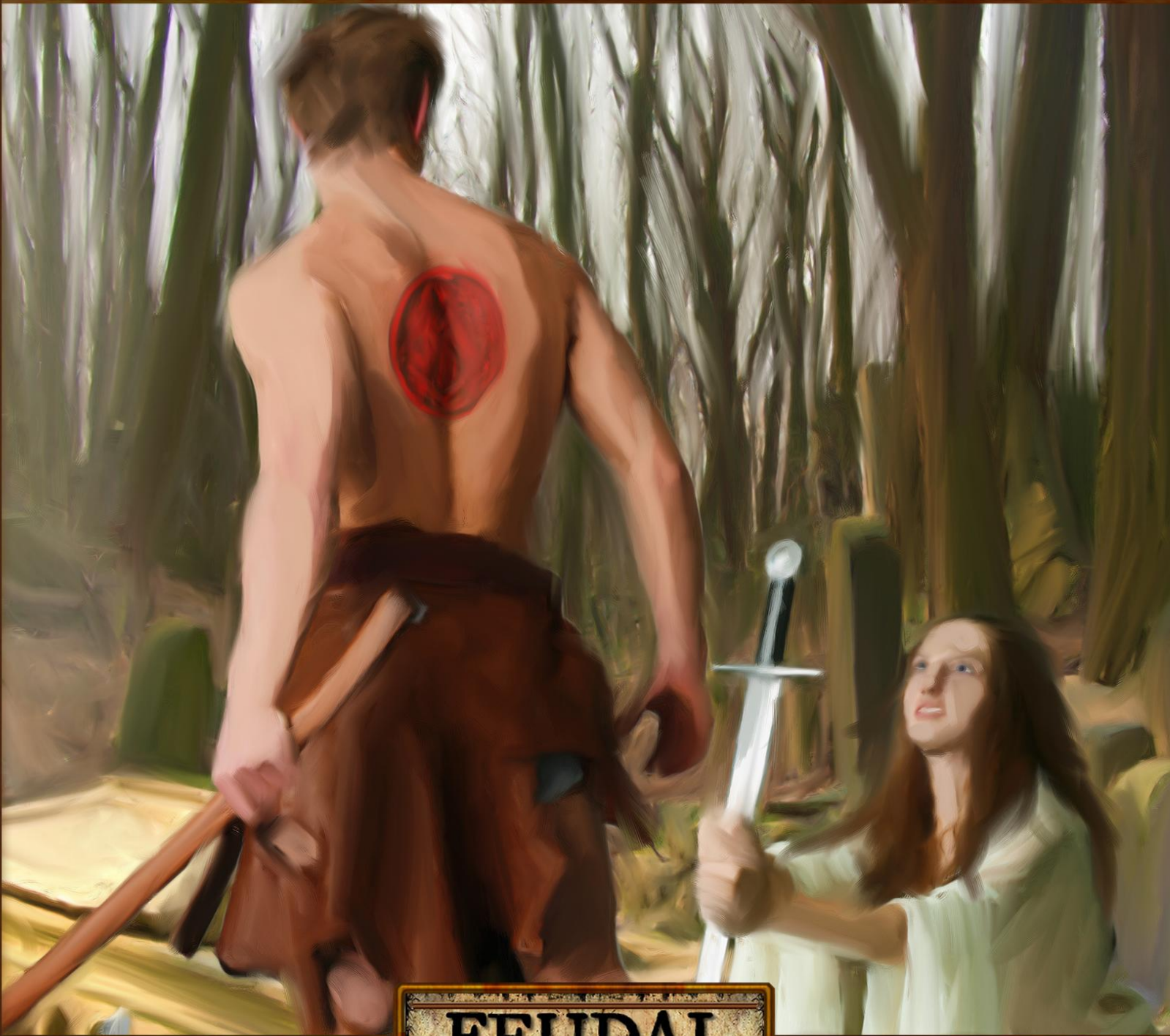


ALEA PUBLISHING GROUP PRESENTS

# MARK OF HUBRIS

## Adventure



10TH LEVEL



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# Introduction



The world contains many treacherous secrets. Each one of those tantalizing tidbits are far flung in the most foreboding of areas: the dark reaches of an evil heart. As one reveals each vile secret, bringing it into the light, allowing it witnessed by the innocent, it threatens to pervert even those of purest virtue.

“The Mark of Hubris” is an adventure designed for five 10th level Player Characters and should escort them to 11th level. Although designed for the *Feudal Lords Campaign Setting™*, this adventure is easily adaptable for any campaign setting.

This adventure also marks the beginning of a Paragon Campaign Path. This adventure, and preceding modules will conclude characters to 21st level. Although designed as part of a campaign path, you can easily run this as a stand alone module.

## THE ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Sir John the Longhorn, a once brave and stoic knight, lived in a time when few traveled into the Western Fringe. Though a land filled with promise, it also held great mysteries and dangers to stifle the stoutest heart.

A successful knight, he desired to leave his heirs more than wealth and position, since, though valuable, are easily lost. The Longhorn wished to bestow upon his house a legacy. For this reason alone, the confident knight traveled into and claimed land in the Western Fringe.

With a pagan druid for an advisor, the grand lord hunted the surrounding wood for the Questing Beast, a creature so foul, that to declare a hunt for the beast can drive one into ruin. Such a vile monstrosity, as it represents incest, violence, and chaos, would surely leave an eternal legacy if killed.

After three weeks of relentless tracking, through lands that slowly twisted from reality and no longer yielding its bounty, and as his hunting party dwindled from death and disease, Sir John spied a bit of salvation. A unicorn stood before him stirring within the knight a beacon of hope in such a desolate place. He had two choices before him: track the elusive unicorn in faith that the creature



will lead him and his men home or kill it so he and the others might survive another week.

Sir John chose the later and in doing so, the knight truly began the hunt for the Questing Beast. He and his hunting party were never seen again. At least that is what the legend claims.

## THE ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Some or all PCs have a mystical mark that up until this point remained something of a mystery. However, recent activities spark renewed interest in the mark and it begins to prove troublesome for those that bear its arcane etchings.

Adventurers must discover the purpose of the mark born upon them while navigating dangerous thoroughfares, running from relentless hunters, and discover the whereabouts of a missing inquisitor. The journey takes them from the underbelly of Caldor to the abandoned gypsy market of Ardor via a trek southward into the foreboding Bog of Bones.

## PREPARING FOR THE ADVENTURE

This adventure requires a bit of preparation before you actually begin. Following the steps below will deeply and quickly draw characters into the story as soon as one of the two adventure hooks appear (see *The Adventure Begins* below for further details).

- **Mark of the Blood Moon:** Sometime before the adventure begins, preferably during their Heroic Tier escapades, three or more characters in the party discover they possess a mystical mark of a runic blood moon. Despite their efforts during this time, they cannot find any information about such a mark or the reason for its appearance.
- **New Characters:** Should characters with the blood moon mark leave or become killed during their heroic tier adventures, have the mark appear on the new characters soon after they join with their present group.
- **Dead Characters:** As characters approach 11th level, and should they have a previously dead character, you can do one of two things to begin to really peak their curiosity. First, you may allow them to play an old character that died sometime ago. There is no reason to explain their miraculous resurrection save that they bear the mark of the blood moon.

Secondly, you may instead choose to allow characters to hear rumors that those dead characters are now once again adventuring, journeying across the countryside. Should characters wish to track these individuals down, it leads them to Caldor near the start of this adventure.

## TREASURE PARCELS

This adventure uses the treasure parcel system found in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE. We encourage you to insert appropriate treasures that fit with the wishes of your individual gaming group.

## DEVELOPMENT

Throughout this adventure, an underlying story exists that runs parallel with the adventurers. Some characters might gain interest in *Sir John the Longhorn and the Hunt for the Questing Beast*, a famous tale sung by bards and troubadours.

The following skill checks aid characters in the meaning behind the story and might present clues to help during certain situations.

### History

**DC 10:** Recants the story of *Sir John the Longhorn and the Hunt for the Questing Beast* as told under the *Background* header.

**DC 16:** Scholars believe that Sir Longhorn never existed. The story represents a warning of those that bear too much hubris, or overwhelming pride and arrogance. The Questing Beast is a representation of overachievement or ever burning desire for more, but never feeling satiated when a goal is met.

Some storytellers recant the legend of Sir John becoming as corrupted as the land in which he travels, thus he killed the unicorn for sustenance so he can continue his hunt for the Questing Beast. It puts an ironic twist on the story, since many believe seeing a unicorn is a legacy and great achievement in and of itself.

**DC 21:** There are still many that believe Sir Longhorn did exist and claim the legend developed from a real quest the brave knight undertook however failed to complete. There are others that swear to have seen Sir John the Longhorn throughout the Western Fringe of Cthonia, during a blood moon, still hunting for the beast that eludes him.

Below are two separate encounters that might peak characters' interest, especially those that bear the mystical mark of the *blood moon*. You can use one or both of these encounters as hooks or proceed directly to *Part One: Mark of Death*.

## Adventure Begins

### SAVAGE MARK

Encounter Level 9 ( 2,000 XP )

Possessed Savage

**Possessed Savage** Level 9 Solo  
Medium aberrant humanoid (human) XP 2,000

**Initiative** +5 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision

**HP** 400; **Bloodied** 200

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22

**Speed** 6

⊕ **Demonic Axe Strike** (standard; at-will)

With intense demonic celerity, the possessed savage quickly moves from his position and strikes. It appears as if he is standing still, poised to attack.

Reach 3; +14 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage, and the target slides 2 squares. This power becomes a reach 1 if the possessed savage is immobilized or slowed.

↘ **Demonic Surge** (standard; at-will) † **Cold, Force, Poison**

Ranged 10; +13 vs. each defense; 1d8+6 cold, force, and poison damage for each successful hit.

↶ **Flurry of Demonic Shadows** (standard; recharge Ⓜ) † **Cold**

Close burst 3; +14 vs. Reflex; 2d6+6 cold damage, and target slides 2 squares.

↶ **Maddening Voices** (standard; encounter; recharges when two possessed savages disappear – see below)

Close burst 5; +12 vs. Will; 1d8+10 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

**Dragged to the Hellish Realm** (immediate reaction, hit by an attack; at-will) † **Teleportation**

The possessed savage teleports the attacker 3 squares.

**Splintered Soul**

The possessed savage's soul is splintered into four distinct beings. At the beginning of encounter, place four figures with no one figure being 5 squares from another. Rather than roll initiative, each figure acts once per round on initiative count 25, 15, 10, and 5.

They cannot delay or ready actions, and on each turn a figure gains one standard action. Once per round, one figure may forego its standard action to give another figure a move action or 2 minor actions. It may use one immediate action between each turn.

Each time the possessed savage is dealt 100 points of damage, one figure with the lowest initiative disappears. When only one figure remains, the creature acts normally.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

**Skills** Arcana +13, Religion +10

**Str** 23 (+10) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 8(+3)

**Con** 20 (+9) **Int** 15 (+6) **Cha** 21 (+9)

## SETUP

This encounter takes place at dusk. Characters might look for a safe camp site or just approach a small village before nightfall. The abomination was once a man that also bore the *blood moon* mark and is now a raving lunatic on a murderous rampage.

## MINOR QUEST

Characters search for the reason such a man might be more susceptible to possession and who or what holds such power.

**Quest XP:** 500 XP for uniting the Horn of Belfor, the wand used by the Hag of Trelang, to its rightful owner.

## MARK OF HERALDRY

Like the *Preparing for the Adventure* section presented earlier, this role-playing encounter can take place either several game months before running this adventure or the morning just prior to the *Mark of Death* encounter (see below).

## SETUP

Adventurers wander through the market area of a town or travel with a merchant as they come across an item that peaks their interest: a shield that bears the *blood moon* mark within its heraldry. The shield is old and if characters show any interest the merchant tries to sell it to them.

He doesn't know too much about its history, but informs them it once held magic powers when he acquired it from a poor knight years ago. The starved knight reluctantly traded it for a meal after claiming it once belonged to Sir John the Longhorn. Soon after, the merchant had a gypsy learned in the arcane ways examine it, but the magic had already faded (see *Adventure Background* for more detail about Sir John the Longhorn).

## Insight Check

**DC 16:** The merchant is lying about it once containing magic. If confronted, he admits being duped by a wandering gypsy youth that used a magician's ritual to make them temporarily appear magical in nature.

## Diplomacy or Intimidate Check

**DC 16:** When he caught up with the lad, in exchange for his life, the youth told him where a small treasure trove of several magical shields existed. The young gypsy been to the frightful location once, but many horrible guardians stood watch so he fled. The youth planned going to Caldor with this information in hopes to find someone to aid him in his journey to acquire the items and to make his fortune.

**DC 21:** The shields hang upon a tree in the deep recesses within the Bog of Bones. He doesn't know the exact location, since he did not completely trust the boy. The merchant also did not care too much for his tale. The merchant kept the shield and took all the wealth the gypsy lad had for retribution for the deception.

## MINOR QUEST

Should adventurers press the merchant to reveal the se-



cret of the shield, he haggles and negotiates a percentage of their value if they retrieve a few. He says time is at the essence since the gypsy youth is perhaps also seeking adventurers in Caldor to take up such a quest.

**Quest XP:** 500 XP for rescuing the gypsy youth from the Hag of Trelang in the Bog of Bones and learn the secret of the Shield Tree.

## Part One

### MARK OF DEATH

This encounter takes place when characters are in a large city, such as Caldor. This is a simple role-playing encounter to induce a little anxiety or fear into adventurers bearing the *blood moon* mark.

#### SETUP

The best possible situation to introduce the encounter is when characters elect to go to the city for one reason or another. When characters venture near the market or another high-traffic area, read or paraphrase the following:

*Several soldiers of the king, followed by a few town militia, abruptly push through the throng of people in the marketplace. They make way for knights on horseback accompanied by an uncomfortable number of inquisitors. In the middle of the armed men, a couple drag a large canvas bag through the streets. The brown fabric has dark, blood-like stains and, though it is evident a creature lies within, the canvas bag is limp and still.*

*The procession stops and as laborers set up a makeshift table for the inquisitors, several town militia set aside their polearms to hang the canvas bag on the long iron hook jutting from the information post in the center of the square. Afterward, and as a curious crowd gathers, one of the knights on horseback speaks:*

*“I am Sir Thorus of Bannock. For reasons privy to those leading the investigation into the matter, several reports from the countryside reveal quite a few madmen of demonic strength have attacked several villages. These unprovoked outbursts have left many dead, therefore we must issue a warrant for the capture or death of such individuals that bear this mark—”*

*Sir Thorus instructs several men to peel the canvas bag from the bloodied, battered body underneath. No mere sword wounds dispatched the wretched body, but foul markings of torture by the Inquisition. After the crowd gasps and curiosity grips them once more to look upon the hanging corpse and the men wash blood from its skin, you see a familiar marking upon its body.*

*“The inquisitors,” Thorus continues, “are here to*

*take your testimony or questions regarding this blood moon mark. We wish to know your knowledge about the matter, regardless of its trivial nature. Guards at the various gates have been instructed to personally search those wishing to leave for such a mark. I stress that cooperation is paramount and if you wish not to be searched in such a manner, do not leave the city. For noble ladies, the Sisters of St. Ffraid have a private chamber where they may be searched to maintain dignity.”*

*Several people shuffle into a few lines as inquisitorial clerks ready quills and parchment to record their testimony. As you take in the situation, you soon discover a particular merchantman, one you recognize in connection with the shield that bears a similar mark, talking to an inquisitor removed from the rest, and he points your direction.*

#### DEVELOPMENT

To make this scene more memorable, the person dragged through the market and hung on display should be an ally or even a former character. This will draw a strong connection to the group.

