting.

After escaping the battle in the throne room, Tycaris comes here to summon Czatche with the *wyrdstaff*. If the party attacks the sorcerer, he fights to the death. Czatche aids Tycaris as much as possible from within his prison beneath the ground — throwing rocks, uprooting trees, and causing earthquakes — but he cannot escape unless Tycaris completes the ritual or breaks the staff.

Each round, the PCs must roll 1d20 and suffer the malady wrought by the chaos-inflicting Czatche.

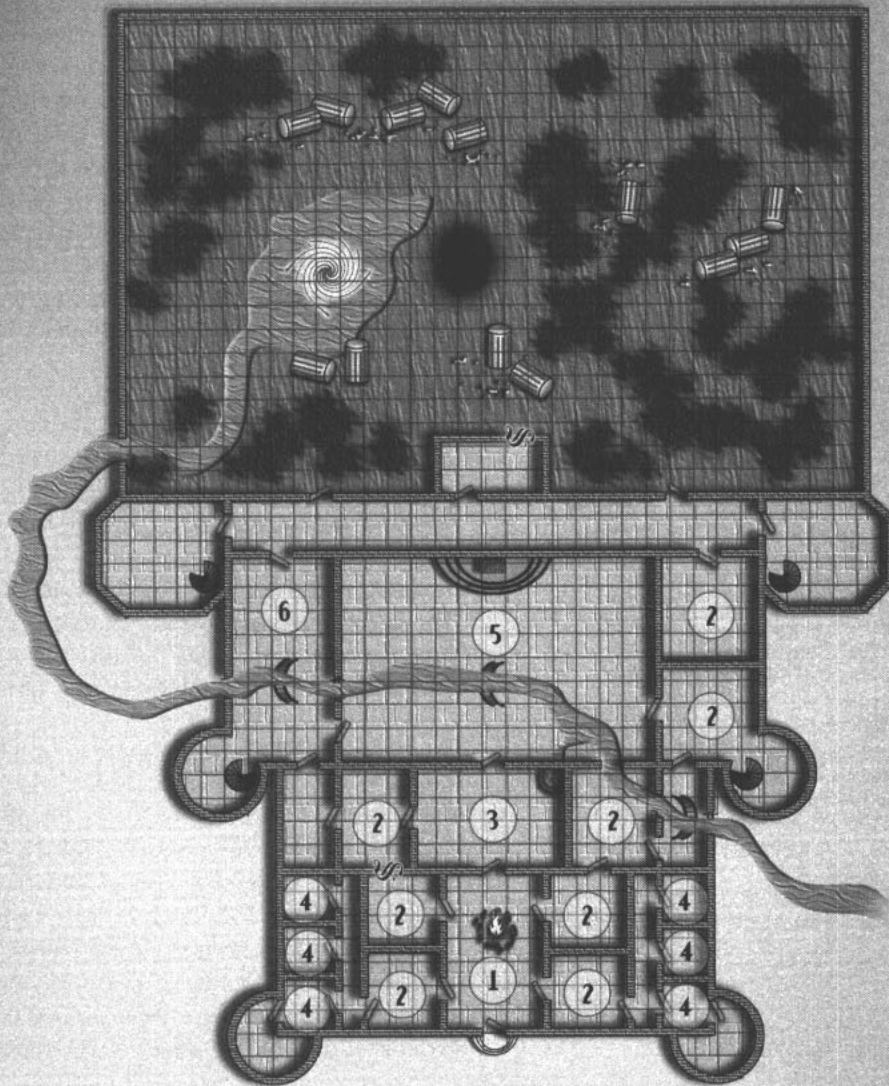
CHAOS

1d20	Effect
1–4	Balance check (DC 20) or be knocked prone
5–7	Concentration check (DC 15) or lose a standard action this round
8–11	Fortitude save (DC 20) or be blinded for 1d3 rounds from debris and dirt
12–15	Jump check (DC 15) as the ground beneath thrusts upward, failure results in being knocked back 10 ft. and knocked prone
16–18	Reflex save (DC 20) or be struck by debris for 3d6 damage
19–20	Strength check (DC 20) or be disarmed

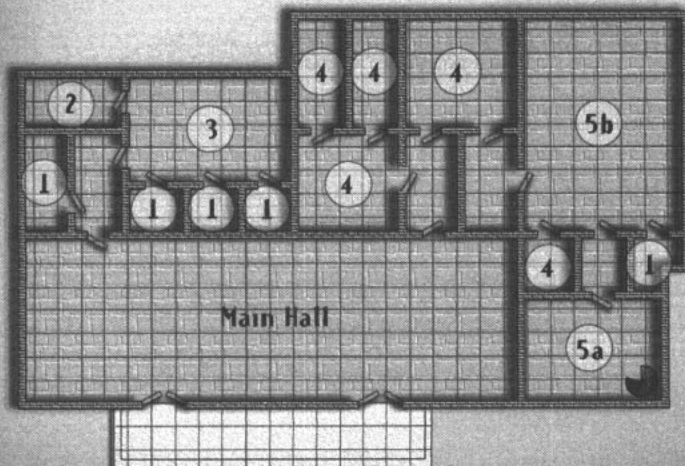
Tactics: When Tycaris feels he cannot win, he breaks the *wyrdstaff*, requiring a Strength check (DC 20). If he succeeds, Czatche the Blood Moon (a gelugon devil) escapes his imprisonment. After taking a moment to tear Tycaris to shreds, Czatche teleports away, laughing in victory. The PCs will no doubt hear from him again — someday.

SERVANTS OF THE BLOOD MOON

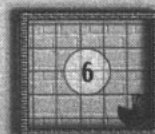
PALACE



LIBRARY



2nd Floor



-  Spiral stairs
-  Secret door
-  Portcullis
-  Bridge
-  Toppled columns

♣ **Ice Devil (Gelugon):** CR 13; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 14d8+84; hp 147; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 32, touch 14, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +14; Grp +24; Atk +20 melee (2d6+9/x3 plus slow, spear) or +19 melee (1d10+6, claw); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (2d6+9/x3 plus slow, spear) and +14 melee (2d6+3, bite) and +14 melee (3d6+3 plus slow, tail); or +19 melee (1d10+6, 2 claws) and +14 melee (2d6+3, bite) and +14 melee (3d6+3 plus slow, tail); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Fear aura, slow, spell-like abilities, summon devil; SQ Damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, regeneration 5, see in darkness, spell resistance 25, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +14, Will +15; Str 23, Dex 21, Con 23, Int 22, Wis 22, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +22, Climb +23, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Intimidate +24, Jump +27, Knowledge (any three) +23, Listen +25, Move Silently +22, Search +23, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +23, Spot +25, Survival +6 (+8 following tracks); Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (spear).

Fear Aura (Su): An ice devil can radiate a 10-ft.-radius fear aura as a free action. A creature in the area must succeed on a DC 22 Will save or be affected as though by a fear spell (caster level 13th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ice devil's aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Slow (Su): A hit from an ice devil's tail or spear induces numbing cold. The opponent must succeed on a DC 23 Fortitude save or be affected as though by a slow spell for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*cone of cold* (DC 20), *fly, ice storm* (DC 19), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *persistent image* (DC 20), *unholy aura* (DC 23), *wall of ice* (DC 19). Caster level 13th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Devil (Sp): Once per day an ice devil can attempt to summon 2d10 lemures or 1d6 bearded devils, 2d4 bone devils with a 50% chance of success, or another ice devil with a 20% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

Regeneration (Ex): An ice devil takes normal damage from good-aligned weapons and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

EPILOGUE

If the PCs defeat Tycaris, they find the Unicorn's horn separates easily from the base of the wyrdstaff. When it does, the glass figurine glows brightly (whether it is with the party or still in the Chapel). Placing the horn against the glass causes a brilliant flash as both vanish. A new Unicorn, sent by the goddess Sharisis, appears before the party, and the nearby trees return to good health. The Unicorn thanks the PCs before he leaves to heal the forest of Myereth, blessing them in the goddess Shaisis's name. The elves slowly begin returning to their home and ask the PCs to stay for a celebration in their honor.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The PCs camp on the outskirts of town a few days after the ordeal at the manor, sitting around their campfire enjoying the quiet evening. Suddenly there is a loud roar, and they are blinded momentarily as the campfire surges into the air. The flames split down the middle, revealing a black-cloaked figure clutching a scythe. The apparition staggers for a moment. Then, it pulls back the hood on its cloak. Beneath is a bleached skull with stars for eyes (see the adventure "The Last Gods").
- The villagers tell the PCs about the local bard Cedric. Cedric had heard other bards speak of a beautiful young woman named Liriandra, said to be of marriageable age, and the daughter of a wizard. Seeking her hand in marriage, the impulsive young man ran off to the village of Stormy Shore to the north. Cedric was well liked by everyone, especially the young ladies. His impulses often took him away from home for weeks at a time, but he has never been gone this long before (see the adventure "The Illusionists Daughter").



Chapter 24:

The Last Gods

Levels 10 to 12
by Kevin Wilson

The evening air is chilly, but the crackling fire you lit warms your bones. Crickets chirp as you smile up at the stars, happy for a quiet evening.

There is a loud roar, and you are blinded momentarily as the campfire suddenly surges up. The flames split down the middle, revealing an abyss leeching the warmth from your soul. Out of this hellish place stumbles a black-cloaked figure clutching a scythe. Quickly, you reach for your weapons.

The apparition staggers for a moment. Then, gathering its strength, it pulls back the hood on its cloak. Beneath is a bleached skull with stars for eyes.

"I am Azrael, Lord of the Undead," it hisses. "Or rather, I will be Azrael, after Time itself has died."

Even as Azrael speaks, decay eats away at its body, and the god shudders. Holding one arm up to watch as tiny fissures form in its bones, the deity sighs, "Ah, sweet Entropy, come to claim me at last."

Its gaze sweeps back to you. "But no, not just yet. First, I must set events in motion."

Weakness overcomes Azrael, and it sinks to one knee. "Long ago, I became the most powerful of all the gods, in spite of my enemies' efforts to stop me. Delirious with power, I destroyed the other gods and eventually fell to feasting upon the souls of their worshippers. After devouring every living creature, I consumed the planets and, eventually, the stars themselves, until I was left alone, in darkness."

The god struggles to finish its message as its bones turn to dust and blow away, "Unexpectedly, I felt remorse for what I had done. I grieved for the universe I had destroyed, but I lacked the power to recreate it. So, I have come to you, to beg you to do what I cannot."

Azrael reaches into its cloak and produces a leather sack. "Take these items and use them."

As Azrael dissolves, it gasps out, "Kill me tonight, or tomorrow will never dawn."

All that remains is a pile of dust and a leather bag.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 10 to 12. Experienced players who are able to deal with bizarre situations and who have a sense of the absurd are recommended for this adventure. It will bend your "reality suspenders." Due to the nature of this adventure it makes a good thread to end a campaign on or to shift the focus of a campaign.

Due to the nature of this adventure, and how it was written, the finale can be nearly anything. The series of puzzles and traps are designed to challenge PCs without hundreds of rounds of combat. If you feel the plot does not fit your style of play, replace the ending with an artifact that must be retrieved or a demon that must be destroyed.

The introduction to this adventure can be read aloud or paraphrased to the players to start the adventure.

Everything Azrael said was the truth. The characters are going to have to kill a deity to complete this adventure and save their universe. Fortunately for them, the leather bag Azrael left behind contains the items they need to accomplish this great task.

THE LEATHER BAG

The leather bag contains a scroll, a plain, gray dagger, and a large diamond. The dagger is a magical item known as *the reckoner* (see New Magic — Appendix A). The characters are going to need it to destroy Azrael.

The diamond is a magical transportation device. When smashed, it transports the PCs to room #1, where they begin their quest. This is a one-way trip, only completing the adventure allows the PCs to return home.

As for the scroll, read the players the following when the PCs examine it:

"I have chosen your group because I think you are the most likely to succeed in killing me. My past self hopes to journey to the Mausoleum of the Gods, avoiding the guardians placed on the path leading there, and reach the Lethe Archway, where the Gem of Oblivion rests.

"When gods wish to die, they journey to the mausoleum and step through the archway. Their powers are stripped from them by the gem, and their souls are sent on to their final reward. My past self plans to steal the godly powers accumulated within the gem.

"The diamond I have left you will transport your group to the mausoleum if you crush it. Unfortunately, it's a one-way trip. You must find your own way back.

"I realize this quest seems impossible, but do not despair. I have also left you a powerful weapon in the form of thereckoner. If you use the blade to attack while my past self is distracted fighting with the Lord of Death, you may be able to strike the decisive blow.

"By now, I've already begun my progress toward the Archway. You must hurry."

THE GUARDIANS

When the PCs crush the diamond, there's a flash of light. When the light fades, they find themselves standing on a narrow path. On either side of them is a sheer drop thousands of feet to rocks below. Off in the distance, they can just make out an enormous building...the Mausoleum of the Gods. However, to get there the PCs must pass by its guardians first.

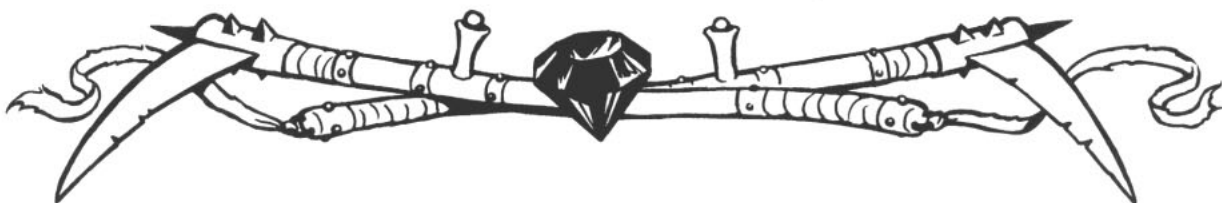
1. Xerxanck

The ground suddenly rumbles beneath your feet as everything lurches up and then falls back down. Hurling near the edge of the path, you can see the cause for the disturbance. What you thought was rocky ground is actually the skin of some enormous creature. The very air around you feels devoid of energy, of magic itself.

The mausoleum is built on an enormous god-creature named Xerxanck. This immense deity is the size of a small moon. It radiated antimagic in all directions so powerful even magic used by a god is canceled. Once the PCs get inside the mausoleum, the antimagic no longer affects them, but until then, they cannot use any magic or magic items, not even artifacts. A successful Spellcraft check (DC 12) before casting a spell alerts the caster to the fact that there is no magical energy here to power the spell (prevent him from wasting the spell). Nothing the characters do can hurt Xerxanck.

2. The Meme Bridge

The path leads to a gap several hundred feet across. Reaching the end of the road and looking down, you can make out a narrow bridge long enough to span the gap. Unfortunately, the bridge rests on the ground far below you. A glow catches your eye, and you notice several rings attached to chains leading into the cliff face. There is one ring for each member of your party.



To continue, each character in the party must grasp one of the rings and pull. Doing so causes the bridge below to rise up until it is flush with the path, allowing the characters to cross. However, pulling the chain also sends a signal to Xerxanck. The beholder raises one of its smaller eyestalks to look at the party, and it emits a ray of soul transference shuffling the characters' souls between their bodies.

To reflect this, have each player pass his character sheet to the player to his left. They must now play each other's characters, as all their abilities have been swapped because of the eye. This effect lasts until the end of the adventure and cannot be dispelled in any manner, including the use of a wish spell. This is intended to keep the players disoriented and panicked throughout the adventure. To aid this effect, don't give them much time to think things through when a situation calls for a snap decision.

3. Wafarak the Giant

An enormous man bars your way. His skin is light blue and his hair silvery white. He carries a gargantuan morningstar swinging menacingly at his hip. Frowning at you, he grumbles, "I am Wafarak, Guardian of the Mausoleum. Leave or perish." Behind him, you can make out the stone steps of what must be the mausoleum itself.

Encounter: Wafarak is a cloud giant assigned to protect the mausoleum from mortals.

Tactics: He doesn't hurl rocks, and Xerxanck's eye prevents him from casting magic, so he relies on his great strength to win. He fights to the death, and then rises back up one hour after he is killed. However, after the PCs beat him once, he won't molest them again.

▲ Wafarak, Cloud Giant: CR 9*; Huge giant (air); HD 17d8+102; hp 178; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +12; Grp +32; Atk +22 melee (4d6+18, morningstar) or +22 melee (1d6+12, slam) or +12 ranged (2d8+12, rock); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (4d6+18, morningstar) or +22 melee (1d6+12, 2 slams) or +12 ranged (2d8+12, rock); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA [Rock throwing], [spell-like abilities]; SQ Low-light vision, oversized weapon, rock catching, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +16, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 35, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +19, Craft (any one) +11, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +11, Listen +15, Perform (harp) +2, Sense Motive +9, Spot +15; Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Power Attack.

Oversized Weapon (Ex): A cloud giant wields a great, two-handed morningstar (big enough for Gargantuan creatures) without penalty.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 pounds), *obscuring mist*; 1/day—*fog cloud*. Caster level 15th. Of course, Wafarak cannot use any of these abilities.

* Wafarak's CR is 11 if he casts spells and throws rocks, but with this limited options, he is CR 9.

THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE GODS

To enter the mausoleum, the party passes through a large, marble door. It is unlocked and untrapped. Any deity touching this door immediately has its powers suppressed while inside the mausoleum. It has no effect on mortals.

Once within, the PCs are safe from Xerxanck's antimagic ray, but they are still hopelessly trapped in each other's bodies. Worse yet — although they don't know it — they've got a stowaway. Azrael's past incarnation has noticed them and has decided to use the party to sneak into the mausoleum without having its powers drained away by the mausoleum. It is currently hiding on one of the PCs, disguised as a single mote of dust, but this isn't revealed to them until later.

4. The Nine-Keyed Door

Before you stands a 50-ft. tall door, forged from some black metal you are unfamiliar with. At its base is a series of nine locks arranged in three rows of three. The locks are numbered 1-9. Worked into the doorframe are enormous sculptures of a nymph and a dragon. In addition, there are smaller doors to your left and right. The door to your left has three locks on it, numbered 1-3.