#### Streetwise Check

**DC 0:** News spreads like wild fire, that the body strung up in the middle of the square is now missing. Some rumors believe necromancers or reanimationists might have stolen the body.

**DC 10:** A quiet, eerie rumor claims the body clamored out the shallow grave several hours after the inquisitors buried it.

#### MINOR QUEST

Escape the city.

**Quest XP:** 500 XP for helping Harriet escape (see below).

### ESCAPE

After several similar announcements throughout the city, it should slowly become evident that the noose tightens around characters bearing the mark. In a time when civil liberties do not exist, guards and inquisitors search vehemently those wishing to leave Caldor. Though, characters looking for an exit strategy, might find one in the scenarios presented below.

#### CITY GATES

Although not the best means of escape, it is not impossible and it is the most likely means to garner attention from Sir Thorus.

**Encounter:** *Escape: Bribery* (see page 14).

## OVER THE WALL

Characters may make a brazen attempt to climb over the city walls.

**Encounter:** *Escape: Climbing the Walls* (see page 16).

## THE UNDERWORLD

As adventurers duck in and out of alleyways or taking cover in the seedier places in the city, such as the Black Ward, they spy a woman that also bears a mark.

**Encounter:** *Caldor after Curfew* (see page 18).

## DEVELOPMENT

After the confrontation with Finnis Blorkin, characters may be suspicious of Harriet. She quickly explains that her only intention is to find her brother, Josiah who went missing soon after he began a personal investigation into the mark of the blood moon. Josiah told her, that should she ever need to leave the city, there was a route, known by the Caldor Office of the Inquisition, beneath the *Curdled Whey*. However, from what the inquisitor gathered, it is an extremely dangerous option and should only be used during desperate times.

### Insight Check

**DC 15:** Harriet seems to be holding something back.

**DC 20:** She sweats a bit when mentioning Josiah, as if Harriet fears him.

## QUESTIONING HARRIET SKILL CHALLENGE

**Setup:** Convince Harriet

**Level:** 10 (500 xp)

**Complexity:** 1 (4 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate,

**Bluff (DC 16):** By using a subtle play on words, characters trick Harriet into revealing that her father is in danger and that her brother, Josiah, might be the cause of it.

- A failure closes off this approach increasing the DCs for the rest of the challenge to *hard* (DC 21).

**Diplomacy (DC 16):** Characters offer to help or bargain with Harriet to get at the heart of the matter. She completely trusts characters after 3 or more successes with this approach at the end of this skill challenge, but characters must try to fulfill their agreement with her.

**Insight (DC 16):** By poking holes in her story, such as “why start searching for your brother now when he has been missing for some time”, characters find out she has a strong dislike for her brother.

- A failure closes off this approach increasing the DCs for the rest of the challenge to *hard* (DC 21).

**Intimidate (DC 16):** Adventurers blatantly threaten Harriet. She fears characters after 3 or more successes with this approach at the end of the challenge. Harriet

will leave the group at the first opportunity after they emerge on the other side of the city wall.

- A failure closes off this approach increasing the DCs for the rest of the challenge to *hard* (DC 21).

**Success:** The characters push Harriet into revealing her true motivation for finding Josiah: Her father bears the mark of the blood moon and recently became apprehended by the Inquisition. She hopes that Josiah can use his influence to set him free or at least make the man comfortable. However, she doubts this will work, so Harriet plans to clear a path to escape from Caldor then attempt to rescue her father should Josiah fail to lend aid.

**Failure:** Harriet refuses to offer anymore information concerning her personally life. She slowly becomes aloof from the group aiding only when she deems appropriate. Characters can attempt this skill challenge again after an extended rest

## MAJOR QUEST

Locate Josiah.

**Quest XP:** 2,500 XP for locating Josiah, defeating him, and having him reveal what secrets he discovered about the *blood moon* mark.

# Part Two

## THE UNDERBELLY

A dark, elusive passage leads from the *Curdled Whey* out of the city, however it is a path wrought with dangers and protective wards.

## MAIDEN'S MILK

Adventurers seek out the hidden entrance in the bottom cellar of the *Curdled Whey*.

**Encounter:** *Maiden's Milk* (see page 20).

## DEVELOPMENT

The secret entrance located inside the iron maiden empties into a maze of cramped, winding caverns that once was a Romus aqueduct that supported the ancient city. Now, it serves as passageways for evil entities, smugglers dabbling in the flesh trade or other heinously illegal items, and the foulest necromancers.

## INTO THE AQUEDUCTS

Aside from navigating the aqueducts, there are several possible encounters plus one planned encounter (*The Path of Beating Hearts*). There is no particular order when to run this encounter. Therefore, you can run it



anytime during the Navigating the Aqueducts Skill Challenge.

Adventurers must brave the aqueducts and travel to the exit that takes at least six hours.

### NAVIGATING THE AQUEDUCTS

**Setup:** The aqueducts are a maze of dead end passages, crumbling corridors, natural cisterns, and ancient Romus sewers. Each hour, have characters make a group check. A majority of successes in each group check represent a success for the skill challenge.

**Level:** 10 (XP 1,000)

**Complexity:** 2 (6 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Athletics, Arcana, Dungeoneering, Endurance, Perception, Stealth, Streetwise.

#### Hour One, Dungeoneering (DC 16, group check):

Characters navigate the winding caverns and avoid a few natural hazards, such as venting steam.

- If the group fails this check, they encounter the following hazard:

**Caustic Geyser** (see the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE for further details).

#### Hour Two, Stealth (DC 16, group check):

Adventurers move quietly past a group of necromantic cultists or a group of roguish assassins.

- If the group fails this check, they encounter the following monsters:

**2 Black Puddings** (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL 2 for further details). These are remnants of two old necromantic wizards—their foul energy oozed from their bodies like a thick bile once they died.

#### Hour Three, Athletics (DC 16, group check):

Characters successfully swim across a deep cistern, which includes an underwater tunnel.

- If the group fails this check, individual characters that failed must make an immediate DC 10 Athletics check or risk suffocation by drowning. They also encounter the following monster:

**1 Otyugh** (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL for further details). This creature lurks three squares beneath the water, but is immobilized. If it takes damage, it must succeed on a DC 20 Endurance check or take 7 damage. This forces the creature to move to the surface on its next turn.

#### Hour Four, Endurance (DC 10, group check):

Adventurers stave off the heat from underground vents or the weariness from exerting themselves.

- If the group fails this check, each loses a healing surge.

#### Hour Five, Perception (DC 16, group check):

Adventurers avoid confrontation with a group of wandering corpse slavers or assassins.

- If the group fails this check, they encounter the following monsters:

**3 Dark Stalkers** (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL for further details).

#### Hour Six, Arcana (DC 21, group check):

Adventurers observe many runic markings that might pose dangerous or possibly lethal to careless characters. These could be magical traps, wards, or arcane marks of powerful necromancers.

- If the group fails this check, they encounter the following hazard:

**Glyph of Warding** (see the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE for further details).

#### Hour Seven, Endurance (DC 16, group check):

Adventurers stave off the heat from underground vents or the weariness from exerting themselves.

- If the group fails this check, each loses a healing surge.

#### Hour Eight, Athletics (DC 16, group check):

Adventurers navigate across a 15-foot chasm either by clinging to the cavern wall or jumping across.

- If the group fails this check, individual characters that failed must either make an immediate DC 15 Athletics check (jumping across the chasm with a running start) or DC 20 Athletics check (climbing across the water-worn cavern wall). Those that fail the jump check fall 30 feet and receive 3d10 damage. Characters failing the climb check by 5 or more also fall 30 feet, taking 3d10 damage.

**Success:** Characters are allowed a short rest before proceeding to *Revenge of the Gutter Mage* encounter, which immediately leads to the exit.

**Failure:** Characters are allowed a short rest before proceeding to *Revenge of the Gutter Mage* encounter, however each are weakened at the beginning of that encounter (save ends) from the exhausting trek. Each group failure during the skill challenge also adds an extra hour on their travel time.

### PATH OF BEATING HEARTS

This is a blatant test for the good at heart and takes place sometime during the *Navigating the Aqueducts* skill challenge.

**Encounter:** *Path of Beating Hearts* (see page 24).

### REVENGE OF THE GUTTER MAGE

This encounter takes place after characters finish the *Navigating the Aqueducts* skill challenge. The Gutter Mage, surmising the particular path Harriet and her ac-



complices planned to take, gave inquisitors a tip in lieu of a small reward. He informed Sir Thorus of Bannock that a group bearing *blood moon* marks intended to escape the city via an ancient Romus aqueduct. Sir Thorus and a small contingent await near the exit.

**Encounter:** *Revenge of the Gutter* (see page 26).

## Part Three

### THE BOG OF BONES

Once outside the city, they are free to travel to the Bog of Bones to reach the fabled Shield Tree, the last known destination of Josiah. If Harriet still lives, she guides them there. If Sir Thorus escaped or characters spared his life, he will take a day to recuperate and gather an small expeditionary force to track them down.

Once characters arrive near the edge of the bog, read or paraphrase the following:

*The Bog of Bones is an ominous place boding great evil by its very presence between the borders of Cthonia and Darcadia. With each step into the murky waters, bone crunching beneath the weight of each step; bones of knight errants questing to reach the very heart of the swamp and bear witness to the ancient Shield Tree.*

*All manner of vile, twisted creatures slink and swim in the bog as well as the hanging vines of death and moss from decaying oak trees. Fantastic mounds of swamp rock and fungus form great lichen trees and bushes. You feel a touch of shadow cling to your exposed skin with each passing hour you travel deeper into its interior.*

The Bog of Bones centers on a particular area where the Realm of Shadow holds great influence. Each time characters begins an encounter within the Bog of Bones or as each hour passes, have them make an Endurance check.

BOG OF BONES	ENDURANCE CHECK
<b>Check Result</b>	<b>Effect</b>
10 or less	Characters lose 1 healing surge and gain vulnerable 10 necrotic.
11-20	Characters lose 1 healing surge and gain vulnerable 5 necrotic.
21-25	Characters lose 1 healing surge.
26 or greater	Characters suffer no effect.

Characters may lose more than one healing surge due to multiple checks, however only apply the greater vulnerability should they receive additional vulnerability results. Characters regain lost healing surges normally and

lose vulnerabilities after an extended rest. Furthermore, while within the bog, characters can only run at Speed +1 and cannot take two move actions that results in moving twice during their turn unless they possess a swim speed or swamp walk. Characters can teleport or fly normally.

### INTO THE BOG

Aside from navigating the bog, there are several possible encounters plus planned encounter (*The Black Pool*). There is in no particular order and you can run the encounter at your leisure during the Navigating the Aqueducts Skill Challenge.

Adventurers must brave the aqueducts and travel to the exit that takes at least six hours.

### NAVIGATING THE BOG

**Setup:** The Bog of Bones is riddled with sinkhole, treacherous mires, muck, and flora as well as vicious creatures. Each hour, have characters make a group check. A majority of successes in each group check represent a success for the skill challenge.

**Level:** 13 (XP 800)

**Complexity:** 1 (4 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics, Endurance, Insight, Nature, Perception.

#### Hour One, Nature (DC 18, group check):

Characters navigate the natural and fantastic dangers located deep within the swamp such as flaming gas pockets and necrotic cesspools.

#### NECROTIC CESSPOOL Level 10 Obstacle

Hazard XP 500

**Hazard:** This hazard consists of an area of 16 x 20 squares where various pockets of necrotic swamp water from the Realm of Shadows empties into the material realm mixing with normal bog water.

#### Nature

DC 26: The character can end their move safely this turn. Otherwise, the end up on a necrotic cesspool square.

#### Arcana

DC 22: The character's knowledge provides a +2 bonus to Nature checks to disable a necrotic cesspool square.

#### Trigger

When a character enters or begins its turn into a necrotic square, the hazard attacks that creature.

#### Attack

**Opportunity Action** **Melee 1**

**Target:** Creature in hazard square.

**Attack:** +13 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 2d10+6 necrotic damage, and target is slowed (save ends).

On a critical hit, the target is stunned instead of slowed (save ends).

**Miss:** Half damage and the target is not slowed.

#### Countermeasures

- An adjacent character can make a necrotic square inert with a successful Nature check (DC 26).
- A character can make an Athletics check (DC 11) as an immediate interrupt to leap from the treacherous square to an adjacent space.



- If the group fails this check, they encounter the following hazard:

**Hour Two, Acrobatics (DC 18, group check):**

Adventurers move through a dense area of thick, clinging swamp vines that threaten to entangle them beneath the murky waters.

- If the group fails this check, they encounter the following hazard:

**CLINGING BONES VINES**

**Level 8 Elite Obstacle**

Hazard

XP 700

*When adventurers move into the center of the area riddled with vines, then begin to enclose and constrict attempting to bring them beneath the waters.*

**Hazard:** This hazard consists of an area of 16 x 20 squares where vicious vines attempt to drown their victims to gain nutrients through their rotting remains.

**Nature**

DC 22: The character's knowledge provides a +2 bonus to countermeasure checks to overcome the hazard.

**Initiative +4**

**Trigger**

The hazard is triggered when characters reach the center of the area. Roll initiative. On the hazard's initiative count it pulls a character deeper into the water

**Attack**

**Standard Action** Area 16 x 20 squares

**Target:** Each creature in the area.

**Effect:** On the hazard's initiative count it pulls a character deeper into the water. This has the following effects.

Round 1—Does not effect Medium creatures. The area is difficult terrain for Small creatures.

Round 2—The area is considered difficult terrain for Medium creatures and small creatures must swim.

Round 3—Every creature must swim.

Round 4—All creatures are considered swimming underwater.

**Countermeasures**

- A character can delay the effect for themselves or an adjacent character for 1 round with a Thievery or Athletics check (DC 19) as a standard action.
- A character can slip through the vines or wrestle with them on a successful Acrobatics, Athletics, or Thievery check (DC 24) as a standard action. This causes the vines to take twice as many rounds to drag the character or an adjacent character beneath the water. Use the 1st round result on round 2, the 2nd round result on round 4, and so forth.
- A character can break free of the particular vine holding them or an adjacent character on a Strength check (DC 30). This resets the effect to the 1st round results for the freed character.
- A character becomes totally free of the hazard once outside the area.
- A character can attack the vines (AC 10, Fort 8, Ref 8; hp 50; resist 10 all). Destroying the particular vine resets the effect to the 1st round results for the freed character.

**Hour Three, Insight (DC 18, group check):**

Characters move into the territory of a violent, gypsy bog druid. They are able to perceive the hanging skulls,

and foreboding snake and crocodile skins as a warning and thus avoid the area.

- If the group fails this check, they encounter the following monsters:

**1 Bog Druid** (She is a human gypsy, however use the statistics for Greenscale Marsh Mystic; see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL for further details).

**3 Shambling Mounds** (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL for further details).

**Hour Four, Endurance (DC 11, group check):**

Adventurers stave off the some of the necrotic effects or the weariness of exerting themselves.

- If the group fails this check, each loses a healing surge.

**Hour Five, Perception (DC 18, group check):**

Adventurers avoid confrontation a bog hag.

- If the group fails this check, they encounter the following monster:

**1 Bog Hag** (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL for further details).

**Hour Six and beyond, Endurance (DC 11, group check):**

Adventurers stave off the some of the necrotic effects or the weariness of exerting themselves.

- If the group fails this check, each loses a healing surge.

**Success:** Characters are allowed a short rest before proceeding to the *Hag of Trelang* encounter, which immediately happens as they finish this skill challenge.

**Failure:** Characters are allowed a short rest before proceeding to the *Hag of Trelang* encounter, however each automatically contracts the *Blinding Sickness* disease (see the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE for further details).

**THE BLACK POOL**

Characters encounter this hazard at some point during the skill challenge.

**Encounter:** *Black Pool* (see page 29).

**DEVELOPMENT**

As characters emerge from the skill challenge, just prior to the *Hag of Trelang* encounter, characters witness the following:

*A clash of steel and bolts clang and whiz throughout the charged air. Several battered and worn gypsies stumble from the thick vines and bog oaks collapsing before you; their once vibrant clothes besmirched with sweat and blood. Other gypsy rogues emerge from the heat of battle as they struggle against one of their own kind bearing a blood moon mark across his back and a demonic rage in*



his eyes. He too is tattered and bloody as the possessed finally falls as a lifeless heap into the murky bog water.

The gypsies begin to tend to their own as one of the vivacious warriors with a swarthy complexion and rich, black hair approaches. "I am Vehsas, leader of this clan and if you should be friends of Clan Romious, then I advise you to turn back. A bit further south lies the Shield Tree and a treacherous witch."

Characters can pose several possible questions:

#### **Why are you and your clan here?**

*"The town militia of Ardor forced us into the bog after demolishing our presence at the gypsy market. We took refuge with the witch of the bog, the Hag of Trelang, in exchange for many rare ritual components. However, she secretly coveted what Ardor despised."*

#### **What happened?**

*"The inquisitors of Ardor sought to apprehend our brothers and sisters that bore the mark of the blood moon. We refused and fighting ensued.*

*"However, little did we know the hag and her sisters also sought those with the mark to bring demonic entities into this world to serve them. Those that bear the mark are more susceptible to possession allowing demons to transverse into this world from their terrible realm of hellish fire.*

*"The three sisters have spread chaos and carnage these past weeks by unleashing powerfully possessed victims across the land. We finally killed the last of our possessed siblings and escaped the hag's influence."*

#### **Will you aid us in defeating the coven?**

*"It is just the one witch—I am sure the other sisters are elsewhere. I heard of one in the barbarian lands west of Shadow River preying on clans with tribesmen that bear the mark. I heard of attacks of possessed madmen elsewhere."*

*"Despite my anger and resolve—we are in no shape to fight such evil. We must attempt to organize ourselves and recoup from the injuries we suffered—both physically and morally. We can aid you in leaving the bog should you catch up with us later. We have become quite familiar with the dangers within the Bog of Bones."*

#### **Do you know of a Josiah?**

*"That name does not ring true to my ears. I am sorry that I cannot aid you in that matter. If he traveled to Shield Tree, he might have fallen victim to her evil. If you can make her speak, she might offer the information in exchange for something, but be weary—she is a tricky foe and cannot be trusted."*

#### **THE HAG OF TRELANG**

Characters encounter this at the end of previous skill challenge after time for a short rest.

**Encounter:** *The Hag of Trelang* (see page 30).

## **Conclusion**

Once free of the threat posed from the Hag of Trelang, adventurers are free to travel to Ardor to attempt to find Josiah for information or to further aid Harriet. Once there, characters may begin searching for a gypsy library or a one-eyed inquisitor.

#### **Streetwise Check**

**DC 10:** No one is familiar with an inquisitor named Josiah, although many do know a one-eyed inquisitor named Corbin the One-Eyed. He apparently did not get along with the several minor inquisitors in the area and eventually disappeared near the gypsy market before it became raided. The inquisitors used this as the ultimate excuse to drive the gypsy clan, Romious, from their place in their market coupled with the reason that several bore the blood moon mark. However, most believed that local inquisitors made Corbin disappear or that he fell to the Veiled Coven that operates in the area.

**DC 15:** No one is also familiar with a gypsy library and most laugh stating: *"It is no secret they have a command for the arcane arts, but literature? Are you telling me those lordless heathens can read?"* However, a few point to a distant copse of trees lingering at the far end of town claiming: *"If the gypsies did have a library, it is there amongst their shattered and burnt caravans they failed to defend during their flight from Ardor."*

#### **CORBIN THE ONE-EYED**

Characters make the final trek to search for the remains of Josiah. If Harriet is no longer with the group, read or paraphrase the following:

*You venture into the dark, copse of trees to find the smoldering remains of a once vibrant gypsy market and witness the passion humans have for destruction when in fear themselves. As you attempt to salvage what remains of the camp into answers for your questions, you also spy others searching the wreckage. You first assume the torchlight comes from several Clan Romious gypsies seeking to reclaim their livelihood, but soon realize, with curiosity, that it is not light from a torch you see, but five glowing balls or arcane light. They swarm about, seemingly probing your very nature, but soon attack.*



### **Library Guardians – Encounter Level 10 (2,500 XP)**

Although the gypsy wagon containing the library is destroyed, its arcane guardians still linger.

**5 will-o-wisps** (see the in the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL 2 for more details).

Once they are defeated, read or paraphrase the following:

*The shattered balls of lights once again take form as each looks like to repeat its attack, although instead they join together taking the visage of a ghostly man.*

*“I am the Librarian, once known to the mortal realm as Josiah. Though the destruction of the library is complete, the forlorn gypsy witches bound the information within. Since you have defeated me, I am compelled to share its secrets, much to the demise of the gypsy hags and their arcane meddling, for they too are constrained to the ritual magic—the same magic that holds me here for eternity. Though, you must first know a name of the gypsy clan leader of the Romious—present, past, or future.”*

Continue to the *Development*.

If Harriet is still with the group, read or paraphrase the following:

*You venture into the dark, copse of trees to find the smoldering remains of a once vibrant gypsy market and witness the passion humans have for destruction when in fear themselves. As you attempt to salvage what remains of the camp into answers for your questions, you also spy others searching the wreckage. You first assume the torchlight comes from several Clan Romious gypsies seeking to reclaim their livelihood, but soon realize, with curiosity, that it is not light from a torch you see, but five glowing balls or arcane light. They swarm about, seemingly probing your very nature, but soon appear to grow hostile and prepare to attack.*

*As you poise yourself for battle, they flutter and glow wildly around Harriet. The wisps of lights join together taking the visage of a ghostly man.*

*“I am the Librarian, once known to the mortal realm as Josiah. Though the destruction of the library is complete, the forlorn gypsy witches bound the information within. Since you have defeated me, I am compelled to share its secrets, much to the demise of the gypsy hags and their arcane meddling, for they too are constrained to the ritual magic—the same magic that holds me here for eternity. Though, you must first know a name of the gypsy clan leader of the Romious—present, past, or future.”*

### **DEVELOPMENT**

The name Josiah, the librarian, needs is Vehsas should they seek knowledge of the ancient tomes that the gypsy library once housed. However, they are in no need of the name to speak to Josiah about his mortal life. Therefore, should characters forget the name of the gypsy leader at their initial meeting in the bog just prior to the encounter with the Hag of Trelang, it is no worry.

Characters can pose several possible questions:

#### **How did you come to guard the gypsy library?**

*“I initially came to Ardor on my own accord, looking for an ancient book about Vos the Deathless, an old villain from tales told to frighten young children long ago. I soon died upon my discovery of the library and the gypsy witches bound me to it as a guardian forever more.”*

#### **Who is Vos the Deathless?**

*“A villain from an ancient story for children. But I hold true to the belief that Vos the Deathless is real and still lurks in this world.*

*“I did not find a treatise about the vile man to confirm my suspicions, but did discover and consume the ancient fairy-tales once told to the young: Vos the Deathless cannot die by normal means or from destroying his body. His soul is hidden away inside a needle, which lays within an egg, inside a duck, bound within a rabbit, that sleeps in an iron chest, buried beneath a green oak tree, that thrives upon the Island of Bayoun, afloat upon the deepest ocean. As long as his soul is unharmed, he lives. Should the chest be discovered and opened, the rabbit shall dart away. If the hare is killed, the duck will emerge and fly high to the heavens. Should one capture the duck and possess the egg, they have Vos the Deathless in their power. If the egg is broken and the needle comforting his soul is shattered upon his forehead, Vos shall die.”*

*“It is a simple story for children, although I believe it to hold a metaphor that Vos is a lich and there are numerous obstacles to find and destroy his soul. One of which, I discovered too late, after my death—The Horn of Bel-for must return to its original possessor.”*

#### **Who do you believe is Vos the Deathless?**

*“I am not sure, but I do know much evidence lies within a higher official of the church. As soon as the Mark of Hubris began to appear across Cthonia some time ago, several high officials, through I what discovered was anonymous orders hidden within a well-oiled bureaucracy, had interest destroying such individuals.*

*“I paid no mind of it a first, until conflicting orders, once again through anonymous orders, had interest in finding and protecting such individuals. That is when I began to do research and discovered that the Mark of*



Hubris appeared once before and long ago. Several knight champions, each bearing the mark, set upon the world to contain the evil of a powerful lich. From what I have gathered, these purest of knights and unquestionable virtue, these Champions of Hubris, each failed in their task.

*"I believe the lich they sought to destroy was none other than Vos the Deathless—the famed villain from a forgotten children's bedtime story. Moreover, I felt the conflicting orders only meant that Vos the Deathless is a high official in the church and there is an internal power struggle within the inquisition to either consolidate his struggle or vanquish it.*

*"I further believe that the mark only identifies those that have the possibility of becoming a champion should they set themselves upon the task."*

#### How do you rid yourself of the mark?

*"From the few morsels I consumed, I gleaned that to rid yourself of the mark is to simply deny yourself from the quest, now that you have knowledge of its existence. I surmise this comes from the tale of Sir John the Longhorn, one of the Champions of Hubris. He denied himself from the quest set before him. Unfortunately, perhaps due to his ever present virtue, he ended his own life."*

#### Are there others like you within the Inquisition?

*"There are a few that took it upon ourselves to head a private investigation. I do not know how well they have organized themselves since I left Caldor or if they still breathe. I myself changed my name to Corbin to throw inquisitorial hunters from my movements after emerging from the Bog of Bones. I can give you one name—the others have escaped my memory due to my deathly prison: Garis Black, an inquisitor of a dubious nature. Seek him out, if you can, for like most of us, he went into hiding, but he is not entirely trustworthy."*

**Is it possible to aid in the freeing of Harriet's father?** If Harriet is still alive, she will tearfully ask this question herself.

*"I am sorry, but I can no longer help. I also feel as each day passes, I care a little less for the happenings of the mortal realm. I fear within a year, I will no longer know myself."*

Before too long, Josiah begins to become weary explaining he is not meant to hold this visage long. Soon afterward, he bursts into light taking the form of five glowing wisps.

#### DEPARTING OF THE WAYS

Harriet thanks the characters for all they have done in aiding her and hope they make what she feels is the right

decision about their marks. She, for one, heads to continue her brother's journey and as she informs them that she intends to do so, characters witness a small Mark of Hubris appear on her forearm.

## Appendix

This adventure introduces two new magic items: *The Mark of Hubris* and the *Horn of Belfor*. Much mystery surrounds the *Mark of Hubris* and only a bit of its power is presented here. Further adventures will expand upon its power. The *Horn of Belfor* will only prove useful for characters should they choose to keep it for themselves rather than reunite it to the Hag of Trelang.

#### MARK OF HUBRIS

Paragon Level

*A mystical circle bearing cryptic sigils and runes that rests slightly raised upon the skin as a scar.*

##### Wondrous Item

**Property:** Cannot be identified by means of Detect Magic.

**Power (Consumable):** As the Raise Dead ritual (see D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK for more details), with a performance time of 1 day, instead of 8 hours.

**Power (Consumable):** As the Raise Dead ritual, with a performance time of 1 month instead of 8 hours.

**Power (Level):** As the Raise Dead ritual, with a performance time of 1 month instead of 8 hours.

#### HORN OF BELFOR

*A twisted, slowly decaying, unicorn horn corrupted by decades of foul use.*

**Level:** 13

**Price:** 17,000 gp

##### Implement (Holy Symbol)

**Prerequisite:** You cannot be a fey.

**Enhancement:** +3 attack rolls and damage rolls

**Critical:** +3d6 damage; +3d8 damage with an arcane power

**Property:** Arcane casters can wield this holy symbol as an implement (wand) for arcane powers. Cannot be created.

**Power (Encounter • Healing):** Minor or Free. An ally within 10 squares can spend a healing surge or make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end. If the ally is adjacent, then it is instead a free action. Add the symbol's enhancement bonus to hit points regained or saving throw.

#### THE NEXT ADVENTURE: THE HOUSE OF HUBRIS

Characters seek out Garis Black to find that he is nothing more than an old nemesis, however he holds vital information about their task. Should they help him obtain what he seeks in an ancient manor house once belonging to a Champion of Hubris or aid a friend in dire need? The choice is theirs in the next installment of the *Blood Moon Mark* Paragon Campaign Path.



## ESCAPE: BRIBERY

Encounter Level 9 (2,000+ XP)

### SETUP

Although not the best means of escape, it is not impossible and it is the most likely means to garner attention from Sir Thorus. Nuns are present to strip search human female characters in private tents (male characters are searched behind makeshift screens). Other female races may petition to gain the same treatment with a Religion check (DC 10) or a Diplomacy check (DC 16).

### BRIBERY SKILL CHALLENGE

**Setup:** To bribe guards and authorities to allow characters to leave the city without a strip search.

**Curfew:** This skill challenge cannot take place after nightfall. The city closes its gates until dawn.

**Level:** 9

**Complexity:** 4 (10 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Streetwise

**Secondary Skills:** Insight

**Insight (DC 21):** There are four main gates: North Gate, King's Gate, Gypsy Gate, and Castle Gate. A successful Insight check allows characters to choose which of the four will provide the best chance to bribe the guards to leave the city. The most obvious assumption is the Gypsy Gate, however they are more likely to turn in some body with the mark for a reward or examine such characters themselves for any arcane usefulness. A successful check leads them to King's Gate (guards are used to bribery due to the wealthy that live in the area), while a failure by 4 leads them to either North Gate or Gypsy Gate. A failure by 5 or more directs characters to Castle Gate. Characters can use Insight only once during this skill challenge.