All doors with keyholes in the mausoleum are utterly impossible to pick or open without using the proper keys, which are currently scattered throughout the outer rooms of the mausoleum. If any of the PCs approach or touch the nine-keyed door, the metal dragon and nymph worked into its frame speak in unison, saying the following:

"The nine-keyed door opens only two ways:
To the touch of gods come to die,
Or a mortal armed with the keys of days.
Step forth, if to pass you would try."

If all nine keys found in this adventure are inserted in the large door in any order, the door unlocks and opens. The smaller door to the left, on the other hand, can be opened using only the first three keys found in the mausoleum.

5. The Mirrored Key

The room is bare, but two mirrors hang on the walls across from each other. A silver key is reflected in each, hanging in the center of the room, but you cannot see anything where the key should be to cast such a reflection. The only other object of note in the room is a heavy, ornate rug covering the floor.

Treasure: There is nothing but bare floor under the rug, a finely crafted piece worth 1,500 gp. If the two reflected keys are examined closely, the PCs notice the keys each have the number “1” inscribed on them, but the key on the right has the number reversed.

The two mirrors are unbreakable. To make the key appear, the characters must cover one of the mirrors, possibly using the rug in the room.

If the characters cover the mirror on the right, the real key appears floating in the center of the room, the number “1” inscribed correctly on it. It can be plucked from the air.

If the characters cover the left mirror, a reversed key inscribed with a backwards “1” appears floating in the center of the room. Like the other key, it can be taken easily, but it doesn’t work in any of the locks in the mausoleum. In fact, the first time it is inserted in a lock and turned, it bursts into flames and dissolves, inflicting 6d6 fire damage to the person holding it (half with a successful Reflex save (DC 20)).

If both mirrors are covered at once, nothing happens.

As each key is taken, its reflection disappears from the mirror it’s shown in. The keys cannot be replaced by any normal means.

6. The Glass Cage

In the center of this room is a large crystalline structure resembling a cage or a puzzle box. The sides of the box are clear, and inside you can make out the form of a silver key floating in its center.

The box is made of transparent glass and put together like an elaborate puzzle. There are parts to slide, rotate, push, pull, and twist.

The cage can be opened in one of several ways. The first and most obvious way is to break it open. This works fine, but only a magical weapon can break the glass, and the weapon then shatters as well, so this is not the best option the PCs could opt for. Should a weapon somehow survive when it shatters the cage, it explodes in a cascade of broken glass that fills the entire room. The cascade inflicts 4d8 of slashing damage and covers the floor of the room with shards that function as caltrops. Reflex save for half, DC 21. No save for the person who shattered the cage.

The next option is to solve the puzzle by hand — a long and tedious task. The character must make two successful consecutive Disable Device checks (DC 30) to work out the intricate method by which the box can be opened. Each check requires an hour of time and failure on the second check means starting over from the beginning.

Another method is to cast knock on the box. However, a single spell can’t open it; four castings are required, or two if the first Disable Device check was successful. Other magical spells do not affect the box.

Lastly, a character with Perform (sing) can sing (if female) or Perform (instrument) can use his musical instrument to play a high enough note to shatter the box. This inflicts 3d6 slashing damage to anyone standing within 5 ft. of the box (half with a successful Reflex save, DC 20).

The key has the number “2” inscribed on it.

7. The Room of Changing

As you open the door, a cone of freezing energy blasts towards you. Leaping to one side, you catch a glimpse of a bipedal insect creature covered in spikes grinning in anticipation of the combat to come.

Encounter: This ice devil — Barrius — is a champion of the god Xerxanck and intends to fight to the death. The room itself brings additional peril to the PCs. At the start of each round, the PCs must roll 1d20. If two or more players roll the same number, have those players pass their character sheets clockwise among themselves, making sure they do not get their own character back. During this time, the PCs cannot kibitz or share information on tactics. The player must figure out the best plan, by working with the information he has.

Treasure: Inside the monster’s gullet is a silver key with the number “3” inscribed on it.

▲ Barrius, the Ice Devil (Gelugon): CR 13; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 14d8+84; hp 147; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 32, touch 14, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +14; Grp +24; Atk +20 melee (2d6+9/x3 plus slow, spear) or +19 melee (1d10+6, claw); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (2d6+9/x3 plus slow, spear) and +14 melee (2d6+3, bite) and +14 melee (3d6+3 plus slow, tail); or +19 melee (1d10+6, 2 claws) and +14 melee (2d6+3, bite) and +14 melee (3d6+3 plus slow, tail); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Fear aura, slow, spell-like abilities, *summon devil*; SQ Damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, regeneration 5, see in darkness, spell resistance 25, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +14, Will +15; Str 23, Dex 21, Con 23, Int 22, Wis 22, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +22, Climb +23, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Intimidate +24, Jump +27, Knowledge (any three) +23, Listen +25, Move Silently +22, Search +23, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +23, Spot +25, Survival +6 (+8 following tracks); Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (spear).

Fear Aura (Su): An ice devil can radiate a 10-ft. radius fear aura as a free action. A creature in the area must succeed on a DC 22 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 13th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ice devil’s aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Slow (Su): A hit from an ice devil's tail or spear induces numbing cold. The opponent must succeed on a DC 23 Fortitude save or be affected as though by a *slow* spell for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*cone of cold* (DC 20), *fly, ice storm* (DC 19), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *persistent image* (DC 20), *unholy aura* (DC 23), *wall of ice* (DC 19). Caster level 13th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Devil (Sp): Once per day an ice devil can attempt to summon 2d10 lemures or 1d6 bearded devils, 2d4 bone devils with a 50% chance of success, or another ice devil with a 20% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

Regeneration (Ex): An ice devil takes normal damage from good-aligned weapons and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

8. The Test of Wit

There are three tables here. Sitting on each table are four small, glowing boxes. Each box is currently open and empty. Lying on the ground in front of the tables are the remains of a human who died in agony.

The corpse is the remains of a previous adventurer. His spirit and his body cannot be spoken with, as the dead cannot help the living here.

Each of the boxes is a magic item serving a specific purpose while it is open, but it ceases to function once shut. An *identify* spell is the simplest way to figure out what each box does, but other methods such as *analyze dweomer* or a Spellcraft check (DC 25) can also work. A Bardic Knowledge check (DC 30) can help, but requires 30 minutes of examination per box.

The boxes cannot be moved, destroyed, or damaged. They can only be opened or closed. The charts below shows what each box does. Reveal this information to the players as the nature of each box comes to light.

Closing the boxes at random is dangerous and can result in several very nasty spells being cast on the person foolish enough to try. You may wish to mock up some boxes for this encounter so the players can have a hands-on experience.

The Left Table:

Upper Left (Square, Gold): This box negates all effects from round boxes while open.

Upper Right (Round, Silver): This box casts *enervation* (as if by a 10th level sorcerer, +8 ranged touch attack), DC 19 on the nearest being once every minute while open.

Lower Left (Rectangular, Silver): This box negates all effects from four-sided boxes while closed.

Lower Right (Triangular, Copper): This box gives the key in this room substance once it has appeared, so it can be taken. The key has the number "4" inscribed on its side.

The Center Table:

Upper Left (Round, Gold): This box reopens every box on this table once every minute while open.

Upper Right (Triangular, Silver): This box negates all effects from boxes on the left and right tables while open. In addition, it is the strongest of the boxes, and it overrides all the others.

Lower Left (Round, Copper): If this box is closed or negated, a *bestow curse* spell (as if by a 10th level sorcerer, DC 19) is cast on the nearest being.

Lower Right (Triangular, Gold): This box negates all effects from square boxes while open, and rectangular boxes while closed.

The Right Table:

Upper Left (Square, Silver): This box causes the key in this room to appear while open, but the key still lacks substance and cannot be taken.

Upper Right (Rectangular, Gold): This box casts a *phantasmal killer* spell (as if by a 10th level sorcerer, DC 19) on the nearest being once every minute, whether open or closed.

Lower Left (Rectangular, Copper): This box causes all triangular boxes to open once every minute while open.

Lower Right (Square, Copper): This box negates all effects from gold boxes while open.

The best course of action for the characters to take is to set up all the boxes on the left and right tables first, then close the upper, right-hand box on the center table. Assuming they've carefully arranged it so no deadly spells go off and the key appears and is given form, it materializes out of thin air and falls to the ground. This puzzle looks harder than it really is.

9. The Wooden Men

Rows of wooden mannequins are lined up on both walls along the length of this room. They are standing in fighting stances and facing toward each other. There is just enough room for one person to squeeze between them and make her way to the other end of the room, where a silver key hangs on the wall.

Encounter: The wooden men here are automatons skilled in fighting. When any character tries to pass between them, they animate and try to pummel the trespasser with their wooden fists. It takes three rounds to move between them to reach the key, and then another three rounds to return with it. Only one character at

a time may try. However, once the key is reached, there is a small area of safety where the character can rest until ready to return.

Tactics: Each round a character moves between the wooden men, they inflict five +12 melee attacks on the trespasser, dealing 2d8+3 bludgeoning damage with each successful hit (for the purpose of the Mobility feat, these attacks are considered to be attacks of opportunity). A successful Tumble check (DC 25) allows a PC to avoid one attack each round, with each additional 10 points of success allowing the character to avoid an additional attack (down to a minimum of 2 attacks). The wooden men are immune to all damage and magical spells. Any character reduced to 0 hp by the wooden men is transformed into a new wooden man (no saving throw) and joins their ranks.

A character with a movement rate of 50 ft. or higher can make the trip in only two rounds each way. The wooden men are tall enough to reach the ceiling, and they attack anything trying to fly over them, including thrown objects.

Treasure: The key is inscribed with the number "5" and enchanted so it cannot be moved unless carried by a living creature, nor can it be transported by magic, such as a dimension door spell. No amount of magical power, not even a wish, can break this rule.

10. Do Unto Others...

Scattered about this room are over a dozen men bleeding heavily from gaping wounds. Their constant moans fill the air as they thrash feebly about, seeking to end their torment.

Encounter: The men in this room are spirits placed here to test the charity of those mortals. Spells such as *know alignment*, *detect evil*, and the like fail, and the men speak an unknown language, a kind spells cannot translate. The characters can tell the injured men are pleading for help. The PCs must decide what to do with no further information.

Tactics: Whatever the PCs choose to do, as each man is healed (with a *cure* spell or Heal check) or killed, he vanishes. When the last man is gone, a silver key with the number "6" inscribed on it appears in the center of the room. However, when the characters leave the room with the key, there is a flash of light, and they find themselves lying on the floor in pain. They have just enough time to realize their wounds are fatal and their magical abilities have been stripped from them before the door opens, and in walks: the PCs. They can only watch helplessly as whatever actions they took before are repeated, this time with them as the recipients. PCs who decided to put the

injured men out of their misery have their callousness reflected back upon themselves, while characters who healed the men are rewarded with charity themselves.

After the scene has replayed itself, there is another flash of light, and the PCs find themselves standing outside the room. PCs who died in the room as a result of their cruelty die for real, while PCs who were healed find themselves at full health. (This may require some interpretation of motive on behalf of the characters, for example if the party did kill the men out of mercy and not callousness, do you still kill the characters? In such an instance, resolve the dilemma.)

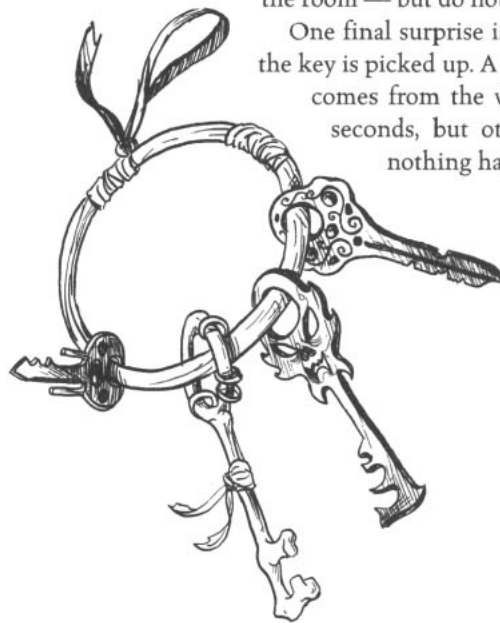
11. The Organ Grinder

A pedestal occupies the center of this room. Resting on top of it is a silver key with the number "7" inscribed on it. Surrounding the pedestal are five statues with raised spears. The floor is tiled in a checkerboard white-and-black pattern. Lastly, there are small red crystals spaced evenly about the room, inset into the floor between the tiles.

Contrary to what the PCs might think, this room is not trapped. However, there are enough telltale signs scattered around the room to convince any rogue the room is full of traps. They just cannot seem to disarm them. There is an *antimagic field* covering the room, so attempts to retrieve the key with spells or spell-like abilities fail. The gems set into the stone are colored glass, worth maybe 5 gp all together.

In reality, there is nothing stopping the characters from walking over to the key, picking it up, and walking out of the room — but do not tell them this.

One final surprise is sprung when the key is picked up. A grinding noise comes from the walls for a few seconds, but other than this, nothing happens.



12. A Friend in Need

There is a large, stone slab with a pendulum blade swinging above it in the center of the room. With a flash, <randomly selected hero's name> disappears, then reappears strapped to the slab by heavy, black, metal bindings. The pendulum blade slowly descends. Glancing quickly around the room, you notice several oddly-shaped levers, each with a large blade hanging over it.

Nothing the characters attempt can free their friend from the stone slab. The pendulum blade continues to descend, and neither brute force nor magic can stop it.

There is one lever for each of the free characters. Unless directly pulled upon by a character, the levers do not move.

In addition, each lever has an odd device holding the character's hand in place once it is pulled down halfway. After having his hand locked in place, a character must decide whether or not to pull the lever the rest of the way down. Releasing the lever snaps it back to its original position and frees his hand. Pulling it all the way down causes a sharp guillotine blade to fall from the ceiling and cuts the hero in half, instantly killing him — or so it appears. In reality, it's just an illusion, and the character is really unconscious on the floor, but there's no way for the others to realize this.

The pendulum blade is the only real blade in the room, and it can only be stopped if all the levers in the room are pulled. Each lever pulled slows the pendulum just a little, and no one lever can be pulled twice.

Once the imprisoned character has been freed or killed, a secret compartment in the pendulum blade opens up, revealing a key inscribed with the number "8". The door here can only be unlocked by using keys 1 through 8.

13. The Bargainer

A grossly fat creature sits in this room with its back to the far wall. It twirls a silver key, inscribed with the number "9", on a chain around one of its talon like fingers. Smiling toothily as it sees you enter, it says, "One soul, freely given, for one key. No haggle, no barter. Is fair price."

As with many other creatures in the mausoleum, this creature cannot be harmed and is completely immune to magic. Moreover, the characters cannot just take the key from the beast, because with a wave of its hand, it can summon the key back from anywhere they have taken it.

The only way to get the key is for one character to volunteer to die. If someone volunteers, read the following:

As <character's name> steps forward, the creature lifts its hand, and a cold, black ray oozes out to engulf your comrade. The flesh is stripped from your friend's bones in an instant, and with a howl, <name> fades away to nothing. Smiling, the creature throws the key at your feet, saying, "One keeps the bargain."

The character is well and truly dead. Nothing can bring her back to life except for the intervention of a god. Fortunately, such an intervention lies in the next room.

14. The Lethe Archway

As the door swings open, it reveals a large room with an alabaster arch at the far end. Serving as the keystone for the arch is a huge diamond, which can only be the Gem of Oblivion. Torches hang in brackets on the walls, lighting the room...

A plain-looking man blocks your path. His skin is pale, and his hair is pitch black, but his eyes draw your gaze, staring right through you, dissecting and weighing your entire being in an instant. He frowns at your presence, "Why have you come to see the Death of Gods?" His voice is soft, but his words rattle your skull like a handful of dice.

The torches flicker in a sudden gust of wind, and Azrael appears between you and the somber Death.

"They came because I bid them do so, my shadow."

The Death of Gods squints at him, confused. "Azrael? I had not expected you for many millennia yet. Why do you seek the mercy of the Lethe Arch so soon?"

Azrael laughs, "You single minded fool, I don't seek the arch. I've come for the gem and the power accumulated inside it, built up there over unimaginable eons like a pearl in an oyster. Once I have the gem, the other gods have no chance against me, and the universe will be mine at last!" Azrael laughs, throwing back his head in triumph. "This day, all my dreams come true!"

The Death of Gods holds out its hand, and a glittering black scythe materializes in its grasp. "No. They will not."

Azrael sneers at its foe, "Don't delude yourself. You can't stop me. Not at my full power. These fools opened the way, and I made it past all the guardians without a scratch." Azrael gestures and a shadowy scythe appears in his hand.

Casting appraising looks across you once again, the Death of Gods smiles at Azrael. "They are hardly fools just because they opened the way for you. I am the greater fool, for I failed to see your approach and stop you. But no matter. Your quest ends here."

With this, the two deities leap forward, swinging their scythes at each other. Your ears shriek in pain as the blades scrape against each other with the screams of a thousand souls. For now, they seem to be paying you no mind.

THE LAST GODS

The two gods battle for five rounds before the Death of Gods is overwhelmed and killed by Azrael unless the characters intervene. In this conflict, Azrael has 65 hp, and the Death of Gods has 50 hp. Every round the characters do not distract Azrael, he inflicts 10 hp to the Death of Gods with his scythe. If the Death of Gods is killed, the characters have one final round in which to do something before Azrael absorbs the power of the Gem of Oblivion, at which point they are doomed alongside the rest of the universe.

For the Death of Gods to win the battle, the characters must distract Azrael long enough to allow him a successful strike. Every time they manage to distract Azrael, the Death of Gods gets in a blow inflicting 2d10 damage. There are a number of ways they can accomplish this:

Attack Azrael with *reckoner*: Azrael's AC is 20 in respect to the characters, since most of the god's attention is focused on the Death of Gods. After suffering a wound from *reckoner*, Azrael waves a hand at the PCs, hurling them across the room and into a wall. They must make a Will save (DC 20) to hold on to their weapon. They suffer 5d6 damage from the attack.

Attack Azrael with a Normal Weapon: Although the attack inflicts no damage, Azrael is distracted by the character's presence long enough for the Death of Gods to successfully attack. Azrael reacts in the manner listed above.

Cast a Spell on Azrael: If a character casts an offensive 4th-level or higher spell on Azrael, the evil god pauses a moment to reflect the spell at its caster, allowing the Death of Gods to attack successfully.

Attacking the Gem of Oblivion: Trying to hack at the Gem with weapons or spells genuinely angers Azrael. He casts *finger of death* at the character attacking the gem. Failing a Fortitude save (DC 25) the PC dies. A successful save results in suffering only 3d6+30 damage. However, Azrael is so distracted the Death of Gods inflicts 3d10 damage this round.

Bluff Azrael: A character can make a Bluff check (DC 27) to distract Azrael for a round. Annoyed, Azrael then raises his hand slightly, and the character's mouth and nose seal shut (see Suffocation in Chapter 8 DMG).

When Azrael is reduced to 0 hp, the god becomes angry and summons a Servant of Azrael (hp 58) [see New Monsters — Appendix B] for each of them to fight. Then it wills Reckoner out of its wielder's hands. The weapon lands over near the archway.

☛ **Servant of Azrael:** CR 7; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 9d12; hp 58; Init +7; Spd 40 ft., fly 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk Automatic Hit melee (2d8, ghostly scythe); Full Atk Automatic Hit melee (2d8, ghostly scythe); SA ghostly scythe, create spawn; SQ undead traits, incorporeal traits, immune to turning, unnatural aura, sunlight powerlessness; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Reflex +5, Will +8; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Intuit Direction +10, Listen +13, Search +10, Spot +13; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

Ghostly Scythe (Su): In combat, the servant of Azrael swings its ghostly scythe at one opponent every round, automatically hitting it. Damage reduction may still apply, but the scythe is considered to be a +2 *lawful evil ghost touch* weapon for this purpose. No one but the servant of Azrael can touch its scythe, and it dissolves upon the creature's demise. The servant of Azrael does not receive automatic hits with its attacks of opportunity, these it makes with a +7 to attack.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a servant of Azrael becomes a servant of Azrael in 1d4+1 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the servant who created them and remain enslaved until death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life. [Remove Create Spawn, is too powerful, I send one of these into an orphanage at night and suddenly I have 300 of them. Or you could change it to only effect characters of more than 8th level as "it requires the death of a powerful soul to spawn a servant of Azrael" and give them a Will save (DC 25) to avoid the effect.]

Unnatural Aura (Su): Wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a servant of Azrael at a distance of 60. They do not willingly approach nearer than this and panic if forced to do so. They remain panicked as long as they are within range.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): Servants of Azrael are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it, servants are simply *dazzled* by any effect that creates the equivalent of sunlight. A servant of Azrael caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only partial actions.

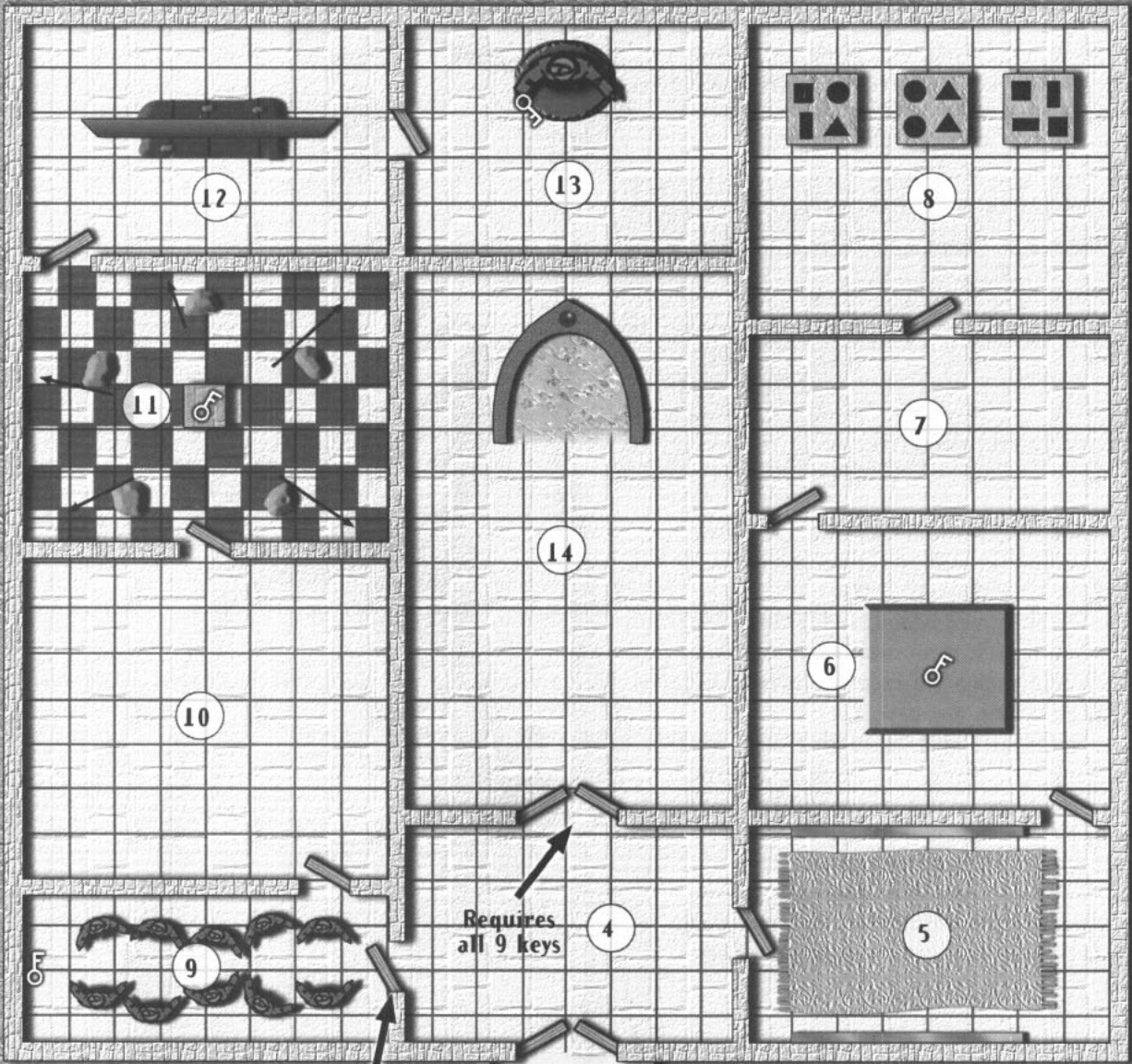
Run two rounds of combat with the servants distracting the characters and Azrael wounding the Death, then read the players the following text, putting the name of the character who sacrificed himself to the Bargainer (room #13):

Azrael knocks the scythe out of the Death of God's hands and towers over it, pausing to savor the moment before striking. "You see, Death of Gods, your little playmates have proven useless in the end. I still stand triumphant. Who's going to help you now?"

The Death of Gods smiles up at Azrael and makes a small gesture. "We'll see."

Just then, <character's name> stumbles out of the Lethe Archway behind Azrael, near reckoner. The Lord of Undeath has yet to notice your comrade.

THE LAST GODS



Requires keys 1-3

Requires all 9 keys

2

3

THE LAST GODS

As a reward for his sacrifice earlier, the PC gets a chance to save the day. All he has to do is pick up reckoner and attack either Azrael or the Gem of Oblivion to deal the Lord of Undeath a crushing defeat. If the characters are victorious, read them the following text:

Azrael screams in horror, stretching its skeletal hands out towards the Gem of Oblivion, "No! Not this way! Not by a handful of mortals!"

Standing up, the Death of Gods extends its hand, and its dark scythe flies to its grip. Grinning, it swings the scythe in a glittering arc, slicing Azrael neatly in two. The evil god's scream lingers in the air as its body is reduced to ashes and drawn into the Lethe Archway. Finally, it is done.

Assuming the party wins, the Death of Gods thanks them for their assistance, returns party members to life, dispelling all baneful magical effects (including putting them back in their own bodies) and healing them fully, and then grants each party member a wish. After they make their wishes, the characters are returned to camp where this all started.

Assuming the party wins, the Death of Gods thanks them for their assistance, returns party members to life, dispelling all baneful magical effects (including putting them back in their own bodies) and healing them fully, and then grants each party member a limited wish. After they make their wishes, the characters are returned to camp where this all started, no time seems to have passed since they left...





NEW SPELLS

Break Greater Seal

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 6**Components:** V**Casting Time:** 1 standard action**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)**Target:** One sealed object with an area up to 10 sq. ft./level**Duration:** Instantaneous; see text**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

Break greater seal opens all manner of magically warded portals, prisons, doors, and anything else held by magical means. It is in all ways like *knock*, except there is no limit to what it can open. One casting of *break greater seal* opens any barrier held by magical or nonmagical means. This spell does not trigger traps, remove symbols or magical wards, and so on. It only opens locked or sealed objects or obstructions. A cave in could not be moved with this spell, but a rusted portcullis could.

Necromantic Armor

Enchantment

Level: Clr 6**Components:** V, S, MF**Casting Time:** 10 minutes**Range:** Touch**Target:** One suit of armor**Duration:** Permanent**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

Necromantic armor casts a kind of permanent *animate dead* on a piece of armor, radiating high levels of both evil and magic. When the armor is placed on a dead body, it animates the remains into a skeleton or zombie under the control of the creator of the armor. In addition, the skeleton or zombie has full hit points, gains the Toughness feat (even if it already has it), +2 turn resistance, and a +5 enhancement bonus due to the vile nature of the armor. Undead created by this spell do not flee if turned within 50 ft. of the armor.

If a living creature dons the armor, he suffers 3d6 hit points of damage per turn until dead (Will save halves the damage). The damage appears as dead skin on the wearer's body. If the armor kills a living wearer, it instantly reanimates the body as a zombie.

Undead created by the armor may remove the armor, but must remain within 50 ft. of the armor or become unanimated — at least until the armor is placed on those remains again. However, the undead lose all of the benefits listed above without the armor on.

If *consecrate*, *dispel evil*, *hallow* or *remove curse* are cast on the armor, the caster is allowed a check as if *dispel magic* had been cast.

Material Focus: A suit of medium or heavy armor that is transformed in the casting.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Amulet of Gos*Minor Artifact*

The *amulet of gos* is a drop-shaped platinum amulet held by a gold chain. It emits a strange blue-white glow that is most noticeable in the dark. But, even in broad daylight it shines faintly.

As a standard action, possessor of the *amulet of gos* activates its power. Once activated, the amulet ages all creatures within a 10-ft. radius 1 year per round of exposure. The effect is negated if the creature makes a successful DC 30 Will save each round. Thus, it can cause a creature with a short natural life span to age and die in a brief period. Even creatures with longer life spans suffer the ravages of age prematurely.

The magic of the amulet is fickle, and at times, mutations have been known to take place. Rats, snakes, even mold in the area of the amulet when used are known to double or triple in size, dwarfing their original shape. The specific magic properties of the amulet are left to the DM, adding lasting effects to the PCs lives.

Strong transmutation; CL 20th; Weight —.

Arcanus Morti*Minor Artifact*

This hefty axe has a blackened haft and blade. Its grip is silver-wired and the weapon beats an eerie red glow, mocking the beating of a heart.

This enchanted axe was originally a +1 *battleaxe*. However, when Captain Renik Ghent was transformed into a guardian spectre (see *New Monsters* — Appendix B), the Dark Powers enchanted it further turning it into a +2 *ghost touch unholy wounding battleaxe*.

Whoever successfully destroys the guardian spectre, Captain Renik Ghent, may keep *Arcanus Morti*. This is not undertaken without great risk however. First, the

unholy ability bestows one negative level upon any good being trying to wield it. Secondly, each day the *battleaxe* is carried, the owner must make a DC 20 Will save or the owner's alignment moves one step closer to lawful evil. This continues each day until the alignment has been fully converted to lawful evil.

Strong evocation (evil); CL 14th; Weight 6 lb.

Chest of Displacement

The *chest of displacement* is a simple item meant to keep valuables hidden. To displace items, its owner places them in the box and locks the box twice. When unlocked once, the box appears to be empty or just holding items that have not been displaced. To make items reappear, the owner uses the key to unlock the box twice. While items are displaced, they are visible through the window in the front of the chest.

Faint illusion; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *displacement*; Price 30,000 gp; Cost 15,000 gp + 1,200 XP; Weight 20 lbs.

Chest of Preservation

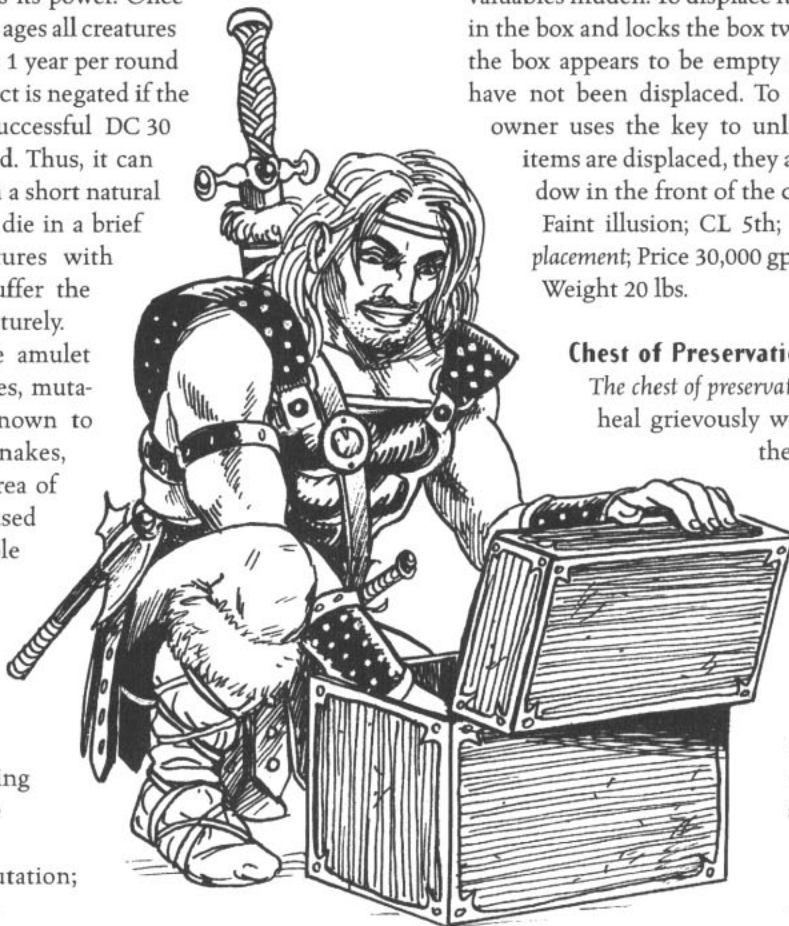
The *chest of preservation* was created in order to heal grievously wounded soldiers and carry them safely home. It is actually

a coffin, though its creators refused to call it such for fear of necromantic associations. The man-shaped box has been carved out of a single piece of wood — a tree-trunk or a great log — and is marked with well-known symbols for healing.

Anyone lying in the chest with the lid closed enters a state of suspended animation and heals 1d8+5

points of damage for every eight hours spent in the chest, though they cannot move or engage in any other activity during this time. The chest can also prevent a dying character from losing any more hit points, keeping her alive until friends can bring her to a proper healer. If the chest is opened before the requisite eight hours, the healing is negated and anyone within must wait another eight hours before gaining any benefits.

Moderate conjuration (healing); CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *cure light wounds*; Price 3,400 gp; Cost 1,700 gp + 136 XP; Weight 20 lbs.



Efreet Orb

Some believe the *efreet orb* is an amazing artifact originating in the fabled City of Brass, but in actuality it's just the creation of a minor arcanist with a flare for the dramatic. Kavon Deralia won the device in a card game with her magic-wielding peers many years ago, and it has remained in her treasure trove ever since. It is not known if any other *efreet* orbs exist, but Kavon herself has learned how to create additional orbs, and she can teach qualified wizards how to do so if she wishes.

The orb appears as a small globe about 3 inches in diameter. It glows soft red, providing light equal to the flame of a single candle. It radiates heat at all times, although it may be handled without damage.

When the *efreet orb's* user clenches it in his right hand and utters the first command word ("fire"), the warmth increases dramatically. It then protects all those within a 10-ft. radius from all chilling effects of weather and outdoor exposure. Even so, it can still be handled barehanded.

If the user hurls the orb and utters the second command word ("sun"), then it explodes in a powerful blast of heat, causing an effect equal to a fireball spell cast by a sixth-level wizard. Each time this ability is used, it temporarily drains the orb of all its powers. It takes two to four days of recharge time before it can be used again.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, light, burning hands, fireball; Price 12,000gp; Cost 6,000 gp + 480 XP; Weight 1 pound.

Fey Talisman

This device is in the form of a small golden amulet on a golden chain. A translucent opal sits in the center. When placed on the wearer by someone else, it completely transforms the wearer into a member of the giver's race. Unwilling recipients can make a Will save (DC 15) to prevent this from happening.

The wearer looks pretty much like himself, only with all the traits of the giver's race instead of his own. The artifact also affects the wearer's mind, granting him knowledge of the race's traditional languages and customs, much as if he'd always been a member of that race. In fact, the wearer actually believes that he's always been a part of his new race — at least in his heart — and he has no desire to revert.

Strong transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, detect thoughts, polymorph, tongues; Price 80,000 gp; Cost 40,000 gp + 3,200 XP; Weight —.