**Bluff (DC 21; 25 at Castle Gate):** You compose a fairly believable lie for your urgency to leave the city.

- Characters may also offer a monetary bribe (1 gp x PC level) to gain a +2 circumstance bonus (King's Gate only). If characters offers a monetary bribe of 500 gp, they succeed without the need of a skill check. Characters can only do this once.
- A successful check counts as a success and grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the next PC to make a skill check.
- In addition to a failed result for the skill challenge, a failure makes the guards become suspicious and the character must immediately make a second check with a different skill. A failure in the second check results in the character being detained for an hour for questioning. Furthermore, they cannot leave the city through bribery until after they have had an extended

rest.

**Diplomacy (DC 16; 21 at Castle Gate):** You put the guards at ease with your smooth and calm tone and banter.

- Characters may also offer a monetary bribe (1 gp x PC level) to gain a +2 circumstance bonus (King's Gate only).
- A successful check counts as a success and grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the next PC to make a skill check.
- In addition to a failed result for the skill challenge, a failed result also disallows characters to continue using the Diplomacy skill. The guards feel the conversation is disingenuous and distracts them from their work.

**Intimidate (DC 21; 25 at Castle Gate):** You threaten guards with political muscle or blatant threats to their safety or the well-being of their loved ones.

- Characters may make an immediate Streetwise check (DC 16) to drop a few influential names that might cause a hassle for the guards in question to gain a +2 circumstance bonus (King's Gate only).
- A successful check counts as a success and grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the next PC to make a skill check.
- Guards become unfriendly with a failure. Increase all DCs by 2, the character loses a healing surge (as guards use their weapons to push them from the gate), and characters may no longer use Intimidate for this skill challenge.

**Streetwise (DC 21; 25 at Castle Gate):** You know many movers and shakers that may help the guards in question with a favor. This could be advancement in the ranks, better hours of duty, or a better assignment.

- Characters may make an immediate Intimidate check (DC 16) to drop a few influential names that might cause a hassle for the guards in question to gain a +2 circumstance bonus (King's Gate only).
- A successful check counts as a success and grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the next PC to make a skill check.

**Success:** The characters leave the city. However, after an extended rest, when guards give their daily report, the characters gain the attention of Sir Thorus who begins to immediately search them out.

**Failure:** Characters cannot leave unless they succumb to being stripped searched. They cannot attempt this skill challenge again until they take an extended rest. Furthermore, increase this skill challenge DC by 2 as well as the DCs in the *Over the Walls* skill challenge.

### DEVELOPMENT

Encounter Level 9 (2,000+ XP)

It is possible for characters to enter a confrontation with the gate guards. Once an altercation begins, the tower guards immediately lower the portcullis completely



blocking off this gate as a means to escape. They will remain closed until the following day.

- 5 Caldor Gate Guards
- 4 Caldor Tower Guards
- 1 Caldor Gate Captain

<b>CALDOR GATE CAPTAIN</b>	
<b>Level 10 Soldier (Leader)</b>	<b>XP 500</b>
Medium natural humanoid (human)	
<b>Initiative</b> +10 <b>Senses</b> Perception +12	
<b>HP</b> 104; <b>Bloodied</b> 52	
<b>AC</b> 26; <b>Fortitude</b> 22, <b>Reflex</b> 22, <b>Will</b> 22	
<b>Speed</b> 5	
⊕	<b>Longsword</b> (standard; at-will) † <b>Weapon</b> +16 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage, and the target is slowed.
↖	<b>Strike on Command</b> (when first bloodied; encounter) Close burst 10; targets allies; the target may shift 1 square and make a basic melee or ranged attack as a free action.
	<b>Gate Captain's Parry</b> (immediate interrupt; when hit by an attack; recharge [2]) Personal; Caldor gate captain gains a +4 power bonus to AC. If the attack misses, the triggering creature grants combat advantage to the Caldor gate captain until the end of its next turn.
	<b>Caldor Gate Captain Tactics</b> A Caldor gate captain gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls against creatures granting combat advantage, and its attack deals an extra 2d6 damage against that creature.
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned <b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Skills:</b> Athletics +13, Endurance +13	
<b>Str</b> 16 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+8) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 13 (+6) <b>Cha</b> 16 (+8)

<b>CALDOR GATE GUARD</b>		<b>Level 8 Minion</b>
Medium natural humanoid (human)		<b>XP 88</b>
<b>Initiative</b> +6 <b>Senses</b> Perception +6		
<b>HP</b> 1; a minion is never damaged by a missed attack		
<b>AC</b> 22; <b>Fortitude</b> 20, <b>Reflex</b> 18, <b>Will</b> 18		
<b>Speed</b> 5		
⊕	<b>Polearm</b> (standard; at-will) † <b>Weapon</b> Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 6 damage.	
	<b>Caldor Gate Guard Tactics</b> If two or more Caldor gate guards hit the same target in the same round, the second attack also knocks the target prone.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned <b>Languages</b> Common		
<b>Str</b> 20 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 15 (+6) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+6)	
<b>Con</b> 16 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+4) <b>Cha</b> 11 (+4)	

### Tactics

The Caldor tower archer rain arrows down from above hiding behind crenellations granting him cover. After the Caldor gate captain becomes bloodied for the first time, another gate captain and five more gate guards appear in 1d4+2 rounds. The guards will not pursue if characters retreat, but this action will put the city on alert for the characters and draw the attention of Thorus.

Attacking the guards counts as an immediate failure to the skill challenge (see above for details).

<b>CALDOR TOWER ARCHER Level 7 Artillery</b>	
Medium natural humanoid (human)	
<b>XP 300</b>	
<b>Initiative</b> +6 <b>Senses</b> Perception +4	
<b>HP</b> 62; <b>Bloodied</b> 31	
<b>AC</b> 19; <b>Fortitude</b> 18, <b>Reflex</b> 19, <b>Will</b> 17	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
⊕	<b>Short Sword</b> (standard; at-will) † <b>Weapon</b> +12 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage.
⊕	<b>Shortbow</b> (standard; at-will) † <b>Weapon</b> Ranged 15/20; +14 vs. AC; 2d8+3 damage.
↘	<b>Deadly Rain</b> (standard; recharge [2], [2]) † <b>Weapon</b> The Caldor tower archer makes 2 shortbow attacks, each at -2 penalty to the attack roll.
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned <b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Str</b> 14 (+5)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+6) <b>Wis</b> 12 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+4) <b>Cha</b> 13 (+4)

## ESCAPE: SCALING THE WALL

Encounter Level 9 (2,000+ XP)

### SETUP

Aside from exiting through one of the four gates or if that avenue is now closed off to them, characters might try scaling over the city wall.

### SCALING THE WALL SKILL CHALLENGE

**Setup:** To covertly scale one of the many of the city walls to escape unnoticed.

**Daytime:** If this encounter takes place during the day, add 5 to each of the DCs of this skill challenge.

**Level:** 9

**Complexity:** 4 (10 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Athletics, Stealth, Endurance

**Secondary Skills:** Bluff, Perception, Streetwise

**Special Rules:** Characters alternate each round between *Part One* and *Part Two*. The first round, characters make a group Athletics check and on the second round, characters make a group Stealth check. On the following round, revert back to the group Athletics checks and so on.

### Part One

**Athletics (DC 20; Group Check, half must succeed):** Characters scale the 50-foot wall.

- Each failed check by 5 or more results in a loss in a healing surge for the character that failed. A character can make an immediate Athletics check (DC 25) to avoid losing the healing surge.
- If the group fails, in addition to counting as a failure for the skill challenge, cumulatively increases the Stealth check DC by 2 as guards become alerted from the noise or sudden movement.

**Perception (DC 16):** Each round in which adventurers make a group Athletics check, at least one character must look for guards. Up to two other characters can aid in this check.

- Instead of counting as an success for the skill challenge, a success grants a +2 circumstance bonus to one PC during the next Stealth check.
- A failure does not count as a failed result, but instead increases the next Stealth DC by 2.

**Bluff (DC 16):** Each round in which adventurers make a group Athletics check, one character can cause a minor distraction with a Bluff check. One other character can aid.

- Instead of counting as a success for the skill challenge, it instead grants a +2 circumstance bonus to one PC during the next Stealth check.
- A failure does not count as a failed result, but instead increases the next Stealth DC by 2.

### Part Two

**Stealth (DC 21; Group Check, half must succeed):**

*As you climb, you do so quietly, clinging to shadows as not to draw attention.*

- A successful check counts as a success for the skill challenge.
- If the group fails, in addition to counting as a failure for the skill challenge, cumulatively increases the Stealth check DC by 2.

**Endurance (DC 16):** *You momentarily pause waiting for a guard to move by, desperately clinging to the stone wall using each muscle to sustain your grip.*

Each round in which adventurers make a Stealth check, they must also make an Endurance check.

- A failure does not count as a failed result, but instead increases the next Athletics check DC by 2.
- Each failed check by 5 or more results in a loss in a healing surge for the character that failed. A character can immediately take a Second Wind action to avoid losing the healing surge. This action can only be performed once during this skill challenge.

### Secondary Skills

**Streetwise (DC 21):** *You have a good idea on the schedule the guards keep, how often they move along the wall, and their usual routes.*

A character may substitute a successful Streetwise check with either Perception or Bluff. Only one character can only perform this skill check once during this skill challenge.

**Success (0 failures):** The characters leave the city.

**Success (1 failure):** The characters leave the city.

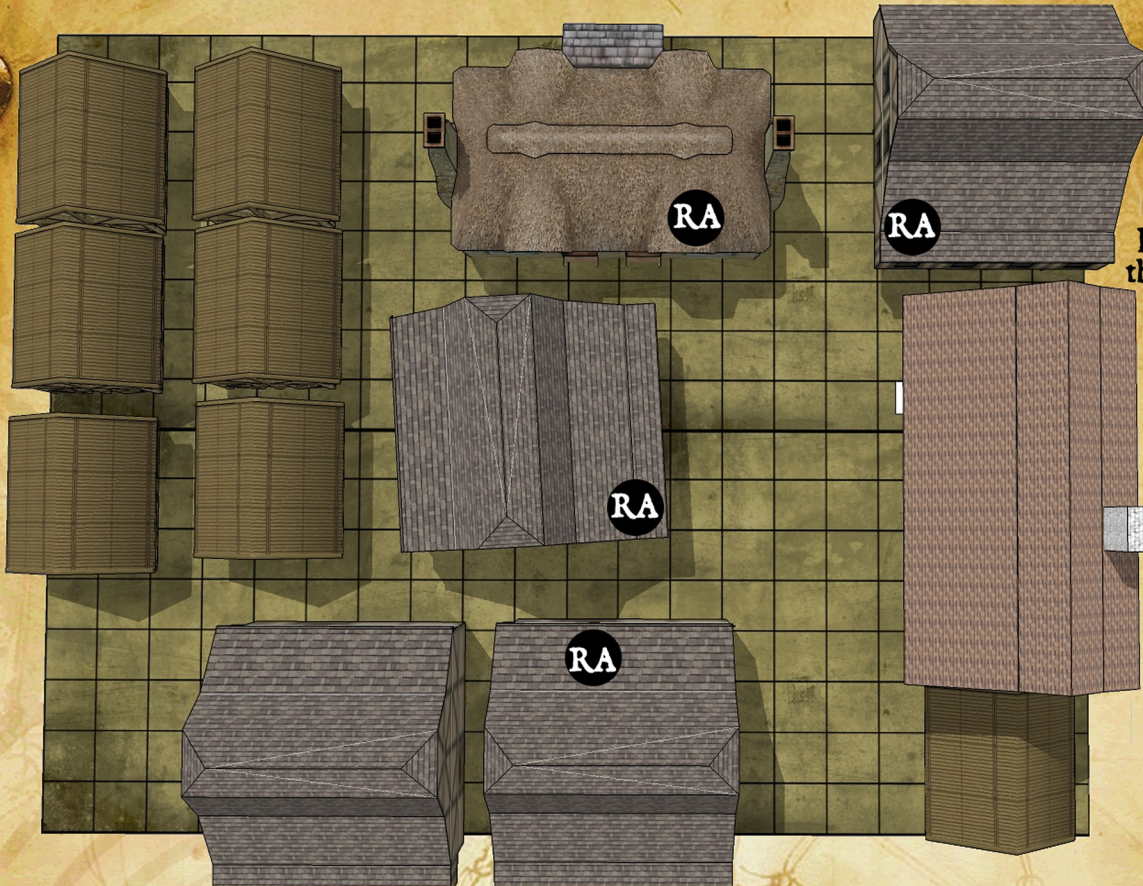
However, after an extended rest, when guards give their daily report, the characters gain the attention of Sir Thorus who begins to immediately search them out (use the adversaries in *Revenge of the Gutter Mage* encounter when he finally catches up to characters).

**Success (2 failures):** The characters leave the city.

However, before a rest, characters are spotted by a group of soldiers patrolling outside the city wall anticipating such an escape. Use the adversaries presented in the Development section of the *Escape: Bribery* encounter.

**Failure:** Characters are spotted by a group of soldiers patrolling the wall and attacked. Use the adversaries presented in the Development section of the *Escape: Bribery* encounter. Furthermore, they cannot attempt this skill challenge again until they take an extended rest. Furthermore, increase this skill challenge DC by 2 as well as the DCs in the Bribery skill challenge.





Harriet enters the area via this alleyway.

**Curdled Whey**

**Rooftop Archers - RA**

The alley assassin and Black Ward brigand can be placed in any alleyway at your discretion. Feel free to add crates and barrels for cover or access to the rooftops.



**Curdled Whey**

# Black Ward Streets

## CALDOR AFTER CURFEW

Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

**4 Rooftop Brigands**  
**1 Black Ward Brigand**  
**1 Alley Assassin**

### SET UP

Harriet Blackpike (her father was part of the town militia of Blackburn) is a rogue using the current situation to lure desperate people to help her escape the city. She cleverly mimicked the mark by modifying an arcane mark ritual, and casually, but carefully, allows the mark to be seen.

If characters inquire about her, a few shrug, saying, “She claims to know a way out of the city and is willing to risk her neck for some hard coin.” If characters approach her about the subject, Harriet actually claims she is looking to leave the city via an abandoned aqueduct beneath the streets. Her brother, an inquisitor name Josiah, went missing several months ago from Caldor and she seeks to find him.

### ROLE-PLAY

Contrary to what others might have said, Harriet is not looking to earn coin escorting characters out of the city. However, she will insist, because of the dangerous route, that she holds an equal claim over the belongings of any fallen comrade.

If characters agree, she asks them to meet her after curfew at the abandoned building, the *Curdled Whey* in the Black Ward district. She claims she will come alone and should they see anyone but her, they should hide or prepare to use their blades.

### History or Streetwise Check

Characters curious about the origins of the *Curdled Whey* can make a check to find out the information below. Harriet can also provide the following during role-play.

**DC 15:** The *Curdled Whey* specialized in cheeses and drink from watered whey after removing the curds from plain milk; a poor man’s beverage.

**DC 25:** Many believed the store front hid a secret entrance used to smuggle illegal goods in and out of the city. It was shut down and abandoned after discovered by the district Alderman and the ward militia.