Fiend

Fiend is a jet-black +2 *keen*, *might cleaving unholy greataxe* made of onyx that crackles with red sparks when held by a wielder of chaotic alignment. The blade is serrated, and blood occasionally drips from it, whether or not it has

recently been used to slay someone. Also, no matter what attempts are made to conceal its scent, *fiend* always reeks of blood and viscera.

Strong evocation [evil]; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *keen edge*, *divine power*, *unholy blight*; Price 72,000 gp; Cost 36,000 gp + 2,880 XP.

Heart of Loyalty

The *heart of loyalty* appears as nothing more special than a reddish lump of rock the size of a fist — actually it's the calcified remains of King Rence's heart (see the adventure "Kin and Kinsmen"). When brought before someone's face it glows dull, red if the person is of indirect descent of Rence's bloodline, or brilliant white before those of direct bloodline.

Further, the *heart of loyalty* is a prison for the slayer of dreams (see New Monsters—Appendix B), an extraplanar creature native to the Abyss. Should a descendant of Rence show mortal fear in its presence, the creature within uses this to escape. The wielder of the *heart* can imprison the slayer (or any other extraplanar creature) by smearing his own blood upon the surface of the *heart*, and then smearing the extraplanar's blood. The extraplanar creature must make a Will save (DC 14) or be imprisoned in the *heart*. The *heart* may only contain one creature at a time; attempting to contain more destroys the *heart of loyalty*, freeing the imprisoned monster, as does taking the *heart* to another plane.

Should the *heart* contain an extraplanar, whoever holds it may speak aloud the creature's true name and three times per day *commune* with the creature as if the wielder had cast the spell at the 11th level of ability. It is not likely this information can be trusted.

In addition, once per day the wielder may command the trapped creature to use one of its supernatural or spell-like abilities, as if the power came from the *heart* itself.

Strong Abjuration; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, planar binding, banishment; Price 150,000 gp; Cost 75,000 gp + 6000 XP; Weight 4 lbs.

Helm of Sleep

This item forces its wearer to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 17) once per round or fall into a deep sleep as long as the helmet is worn. The helmet can be removed easily, awakening the wearer (who feels instantly refreshed and can act after 1 round of disorientation). So long as the helmet remains in place, its wearer neither hungers, thirsts, or ages. Some wizards use such helms as a long-term means of suspended animation, but they are also quite useful in detaining dangerous criminals.

If a spellcaster wears the *helm of sleep* for more than a day, all spells he previously prepared are wiped from his memory. Sorcerers and bards are affected as if they have no spells remaining for the day.

Moderate Enchantment (compulsion); CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *deep slumber, sleep*; Price 10,000 gp; Cost 5,000 gp + 400 XP; Weight 3 lbs.

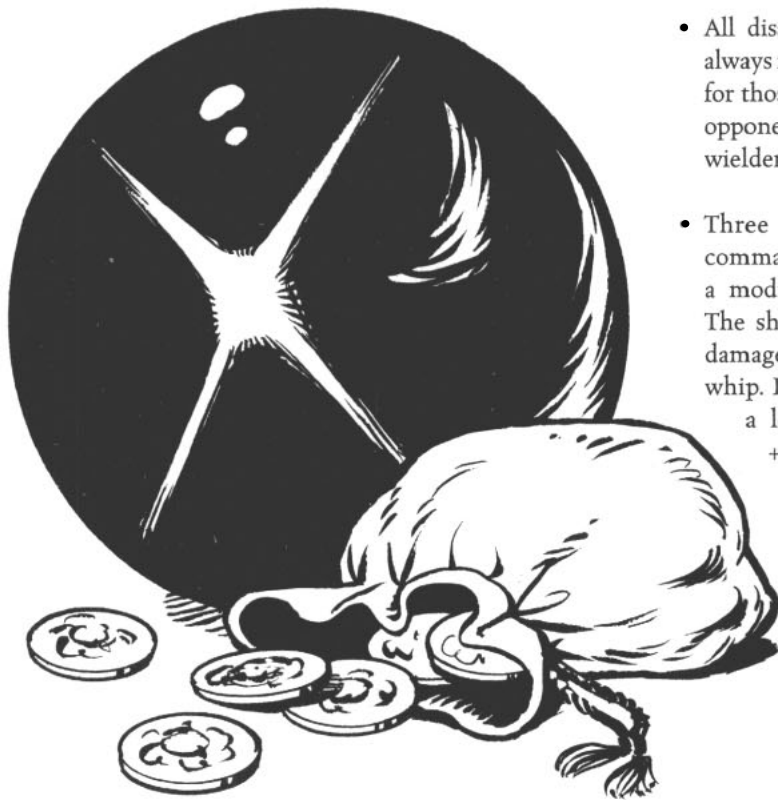
Jerimond's Orb

Jerimond was adept at altering the course of probability. Although this orb was created for another use, before his death he managed to alter its purpose. Now, rather than simply affecting one person, it can benefit a larger segment of the population. When held, the orb grants a +5 resistance bonus to all saving throws. However, when placed in the central square of a small village, the orb instead increases the region's chances of fair weather, good harvests and health.

The orb must be within its brackets (now sealed within the hand of Treefall's statue) to work its magic upon a village. Sadly, the orb has a cost. If a person or place is deprived of the orb, misfortune strikes her or it for the same length of time as it was used for luck.

For an individual, this takes the form of sickness and fatigue (–5 to all saving throws). For a village, this misfortune appears as the curse of the mathorn (see *New Monsters*—Appendix B).

Strong transmutation; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, *control weather, limited wish*; Price 200,000 gp; Cost 100,000 gp + 8,000 XP; Weight 5 lbs.



Luminous Blades

These +3 longswords are the two remaining blades of the six elven knights. When a *luminous blade* is drawn, a pair of teeth bite into the hand of the wielder, doing 1 hit point of damage. The user's blood flows through the sword, and after a moment a blade of fiery energy erupts from the guard to the tip of the blade.

When a hero using a *luminous blade* strikes his opponent, he may suffer 2 hit points of damage in order to deliver an extra +2d6 lawful damage to a creature. He may do this once per successful hit. Creatures of lawful alignment cannot be harmed in this manner. The sword does no damage to the wielder as it is released, and the damage taken by using the sword's powers heal normally.

Moderate evocation; CL 5th; Item Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *flame blade*; Price 55,815 gp; Cost 27,908 gp + 2,233 XP.

Malloc's Lash

Malloc's lash is a vile-looking bullwhip made from a single piece of thick animal hide. The grip is wrapped in leather strips with a polished brass knob on the pommel. The whip tapers to a thin point with a small brass weight attached to the end. The last two ft. have tiny steel teeth embedded in the leather. In combat it functions as a magical +3 whip dealing 1d2 + 3 subdual damage with the following additional effects:

- All disarm and trip attacks made by the wielder are always made with a +5 enhancement bonus to the checks for those actions. If the wielder successfully disarms an opponent, the weapon lands at the feet of the whip wielder, not the original owner.
- Three times per day, the wielder can speak the command word "kneel" as a free action to deliver a modified shocking grasp to the next person hit. The shocking grasp delivers 5d6 points of electricity damage in addition to the normal damage dealt by the whip. If the target is wearing metal armor or carrying a lot of metal, this attack gains an additional +3 bonus.

Strong evocation (evil); CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *Improved Disarm, command, mage hand, shocking grasp*, creator must be evil; Price 98,302 gp; Cost 49,151 gp + 3,932 XP.

Pendant of Syrenal

Created seven centuries ago by an elven wizard (whose fear of undead would certainly have left him paralyzed with horror during a confrontation with such creatures), this item appears as a mithral pendant, hung on a silver chain. Though he had no priestly abilities, he had a good understanding of all magic related to the negative plane and to summoned creatures. As such, he attempted to create a device to protect him from the objects of his fear. After years of research and dozens of failed attempts, he created this pendant.

While worn around the neck, the pendant focuses positive energy around the wearer. This makes it difficult for undead creatures to physically approach or manifest within 5 ft. of the wearer. Undead must make a Will save (DC 25) in order to resist the pendant's magic. Since most undead creatures use their body parts as weapons (claws, bite, touch, etc.), only those few who use long or ranged weapons or attacks are any threat to the wearer. The pendant does not protect the wearer against ranged attacks, like as the domination ability of vampires, but it renders the wearer immune to energy drain attacks.

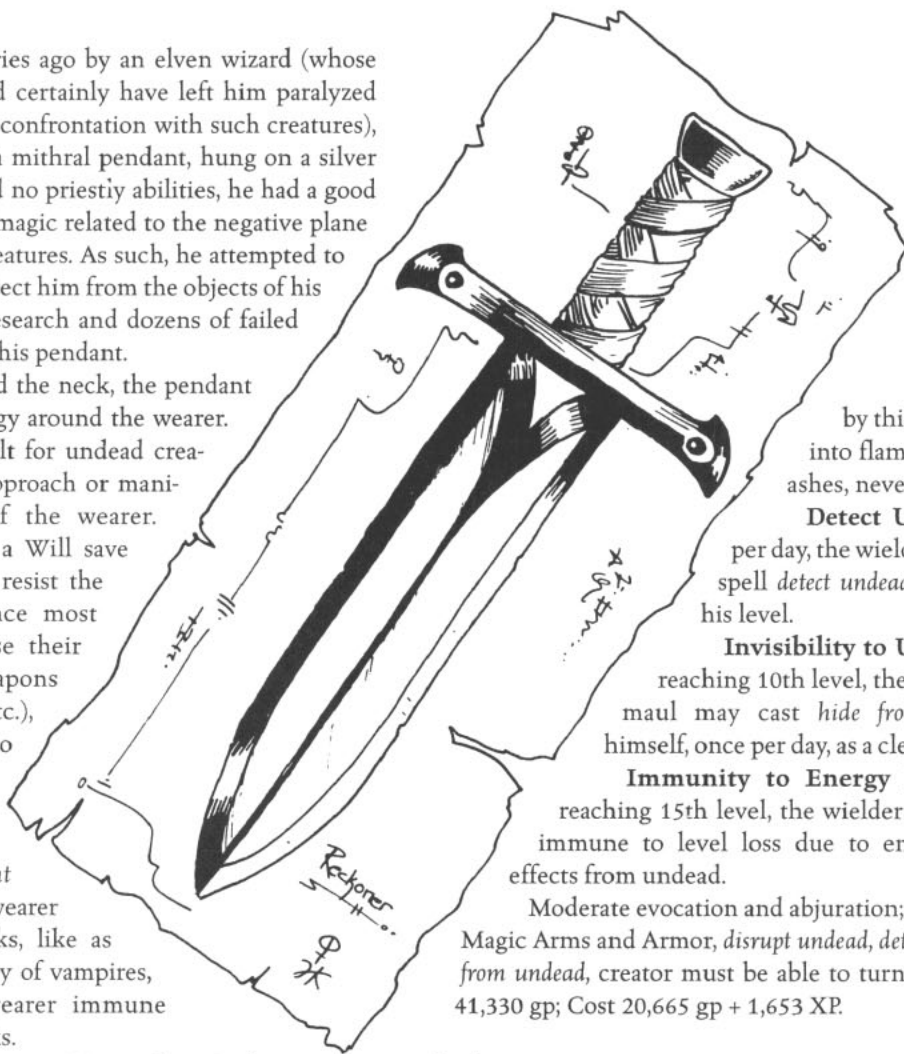
Moderate Abjuration; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, *protection from evil*, *control undead*; Price 208,000 gp; Cost 104,000 gp + 8,320 XP; Weight —.

Perditor Mortua

This *+1undeadbane maul* (a greataxe that does bludgeoning damage) is made of silvery mithril and is embossed with sigils on the head translating to its literal name: "Destroyer of the Dead." The maul is only usable by a non-evil character that can turn undead. No other character can pick it up or wield it. It is unusual in that its powers are dependent upon its wielder's level. As its wielder gains power, so does the maul.

The wrappings around the maul's handle are made from mummy wrappings, and the loop of hair tied to the base of the handle was taken from a necromancer. The process used to create the maul has been lost to antiquity.

Burn Undead: The maul has a +3 bonus to attacks and damage when used to attack undead, plus an extra 2d6 damage from the bane effect. In addition, undead killed



by this weapon burst into flames and burn to ashes, never to rise again.

Detect Undead: Twice per day, the wielder can cast the spell *detect undead* as a cleric of his level.

Invisibility to Undead: Upon reaching 10th level, the wielder of the maul may cast *hide from undead* on himself, once per day, as a cleric of his level.

Immunity to Energy Drain: Upon reaching 15th level, the wielder of the maul is immune to level loss due to energy draining effects from undead.

Moderate evocation and abjuration; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *disrupt undead*, *detect undead*, *hide from undead*, creator must be able to turn undead; Price 41,330 gp; Cost 20,665 gp + 1,653 XP.

Reckoner

Minor Artifact

Reckoner is a plain, gray dagger. It does not radiate magic, and it has no bonuses to hit or damage. What it does have is one of the subtlest and awesome powers the future Azrael could imbue it with.

Simply put, *reckoner* can injure any being: living, dead, or undead. The dagger ignores all damage-reduction abilities, including such aspects as incorporeality. Even the very gods fear its sting.

Reckoner can also damage inanimate objects such as golems or stone. It can even shave slivers off a diamond or a lump of adamantium ore. Given enough time, any wall can be tunneled through, and any chain can be cut.

Its primary drawback is, in spite of this truly mighty enchantment, it still only inflicts normal dagger damage. *Reckoner* cannot be recreated by any mortal spellcaster. It is considered a major artifact.

Strong evocation; CL 20th; Weight 1 lb.

Ring of Remembrance

This silver ring is set with a round polished sapphire. It has a spring of rosemary carved into the band. The ring gives the wearer a psychic feel for the location of the last person to wear it, if the person is still alive. It gives a strong sense of the direction and distance, but is only exact to within an area of 100 ft (the ring will lead a person to a crowded room, but will not be able to determine which person in the room was the last to wear it). The ring only orients to its target if someone else puts it on. Thus, taking the ring off and putting it back on does not reset it.

When a person goes into hiding and needs to make sure that only someone he trusts can find him, a ring of remembrance is typically used. The ritual to attune a ring is permanent, and is set during the creation of the ring. Once attuned, it can never be changed.

Moderate Divination; CL 7th; Forge Ring, *detect thoughts, locate creature*; Price 10,000 gp; Cost 5,000 gp + 400 XP; Weight —.

Ring of Tirna'gael

Minor Artifact

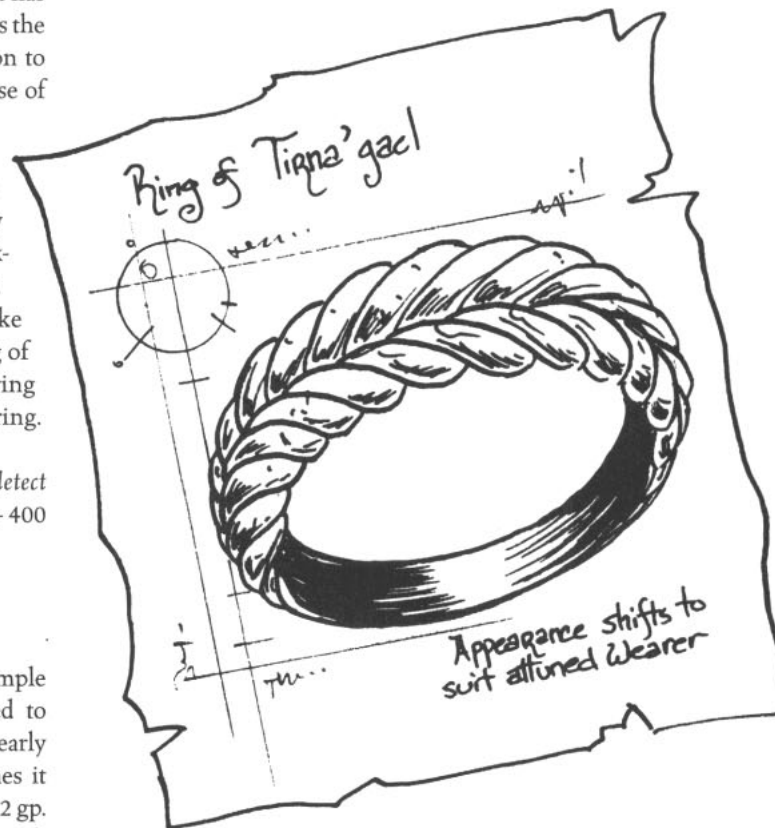
When first encountered, this item appears to be a simple ring with an undefined history. Unless it is attuned to someone, it also seems to be rusted and pocked nearly beyond repair. An Appraise check (DC 15) determines it might be salvageable as a minor trinket worth, at most, 2 gp. But if it is owned (carried, worn, or maintained) for a week or more, it becomes attuned to the owner and begins to morph, appearing more and more ideal for him or her.

When attuned, the ring adds +1 to all damage generated by attacks from the wearer. This bonus is applied to all damage regardless of the source. This bonus is applied after all other modifiers and multipliers. Should the wearer continue to wear the ring as he or she gains levels, the bonus is increased by another +1 for each level gained. This bonus is lost immediately if the ring is ever out of the wearer's possession for one week.

The ring's physical appearance shifts slowly, apace with the benefits gained, until it looks perfectly suited to the wielder. For example, if the ring were attuned to a paladin, it would become more regal and brilliant until it gleamed with a vibrant, platinum sheen. Regardless of what the ring appears like when attuned, it always reverts to a tarnished and rusted band after it has been abandoned for a week.

As a side effect of increasing its wearer's damaging power, the ring controls the destruction of a body when possessed by a nescient. While wearing the ring, the host is not affected by Body Destruction. Unfortunately, while the ring is worn, the nescient's Augment power does not work, and its Damage Reduction power does not grow any stronger, either. This ring is a minor artifact and cannot be destroyed by any mundane means.