**DC 30:** It served as the entrance into underground forays that not only leads out of the city, but into the Catacomb District, and eventually to the Skullcap, a den for assassins and foul necromancers.

### AMBUSH

A few moments after they meet at the rendezvous, just before Harriet emerges from the shadows, read or para-

phrase the following:

*The winding dark alleys open into a small square congested with crumbling, overhanging buildings that shadow the streets. You hear the gurgling of sewage water moving unabated down the center of muddy streets as rats and other fantastic vermin scamper throughout the lonely night. Several blocks away, you hear the echoes of a few drunks and a few streets down, a scuffle or knife fight. You await anxiously for the arrival of Harriet.*

### Perception Check

**DC 22:** *You hear cautious movement in the alley nearest to the Curdled Whey. As you spy that direction, you see Harriet enter into the street, but you also hear muffled voices in a few of the surrounding alleys.*

**DC 27:** *In the dim moonlight, you see a shadowy figure adjust their position along one of the rooftops.*

### BANTER

During combat, Finnis Blorkin (Black Ward brigand), has a few choice tidbits he spouts at Harriet when attacking. Read or paraphrase the following:

*“The Gutter Mage wondered why thee wanted an arcane mark that could be seen. It took me head to figure that one out, it did.”*

*“Thee think you can lead these blokes to their death and keep all the reward for thyself? The Gutter Mage is pissed, he is.”*

*“These marked blokes are ours. And if that mark is permanent like the Gutter Mage claims, I will collect on your head as well.”*

### TACTICS

The Black Ward brigand and alley assassin try to stick to the shadows while the rooftop brigands remain above showering down on vulnerable targets. When the alley assassin falls to 45 or fewer hit points, he skirts down the narrow allies to escape.



### BLACK WARD BRIGAND

#### Level 11 Elite Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (human)

XP 1,200

**Initiative** +12 **Senses** Perception +11

**HP** 228; **Bloodied** 114

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 6

#### Action Points 1

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**  
+16 vs. AC; 2d8+4 damage (crit 1d8+20 damage).

† **Slicing Blade** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**  
The Black Ward brigand makes two longsword attacks; +14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

† **Beguiling Shift** (minor; encounter) † **Charm**  
Reach 2; +14 vs. Will; the target is pulled 1 square and the Black Ward brigand gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the brigand's next turn.

† **Bloody Mark** (minor; recharge [1]) † **Weapon**  
Bloodied targets only; The Black Ward brigand makes two longsword attacks; +16 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage, and ongoing damage (save ends).

#### Combat Advantage

The Black Ward brigand deals an extra 3d6 damage against creatures that grants combat advantage.

#### Swift Evasion (minor; encounter)

Choose one condition: marked, slowed, or dazed; end that condition and the Black Ward brigand shifts 2 squares.

**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** Common

**Skills:** Acrobatics +14, Bluff +13, Intimidate +13, Stealth +17, Streetwise +13, Thievery +15

**Str** 23 (+11) **Dex** 20 (+10) **Wis** 12 (+6)

**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 17 (+8)

### ROOFTOP BRIGAND

#### Level 9 Minion

Medium natural humanoid (human)

XP 100

**Initiative** +3 **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 1; a minion is never damaged by a missed attack

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16

**Speed** 6

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**  
+13 vs. AC; 6 damage.

⊗ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**  
Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 6 damage.

#### Rain from the Rooftops

Against creatures without cover or concealment, rooftop brigands gain a +2 bonus to hit and 2 extra damage with ranged attacks.

**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** Common

**Skills:** Acrobatics +11, Thievery +8

**Str** 12 (+5) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)

**Con** 15 (+6) **Int** 9 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+4)

**Equipment** crossbow, crossbow bolts (20), leather armor, longsword.

### ALLEY ASSASSIN

#### Level 12 Elite Lurker

Medium natural humanoid (human)

XP 1,400

**Initiative** +16 **Senses** Perception +15

**HP** 194; **Bloodied** 97

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 6

#### Action Points 1

⊕ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**  
+17 vs. AC; 3d4+4 damage.

⊗ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**  
+17 vs. AC; 3d4+4 damage.

† / ⊗ **Twofold Dagger Strike** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**  
The alley assassin makes two dagger attacks.

⊗ **Assassin's Blade** (standard; encounter) † **Poison, Weapon**  
+15 vs. Reflex; 4d4+10 poison damage.

← **Mark of the Alley Assassin** (minor; encounter)  
Close burst 10; targets one creature; the target gains 10 vulnerability to poison until the end of the alley assassin's next turn.

#### Dusty Escape (move; encounter) † Illusion

The alley assassin can shift 5 squares. The alley assassin gains concealment until the end of its next turn.

#### Shadowed Embrace (minor; encounter)

The alley assassin gains a +5 bonus to Stealth checks until the end of its next turn.

#### Whispers of an Assassin (immediate reaction; when hit or missed by a melee attack; recharge [1])

The attacking creature is grabbed until the end of its turn, and the alley assassin can make an *assassin's blade* attack. When the grab ends, the alley assassin may immediately shift to a space adjacent to the attacking creature.

#### Combat Advantage

The alley assassin deals an extra 2d6 damage against creatures that grants combat advantage.

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Common

**Skills:** Acrobatics +17, Stealth +17, Streetwise +12

**Str** 14 (+8) **Dex** 22 (+12) **Wis** 19 (+10)

**Con** 19 (+10) **Int** 14 (+8) **Cha** 13 (+7)



## MAIDEN'S MILK

Encounter Level 10 ( 2,500 XP )

**4 Gargoyles** (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL for further details).

### I Lethargic Haze Trap

#### SET UP

The cellar of the *Curdled Whey* is several stories tall with a long, rickety wooden stairs leading to the bottom. As characters descend into the darkness, read or paraphrase the following:

*The entry into the cellar opens up to a pit of darkness several stories deep as wooden stairs precariously cling to the hewn stone walls. With each step, the rickety stairs and occasional platforms sway, creak, or give away as the dark hole below swallows the splintering wood.*

Momentarily ask what the PCs are doing before continuing:

*You feel a warm, fetid smell come over your being and then shutter as a queasiness upsets your stomach. Suddenly, a tiredness swells over you for but a moment and then, the fire fills each of the ancient sconces lining the path downward.*

The sconces are lit by an ancient magic that draws life energy to fuel its fires; the character first in line loses 1 healing surge.

*As you progress down the lit stairwell you see damp, cold recesses that house fermenting cheese wheels and curdled milk. Occasionally, you see a horrifying, stone vestige of warning carved into the wall. Each step downward, mold spores make it difficult to breath and when you reach the bottom you occasionally enter a coughing fit.*

Despite the spine-chilling descent, the cellar is typical of what characters might expect it to look like: it is cold and damp due to its depth into the earth, lined with shelves, crates, barrels, sacks, and other foodstuffs, although rotting. Characters can have a look around to search out an entrance into the old Romus underground aqueduct.

#### Perception Check

**DC 0:** Several moldy cheese wheels have several teeth marks.

**DC 10:** A character uncovers a manifest and some other ledgers. Although they once sold cheese, whey drink, and curds to eat, there is a reference to Harold Dig and buying large quantities of “beef”.

**DC 15:** On top of a barrel sits a moldy cheese wheel with a sharp knife. Its edge, coated with dried blood.

**DC 18:** A secret panel reveals three heavy canvas robes each accompanied by a plague doctor’s bird mask and goggles (the glass is made of magnifying lenses; only good for reading, otherwise –2 Perception and Initiative checks).

**DC 20:** Near the barrel, a faint blood mark stains the wall.

**DC 21:** An arcane symbol of some sort carved into the floor in each corner of the room. They faintly glow if touched.

**DC 25:** A fine seam runs along the stone wall near the knife and barrel revealing a secret door.



#### Arcana Check

**DC 15 (the arcane symbols):** The symbols are an old binding ritual. Something guards or did guard this room.

**DC 25 (the blood mark on the wall):** By sacrificing a healing surge by using the ritual knife and marking the wall with blood will open the secret door.

#### Streetwise Check

**DC 20:** Harold Dig works in one of many church graveyards throughout the Catacomb District. The “beef” the ledgers refer to is more than likely corpses. If characters present this manifest to church officials, the authorities will arrest Harold and reward characters with 500 gp.

#### GARGOYLES

The gargoyles are bound to this area and act as its guardians, occasionally feasting on the moldy cheese. They are the horrifying vestiges characters see while walking down the stairs. They remain in statue form and wait for an opportune moment to attack once characters are below. They only come out of statue form if characters deal more than 25 points of damage in a single attack.

## LETHARGIC HAZE

This haze rolls into the room once the secret door is opened to cover both the cellar and the adjoining torture room. The gargoyles are immune to this effect.

## TORTURE CHAMBER

Adjoining the cellar via the secret door is a small torture chamber. Read or paraphrase the following once characters enter:

*All manner of spiked chains and wicked devices churl your stomach as they sit splayed and ready for use; to coerce with cord and fire and water. Various clamps, manacles, rope, and chains either hang listless on the walls or dangle from the ceiling. Huge bellows, through means of animation magic, pump into the area a lethargic haze to keep prisoners from resisting. Pins, vices, spikes, and heating elements adorn the room and against the far wall, a dreaded iron maiden stares into your soul.*

Although the shop above was shut down, the torture chamber is still in use by the nefarious individuals who once ran the shop above. The Black Ward militia and alderman are too frightened to investigate beneath the *Curdled Whey*. The alderman petitioned the Inquisitional Office of Caldor to look into the matter. Among other things, this is what brought the attention of Harriet's brother, Josiah, for he serves as a clerk in the Requisitions Office.

### Perception Check

**DC 10:** The iron maiden cannot be moved.

**DC 15:** Each of the spikes in the interior of the iron maiden are hollow and designed to drain blood as well as the grate at the bottom.

**DC 20:** Within the interior of the iron maiden, beyond its back, characters here moving water. It also appears this torture chamber is still in use.

**DC 25:** There is a secret door located in the iron maiden.

### Dungeoneering or Arcana Check

After characters discover the secret door in the iron maiden.

**DC 16:** To open the secret door, someone must be sacrificed in the iron maiden. However, a character can engage in a skill challenge to trick it into opening. DC 28 Arcana or Dungeoneering check. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures). Success opens the secret entrance, but each failed attempt causes a loss in a healing surge. If a character no longer has a healing surge to lose, they instead suffer ongoing 10 damage (save ends). Characters can repeat this skill challenge should they fail. Regardless of success, once 10 healing surges are lost, the door opens.

## LETHARGIC HAZE

Level 10 Lurker

Hazard

XP 500

*A lingering smog hangs in the air, causing a sluggish apathy for those who tarry too long in such a place.*

**Hazard:** Those that open the secret door, enter the room, or start their turn in the room, the haze attacks.

### Perception

The haze is very prevalent, thus no Perception check is necessary.

### Dungeoneering

DC 21: Character successfully identifies the haze.

### Trigger

When a target opens the secret door, enters the room, or starts their turn in the room.

### Attack

#### Opportunity Action

Melee touch

**Target:** Triggering creature

**Attack:** +13 vs. Fortitude

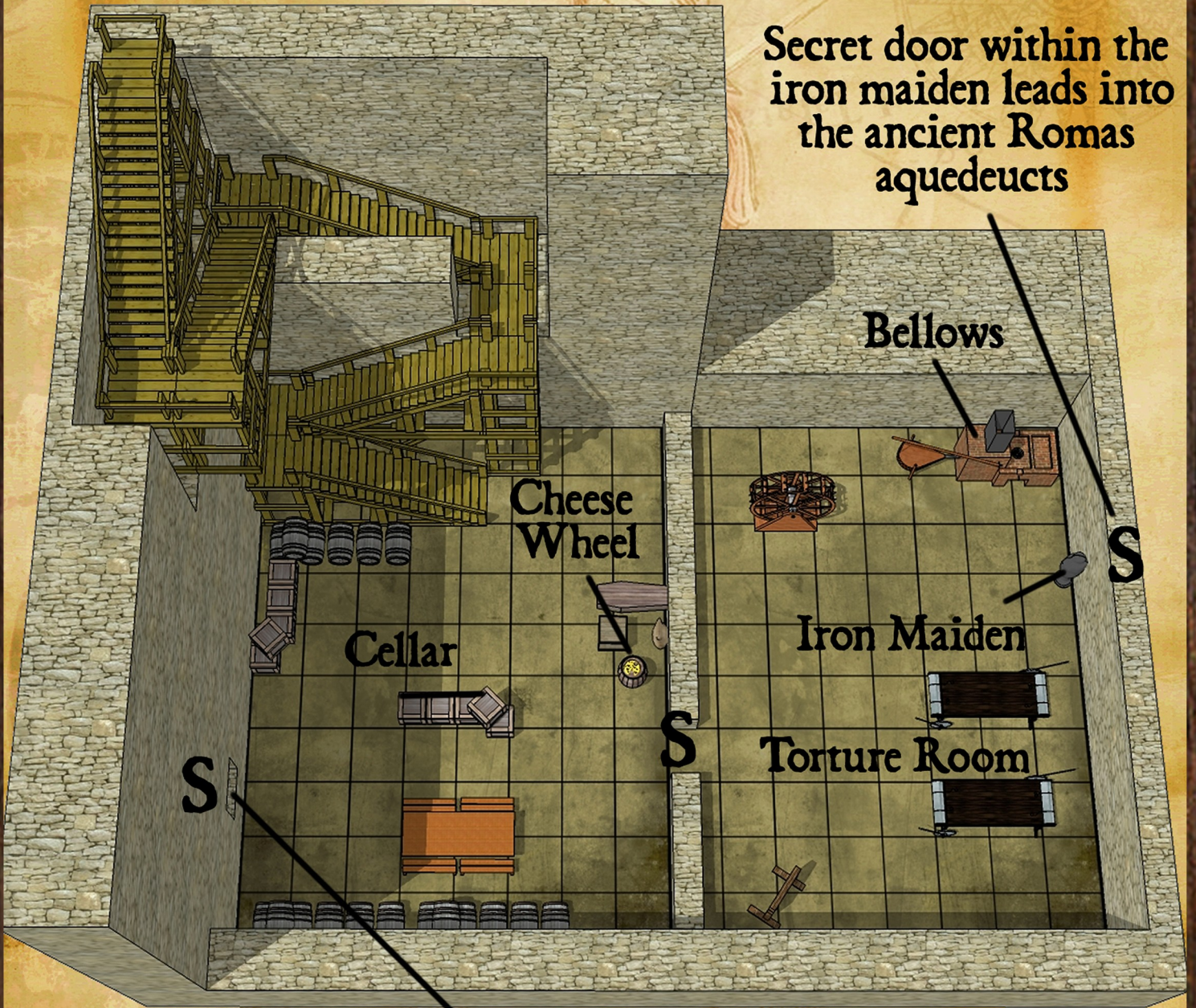
**Hit:** The target is slowed (save ends) unless already slowed, which instead it is immobilized (save ends).

### Countermeasures

- A character can burn away the mist by using a power with the fire keyword. The mist is cleared in each square of the power's area until the end of the character's next turn.
- If a character wears one of the plague doctor's heavy canvas robes, goggles, and mask, they receive a +2 bonus to the Fortitude defense against this trap.
- A character can engage in a skill challenge to deactivate the bellows in the adjoining torture chamber. DC 28 Arcana check. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures). Success disables the trap while failure causes the bellows to explode (close blast 3, 3d8+4 necrotic and fire damage to all creatures in the blast). Either way, this will end the trap.

Gargoyles will make use of  
the stairs to protect themselves  
from melee attacks

Secret door within the  
iron maiden leads into  
the ancient Romas  
aqueducts



Secret Compartment

S = Secret Chamber  
or Door

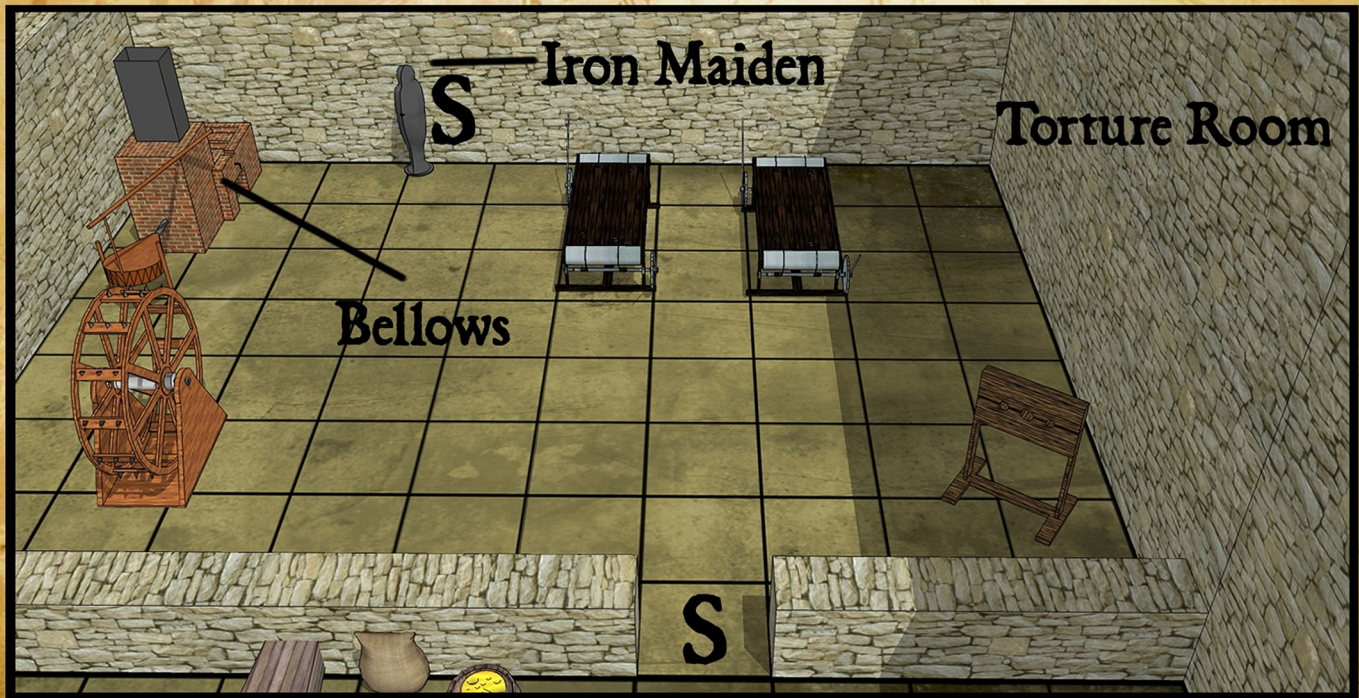
# Beneath the Curdled Whey



**S**  
leads to  
torture room

**Cheese Wheel**

**S = Secret Chamber**



**Bellows**

**S** — **Iron Maiden**

**Torture Room**

**S**  
leads from  
cellar

*Norman*



## PATH OF BEATING HEARTS

Encounter Level 10 ( 2,500 XP )

### 5 Altars of the Beating Heart Traps

#### SET UP

This section of tunnel is highly radiant with arcane energy (Arcana check DC 25; 1 minute). The immoral necromancers used dark ritual magic to bind the hearts of innocent victims and forged them into a trap. Read or paraphrase the following:

*The ancient underground aqueduct begins to widen opening into a hewn, dank cavern. Various carved niches display a macabre collection of bones, skulls, and scavenging rats. A few gruesome tools of torture sit on a rotating table.*

*A large, engraved pentagram dominates the floor of the cavern and at each point, a crude stone pedestal bears the weight of a human heart. Behind each platform, a wooden pole supports a malnourished prisoner. As each spy your approach, they call out: "Save us!", "Let us go!", "Do not harm the hearts, they belong to each of us."*

This is a true reflection of evil. Unbeknownst to the prisoners, they are doomed. They cannot reunite with their heart while alive. Only a *raise dead* ritual once the heart is placed back into the victim will cure them of this ill fate (see 4th Edition Player's Handbook for details).

#### FREEING THE PRISONERS

Characters may falsely assume that freeing the prisoner will stop the attack from that particular heart. This is not the case, however they may try.

**Manacles:** All defenses 8; hp 30.

Prisoners that are freed immediately pick up their hearts following characters, begging for their help to put it back in their chest. The second prisoner released, who is mad, eats his heart killing himself and ceasing one of the traps.

If characters continue to attack the hearts, the prisoners put up a feeble defense to stop them. However, killed prisoners do not disable a heart.

#### DEVELOPMENT

It is possible characters may elect to leave the prisoners behind and thus foregoing this dilemma. The intention of this encounter is to display a possible no win scenario due to the absolute evil that exists near this area of the aqueducts. It can also cause alignment issues that some characters might later atone for if they fail to free the prisoners. This was the original intention of the trap's

### ALTAR OF THE BEATING HEART

Level 10 Blaster

Trap

XP 500

**Trap:** The beating heart sitting upon a pedestal drains life energy from those near it by inciting a heart attack.

#### Perception

No perception necessary to notice the still beating heart.

#### Initiative +4

#### Arcana

DC 21: Character successfully identifies the trap and recognizes that the fate of each prisoner relies on the existence of their particular heart.

#### Trigger

When characters enter within range of the first heart, it rolls initiative.

#### Attack

##### Standard Action

Close burst 10

**Target:** One creature closest to the heart at the start of each turn. The trap magically identifies intruders from allies. The prisoners are considered allies.

**Attack:** +15 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 1d8+5 necrotic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the beating heart's next turn. If it is already slowed, it is instead immobilized (save ends). Immobilized targets take an additional 1d8 necrotic damage.

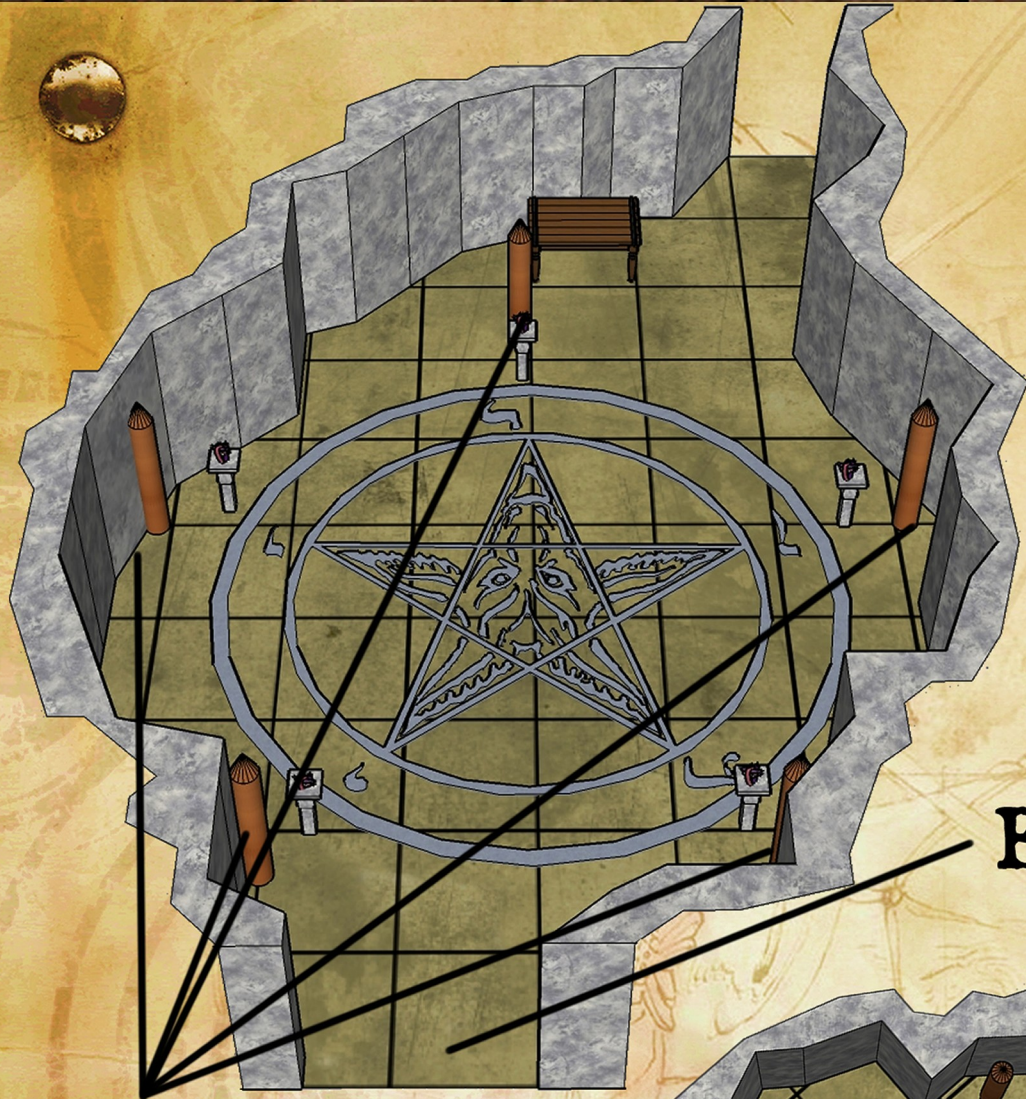
#### Countermeasures

- An immobilized character can make an Endurance check (DC 26) to gain a +2 bonus to saving throws to end the immobilized condition.
- A character can engage in a skill challenge to destroy each heart. Arcana or Thievery check (DC 20). Each successful Arcana check deals 10 damage and allows characters hit by the heart to make an immediate Endurance check (DC 26) to suffer half damage following the round after a successful check. Each successful Thievery check deals 10 damage and causes a -2 penalty to attack rolls made by the beating heart following the round of a successful check. Complexity 1 (6 successes before 3 failures). Success disables the trap while failure causes the heart to send out a necrotic pulse (close burst 10, 3d8+5 necrotic damage to all creatures in the burst). Also, the trap remains active.
- A character can attack the beating heart (AC 10, Fort 8, Ref 8; hp 95; resist 5 all). Destroying the beating heart disables the trap.

creator: to serve as a warning of the evil that awaits should intruders insist on seeking it out.



# Path of Beating Hearts



Entrance

Prisoners

Hearts





## REVENGE OF THE GUTTER MAGE

Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

**Sir Thorus of Bannock (T)**  
**Inquisitor Marcus (M)**  
**Inquisitorial Witch (W)**  
**2 Knight Inquisitors (K)**

### SETUP

This encounter can take place several places: at the end of the *Navigating the Aqueduct* skill challenge, if characters scaled the city wall, or the day after they bribed their way out of the city. If adventurers made their way out of the city via another route other than the aqueducts, then this encounter takes place on the road.

Read or paraphrase the following depending on the outcome of the skill challenge:

#### If successful in navigating the skill challenge:

*Echoing voices wind down the ancient Romus tunnels as you near an apparent exit. A raspy voice, crackles as a flame would lick your ear: "How well informed is your source? We wait hours in this ancient place of debauchery and Inquisitor Marcus grows tired."*

*"Does he," replies a confident, noble voice you've heard once before. "Master Marcus, can this witch read your thoughts? The Gutter Mage, as he is known in the Black Ward and Catacomb District, is dubious, but fears reprisal. His word is trusted."*

Characters can gain surprise if they can pass a DC 16 group Stealth check.

#### If characters fail in navigating the skill challenge:

*The final underwater tunnel empties in a dilapidated, ancient Romas bathhouse. You emerge from the ten-foot depths of the pool to gasp for air from the naturally warm waters. As you tread water, taking in the fantastic art and tile work that still clings to crumbling walls and ceilings, several figures surround the edge of the pool.*

*Two knight inquisitors, loyal and brutish to the cause of painful confessions stand poised, awaiting orders. A haggard, elder woman also bears a priestly habit adorned with arcane sigils, almost divine in nature. She stands beside a gaunt, aged inquisitor and, despite his rumpling form, appears to lead the group. A vicious scar mars his throat from fiery magic, preventing him to speak. Instead, a gallant knight and hunter, regal in armor, a man who introduced himself earlier to the city square as Sir Thorus of Bannock speaks: "The Gutter Mage pays his respects. It seems even the most deplorable and vile creatures, fear and honor the church and their beloved city of Caldor. Now, it seems we will search your unconscious bodies to see if the Gutter Mage*

*earned his coin."*

Until characters emerge fully from the pool, they must either swim or tread water as part of a move action or run the risk of suffocation by drowning (see the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE for further details). The pool is ten-feet deep.

### TACTICS

They intend to publicly display the adventurers. Therefore, they choose to knock characters unconscious should any fall to 0 or fewer hit points instead of killing them. The inquisitorial witch stays within 10 squares of Inquisitor Marcus to make use of her *penance of the deplorable* power.

If Inquisitor Marcus falls before Sir Thorus, the Knight of Bannock will flee. The others will stay and fight to the death if need be. Their faith and cause for redemption leads them blindly to the great beyond. If Marcus is the only one left standing, he will let characters retreat.

<b>INQUISITOR MARCUS</b>	
<b>Level 13 Artillery (Leader)</b>	
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 800
<b>Initiative</b> +9	<b>Senses</b> Perception +11
<b>HP</b> 100; <b>Bloodied</b> 50	
<b>AC</b> 25; <b>Fortitude</b> 23, <b>Reflex</b> 24, <b>Will</b> 27	
<b>Immune</b> disease; <b>Resist</b> 10 radiant	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
Ⓢ	<b>Redemptive Smite</b> (standard; at-will) † <b>Radiant</b> +18 vs. AC; 1d8+5 radiant damage.
✧	<b>Holy Ray of Redemption</b> (standard; at-will) † <b>Radiant</b> Ranged 20 +18 vs. Reflex; 1d10+7 radiant damage, and target takes -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the inquisitor's next turn.
✧	<b>Praise of Salvation</b> (standard; recharge ☞, ☞☞) † <b>Fire, Radiant</b> Area burst 2 within 20; targets enemies; +18 vs. Will; 2d6+5 radiant and fire damage, and allies within the burst gain 5 temporary hit points.
<b>Inquisitorial Radiance</b> † <b>Healing</b> Inquisitor Marcus can take a -2 penalty to attack rolls to deal an extra 5 points of radiant damage.	
<b>Encouraging Praise</b> (free; when an ally within 10 squares makes an attack roll, skill check, or an ability check and does not like the result, encounter) Inquisitor Marcus adds a 1d6 to the triggering roll.	
<b>Alignment</b> Good	<b>Languages</b> Common, Supernal (cannot speak)
<b>Skills</b> Insight +18, Intimidate +18, Heal +16, Nature +16, Religion +14	
<b>Str</b> 13 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 20 (+11)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+9)	<b>Int</b> 16 (+9) <b>Cha</b> 24 (+13)
<b>Equipment</b> vestments, holy symbol	

**INQUISITORIAL WITCH****Level 11 Controller**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

XP 600

**Initiative** +9 **Senses** Perception +10**HP** 114; **Bloodied** 57**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24**Immune** disease; **Resist** 10 radiant;**Vulnerable** 5 necrotic**Speed** 6⊕ **Staff** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**

+16 vs. AC; 2d8+7 damage, and target gains vulnerable 5 radiant (save ends). Targets more than 5 squares away from the inquisitorial witch gains a +2 to saving throws to end this power's effect.