Strong evocation; CL 18th; Weight 3 lbs.



Scepter of The Goblin King

Minor Artifact

The scepter of the goblin king is a silver rod topped with a crystal. It slowly cycles through the colors of the spectrum, swirling a kaleidoscope of constantly shifting hues and colors. When its powers are activated, the crystal flares to life illuminating the nearby area with multicolored light. This light is the equivalent of light, but because of the spectrum of colors, the radius is only 10 ft., instead of 20 ft.

This sacred item has been the symbol of the ruler of the Prismatic Goblins (see New Monsters — Appendix B) for millennia. Whoever possesses it (and it doesn't have to actually be a goblin) is generally accepted as the ruler of the goblins of the Silverbray Mountains. Its bearer may use the following abilities:

1. Permanently *polymorph* one person per day into a prismatic goblin (Will save, DC 30).
2. May be used as a *rod of wonder* three times per day.
3. The wielder gains a +5 sacred bonus on all Charisma-based skills and checks relating to goblins and other goblinoids.

Strong transmutation; CL 10th; Weight 3 lbs.

Star of Desburg

This award is the highest honor in the country, originating in the city of Desburg. It comes with a small badge for all those inducted into the noble order of the star. This badge itself is magical, crafted by Count Sebastian's mages in order to reward valor and service to the county. Anyone within the Kingdom who sees a PC wearing the badge treats him very well. Merchants offer lower prices and better merchandise, and the common peasant doffs his hat to him.

The badge is a small eight-pointed star made of worked platinum and gold, with a single flawless sapphire at the heart. Written on a banner entwined through the star's points are the words 'given in gratitude.' The badge hangs from a small blue ribbon to be pinned on the recipient's chest.

This badge has two magical functions, both active only when it is worn. First, it grants the wearer an enhancement bonus of +2 to their Charisma. This bonus increases to +4 when dealing with any city officer, guardsman, or official representative of the city of Desburg within city limits.

Moderate enchantment; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *eagle's splendor*, creator must be officially sanctioned by the legal authority of Desburg; Price 5,000 gp; Cost 2500 gp + 200 XP; Weight —.

Sword of Tirna'gael

Minor Artifact

This longsword has come to be known in Tirna'cel legend as the "Demon Slayer," after the amazing victories that Tirna'gael seized while wielding it. The truth of its origins is now long lost — as is the origin of its power — but the amazing destruction it unleashes upon extra-

planar creatures is unquestioned. The Sword of Tirna'gael is a highly recognizable weapon, forged from a glistening white metal shot through with darkest obsidian. These veins swell and throb as the weapon is used against outsiders, gaining more and more intensity as they fall before it, until the throbbing hammers at the eardrums of those as many as fifty ft. away.

The weapon is +2 *outsiders (all) bane* that also enhances the abilities of the wielder. Each time an outsider is destroyed with this weapon (i.e. the final

blow that reduces the outsider to less than 0 hit points), the wielder steal a portion of the outsider's essence. The wielder gains 1d10+10 temporary hit points as if *false life* had been cast on him. There is no limit to the number of temporary hit points that can be gained through this effect.

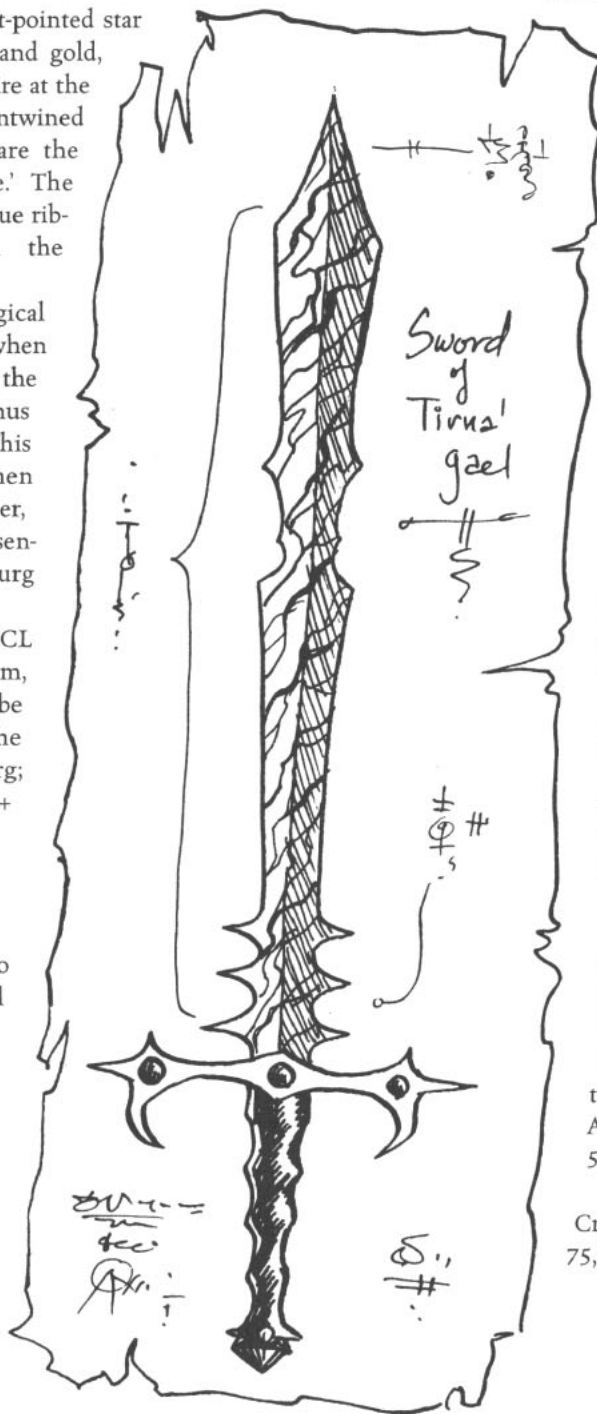
This weapon bestows two negative levels on any extraplanar creature attempting to wield it (which is restored once the weapon is no longer held). There is no saving throw against this effect.

Strong evocation; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *binding, false life*, creator must be good; Price 65,315 gp; Cost 32,658 gp + 2,613 XP.

Symbiotic Magic Jar

This unique gem has been prepared as a *magic jar* receptacle. Such receptacles are normally attuned to just one creature. However, the lost ritualistic procedure used in the creation of this device has left it open to impressions. Anyone carrying the gem for at least one full month becomes attuned to the gem. It then serves as a *magic jar* receptacle for that person upon their death. As a gem alone, this item has a value of 500 gp.

Moderate necromancy; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *magic jar*; Price 75,000 gp; Cost 37,500 gp + 3,000 XP.



Appendix B:

Monsters

BATTLE MASTIFF**Medium Animal****Hit Dice:** 4d8+12 (30 hp)**Initiative:** +3**Speed:** 50 ft. (10 squares)**Armor Class:** 17 (+3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+7**Attack:** Bite +8 melee (1d8 +7)**Full Attack:** Bite +8 melee (1d8 +4), claw +5 melee (1d6+2)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attacks:** Death frenzy, trip**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, scent**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 6**Skills:** Hide +5*, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Spot +6, Survival +1***Feats:** Iron Will, MultiattackB, Weapon Focus (bite)
Environment: Any forest, hill, mountains, plains, and underground.**Organization:** Solitary or pack (2-5)**Challenge Rating:** 3**Treasure:** none**Alignment:** Always neutral**Advancement:** 5–12 HD**Level Adjustment:** —

Battle Mastiffs are huge dogs born and bred especially for warfare. They stand about four ft. high at the shoulder, and weigh 300-400 lbs. They have very short hair, usually black, but occasionally it is rust-brown on the underbelly, around the eyes and mouth, or under the chin. They have massive bull-like necks, tiny pointed ears, broad, blunt snouts, and beady yellow eyes. They are bred for their ferocity and tenacity and are sometimes enhanced with body armor (increasing their already respectable Armor Class) and/or serrated steel gauntlets for their paws (+1 damage bonus). They are trained to obey only one master. If their master is killed, they will immediately attack whatever was responsible for the death.

COMBAT

In combat, battle mastiffs stay close to their masters unless ordered to attack a specific target.

Death Frenzy (Ex): If their master is killed, a battle mastiff will, with suicidal focus, immediately attack the person or being responsible. It gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution, a +2 bonus on Will Saves and a –2 armor class. The mastiff will not stop attacking the its master's assassin until one of the other of them are dies.

Trip (Ex): A battle mastif that hits with its bite may attempt to trip the opponent (+4 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the battle mastiff.

Skills: Battle Mastiffs have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks, and a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

BRAINVINE

Medium Plant

Hit Dice: 4d8 +4 (22 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 0 ft., vines 20 ft. (4 squares)

Armor Class: 11 (+1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 10

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/−2

Attack: 1 piercing per vine +2 melee (1d6−1)

Full Attack: 1 piercing per vine +2 melee (1d6−1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./20 ft.

Special Attack: Motor control

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, Plant traits, electricity immunity

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 9 (for each vine), Dex 13, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 5

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +7

Feats: Great Fortitude, Stealthy

Environment: Temperate and warm, forest, marsh, hill, mountain, and underground.

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None (just what is found on its victims)

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 6 HD (Medium), 7–8 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

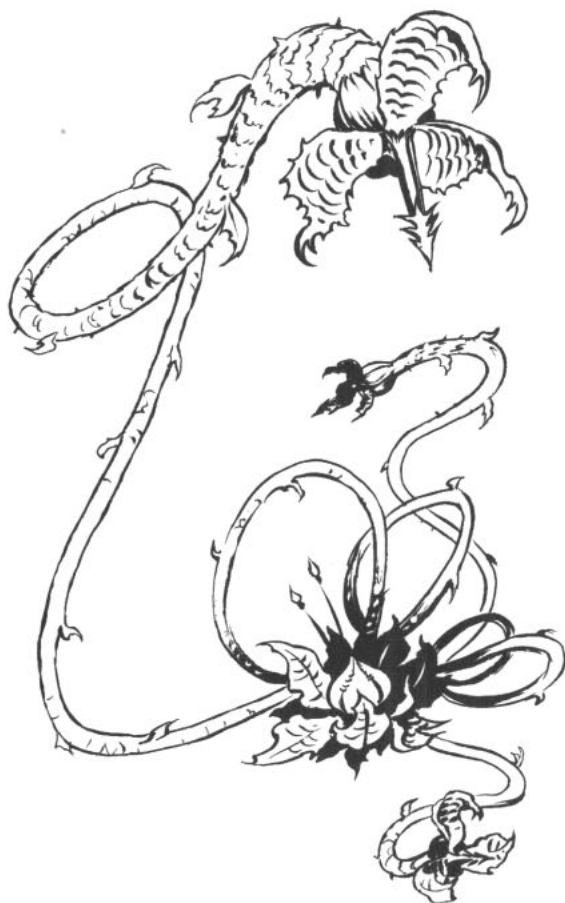
Brainvines appear as a mundane vine cluster with medium leaves every five inches or so along each vine. They have one vine per 3 hp of the plant, rounding up (a typical specimen has 7 vines). These vines spread out over a large area, in all directions from a central point, and can extend out from the central point by hundreds of feet. The plant itself cannot move, but its vines have a speed of 20 ft.

Though the brainvine lists “solitary” for organization, it is very possible to find more than one such plant in an area. Generally, they do not cooperate as more intelligent creatures might.

COMBAT

One plant may not bring more than three vines to bear on a single target.

The brainvine itself only takes damage when its vines are attacked, severed or destroyed. The vines have AC 11, and each vine has damage resistance 3/slashing and takes 5 hp before being severed/destroyed. For each of its vines that have been severed, the brainvine plant loses 3 hp. Effects with an area — such as a fireball spell — that target the center of the vine apply damage directly against the plant’s base hp. If the plant survives, damage is spread evenly among the vines within the area of the effect.



Electricity Immunity (Ex): Brainvines take no damage from electricity.

Motor Control (Ex): After each successful attack made against a mammal by a brainvine, the target must make a Will save (DC14). The save DC is Wisdom-based. If the save fails, a vine has entered the target’s body and attacked its central nervous system. When this happens, the target becomes paralyzed for 10 minutes. Then the target’s body is under the control of the brainvine, which uses the attached vine to send commands to the target’s nervous system.

Even the victim’s sensory capabilities are accessed by the brainvine while it is in control. Victims of the brainvine may perform combat using their normal close combat attacks, but they never have more than a +2 Attack bonus or Damage bonus, nor can the victim have a Dexterity bonus greater than +2. Brainvines may not use ranged attacks or magical/mental abilities of its victims. Victims also have only 3/4 their normal speed.

If the vine, which connects the brainvine to the victim, is severed or destroyed, the control is broken. When this occurs, the vine’s victim must make another Will saving throw (DC 10). Failure indicates the victim falls unconscious for 1–4 minutes. If the save is successful, the victim returns to normal at the end of the current round.

CAVE WYRM

Gargantuan Undead**Hit Dice:** 16d12 (104 hp)**Initiative:** -2**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 30 ft.**Armor Class:** 12 (-2 Dex, -4 Size, +8 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 12**Base Attack/Grapple:** +8/+19**Attack:** Bite melee +15 (2d8+11 plus poison)**Full Attack:** Bite melee +15/+10 (2d8+11 plus poison)**Space/Reach:** 20 ft./15 ft.**Special Attack:** Poison**Special Qualities:** Blindsight (120 ft.), damage reduction 10/good, undead traits**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +8**Abilities:** Str 32, Dex 7, Con —, Int 2, Wis 7, Cha 15**Skills:** Intimidate +19, Listen +12**Feats:** Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Snatch**Environment:** Underground**Organization:** Solitary**Challenge Rating:** 9**Treasure:** None**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil**Advancement Range:** 17–30 HD (Gargantuan)**Level Adjustment:** —

A cave wurm resembles an enormous (80 to 100-ft. long) albino snake. Its eyes are permanently sealed shut by flaps of skin that have grown over them. Its fangs drip with a green poison that reeks of rotting flesh and hisses where it strikes the ground.

Cave wyrms are created by placing the blood of at least 200 sentient creatures inside an enormous iron vat. The creator then prays to Nethtek, using several foul, nearly forgotten rites. The cave wurm then rises up out of the vat, absorbing the blood into its body as it does so. The cave wurm always obey its creator's commands until the creator countermands the orders. Otherwise, the cave wurm continues following its last orders until destroyed.

COMBAT

Cave wyrms are not particularly intelligent, but they have a terrifying bite that delivers a magical poison that rots the victim from the inside out.

Poison (Su): Anyone bitten by a cave wurm must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 18) or take 1d4 points of permanent Constitution damage as the poison races through his system, rotting away at his internal organs.

A victim who dies from this poison seems to turn into a rotted corpse and collapse right before his friends' eyes. This poison loses its potency upon the cave wurm's death.

Skills: Cave wyrms have a +7 racial bonus to Listen checks.

CHAOS SPIRIT

Small Outsider (Chaotic; Incorporeal)**Hit Dice:** 2d8-2 (7 hp)**Initiative:** +8**Speed:** Fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Armor Class:** 17 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 15, flat-footed 12**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+2**Attack:** Slam +7 melee (Book 1d4-2, knife 1d4+1, short sword 1d6+3)**Full Attack:** Slam +7 melee (Book 1d4-2, knife 1d4, short sword 1d6)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attack:** —**Special Qualities:** Possess item, incorporeal traits, natural invisibility, flight**Saves:** Fort +4, Reflex +5, Will +1**Abilities:** Str —, Dex 19, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15**Skills:** Hide +8, Spot +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +7**Feats:** Improved Initiative**Environment:** Any land and underground**Organization:** Flock 3-10**Challenge Rating:** 1**Treasure:** None**Alignment:** Always chaotic neutral**Advancement Range:** 3–6 HD (Medium), 7–10 HD (Large)**Level Adjustment:** —

The chaos spirit is a mischievous and destructive spirit wrought of pure chaos. Though not evil, the chaos spirit draws pleasure from any act of destruction and cares little for the consequences of such behavior.

Chaos spirits are invisible and incorporeal, incapable of interacting with the physical world unless they first inhabit a corporeal object. They can possess any solid object of equal or smaller size than themselves if it's neither alive nor enchanted in any way. Once they inhabit an object, they can cause it to fly about at will, giggling constantly.

Chaos spirits speak their own bizarre language, but a few also speak Infernal or Celestial.

COMBAT

Chaos spirits either slam themselves into an opponent or hurl their stolen body from a distance. The latter attack causes the chaos spirit to lose its physical form, but it hurls the item with a 10-ft. range increment.

Chaos spirits usually don't possess objects carried by a living creature, though they can. To control an object carried by a resisting creature, the chaos spirit must make an opposed grapple roll. (For the chaos spirit's Strength score, use its body's hardness +7.) A successful chaos spirit can cause a warrior to seemingly attack himself with his weapon, beat the wall with his shield, or stumble about blindly as his helmet slips over his eyes.

Casting spells such as Nystul's magic aura on a chaos spirit's body expels the creature. A chaos spirit cannot possess a magical item and is forcibly ejected from any item that is suddenly enchanted, missing its next action.

Possess Item (Su): A chaos spirit can possess any object within its size limit with a standard action. While inside a physical body, the chaos spirit gains a natural armor bonus to its AC equal to half the hardness of the object, rounded down. It also gains a damage bonus as if its Strength score is equal to the object's hardness +7.

While possessing a physical body, the chaos spirit is no longer incorporeal, though damage is absorbed by the creature's body first. If an attack does enough damage to destroy the chaos spirit's body, any excess damage is done to the chaos spirit. However, the chaos spirit renders the possessed items unstable, reducing the hardness of a possessed item by half (round down).

Natural Invisibility (Su): While outside a physical body, the chaos spirit is always invisible. This ability is not subject to invisibility purge.

Flight (Su): A chaos spirit possessing an object of small size or smaller can fly about at full speed. Any chaos spirit possessing a body of medium or larger can still drag itself about at 20 ft. per round. If the body has limbs that can serve as legs, this speed is doubled.

CHIRURGEON

Medium Construct

Hit dice: 2d10 (11 hp) +20 (31 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 15 (+3 Dex, +2 Natural), touch 15, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+3

Attack: Claw +3 melee (1d6+2/19–20)

Full Attack: 2 claws +3 melee (1d6+2/19–20)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Sharp fingers

Special Qualities: Construct traits, haste

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary or gang (2-4)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: 3–4 HD (Medium)

Chirurgeons are swiftly moving slayers, combining the best qualities of larger constructs with the added benefits of agility and speed. Chirurgeons are a ghoulish collection of stolen body parts cobbled together to form a single composite form. They stand about 6-ft. and have sallow skin. They weigh between 200 and 400 lbs. Steel pins and rods stretch the flesh of these creatures in horrific mockeries of their original human forms. Their gaunt bodies are completely hairless. Stitches crisscross their bodies, making them look like living jigsaw puzzles.

Gore-smeared razors extend from the stumps of their hands like slender fingers.

A newly created chirurgeon smells faintly of freshly dug earth and alchemical preservatives. This scent fades after about a week. From their twisted mouths they utter a constant gibbering caterwaul. They move and strike with a grace rarely seen in any other construct.

Chirurgeons do only what they are ordered to do. They are barely intelligent. They can draw no conclusions of their own and take no initiative. As a result of this limitation, their instructions must always be simple, such as "Kill anyone who enters this chamber".

COMBAT

Chirurgeons are deft fighters and can inflict a great deal of damage in a short period. Their high dexterity, surprising bursts of speed, and sharp bladed fingers more than make

up for their lack of raw physical strength.

Most churgeons are typically clothed in little more than rags. However, some creators have taken to strapping their constructs into light armor. In instances where armor is added, add the new armor bonus to the churgeon's natural AC of 12. Be sure to include the Dexterity bonus (as modified by the armor type) to find the churgeon's final AC.

Haste (Su): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a churgeon can enter a battle frenzy that duplicates the effect of the spell *haste* on itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts for 3 rounds.

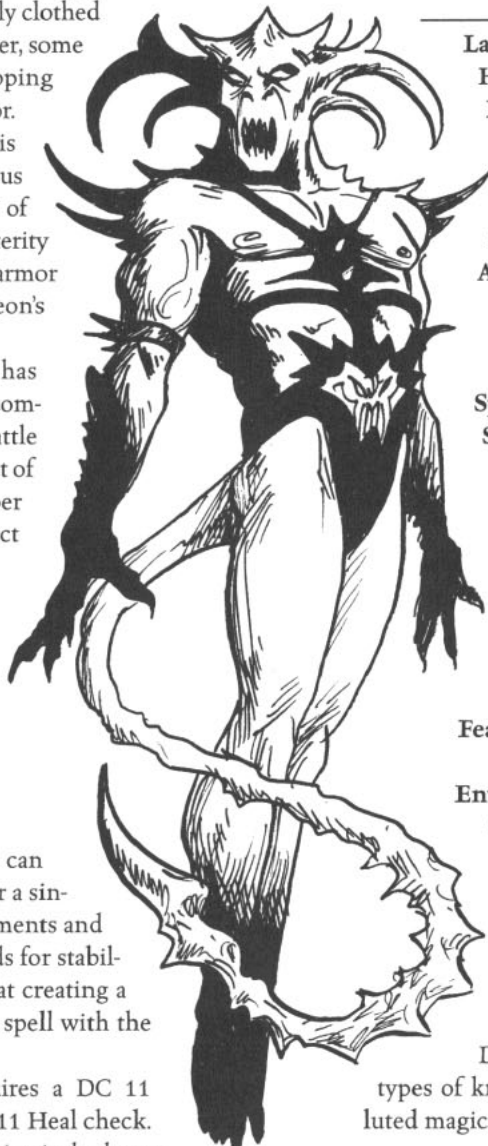
Sharp Fingers (Ex): The blades that make up the churgeon's fingers are exceptionally sharp and threaten a critical hit on a 19–20.

CONSTRUCTION

The pieces of a Churgeon can come from different sources or a single diseased body. Special augments and bindings (frequently metal rods for stability) are also required. Note that creating a Churgeon requires casting a spell with the evil descriptor.

Assembling the body requires a DC 11 Craft (leatherworking) or DC 11 Heal check.

CL 5th; Craft Construct, *animate dead*, *command*, caster must be at least 5th level; Price 4,000 gp; Cost 2,000 gp +173 XP.



DARK CHAMPION

Large Outsider (Lawful, Evil)

Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (56 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 30 ft.

Armor Class: 20 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +9 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+12

Attack: Claw +12 melee (1d6+4)

Full Attack: 2 claws +12 melee (1d6+4), tail +10 melee (1d8+4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attack: Tendon slice, lightning attack

Special Qualities: Redirect magic

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +6

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +9, Hide +8, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +12, Search +7, Sense Motive +8, Spot +9

Feats: Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement Range: 10–16 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

Dark champions are one of the most feared types of known devils, being forged from pure, unpoluted magical force.

COMBAT

They are linked to the mysterious untapped forces holding the universe together, and constantly draw magic of all kinds into themselves, feeding from it. This has a twofold effect. First, it saps the magical power of nearby spells and items, rendering them useless (effectively extending an antimagic field surrounding it at all times). Second, when the Dark Champion saps enough magic, it can convert some of it into a powerful discharge directed at its enemies, most commonly in the form of a lightning bolt.

The Dark Champion is also a skilled hand-to-hand fighter, relying upon its spindly limbs and prehensile barbed tail when challenged by opponents without magic.

Tendon Slice (Ex): A hit from the Dark Champion's tail slices through tendons and muscle, cutting deep into

the opponent's flesh. The target must immediately make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage suffered) or suffer a cumulative -2 penalty to all attack rolls, melee weapon damage rolls, and physical Skill checks. This penalty remains until a *heal*, *regenerate* or similar powerful healing magic is applied. Cure spells only restore lost hit points and cannot remove this penalty. In addition, the target must make a second Fortitude save (DC same) or lose 1 hit point permanently from the trauma (only *heal* or *restoration* restores these permanently lost hit points).

Lightning Attack (Ex): For every 10 points of casting levels and modifiers the Dark Champion gains from its redirect magic quality (see below), it may release a lightning bolt as cast by an 8th level sorcerer. This attack behaves in every way like the *lightning bolt* spell effect.

Redirect Magic (Su): Magic spells and items brought within a 20-ft. radius of the Dark Champion are affected by an *antimagic field* as cast by a 10th level sorcerer, and immediately drop to their lowest possible casting level (in the case of spells) or modifier, positive or negative (in the case of items) to the champion for the purposes of its lightning attack (see above). Spell-like effects without a casting level and items without a numerical bonus do not affect this total, but are still affected by the *antimagic field*. This does not effect the Dark Champion's lightning attack in any way.

FARINAE

Small Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d6 (3 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Armor Class: 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-1

Attack: Halfspear +1 melee (1d6-1) or halfspear +3 ranged (1d6-1)

Full Attack: Halfspear +1 melee (1d6-1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., tribal telepathy

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 7

Skills: Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +4

Feats: Dodge

Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Gang (2-6) or tribe (10-100 farinae, plus 1 queen of 5th level, 1 king of 5th level, and 1 shaman/wizard of 5th level)

Challenge Rating: 1/4

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Chaotic good

Advancement Range: By character class

Level Adjustment: +0

The farinae are tiny humanoids, standing just 30 inches tall. They are all immortal. The farinae are uniformly dark in color, leading some to speculate that they are somehow related to the dark elves. In fact, the flesh of the original farinae was composed of compressed soil, which accounts for the dark-coffee color. The farinae are entirely hairless, and their eyes are a uniform black, like those of a shark. Even their teeth are dark, the color of old wood.

Farinae were once fairly common, with many different wizards creating them by the dozen, but the secret of their construction has long since been lost. Over the years, most of the different groups or tribes of farinae have vanished simply because of attrition.

COMBAT

Farinae are perfectly aware that they don't stand up well against the larger races in a toe-to-toe attack. They rely on their smarts to stack the odds in their favor and to provide them with a means of escape should one prove necessary. If cornered, they fight to the death.

Tribal Telepathy (Su): Farinae can telepathically communicate with each other — or at least any other farinae created by the same wizard — at any range. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in a group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No farinae in a group is considered flanked unless all of them are.

Unless they have visitors, silence is the rule in this society to be broken only by the weird music that they play on their Grecian lyre-like instruments, which they break out at any thinly veiled excuse.

Skills: Farinae receive a +3 racial bonus to Hide checks. This adds to their +4 bonus to Hide checks for being small creatures. This is already figured into the profile above.

FARINAE CHARACTERS

Farinae characters possess the following racial traits.

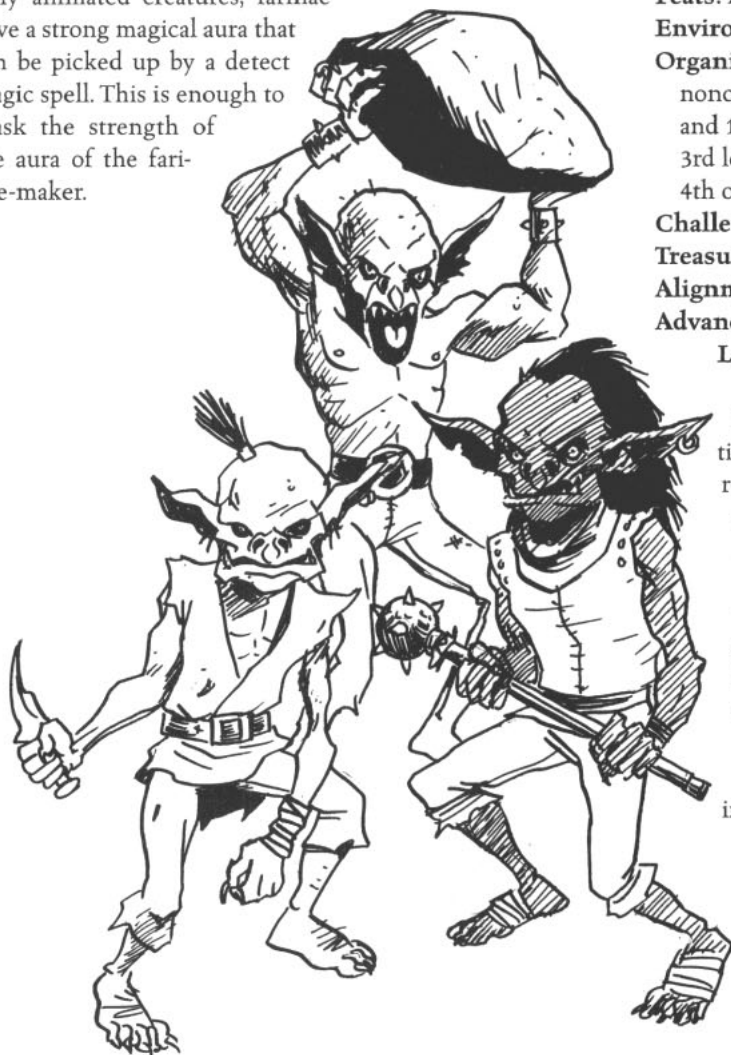
- -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma.
- Small size: +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, -4 penalty on grapple

GOBLIN. DESERT

checks, lifting and carrying limits 3/4 those of Medium characters.

- A farinae's base land speed is 30 ft.
- Darkvision out to 60 ft.
- Racial Feats: A farinae character gains feats according to its character class.
- +2 natural armor bonus: the Farinae are remarkably tough for their size.
- +3 racial bonus to hide checks: Farinae are cunning and know how to hide away from the larger races.
- Magical Creature: as magically animated beings, Farinae radiate magic and can be detected by detect magic and similar spells and abilities
- Automatic Languages: Common. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Elven.
- Favored Class: Fighter.
- Level adjustment +0.

Farinae tend to be fighters or rogues, the only exception being the rare shaman/wizard, a farinae crafted to act as the wizard's magical assistant. As magically animated creatures, farinae have a strong magical aura that can be picked up by a detect magic spell. This is enough to mask the strength of the aura of the farinae-maker.

**Small Humanoid (Goblinoid)**

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +3 studded leather armor), touch 12, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/+0

Attack: Sling +3 ranged (1d4) or short sword +1 melee (1d6)

Full Attack: Sling +3 ranged (1d4) or short sword +1 melee (1d6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Burrowing, darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6

Skills: Hide +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Survival +4

Feats: Alertness

Environment: Desert only

Organization: Gang (4–9), band (10–100 plus 100% noncombatants plus 1 3rd Level sergeant per 20 adults, and 1 leader of 4th–6th level), or tribe (40–400 plus 1 3rd level sergeant per 20 adults, 1 or 2 lieutenants of 4th or 5th level, 1 leader of 6th to 8th level)

Challenge Rating: 1/3

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +0

Desert goblins have adapted to the harsh conditions of the open desert. They are similar in most respects to their “water-soft” cousins, but their environment has made them tougher and more cunning. They often prey upon caravan caravans along major trade routes and bands of desert nomads unlucky enough to stumble into their domain. To avoid the scorching desert heat as much as possible, they prefer to operate above ground only at night.

They are omnivorous and eat practically anything to survive, including carrion, even resorting to cannibalism when food is scarce. Their preferred food is raw flesh (any species will do), as they savor its high moisture content.

Desert goblins resemble mummified normal goblins. Their skin looks like dried leather in varying shades of tan or dun. Their ears are shorter, their eyes yellow, their teeth and claws cracked and filthy. Their feet have thick pads like

a camel's, to allow them to walk on the hot desert sand without discomfort. They generally wear layered robes of light tan or light brown. These colors allow them to blend in perfectly with the desert sand. They are often mistaken for small mummies, when they can be seen at all.

COMBAT

Desert goblins prefer to fight only in large groups. If they do not outnumber their prey by 4 to 1 or more, they usually flee or attempt to hide by burrowing into the sand. They have been known to remain undetected within a few feet of passersby.

They are adept at staging ambushes in the open desert, hiding in the sand until their prey is trapped within their circle. They much prefer to steal what they want and slip away undetected.

Their favorite method of attack is to shower their prey with slung stones to soften them up, then rush and finish them off with short swords.

Burrowing (Ex): Desert goblins also have a unique ability to burrow quickly into desert sand. They can reach a depth of 4 ft. in two rounds. They cannot travel this way, however. This ability is used only to conceal themselves or avoid capture. They can slow their breathing while under the sand so they need no breathing tubes to the surface, and can remain buried for about two hours before having to return to the surface to breathe.

Skills: Desert goblins gain several racial bonuses which apply only in a desert or underground environment: +8 to Hide checks, +8 to Move Silently checks, +4 to Survival checks.

Challenge Rating: Desert goblins with levels in NPC classes have a CR equal to their character level -2.

DESERT GOBLIN CHARACTERS

Desert Goblin characters possess the following racial traits.

- -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma.
- Small size: +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, -4 penalty on grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits 3/4 those of Medium characters.
- A desert goblin's base land speed is 30 ft.
- Darkvision out to 60 ft.
- +4 racial bonus on all Hide and Move Silently checks.
- Automatic Languages: Common, Goblin. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Orc.
- Favored Class: Fighter.

GOBLIN, PRISMATIC

Small Humanoid (Goblinoid)

Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 11, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-1

Attack: Morningstar +1 melee (1d8-1) or javelin +3 ranged (1d6-1)

Full Attack: Morningstar +1 melee (1d8-1) or javelin +3 ranged (1d6-1)

Face/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Prismatic effect

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3

Feats: Alertness

Challenge Rating: 1

Alignment: Usually neutral evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +0

Prismatic Goblins are unique to the Silverbray Mountains. They are the result of a mad wizard/alchemists attempt to breed a more useful goblin. Each goblin is born with no color, and develops their coloring at puberty when the foundation of their personality takes root. Thereafter, Prismatic Goblins travel in packs with their own color goblin. In game terms, they are in every respect the same as the standard goblin except each color of Prismatic Goblin has a special ability determined by their color.

COMBAT

Prismatic Effect (Su): Each goblin pack has its own unique supernatural abilities determined by color:

1d20	Color/Trait
1-6	Red: Can cast bull's strength, as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day, on itself.
7-10	Orange: Can cast haste, as a 7th-level sorcerer, once per day, on itself.
11-12	Yellow: Can cast charm person (DC 11) twice per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.
13-14	Green: Can cast bless, as a 1st-level cleric, 3/day, on itself.
15-18	Blue: Can cast mirror image, as a 3rd-level sorcerer, twice per day.
19-20	Purple: Purple prismatic goblins gain a +2 bonus to damage with all melee and unarmed attacks and the Toughness feat.

Skills: Prismatic goblins have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks. Goblin cavalry (mounted on worgs) usually select the Mounted Combat feat in place of the Alertness feat, which reduces their Spot and Listen check modifiers from +4 to +2.

Challenge Rating: Prismatic goblins with levels in NPC classes have a CR equal to their character level -2.

PRISMATIC GOBLIN CHARACTERS

Prismatic Goblin characters possess the following racial traits.

- -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma.
- Small size: +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, -4 penalty on grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits 3/4 those of Medium characters.
- A prismatic goblin's base land speed is 30 ft..
- Darkvision out to 60 ft..
- +4 racial bonus on Move Silently and Ride checks.
- Automatic Languages: Common, Goblin. Bonus Languages: Giant.
- Favored Class: Rogue.

GUARDIAN SPECTRE

The forces surrounding the creation of a guardian spectre are fearsome in aspect. As with a vigilant haunt, the guardian spectre is someone assigned the task of keeping watch over an area, person or item and that being perishes in the defense. This is where the similarity ends. The spirit that will eventually become a guardian spectre must:

- Be of a Lawful alignment.
- Have an extremely forceful personality (Cha 16+).
- Be a leader of some kind.
- Have pledged a dying oath to return.