← **Holy Surge of Penance** (standard; recharge ☼), ☼ † **Radiant**

Close blast 5; targets enemies; +13 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+3 radiant damage, and target takes ongoing 5 radiant damage and is slowed (save ends both).

**Penance of the Deplorable** (immediate interrupt; when an enemy moves within 3 squares of Inquisitor Marcus; at-will) † **Radiant***As you move toward Inquisitor Marcus, the witch utters an immediate prayer liquored with sweet, holy words then commands: "To your knees and pray to your divine superior, Lord Marcus!"*

Ranged 10; targets triggering enemy; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d10+3 radiant damage, and the target is immobilized and knocked prone (save ends both).

**Inquisitor Protectorate** (minor; encounter) † **Healing**

The inquisitorial witch takes up to 25 damage, and Inquisitor Marcus, if within 10 squares, regains the same amount of hit points. The inquisitorial witch can also transfer one condition effecting Inquisitor Marcus onto herself.

**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** Common**Skills** Endurance +14, Intimidate +13, Nature +15, Religion +10**Str** 10 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+9) **Wis** 21 (+10)**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 17 (+8)**Equipment** leather armor, staff, holy symbol**DEVELOPMENT**

A crumbling hill of rubble leads to an exit in the ceiling. It opens up to a ruined, dilapidated well in the middle of an abandoned farm field.

**SIR THORUS OF BANNOCK****Level 11 Soldier**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

XP 600

**Initiative** +7 **Senses** Perception +8**HP** 111; **Bloodied** 55**AC** 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 22**Speed** 5⊕ **Broadsword** (standard; at-will) † **Weapon**

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Sir Thorus' next turn.

† **Impeding Strike** (free; when a target marked by Sir Thorus moves or attacks an adjacent ally, at-will) † **Poison, Weapon**

+18 vs. AC; triggering creature; 1d10+5 poison damage, and the target receives a -4 penalty to Fortitude and Sir Thorus can slide the target 1 square at the beginning of the target's turn as a free action (save ends).

**Mark of the Hunter** (standard, encounter)† **Poison**

Two targets; close burst 1; +16 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned (save ends).

**Hunter's Quarry** (minor; at-will [1/round])

+1d6; See ranger class feature in D&amp;D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK.

**Alignment** Unaligned**Languages** Common, Royal Tongue**Skills** Athletics +15, Endurance +12, History +16, Insight +14, Nature +16**Str** 21 (+10) **Dex** 10 (+5) **Wis** 16 (+8)**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 18 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+9)**Equipment** plate armor, heavy shield, broadsword**KNIGHT INQUISITOR****Level 10 Brute**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

XP 500

**Initiative** +9 **Senses** Perception +8**HP** 126; **Bloodied** 63**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 23**Resist** 10 radiant**Speed** 6⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) † **Radiant, Weapon**

+12 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage, and ongoing 5 radiant damage (save ends).

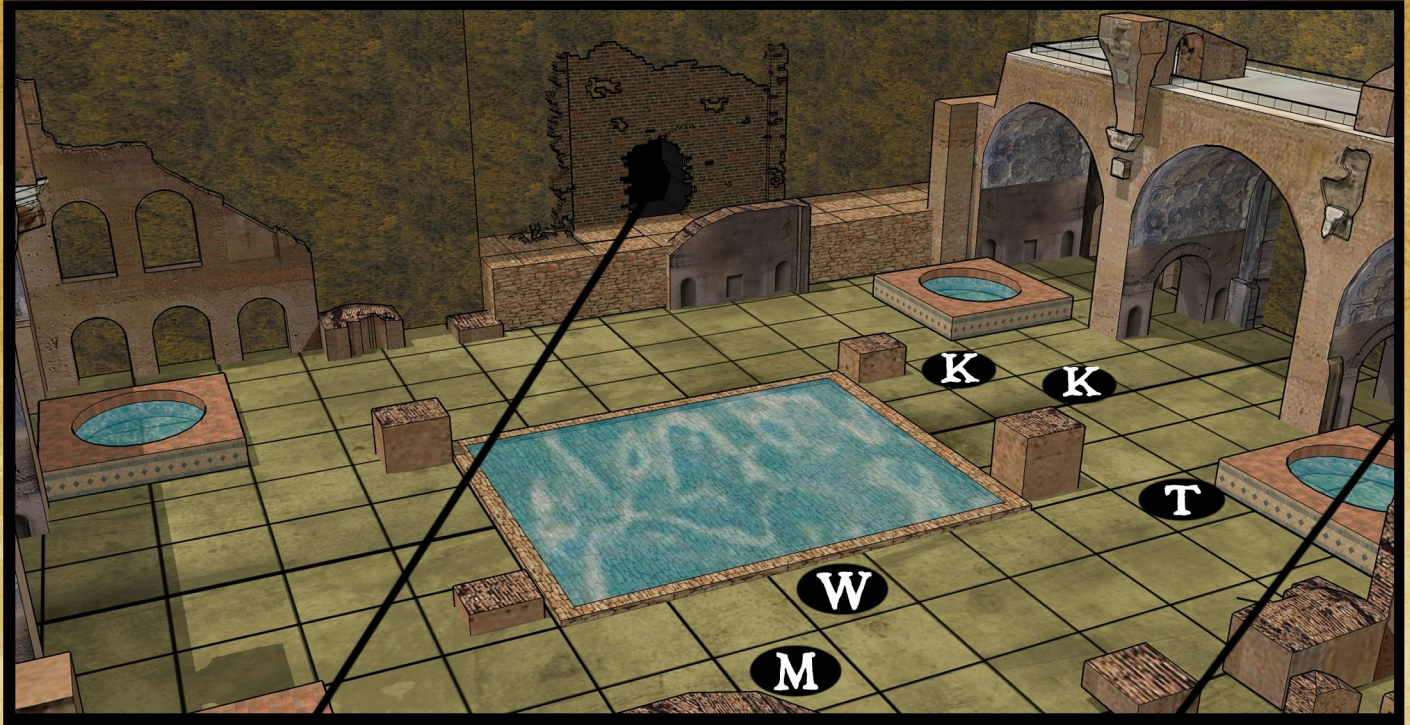
**Fanatical Charge**

When a knight inquisitor charges a target, it makes a greatsword attack against each enemy within its reach during the charge movement.

**Channeled Surge**

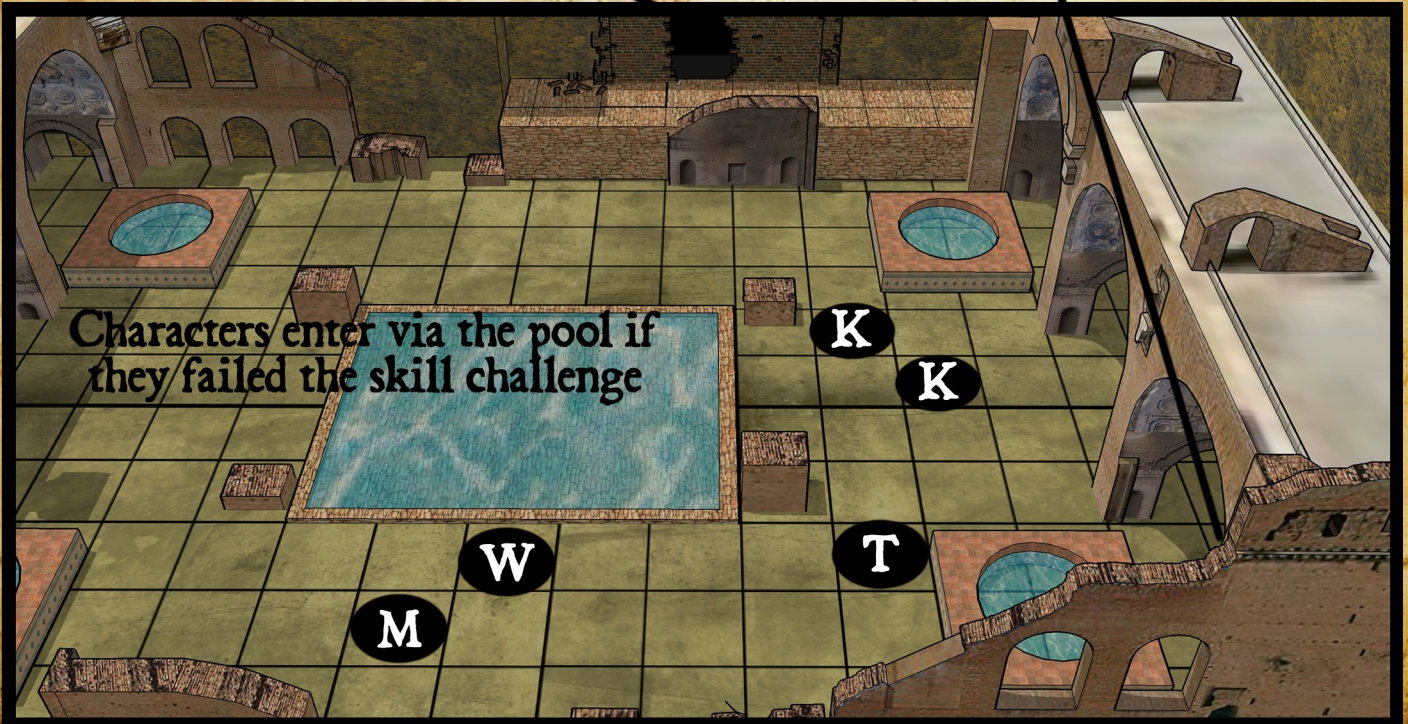
The knight inquisitor deals 5 radiant damage to one target suffering ongoing damage from its greatsword attack each time it bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 or fewer hit points.

**Alignment** Unaligned**Languages** Common**Skills** Athletics +14, Intimidate +14, Religion +5**Str** 20 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+8)**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 21 (+10)**Equipment** chainmail, greatsword, holy symbol



Entrance if characters successfully  
navigate the skill challenge

Leads to pile of rubble  
exiting from the area.



Characters enter via the pool if  
they failed the skill challenge

## Underground Ruins Romas Bath



## BLACK POOL

Encounter Level 10 ( 2,800 XP )

### 1 Shadow Realm Sinkhole

4 Trap Haunts (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL for further details).

### SET UP

Unlike the minor necrotic cesspools, this is a larger, more concentrated, necrotic portal that twists minds as it subtly causes the creature to decay and finally become transported into the Realm of Shadows. Read or paraphrase the following:

*As you move closer to the heart of the ill-famed bog, the murky waters possess a bone-numbing chill and remains virtually calm and without movement. No bones lay beneath your feet and you have long since ceased your frustration from blood sucking leeches for none exist within this area of the bog. All seems silent, but apprehension grips you.*

Have characters proceed for a bit and allow their anxiety to build before reading the following:

*Four, transparent rotting vestiges of knights arise from the dark waters. Each bear relics of ancient kingdoms and as they move closer, they agree amongst themselves that you shall make fine squires in the realm of shadow and death.*

### TACTICS

The trap haunts initially attempt to dominate victims with *ghostly possession* to forcefully lead characters into the Shadow Realm cesspool. Once trapped, they will voluntarily leave their victim and attack them relentlessly.

### DEVELOPMENT

Any character that dies within the Shadow Realm sinkhole becomes immediately transported to the Realm of Shadows.

### SHADOW REALM SINKHOLE

Level 12 Elite Lurker

Hazard

XP 1,400

**Hazard:** Calm, floating debris hides four dark, watery squares.

#### Insight

DC 18: Adjacent characters notice the slight rippling of the debris indicating the area as dangerous. A DC 21 check is successful for characters further away.

#### Arcana

DC 22: Character successfully identifies the hazard once it attacks and gains a +2 bonus to Athletics to free themselves or an adjacent character from the hazard.

#### Trigger

Each square attacks a medium or smaller creature once it enters the area.

#### Attack

**Immediate Reaction**      **Area** 1 square

**Target:** Each creature in a hazardous square

**Attack:** +18 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 1d10+5 necrotic damage, and target is pulled beneath the water teetering on the edge of the portal into the Realm of Shadow. The target is also dazed and restrained (save ends both). When a restrained character ends its turn at the edge of the portal, that target takes 1d10+5 necrotic damage must also succeed on an Endurance check (DC 20) or lose a healing surge. A character with no healing surges instead takes damage equal to its level. This continues until the target is freed or dies.

#### Countermeasures

- As a standard action, an adjacent character can attempt to pull a creature from the sinkhole with a successful Athletics check (DC 18). The target is no longer affected by the hazard and may move into an adjacent square, but allows the sinkhole to attack the rescuer at a –2 penalty.
- A character can attempt to free themselves as a move action with a successful Athletics check (DC 21). Freed characters are no longer restrained or dazed and can move to any adjacent space of the hazard.



## HAG OF TRELANG

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### Hag of Trelang (HT)

**2 Bog Ogre Cultists (BO)** (Use Ogre Thug statistics found in the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL, however give the creature swamp walk).

**3 Feymire Crocodiles (FC)** (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL for further details).

### SETUP

Characters enter into a small clearing in which lies the fabled Shield Tree. No other creatures are present in the area. Read or paraphrase the following:

*An ancient swamp oak clings to a mossy island surrounded by black waters and decaying lily pads. At the base of the trunk, massive roots swallow the rusting plate armor and among its virile, thick branches hang an assembly of knightly shields and dangling corpses of once brave warriors.*

*Through an approaching fog of misty vapors and swamp gas, you spy the shield bearing the mark of the blood moon; the shield of Sir John Longhorn. Strangely enough, you also glimpse a lifeless knight lynched to a tree wearing a matching tunic. Is this perhaps the remains of his squire?*

Allow characters to move about, but as they attempt to take a shield from the tree, read or paraphrase the following:

*Appearing from the fog, a large haggard woman, bearing a mantle of witch-like trinkets. Moss and fungi also cling to her water-clogged skin as she greets you with blackened teeth and a wiry smile: "I would not touch a single questing shield unless you have prepared yourself for the fate a single shield should bestow. Once claimed and removed from the Shield Tree, you accept a quest that will test your core being. Many believe these are shields of fallen collected by myself and my sisters, but this tree stood long before me and only the most ancient of dragons know the secrets of its ornaments."*

*Two bog ogre cultists, covered in leeches and lichen, emerge from the fog as well, taking positions near the witch. Several crocodiles also slip into the water. The gaunt hag continues: "I notice you are particularly interested in the shield that once belonged to Sir John Longhorn.*

*"I remember him quite well. The poor lad completed the quest he chose once he claimed the shield, the Mark of Hubris, for himself and his champions. However, once he completed his task, a great woe fell upon him for what he had done. It beleaguered him so that*

*the righteous knight hung himself upon that branch and he still hangs awaiting redemption from his humility of being so pure of heart."*

Characters may have a few moments to question the Hag of Trelang before she launches into attack. Below are a few possible questions with answers.