The dark powers that be are drawn to the utter anger and despair these souls emanate in their journey to the afterlife. The Dark Lords reward the guardian spectres for their dedication. Such is the power to do in death what they failed to do in life.

In melee, a guardian spectre is terrifying to behold. It wields whatever weapon it did in life, but that weapon is enhanced beyond the abilities it had before the transformation. The favored weapon of the guardian spectre is enhanced with a +1 attack and damage bonus, the ghost touch ability, the unholy ability and the wounding ability. The guardian spectre's armor is also given the ghost touch ability.

SAMPLE GUARDIAN SPECTRE

This example uses a 8th level human fighter as the base creature.

Sample Guardian Spectre, Human Ftr 8: CR 10; Medium Undead; HD10d12; hp 63; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d10+7/17-20 plus wounding, greatsword); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d10+7/17-20 plus wounding, greatsword); SA manifestation, frightful moan, horrific appearance, corrupting gaze; SQ undead traits, incorporeal traits, telekinesis, +4 turn resistance and rejuvenation; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 15, Con-, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Listen +10, Search +10, Spot +10; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Manifestation (Su): Can affect things on the material plane

Frightful moan (Su): The guardian spectre can moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-ft. spread must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same guardian spectre's moan for one day.

Horrific Appearance (Su): Any living creature within 60 ft. that views the guardian spectre must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or immediately suffer 1d4 points of permanent Strength, 1d4 points of permanent Constitution and 1d4 points of permanent Dexterity drain. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same guardian spectre's horrific appearance for one day.

Corrupting Gaze (Su): The guardian spectre can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 ft. Creatures that meet the guardian spectre's gaze must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or suffer 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of permanent Charisma drain.

Telekinesis (Su): The guardian spectre can use telekinesis once per round as a free action, as cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the guardian spectre's HD or 12 whichever is higher.

Rejuvenation (Su): The guardian spectre will restore itself in 2d4 days with a successful level check (1d20+ guardian spectre's level or HD) against DC 16. The only ways to permanently destroy a guardian spectre are:

- To cast hallow on the focus of its attention after it is physically destroyed, but before it rejuvenates.
- To relieve the creature of its weapon, cast a remove curse, and then destroy it.
- Lawfully relieve the guardian spectre of its command.

Possessions: +2 full plate, masterwork greatsword (focus for guardian spectre abilities, treat as a +1 ghost touch, unholy, wounding weapon).

CREATING A GUARDIAN SPECTRE

"Guardian spectre" is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A guardian spectre uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.



Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead (augmented humanoid or monstrous humanoid). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size is unchanged.

Hit Dice: Increase all current and future Hit Dice to d12s.

Speed: Same as the base creature. If the base creature has a swim speed, the guardian spectre retains the ability to swim.

Armor Class: Same as base creature.

Attack: Same as base creature.

Full Attack: Same as base creature.

Damage: Same as base creature.

Special Attacks: Manifestation, frightful moan, horrific appearance and corrupting gaze

Manifestation (Su): Can affect things on the material plane

Frightful moan (Su): The guardian spectre can moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-ft. spread must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same guardian spectre's moan for one day.

Horrific Appearance (Su): Any living creature within 60 ft. that views the guardian spectre must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or immediately suffer 1d4 points of permanent Strength, 1d4 points of permanent Constitution and 1d4 points of permanent Dexterity drain. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same guardian spectre's horrific appearance for one day.

Corrupting Gaze (Su): The guardian spectre can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 ft. Creatures that meet the guardian spectre's gaze must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or suffer 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of permanent Charisma drain.

Special Qualities: Undead traits, incorporeal traits, telekinesis, +4 turn resistance and rejuvenation

Telekinesis (Su): The guardian spectre can use telekinesis once per round as a free action, as cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the guardian spectre's HD or 12 whichever is higher.

Rejuvenation (Su): The guardian spectre will restore itself in 2d4 days with a successful level check (1d20+guardian spectre's level or HD) against DC 16. The only ways to permanently destroy a guardian spectre are:

- To cast hallow on the focus of its attention after it is physically destroyed, but before it rejuvenates
- To relieve the creature of its weapon, cast a remove curse, and then destroy it
- Lawfully relieve the guardian spectre of its command

Abilities: Same as base creature

Skills: Same as base creature

Feats: Same as base creature plus Alertness

Environment: Any, usually same as base creature

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2

Treasure: It's weapon

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: Same as the base creature +3

HOUND OF WINTER

Medium Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Cold, Lawful)

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+5

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 cold)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 cold)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon, freezing bite

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., icewalking, immunity to cold, scent, vulnerability to fire

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6

Skills: Hide +13, Jump +12, Listen +7, Move Silently +13, Spot +7, Survival +7*

Feats: Improved Initiative, Run, Track

Environment: A lawful evil-aligned plane

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (5–12)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: 5–8 HD (Medium); 9–12 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: +3 (cohort)

Before his untimely demise, Magal the Undying wished to discover the essence of certain infernal beasts. To this end, he captured several hell hounds for the purposes of experimentation. He had made significant progress, in fact, when Kavon Deralia came calling. His experiments were the source of their feud. She thought he went too far, and she worried that his effort might unleash a cataclysm that would destroy the entire region.

The wave of magical energy unleashed by the Circle of Ice engulfed Magal's altered hell hounds, transforming them into the hounds of winter. They promptly broke free from their confinement (designed to contain fire-based creatures only) and ran rampant through the ice caves. A handful of them escaped the area and have begun breeding in the frozen wastes. Within a few years, the mountains north of Azinth should be full of the beasts.

The hounds of winter appear as large, powerful mastiffs with thick, white fur composed of thousands of tiny ice crystals. Their skins and tongues are frost blue, and their eyes glow a wintery white. Winter hounds are every bit as

evil and vicious as their hot-blooded cousins, and they enjoy toying with their prey — sometimes for hours — before killing it.

COMBAT

The hounds of winter hunt in packs, using the local terrain to their advantage. They rarely stray outside of their established territory. They seem to enjoy chasing their prey — sometimes they draw a hunt out for hours — and often work to drive potential victims into deadfalls, dead ends, and other terrible positions. They like to use their icewalk ability to good advantage, cornering their prey in the middle of frozen ponds or on other slippery surfaces.

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-ft. cone, once every 2d4 rounds, damage 2d6 cold, Reflex DC 13 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Fiery Bite (Su): A hound of winter deals an extra 1d6 points of cold damage every time it bites an opponent, as if its bite were a frost weapon.

Icewalking (Su): The hounds are able to move across ice and snow as if it was solid, stable, dry ground. This is partially due to their vicious claws, but it's mostly owed to their magical nature.

Skills: Hounds of winter have a +5 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

*They also receive a +8 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent, due to their keen sense of smell.

MAEDAR

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 6d8+6 (33 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+10

Attack: Falchion +11 melee (2d4+6/18–20), or bite +6 melee (1d4+4 and poison)

Full Attack: Falchion +11/+6 melee (2d4+6/18–20), or bite +6/+1 melee (1d4+4 and poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Poison

Special Qualities: Reversing gaze

Saves: Fort +3, Reflex +7, Will +6

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 15

Skills: Bluff +11, Disguise +11, Hide +7, Move Silently +9, Spot +10

Feats: Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion)

MATHORN

Environment: Any land and underground
Organization: solitary or coupled with a medusa
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually lawful evil
Advancement Range: by character class
Level Adjustment: By character class

The maedar is the male counterpart to the medusa. A maedar is indistinguishable from a normal human at distances greater than 30 ft. (or closer if they conceal their faces). However, their true features, once revealed, are truly unsettling.

They are tall, averaging 6 ft., with well-built, muscular bodies. Although earthen-colored, their bodies are exceptionally well proportioned and attractive. In contrast, their faces are hideous and reptilian with a short, flat nose and deep-set red eyes. They sport two large fangs and concealed poison sacks in their wide mouths. Unlike medusae, whose heads are crowned with writhing snakes, maedar have long dark hair. The creatures often wear only rags and let their hair hang wild, giving them a feral appearance.

Maedar are exceedingly rare, as most offspring of their kind are female and therefore medusae.

COMBAT

In combat maedar prefer heavy-bladed weapons (falchions, battle axes, etc.) that make use of their great strength. Alternatively, the maedar may make a bite attack, injecting poison secreted from poison sacks located in the roof of his mouth.

Poison (Ex): bite, Fortitude save (DC 14); initial damage 1d6 temporary Strength, secondary damage 2d6 temporary Strength.

Reversing Gaze (Su): Reverse the effects of a Petrifying Gaze or similar spell or spell-like ability (like *Flesh to Stone* and *Statue*), returning the target to its original state.

THE HEAD OF THE MAEDAR

Even in death the head of a maedar retains the ability to reverse the effects of a Petrifying Gaze or similar spell or spell-like ability (like *flesh to stone* and *statue*), returning the target to its original state.

The head will begin to decay after 12 hours and become useless in 3 days unless taxidermy or some kind of preserving magic is used to protect it.

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 2d8 (12 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 14 (+4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+5

Attack: Bite +5 melee (2d6)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (2d6), 2 claws +3 melee (1d6 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Poison

Special Qualities: Immunity to sleep and charm effects

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +5, Search +5

Feats: Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Environment: Anywhere near Jerimond's Orb

Organization: Solitary to pack (3-4)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Advancement: 3-4 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

Those who have benefited from the positive effects of Jerimond's Orb are doomed to become mathorns if the orb is stolen, literally transforming into the same kind of creature regardless of their stature in life. Thereafter, from the time of the last rays of sunset to the first light of dawn, the once-lucky men are transformed into beasts that roam and hunt the night, killing and eating any creature in their path. In human form, the mathorn have no memory of their nocturnal activities. As a beast, they exist only to sate their terrible hunger. A mathorn collapses if it reaches 0 or fewer hit points. Like the healing side-effect of a polymorph spell, human brought to 0 or less hit points in the form of a mathorn awake the next morning with 0 hit points and stable.

COMBAT

Mathorn attack with vicious claw strikes and bites, tearing at their opponent's flesh and leaving a toxin behind that slows their victims. Mathorn tend to attack in small packs of three or four, fleeing if their group is cut by half or more during the course of the battle.

If a mathorn can get a party to flee, it pursues any poisoned hero. In this way, it culls the humanoid herd.

Poison (Ex): Fort save (DC 16) or lose 1d4 Dex as initial and secondary damage.

MERFOLK DEFENDER

Medium Humanoid (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 5 ft. (1 square), swim 50 ft.

Armor Class: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather), touch 11, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: Trident +3 melee (1d8+1) or heavy crossbow +3 ranged (1d10/19–20)

Full Attack: Trident +3 melee (1d8+1) or heavy crossbow +3 ranged (1d10/19–20)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Amphibious, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will –1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3, Swim +9

Feats: Alertness

Environment: Temperate aquatic

Organization: Company (2–4), patrol (11–20 plus 2 3rd-level lieutenants and 1 leader of 3rd–6th level), or band (30–60 plus 1 3rd-level sergeant per 20 adults, 5 5th-level lieutenants, 3 7th-level captains, and 10 porpoises)

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always lawful neutral

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +1

Merfolk defenders constitute a sub-group which splintered off from ordinary merfolk based on their uniquely religious fervor and unusually hostile attitude toward land-dwelling creatures. Merfolk defenders see themselves as defenders of the primal power of the water gods, and believe the gods of the other elements — particularly those of the earth — constantly seek to destroy the water gods and everything they created. Therefore, they hate and fear land-based creatures instinctively, and are more than likely to attack any they come across on sight. A high priest, an adept of 7th level or higher leads merfolk defender communities.

COMBAT

Merfolk defenders wield the trident and heavy crossbow, but they tend to arm themselves more heavily than their kin. They have developed protective clothing woven from kelp and reef strands. It is not uncommon to find them carrying large shields shaped from flotsam.

Amphibious (Ex): Merfolk can breathe both air and water, although they rarely travel more than a few feet from the water's edge.

Skills: A merfolk defender has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

MERFOLK DEFENDER CHARACTERS

Merfolk Traits (Ex): Merfolk possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Strength, –2 Wisdom, –2 Charisma.
- A Merfolk's base land speed is 5 feet, its swim speed is 50 feet.
- Amphibious
- Low-light vision
- Automatic Languages: Common, Merfolk.
- Favored Class: Fighter.

NESCENT

Medium Outsider (Neutral, Evil, Incorporeal)

Nescents are like demons, though they are not tanar'ri. In fact, the tanar'ri consider them parasites, a plague upon the Abyss. Nescents are usually both incorporeal and invisible, but they are able to possess the bodies of creatures. Their limitation is they can only use neutral or evil beings as a host. Many tanar'ri suspect this is why the nescents are most often seen in Abyss, where good is rarely encountered.

Nescent must constantly move from creature to creature, however, their possession has an effect upon the target's body. Within days or weeks, the body begins to break down, consumed by an internal fire. An hour before the body collapses entirely, its skin sloughs off, revealing smoldering, dripping lava where muscle and tendons should be. A body completely consumed in this way is reduced to smoking ash, leaving the again incorporeal nescent to find a new vessel.

Solitary creatures, nescents are greedy and territorial, staking out strongholds from which they spread their influence and collect trophies of their success: useful things such as weapons, armor, magical items, and the like. Nescents care little for material wealth outside of the items and security it can purchase for them.

Nescents are extremely vindictive, even for creatures from the other planes. Their grudges last for thousands of years.

SAMPLE NESCENT

This example uses a Fire Mephit as the host.

Fire Mephit Nescent: CR 5 Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 3d10 (17 hp); Init +5; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 fire, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 fire, 2 claws); SA Augment, breath weapon, command lesser creatures, nescent possession, spell-like abilities, *summon mephit*; SQ Body destruction, damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, incorporeal traits, invisibility, invulnerable, immunity to fire, *know alignment*, vulnerability to cold; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +23; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +9, Knowledge: Other Planes +10, Search +5, Speak Language: Common, Spot +5, Tumble +5; Blind-Fight, Endurance, Power Attack.

Augment (Su): The body of a host possessed by a nescent grows stronger, tougher, and faster the longer the nescent remains within it. Starting on the first day, the nescent chooses one physical ability (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to increase by 1 (to a maximum of 30). The nescent may increase one such ability per day.

Body Destruction (Su): For every day a host is possessed, it loses 1 hit point permanently, and its maximum hit point potential is reduced by 1. This is unavoidable and irreversible. When the host body reaches 0 hp, it crumbles into smoldering ash, leaving the nescent to find a new host.

Breath Weapon (Su): 15-ft. cone, damage 1d8 fire, Reflex half DC 12. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial adjustment.

Command Lesser Creatures (Su): While possessing a host, the nescent can control other creatures with fewer HD than those of its host. Any creatures the nescent targets must succeed at a Will save or follow the nescent's commands as though affected by a *dominate person* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer. This ability has a range of 50 yards, although it's telepathic, so line of sight is not required.

Damage Reduction (Su): The body of a host slowly grows tougher the longer the nescent remains within it. Every day of possession, the base creature gains 1/- points of damage reduction, up to a maximum value of 20/-.

Fast Healing (Ex): A fire mephit heals only if it is touching a flame at least as large as a torch.

Incorporeal: When not possessing a target creature, a nescent may only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. It can also pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. It always moves silently.

Invisible (Su): While incorporeal, a nescent is invisible. Since the nescent has no body, this prevents the use of mundane Spot or Listen checks to find it.

Invulnerable (Su): While incorporeal, a nescent can only be attacked physically if found on its home plane which has never been located, even by the Tanar'ri.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour—*scorching ray* (DC 14) as the spell cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer; 1/day—*heat metal* (DC 14). Caster level 6th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Summon Mephit (Sp): Once per day, a mephit can attempt to summon another mephit of the same variety, much as though casting a *summon monster* spell, but with only a 25% chance of success. Roll d%: On a failure, no creature answers the summons that day. A mephit that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Know Alignment (Su): A nescent sees alignments as physical elements and automatically knows the true alignment of any creature it spies.

Nescent Possession (Su): Once per round, a nescent can enter a new host of evil or neutral alignment, on the Material Plane. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will

save (DC 15 + nescent's Charisma modifier). A creature that successfully saves is immune to the nescent's possession effect for one day. If the save fails, the nescent enters the host's body and seizes control of its physical functions. The host immediately gains the effects of the Augment and Damage Reduction abilities, which it retains until the nescent leaves. The host is also affected by Body Destruction (see below).

Resistance (Su): A nescent has fire resistance 20.

CREATING A NESCENT

"Nescent" is an acquired template that can be added to any host of neutral or evil alignment (hereafter called "the host"). The host's type adds "outsider". It uses the host's statistics and special abilities as noted here.

Size and Type: The host's type changes to outsider. The host's size remains unchanged. Do not recalculate base attack bonus.

Hit Dice: Same as the host or d10, whichever is higher.

Speed: Same as host creature.

Armor Class: Same as host creature.

Damage: Same as the host, plus the effects of nescent possession.

Space/Reach: Same as the host.

Special Attack: A nescent retains all the special attacks of the host and also gains those listed here. Unless noted otherwise, all save DCs for a Nescent are Charisma-based.

Nescent Possession (Su): Once per round, a nescent can enter a new host of evil or neutral alignment, on the Material Plane. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 15 + nescent's Charisma modifier). A creature that successfully saves is immune to the nescent's possession effect for one day. If the save fails, the nescent enters the host's body and seizes control of its physical functions. The host immediately gains the effects of the Augment and Damage Reduction abilities, which it retains until the nescent leaves. The host is also affected by Body Destruction (see below).

Command Lesser Creatures (Su): While possessing a host, the nescent can control other creatures with fewer HD than those of its host. Any creatures the nescent targets must succeed at a Will save or follow the nescent's commands as though affected by a *dominate person* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer. This ability has a range of 50 yards, although it's telepathic, so line of sight is not required.

Special Qualities: The nescent retains all qualities of its host, and the host gains the outsider type while possessed.

Augment (Su): The body of a host possessed by a nescent grows stronger, tougher, and faster the longer the nescent remains within it. Starting on the first day, the nescent chooses one physical ability (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to increase by 1 (to a maximum of 30). The nescent may increase one such ability per day.

Incorporeal: When not possessing a target creature, a nescent may only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with

SERVANT OF AZRAEL

a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. It can also pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. It always moves silently.

Invisible (Su): While incorporeal, a nascent is invisible. Since the nascent has no body, this prevents the use of mundane Spot or Listen checks to find it.

Know Alignment (Su): A nascent sees alignments as physical elements and automatically knows the true alignment of any creature it spies.

Invulnerable (Su): While incorporeal, a nascent can only be attacked physically if found on its home plane which has never been located, even by the Tanar'ri.

Damage Reduction (Su): The body of a host slowly grows tougher the longer the nascent remains. Every day of possession, the base creature gains 1/- points of damage reduction, up to a maximum value of 20/-.

Resistance (Su): A nascent has fire resistance 20.

Body Destruction (Su): For every day a host is possessed, it loses 1 hit point permanently, and its maximum hit point potential is reduced by 1. This is unavoidable and irreversible. When the host body reaches 0 hp, it crumbles into smoldering ash, leaving the nascent to find a new host.

Saves: Fort and Ref are the same as the host, plus any ability modifiers. Add +20 to Will saves

Abilities: Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 20. While incorporeal, a nascent has no Strength or Constitution, but it has a Dexterity of 12 for purposes of moving about only. In a host, the nascent uses its own Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores and the host's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores

Skills: Intimidate +9, Knowledge: Other Planes +10, Search +5, Speak Language: Common, Spot +5, Tumble +5. The nascent does not have access to the host's skills.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Endurance, Power Attack. The nascent does not have access to the host's feats

Environment: Any (though usually any land or underground)

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: Same as the host's CR+2

Treasure: Standard for the host, though after six months in the body, the ratio between monetary treasure and items shifts to half the standard money and twice the standard items

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: See nascent possession, augment, and damage reduction, above.

Level Adjustment: —

Medium Undead (Incorporeal)

Hit Dice: 9d12 (58 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 30 ft. (good)

Armor Class: 17 (+3 Dex, +4 deflection), touch 17, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+4

Attack: Ghostly scythe automatic hit melee (2d8)

Full Attack: Ghostly scythe automatic hit melee (2d8)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Ghostly scythe, create spawn

Special Qualities: Undead traits, incorporeal traits, immune to turning, unnatural aura, sunlight powerlessness

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +8

Abilities: Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Intuit Direction +10, Listen +13, Search +10, Spot +13

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or gang (2–4)

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement Range: 13–14 HD (medium)

Level Adjustment: —

A servant of Azrael resembles a black-cloaked, hooded humanoid carrying a scythe. They are created by Azrael, lord of death, to serve most often as shock troops. If an opponent pulls down the hood of a servant of Azrael, she finds nothing within, not even a ghostly figure. The cloaks are entirely empty, but they fight with reckless abandon nonetheless.

COMBAT

The servants of Azrael attack their opponents with their ghostly scythes.

Ghostly Scythe (Su): In combat, the servant of Azrael swings its ghostly scythe at one opponent every round, automatically hitting it. Damage reduction may still apply, but the scythe is considered to be a +2 *lawful evil ghost touch* weapon for this purpose. No one but the servant of Azrael can touch its scythe, and it dissolves upon the creature's demise. The servant of Azrael does not receive automatic hits with its attacks of opportunity, these it makes with a +7 to attack.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a servant of Azrael becomes a servant of Azrael in 1d4+1 days. Spawn are under the command of the servant who

created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life. A servant of Azrael cannot control more than five spawn at any one time.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a servant of Azrael at a distance of 60 ft. They do not willingly approach nearer than this and panic if forced to do so. They remain panicked as long as they are within range.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): Servants of Azrael are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it, servants are simply *dazzled* by any effect that creates the equivalent of sunlight. A servant of Azrael caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only partial actions.

SERVANT OF THE BLOOD MOON

Medium Outsider (Evil, Lawful)

Hit Dice: 7d8+14 (55 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), glide 30 ft. (clumsy)

Armor Class: 20 (+2 Dex, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+9

Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d8+5)

Full Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d8+5), 2 claws +7 melee (1d4+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Spell-like abilities, bleeding wound, fear aura, summon servant of the Blood Moon

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 19, spell-like abilities, telepathy 100 ft.

Saves: Fort +7, Reflex +7, Will +6

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills: Concentration +8, Hide +13, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Spot +9.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or gang (2–4)

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always LE

Advancement Range: 8-10 HD (medium)

Level Adjustment: —

These dark servants appear at first glance to be undead, but they are not. Their skull-like heads are actually made of chitinous bone covered in runes and enchanted symbols, and their tattered “robes” are actually vestigial wings they wrap around themselves to cover their sharp claws.

Although winged, a servant cannot actually fly. They stand about 6.5 ft. tall, and their flesh is a sickening purplish-white. By shrouding themselves in their wings, servants have the ability to become invisible at will. This power takes one round to initiate, during which the servant can take no other action except to defend itself.

The servants are loyal to the greater devil Czatche the Blood Moon and obey him unquestioningly. They are often summoned by sorcerers trying to gain favor with Czatche. They work for anyone endeavoring to free their imprisoned master.

COMBAT

Devils enjoy bullying those who are weaker than them, but servants are more likely to size up their opponents and choose a strategy. A favorite trick is to use their stealth to make party members suspect each other of treachery, causing dissension in their ranks.

Bleeding Wound (Su): A victim bitten by a servant loses 2 hit points from bleeding damage each round until the wound is bound (Heal, DC 10) or healed by any spell or effect.

Fear Aura (Su): As a free action, a servant can create an aura of fear in a 10-ft. radius. This is like a fear spell cast by a 12th level sorcerer (save DC 17). A PC that saves successfully cannot be affected again by this servant's fear aura for one day. Other servants are immune to this effect.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will – *animate dead, charm monster, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, hold person, magic circle against good, and suggestion*. At will but takes a full round action to activate – *improved invisibility*. Caster level 12th.

Summon Servant (Sp): Once per day, a servant can summon another servant with a 60% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

SLAYER OF DREAMS

Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil)

Hit Dice: 7d8+14 (45 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft.

Armor Class: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+10

Attack: Infernal blades +12 melee (1d4+5, plus wounding)

Full Attack: Infernal blades +10/+10/+5/+5 melee (1d4+5, plus wounding)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Infernal blades, fear

Special Qualities: Emotional resistance, vulnerable to turning

Saves: Fort +7, Reflex +7, Will +7

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills: Bluff +3, Hide +12, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Spot +3; Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting

Feats: Dodge, Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting

Environment: The Abyss

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 8–14 HD

(Large); 15–21 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

The slayer of dreams is a demon of shifting light, taking a terrifying vision of a vaguely humanoid figure bristling with spikes. It wields two cursed daggers forged in the demonic fires of the endless abyss. It takes an interest in demoralizing and corrupting proud humans or those with lofty ambitions. It gains a perverse glee (and gains personal satisfaction) from having a mortal's dreams crushed. A mortal who perishes without fulfilling a specific dream or goal it truly wanted to in life but failed thanks to the intervention of a Slayer of Dreams, the soul has a chance of being diverted to the abyss on the way to its final rest upon the mortal's death.

COMBAT

The slayer of dreams is a cunning, but cowardly foe, relying on its natural abilities.

Infernal Blades: The slayer wields two +2 daggers of wounding. These daggers are comprised of infernal energy. They fade to smoke and cinders when the slayer is banished or destroyed.

Fear (Sp): Those damaged by the slayer of dream's daggers of wounding fall into despair. Such a character is considered cowering (see Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) unless he succeeds at a Will saving throw

(DC 15). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Vulnerable to Turning: Though not actually undead, the slayer is vulnerable to the strong force of will associated with undead turning, and is vulnerable as though it were an undead with 9 HD. Attempts to rebuke the slayer, however, affect it as if it were an 18 HD undead creature.

Emotional Resistances (Su): The slayer is immune to all means of swaying its emotions, magical or otherwise. Spells or spell-like effects that attempt to charm, enchant, or sleep the slayer automatically fail. Bluff or Intimidate skill checks automatically fail as well.



SUNKEN SAILOR

Medium-Sized Undead

Hit Dice: 2d12 (13 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

AC: 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+4

Attack: Claw +5 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: 2 claws +5 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Create spawn, drowning touch

Special Qualities: Undead traits, +2 turn resistance

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 9

Skills: Climb +5, Spot +5

Feats: Multiattack

Climate/Terrain: Coastal, aquatic, underground near sea.

Organization: Solitary, gang (2–4) or pack (7–12)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement Range: 3–4 HD (Medium-size)

Level Adjustment: —

Sunken sailors are the soulless but not lifeless cadavers of sailors lost at sea. They haunt the locations of their death: underwater or coastal areas where there is treasure present — especially if the treasure was taken from the

ship upon which they lost their lives.

COMBAT

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to zero hit points by any sunken sailor's drowning touch becomes a sunken sailor under the control of its killer within 48 rounds.

Drowning Touch (Su): When a sunken sailor hits an enemy, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or take an additional 1d4 damage as fluid (sea water) builds up in his lungs, slowly drowning him. The save DC is Wisdom-based. This damage is in addition to the normal damage done by the strike.

TERROR FIEND

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 6d8+10 (45 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 40ft (8 squares)

Armor Class: 23 (+1 Dex, +12 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 22

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+14

Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+4)

Full Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+4), 4 claws +8 melee (1d6+2), barbed tail +8 melee (2d4+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Silent scream, improved grab, polymorph

Special Qualities: Fast Healing

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +7

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 9

Skills: Climb +9, Hide +6, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Move Silently +11, Spot +7

Feats: Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Multiattack

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement Range: 9–16 HD (Large)

Level Advancement: —

They are huge creatures, nearly nine ft. tall, but gangly and strangely jointed. Their skin is a greenish-black, and their features resemble a very ugly elven humanoid. Their arms and legs are covered with barbed spikes which gives them a form of natural armor, and they have huge barbed tails split like a cat's nine tails at the end. They are dangerous and cunning, and capable of taking the form of an

individual they have just killed.

Terror Fiends are not actually infernals of any form, but are monstrous creatures who feed on the blood and fear of nobility. Their senses are so acute they can tell if someone is descended of noble blood simply by their scent. Terror Fiends are merciless and utterly evil, preying on humanity's elite in order to quench their thirst for blood. Worse, they grow stronger when they feed on such blood, and thus often seek to hunt nobles as a predator seeks prey.

As intelligent beings, fiends speak Infernal, Human, Elven, Dwarf, and Common. They gain no memories of their host after they have killed someone and assumed the victim's form, but are often clever enough to pass themselves off successfully for a number of days while they gather information about their new form. Their new form can be any race, size or sex, although most Terror Fiends prefer to hunt within their own gender to make duplication much easier.

COMBAT

A Terror Fiend prefers to lure its victims into solitude, and then devour them and take over their form. This way, it can be supplied with an unending feast of noble blood as it moves from one unsuspecting royal house to the next.

In melee, however, it is a terrible opponent, lunging with both claws and using its tail to augment its attacks. It has the ability to silence the area in which it fights, thus giving it even more advantage and removing its prey's ability to scream for help.

Silent Scream (Sp): The Terror Fiend can create a circle of silence in a ten-ft. radius around its body. No sound can exit this shield, although those inside the field can still hear the normal sounds of the world outside.

Polymorph Self (Su): Similar to the wizard's spell *polymorph*, the Terror fiend can take the form of the last creature it killed. Once assumed, the Terror Fiend can retain this form indefinitely. This form is not an illusion; while in the new form, the Terror Fiend has no access to its physical abilities, although it may still manifest its Silent Scream. The fiend may return to its original form at any time, and may return to its current 'attained form' at will.

Fast Healing (Ex): A terror fiend regenerates 2 hp per round. However, when it is infused with noble blood, it regains an additional hit point for each point of damage it deals to someone born of noble lineage. This effect works on those who aren't aware of their true heritage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a terror fiend must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a tail attack. It

can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict. Terror fiends receive a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks, which is already included in the statistics block.

URNEIL

DEMON OF BILE AND WASTE

Large Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil)

Hit Dice: 10d8+20 (65 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 40ft (8 squares)

AC: 17 (-1 size, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+15

Attack: Bite +15 melee (1d8+5)

Full Attack: Bite +15 melee (1d8+5), 2 claws +13 melee (1d4+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, fear aura

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, stench, spell resistance 22, ritual weakness, telepathy 100 ft.

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills: Sense Motive +10, Spot +12

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always Chaotic Evil

Advancement: 11–18 HD (Large)

Advancement Level: —

Urneil is a demon of unspeakable filth. Its very presence can cause all but those with the strongest stomachs to flee. It resembles little more than a seven-ft. tall heap of shambling muck. Despite its appearance, the creature is surprisingly quick on its feet.

It's almost impossible for Urneil to sneak up on someone due to the thing's foul stench. Also, and it squishes loudly as it walks.

COMBAT

Urneil knows its time on this plane is likely limited. It wants to do as much damage as possible while it still can. It assesses any threat to it quickly, first taking out spellcasters or anyone with a magical weapon. Anyone

carrying a *luminous blade* (see Appendix A) is the creature's primary target. It remembers all too well how those swords were used to defeat him the last time around.

Should the PCs run away, Urneil pursues them relentlessly. He recognizes them as the greatest threat to its new reign of terror, and it wants to eliminate them as quickly as possible.

Fear Aura (Su): As a free action, Urneil can surround himself with an aura of fear with a 10-ft. radius. This is otherwise identical to a 13th-level sorcerer casting a *fear* spell (save DC 17). The save DC is charisma-based. If a PC successfully saves against this ability, it cannot affect him again for one day. Other demons are not affected by this ability.

Spell-like Abilities: At will – *animate dead*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against good* (self only), *suggestion*, *unholy blight*, and *contagion*. Caster level 8th.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding this creature is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 ft. must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again this creature's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ritual Weakness (Su): Once a seven-pointed star is drawn on the creature's head, it loses its fire resistance and can no longer regenerate fire damage.

VEIRGAN

Tiny Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 2d10 (11 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

AC: 19 (+3 Dex, +2 size, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/–10

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d4–4)

Full Attack: +5 melee (1d4–4), –6 claws (1d3–4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft/5 ft.

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Spell resistance 12, natural tongue

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4

Abilities: Str 3, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 20

Skills: Balance +5, Hide +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite), Improved Initiative

Environment: Temprate and warm mountains, forest,

hills

Organization: Solitary or family (1–4)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually Neutral or Chaotic Good

Advancement: —

Advancement Level: —

Veirgan are faerie cats. They resemble normal house cats, except for the brightly-colored, feathered wings sprouting from just behind their forelegs. They are very intelligent, and delight in jokes and games. However, they are quite shy around creatures they do not know, and until a person's intentions are made clear, they make sure to always have an avenue of escape open. Veirgan are herbivores, living entirely on nuts, berries and roots.

Veirgan have a deep love of life, and will go to great lengths to keep someone from getting hurt. They use their spell-like abilities for three purposes: to play games, help others, and find food. *Charm person* is a favorite, as it is wonderful for getting people to do funny things, and keeps them out of fights.

COMBAT

Veirgan avoid combat whenever possible, preferring play to fighting. Their spell-like abilities ensure they almost never have to fight, and they will do whatever it takes to avoid it. Even in defense of their young, a Veirgan will use its abilities to move its offspring to safety, rather than risk leaving it defenseless by getting hurt in a fight.

Natural Tongue (Ex): Veirgan have the innate ability to communicate with any animal, magical beast, or fey. Note they cannot speak to other humanoids innately, although they are quite vocal if someone manages to communicate with them.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*charm person*, *telekinesis*, *improved invisibility*. Caster level 10th.

WORMWRAITH

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 5d8 (22 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 12 (+2 Dex), touch 10, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+5

Attack: Tentacle +6 melee (1d8+2 + 1d6 acid)

Full Attack: Tentacle +6 melee (1d8+2 + 1d6 acid),
2–4 tentacles +4 melee (1d8+1 + 1d6 acid),

2 longswords +3 melee (1d8+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Acid touch

Special Qualities: —

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +7,
Search +5

Feats: Blind Fight^B, Multiattack, Two-weapon Fighting,
Weapon Focus^B (tentacles)

Environment: Urban areas, especially near cemeteries
or graveyards

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Neutral evil

Advancement Range: 6–8 HD (Medium size)

Level Adjustment: —

The uninformed believe wormwraiths to be a type of undead. In truth, they are living creatures that occupy human corpses. Their natural form is a huge bundle of sentient worms, squirming and writhing with a communal intelligence. The worms gestate inside the recently dead, devouring the internal organs and bonding to the bone structure. By the time they reach maturity, they have filled out the body and can animate it with remarkable dexterity. They use the skin of their host as a disguise and can pass for human while keeping their true nature hidden. Many wormwraiths move among human society for years, undetected by the casual observer.

COMBAT

Wormwraiths attack by forming tentacles from their central bundle (which is located in their host's chest) and lashing out through their host's mouth (or through wounds in their host's skin, if their disguise is damaged). Any given wormwraith can have from 3 to 5 tentacles. These tentacles attack directly by penetrating their disguise to attack, or slither up into the arms of the humanoid corpse it controls. This allows it to wield weapons in both hands. A wormwraith with 4 tentacles could make 2 tentacle attacks and 2 armed attacks (on a full attack action).

Acid Touch (Ex): The tentacles of the creature cause 1d8 points damage each and are coated with a corrosive enzyme, which causes an additional 1d6 acid damage.

No Discernable Anatomy (Ex): The wormwraith's vitals are widely dispersed though out the mass of worms that makes it up, it is not subject to critical hits.

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