### What was the task of Sir John the Longhorn?

*"To rob me of the essence I once was by claiming this wand, the Horn of Belfor. The very implement that allows me to bring evil into this world through demonic possession: the proof of a horrid act, that only the pure of heart could perform."*

### Why would a righteous knight, pure of heart, commit a horrid act?

*"That is a question I pondered for many decades, but have no resolution save one—to prevent the existence of a greater form of evil. Their must be balance. Extreme good can not exist without extreme evil."*

**Do you know of Josiah?** If characters do not ask this, Harriet will if she survived the trek.

*"That clever morsel. He too took interest in the Mark of Hubris, but more so with the origin of the mark than the why. I told him of the hidden gypsy library of Ardor that might hold an answer for his quandary before I tried to snack upon his bones.*

*"He escaped my grasp, but not before I removed one of his eyes. Although, he did not leave me empty handed for several of his inquisitorial brethren also searched for him here. They thought they could barter for their lives with religious trinkets. They did not leave this place."*

### Why do we possess these marks or why do some possess these marks?

*"Why do you ask such a question unless you or a loved one bears such a mark?" The haggard witch lets her tongue run hungrily across her rotting teeth and swollen lips. "Show me those marks, children, so that I might summon ancient spirits that crave to once again walk the earth."*

### TACTICS

The real threat adventurers face during this encounter is from the feymire crocodiles more so than the hag or the cultists. Therefore, the Hag of Trelang hangs back under the guard of her cultists as she watches in delight as her pets attempt to feed themselves. She uses the *Horn of Belfor* and *touch of Belfor* to aid the crocodiles while attempting to dominate the character that poses the greatest threat with *command of hubris*. Her cultists protect her position combating any threats against characters



that stray too close.

**HAG OF TRELANG****Level 12 Controller (Leader)**

Large fey humanoid

XP 700

**Initiative** +8    **Senses** Perception +11; low-light vision**HP** 124; **Bloodied** 62**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 24**Regeneration** 10 (The hag's regeneration does not function until the end of next turn if she takes psychic or necrotic damage).**Speed** 7 (swamp walk)④ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage.

↗ **Horn of Belfor** (standard; at-will) † **Radiant**

Must wield the Horn of Belfor; ranged 20; +16 vs. AC; 4d8+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone.

↗ **Touch of Belfor** (Minor; encounter) † **Healing**

Must wield the Horn of Belfor; Ranged 10; an ally may spend a healing surge or make a saving throw against an effect that a save can end.

↗ **Command of Hubris** (standard; recharge ☼, ☾) † **Charm**Ranged 10; targets an enemy previously hit by the *Horn of Belfor*; +16 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends). The Hag of Trelang can only dominate one creature at a time.← **Bog Breath** (standard; encounter)

Close blast 5; targets enemies only; +16 vs. Fortitude; 2d8+5 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

**Demonic Gateway**Must wield the Horn of Belfor; creatures dominated by the *command of hubris* gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deal an extra 1d6 damage with melee attacks while dominated.↗ **Twilight Step** (Move, encounter) † **Teleportation**

The Hag of Trelang can teleport 5 squares.

**Alignment** Evil    **Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Endurance +16, Insight +18,**Str** 18 (+10)    **Dex** 15 (+8)    **Wis** 9 (+5)**Con** 20 (+11)    **Int** 12 (+7)    **Cha** 18 (+10)**Equipment** Horn of Belfor

*the bog water uplifting the spirit within each of you. The rush of air makes each shield upon the ancient oak charter, especially that bearing the heraldry of Sir John the Longhorn. The tangled hair of the hag begins to dance wildly as it transforms into a glistening white mane. Her arms and legs stretch outward becoming taut and muscular fore and hind legs as her hands and feet curl inward developing into hooves. Finally, the matted clothes, bits of leather, and arcane trinkets, fall away giving rise to a powerfully built body of a enchanting unicorn.*

*The fey-like creature stands firmly before you as if new life surges through a once broken soul. The magnificent creature looks upon each of you as you feel the beast convey both gratitude and solemn pity before galloping through the mire disappearing into the fog.*

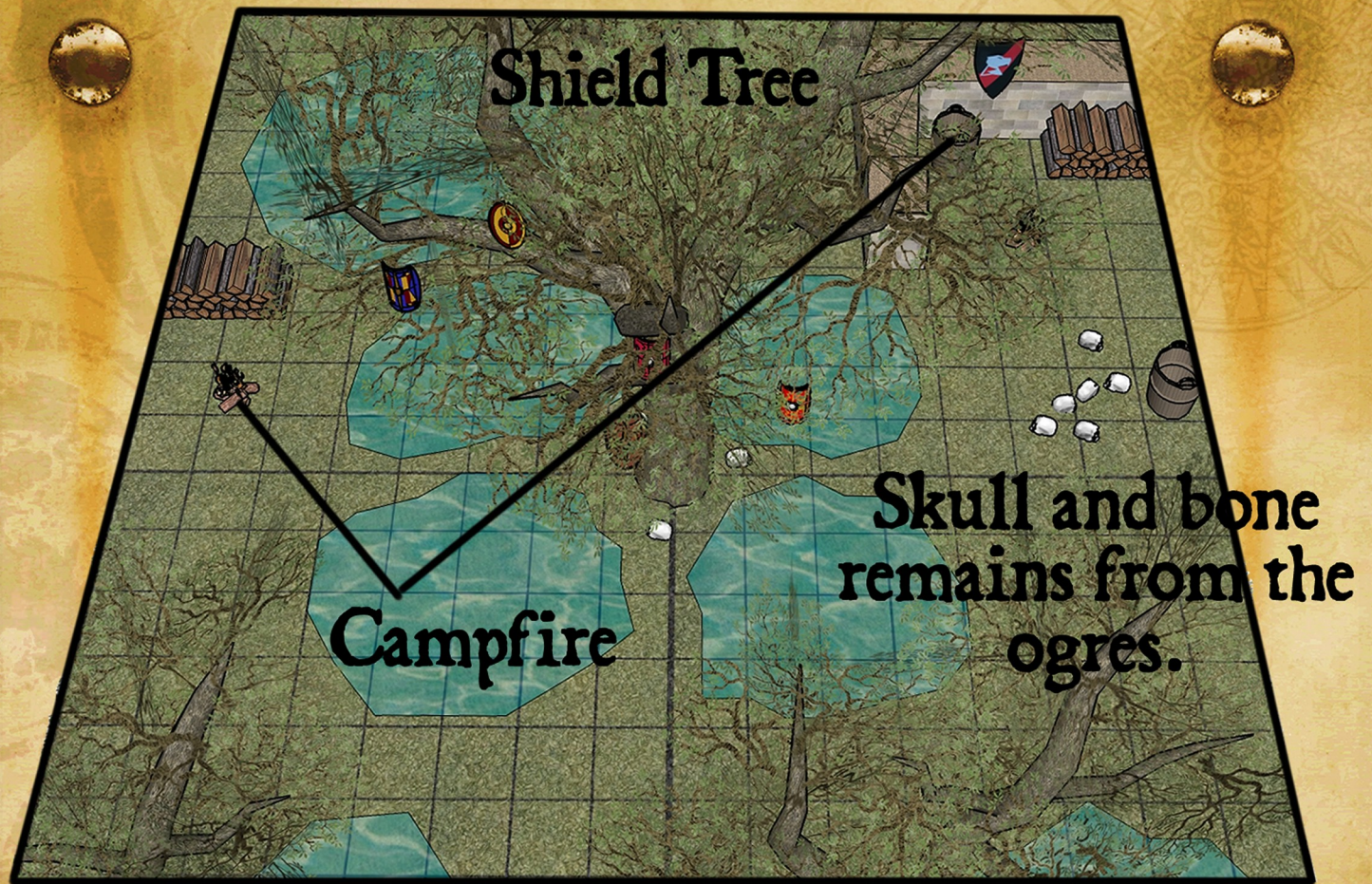
*The wind suddenly dies. Each badge of honor, each symbol of questhood that hangs from the Shield Tree settles into silence, save for that bearing the Mark of Hubris—the shield of Sir John the Longhorn.*

**DEVELOPMENT**

With the *Horn of Belfor* safely in the hand of the adventurers, the manipulation over those bearing the blood moon mark, or the Mark of Hubris as the hag called it, ends. No longer will the countryside be under the threat of raving, demonically possessed individuals.

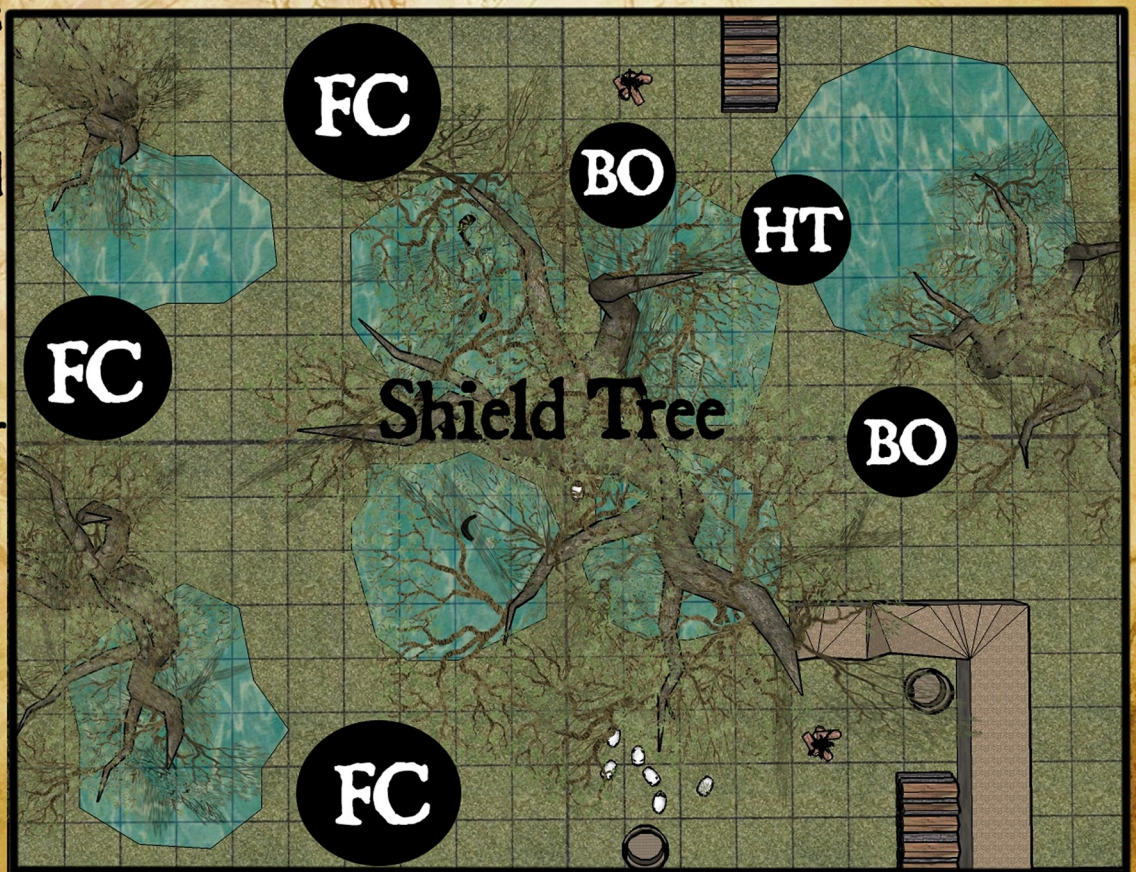
What characters do with the horn is entirely up to them, however when searching the area for treasure or other tidbits, one discovers that the hag has a broken stump under her mat of tangled hair where a single horn once stood. Read or paraphrase the following should characters attempt to reunite the *Horn of Belfor* to the stump of the hag:

*A sweet wind rustles through the underbrush and across*



The creatures appear from the fog and are placed accordingly.

For a smaller party or easier fight, take away one feymire crocodile.







# CTHONIA

## FOREST OF WOE

AHNGRIN

SHADKHANIM

MOUNTAINS

SOMBER WOOD

WOOD OF THE FORGOTTEN

ASHEN

RIVER

ARDEN

BLACKBURN

DRAY WOOD

KALDOR

BLACK GROVE

OAK AGES

SORROWFUL GARDE

TALKING TREES

SHADOW RIVER

CALDOR

SHADOW PEAKS

LOST WOOD

RAVEN'S DEN

WOODMEN'S HALL

ELTON

ARDOR

BORDER KEEP

ELOE CASTLE

BURROW GLADES

SILENT WOOD

RIVER OF GOOD FAITH

TROLLFORD

JOURNEYMAN'S REST

TOWER OF CALEL

STRONGHOLD OF THE ONE

RIVER BOTTOM

SEVEN ARROWS

ASH

BOG OF BONES

TOLLBRIDGE

FEN GROVE

HOWDEN MOOR

MOUNTAINS

SHIELD TREE



KNIGHTS OF MALCHUS  
COMMANDRY

**CALDOR**  
CITY OF CROSSROADS

HOUSE MORGAN

OLD GATE  
MARKET

HOUSE MYOPIA

KING'S GATE

HOUSE BARCEL

OLD GATE

NORTH  
GATE

CALDOR CONSORTIUM  
GUILDHOUSE

CROSSROADS  
MARKET

AR CRANIUM  
BATH

DIOON WAY

HOUSE  
SLOAM

THE DEAD  
TAVERN

GYPSY  
MARKET

BAPTISTA'S  
WEAPONRY

UNIVERSITY  
OF MAN

CASTLE  
GATE

LOAM  
UNIVERSITY

GYPSY  
GATE

THE KING'S  
FIELDS

THE WAYWANDERER'S  
FRIEND

ABERAMA'S  
HIDES AND LEATHERS

# CALDOR

## DISTRICTS AND WARDS



HIGH  
WARD

NORTH  
WARD

OLD GATE  
DISTRICT

PILGRIM'S  
WARD

KING'S  
WARD

BATH  
DISTRICT

LOW  
WARD

NORTH CASTLE  
WARD

CROSSROADS  
MARKET

CASTLE  
WARD

BLACK  
WARD

CATACOMB  
DISTRICT

TANNER'S  
DISTRICT

BISHOP'S  
WARD

GYPSY MARKET

ST. FFRAID'S  
WARD

SOUTH CASTLE  
WARD

SOUTH  
WARD